Flying Start

Being the dad your child needs you to be

early years alliance

Flying Start part of Luton Family Hubs

BEST START IN LIFE

MONPRENEUR
Igniting Sparks of Innovation
"A father's love is the foundation for a child's future."
- Unknown

Key stages and areas in your child's development need your participation

This portfolio is here to offer you guidance and support, but you know your child better than anyone.

How much you choose to be involved is entirely up to you and what feels right for you and your family.

We simply want to make sure you have the information you need to make informed choices and understand the possible impact of your level of involvement.

Did you know?

Happy, confident children don't become confident and independent adults by accident. Growing up is a journey, shaped by many experiences, relationships and moments that help children develop their sense of who they are and who they want to become. One of the most important influences on this journey is the relationship they have with their parents and the people who care for them.

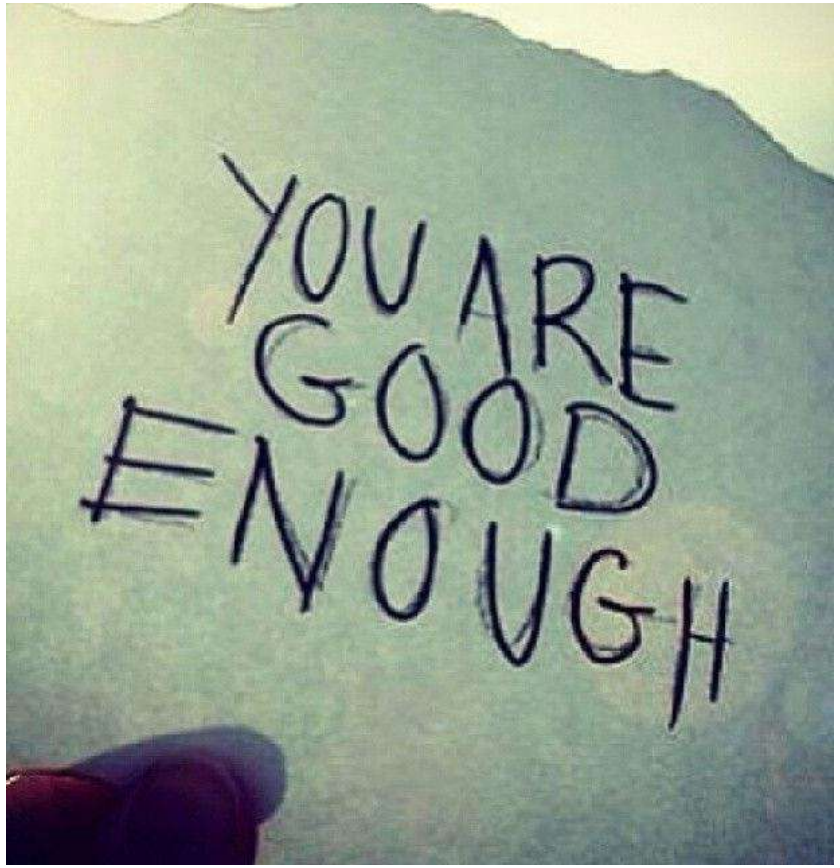
- **Every child is unique, and their future is not predetermined.** Who they become is shaped by their own personality and experiences, their home environment and the wider community around them. A loving, supportive home provides an important foundation from which children can grow and develop.

- **A child's self-esteem, sense of self-worth and the values they develop are all important.** Helping children feel valued, listened to and accepted gives them a strong foundation for their emotional and social development.

Being good enough but willing to learn more

Be the father your child needs not the one you want to be…..

- This doesn't mean that you have to be available 24 hours a day – or even cohabit with your child's mother – the emphasis is definitely **quality over quantity**.
- The role and expectation of being a dad are changing but the work/life balance matters – the pressure that this can bring however can add to the stress levels.
  - Stress and not coping are areas that men have traditionally not communicated very well.



So – get involved

- **As a community, we are here to support you on your parenting journey.** We can celebrate with you when things are going well, support you when you're unsure, and encourage you to get involved in ways that feel right for you and your family. If you're not sure about something, please ask. We may not always have the answer ourselves, but we can usually help you find someone who does.
- **Children don't simply absorb what happens around them – they process it too.** Their developing brains are constantly trying to make sense of their experiences and understand how those experiences make them feel. These early experiences help to lay the foundations for how children see themselves, their relationships and the world around them.
- **But please don't panic.** What children learn in their early years is not set in stone. It can be reshaped through new experiences, positive relationships and the right support. Even children who have experienced difficult or traumatic events can develop, recover and move forward without those experiences defining their whole lives.
- Children have a wonderful capacity to recover and adapt, but they don't have to do it alone. **Having someone there to support, guide and help them along the way can make a real difference**.

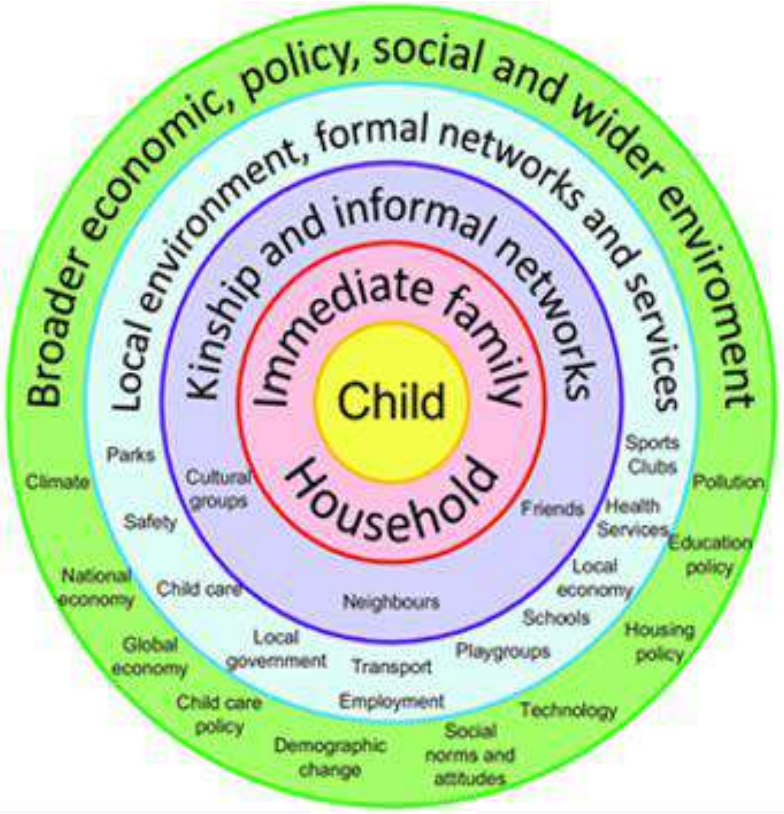
“It takes a village to raise a child”

…is an African proverb, associated with Igbo and Yoruba communities in Nigeria. It reflects the idea that children benefit from being surrounded by a wider community of caring and supportive people as they grow and develop.

Parenting doesn’t have to be a journey you take alone. Having a supportive community around you can help you navigate the challenges of parenthood, while also giving you people to share and celebrate the many joys of being a parent.

All families experience times of vulnerability, uncertainty or simply not knowing what to do next. A strong and supportive community can help families build resilience and feel more confident about reaching out for support when they need it — and accepting help when it is offered.

Asking for help is not a sign that you are struggling to be a good parent. Sometimes, having the right person alongside you can make a difficult moment feel a little easier and help you feel more confident in supporting your child.



Ecological (interconnected) systems of raising children

- The ecological systems holds that **we encounter different environments throughout our lifespan that may influence our behaviour** in varying degrees.
- The family ecology perspective focuses on two things: how a living environment affects the family and how, in turn the family can affect what goes on around them
- Culture, education, economy, language, how we communicate can influence your family dynamic.
- Neighbourhoods are places of shared spaces where children can flourish.

Meeting YOUR CHILD'S needs

What you provide

What WE can assist with

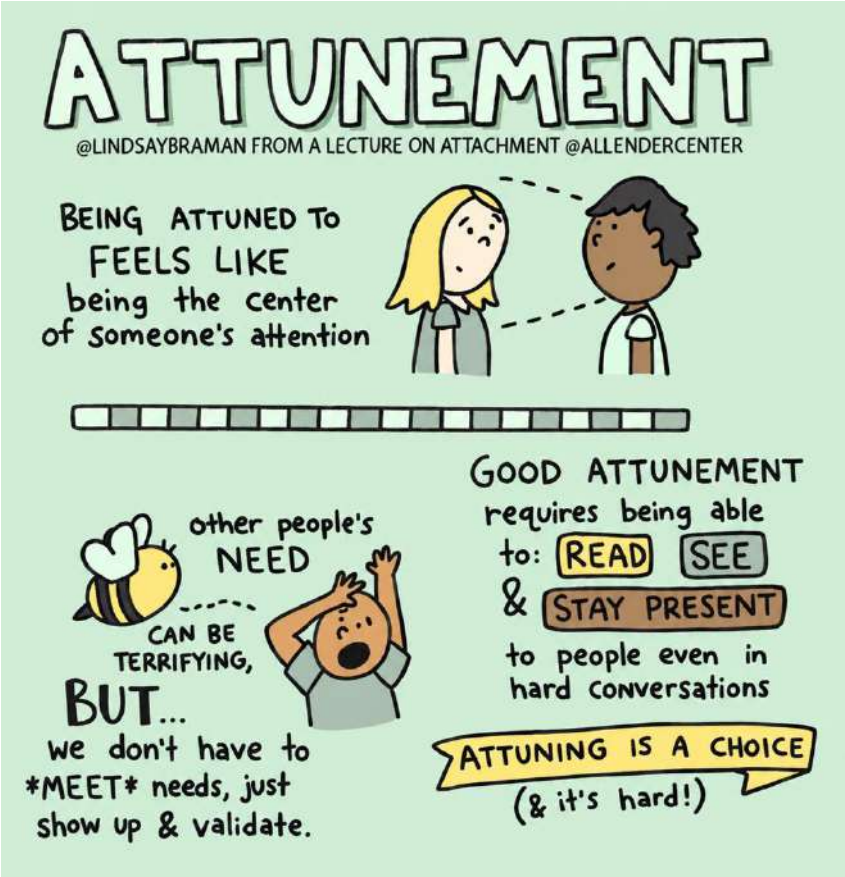
Building brains:
Humans are born to connect, mirror and match

If attachment needs are met, babies feel safe and secure

- The brain and nervous system of the baby mirrors the state of the brain and nervous system in the adult (attunement)
- This attunement patterns the baby brain to develop self-regulation

It takes twenty five years for the human brain to reach maturity

- Attachment needs are lifelong to keep brains working well

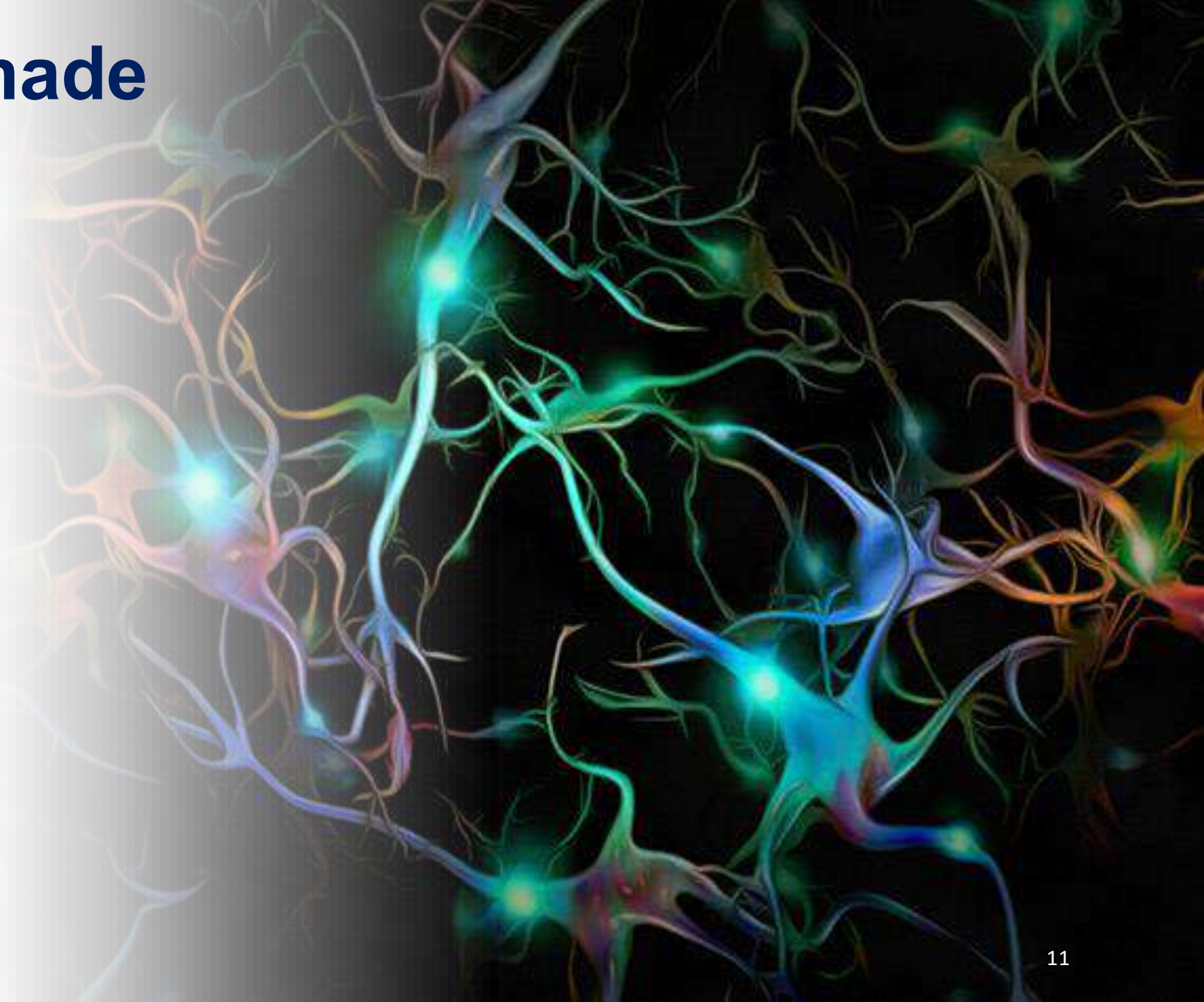


Connections made through play

- When a toddler stacks blocks and then knocks them down, or a preschooler pretends to be a firefighter, they aren't just having fun

- **Playing is how children learn**

- Research shows that play impacts everything from a child's physical abilities and vocabulary to problem-solving, creativity, teamwork and empathy



Eight things children need to thrive

1) Security

Kids must feel safe and sound, with their basic survival needs met: shelter, food, clothing, medical care and protection from harm.

2) Stability

Stability comes from family and community. Ideally, a family remains together in a stable household, but when that's not possible, it's important to disrupt the child's life as little as possible. Kids and families should be a part of larger units to give them a sense of belonging, **tradition** and cultural continuity.

3) Consistency

No "good cop, bad cop." Parents should synchronize their parenting and make sure important values stay consistent.

4) Emotional support

Parents' words and actions should encourage kids' trust, respect, self-esteem and, ultimately, independence

Eight things children need to thrive cont.

5) Love - Unconditional love

Saying and showing you love your kids can overcome almost any parenting "mistakes" you might make. Even when your kids have disobeyed, angered, frustrated and rebelled against you, show them you love them and that you'll always love them.

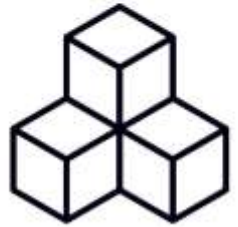
6) Education

Make sure your kids get the best possible education for their future. Get your children 'school ready' and then work alongside the school to maximise your child's potential and talent and work together if you have concerns. but it also includes the invaluable life lessons you provide during the time you spend together.

7) Positive role models

Parents are the first role models for their children - instil positive values such as empathy and kindness and sharing. **Teach children empathy** by being the kind of person you want them to become.

8) Structure



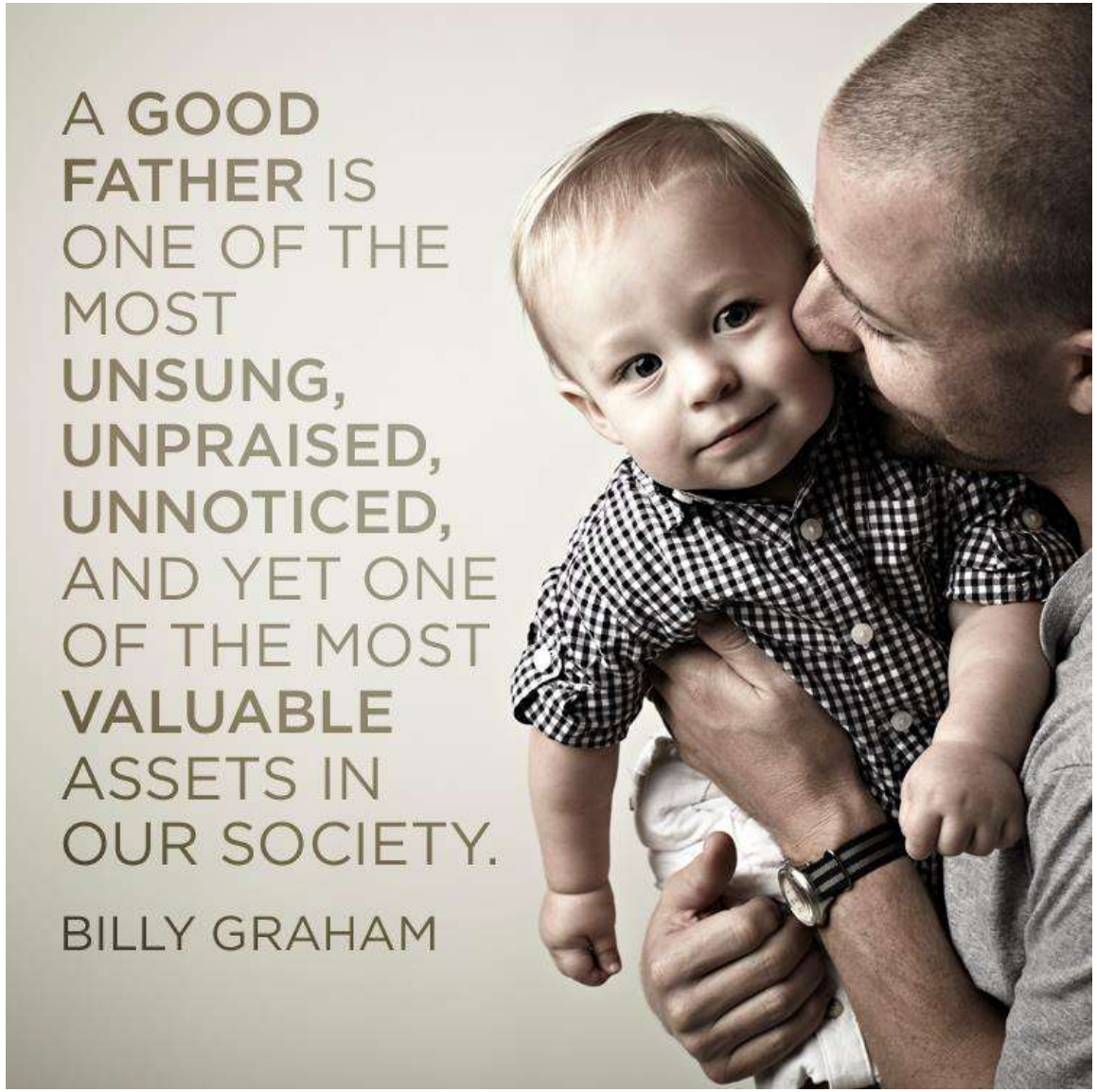
Set consistent rules and boundaries (evaluate them as they grow) ; an absence of consistency means a child will try to figure it out for themselves or will be influenced by others instead.

What does previous research tell us what dads need?

A common theme among varied fatherhood interventions is that men need to develop the capacity to care for themselves in order to become more effective and responsible fathers *(Levine & Pittinsky, 1997)*

If fathers are to positively impact their children's lives, it is critical for them to adopt constructive behaviours.

Thus, in order to help fathers raise healthy children and remain engaged in their children's lives, it may be critical to make investments in program interventions that focus on improving the functioning and well-being of fathers.



- Fathers are a primary source of socialization; they influence family processes and their positive involvement can be beneficial for child well-being *(Lamb, 1997; Bronte-Tinkew et al., 2006)*

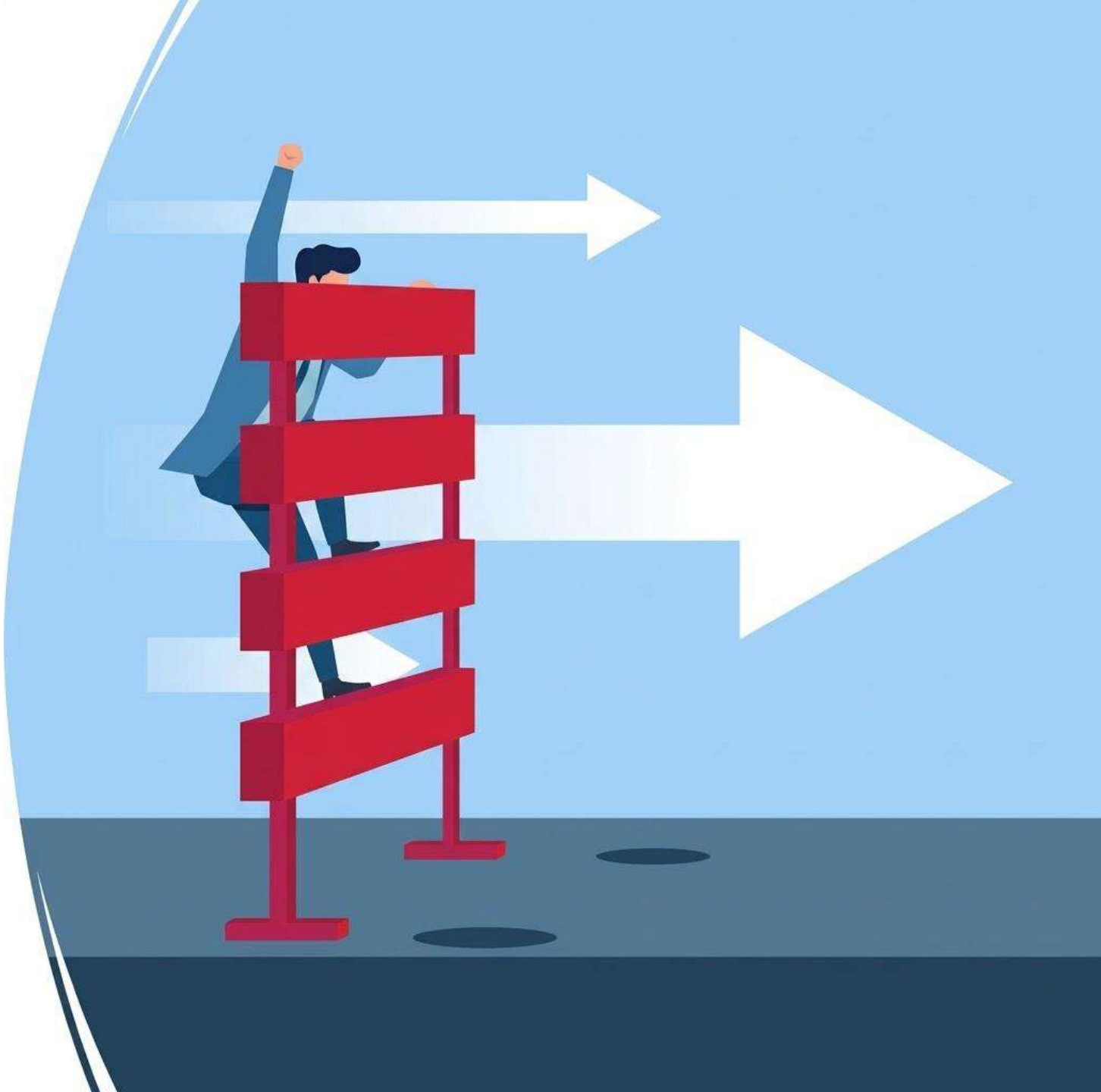
- Paternal participation in family programming has the ability to impact the well-being and functioning of fathers as individuals as well as their families

Barriers to Male Participation in Programs

Studies on fathers' involvement in family programs have identified four categories of barriers that exist to participation in programs *(Shock & Gavazzi, 2004).*

These include:

- pragmatic/structural program issues, such as scheduling and privacy concerns;
- family demographics, such as marital status of parents and income
- father characteristics such as education, past experience with family-based interventions and services; and
- fathers' perceptions of child problem behaviours, the applicability of the program to his family, and his parenting competency.



Childcare and parenting

There are a variety of different types of childcare available in the UK.

These include **pre-school** nurseries and crèches, childminders, after-school clubs, private nannies, and live-in au pairs. However, the availability and affordability of these can vary considerably depending on where you live.

- https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting
- https://www.expatica.com/uk/living/family/the-childcare-system-in-the-uk-106598/

Luton's Family Hub – Partnership working

- Luton's Family Hub and services are available to support your family.
- Did you know that the first 1001 days of a child's life is the most important part of their development?
- Luton's Family Hub will provide support from conception to your child's 5th birthday.
- Our aim is to make your journey the best experience it can be.
- We will support you by improving your access to a range of information and advice and connect you with other relevant services who can help you.
- We look forward to welcoming you and your family at our Family Hub sites and outreach venues.

familyhubs.luton.gov.uk

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory framework –requirements for learning and development, assessment & safeguarding & welfare

Early years foundation stage

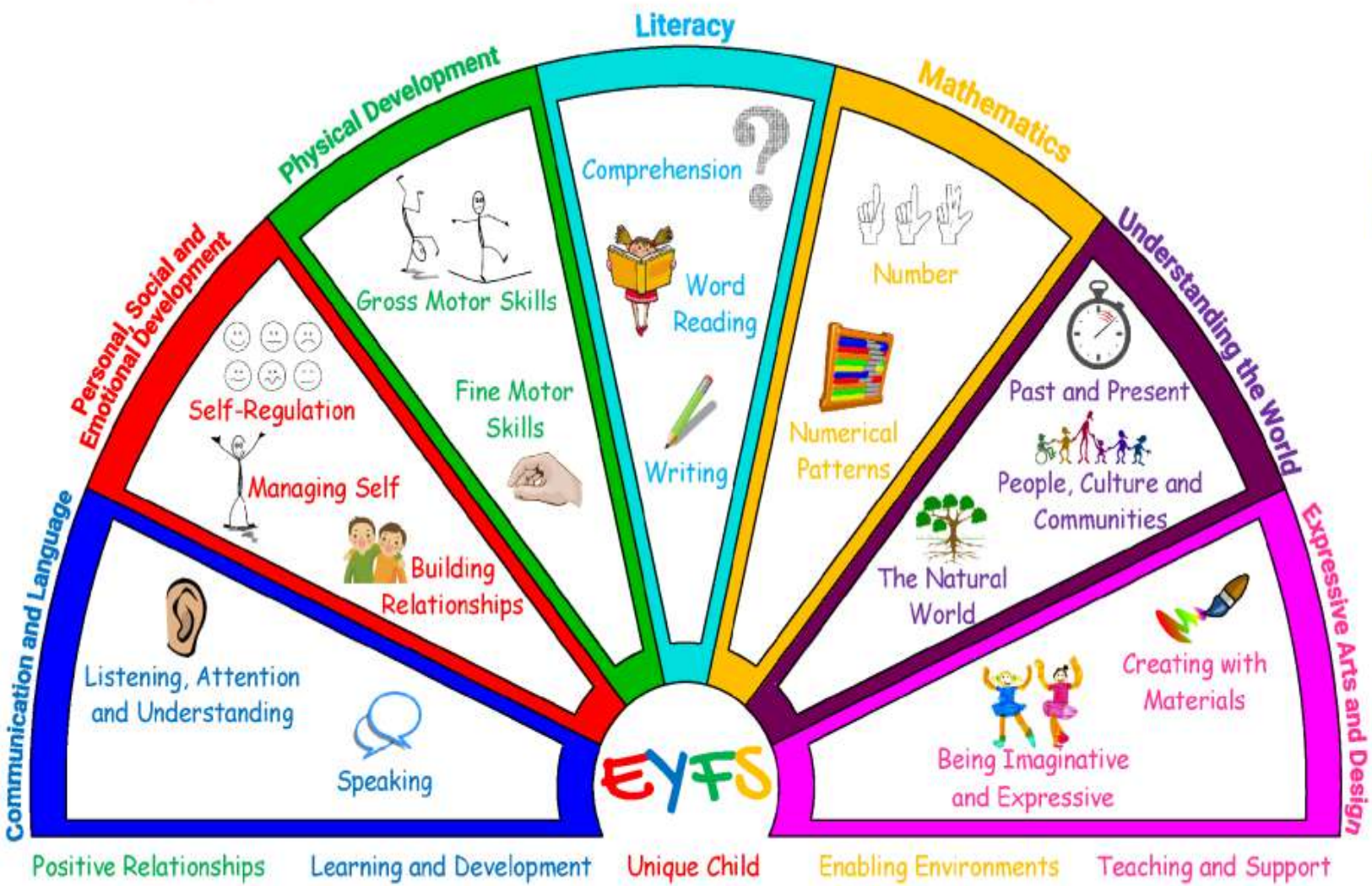
- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

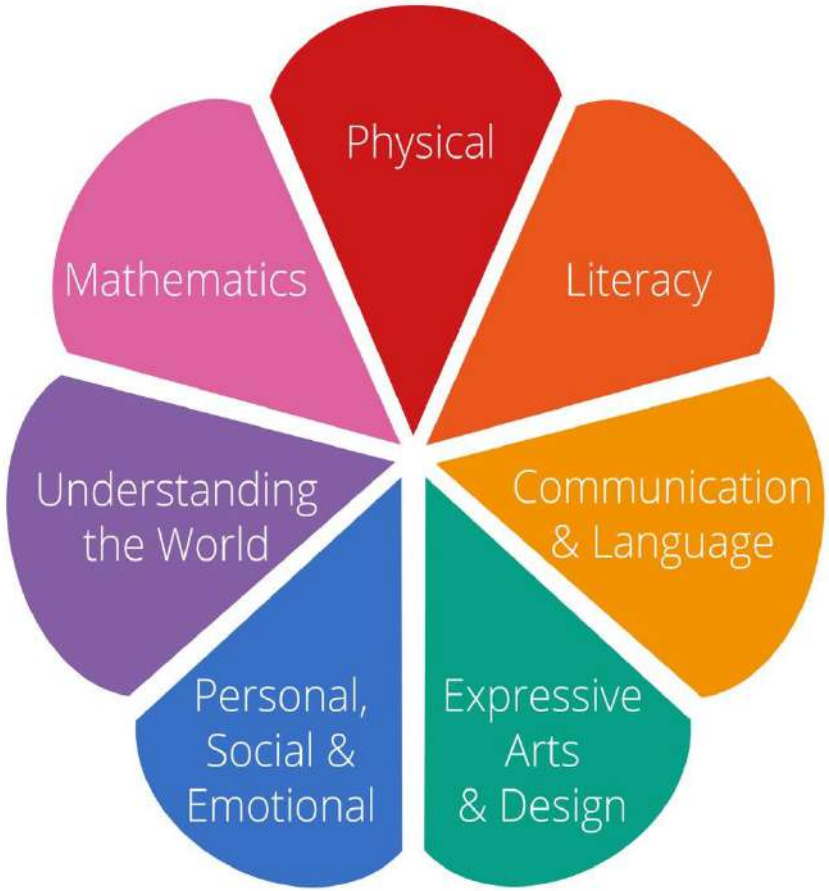
The early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework sets standards for children's learning, development and welfare from birth to five years old.

These standards, which must be met by school and childcare providers, were created to make sure that young children develop and learn safely.

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-statutory-framework-summary-of-requirements

EYFS Development Rainbows

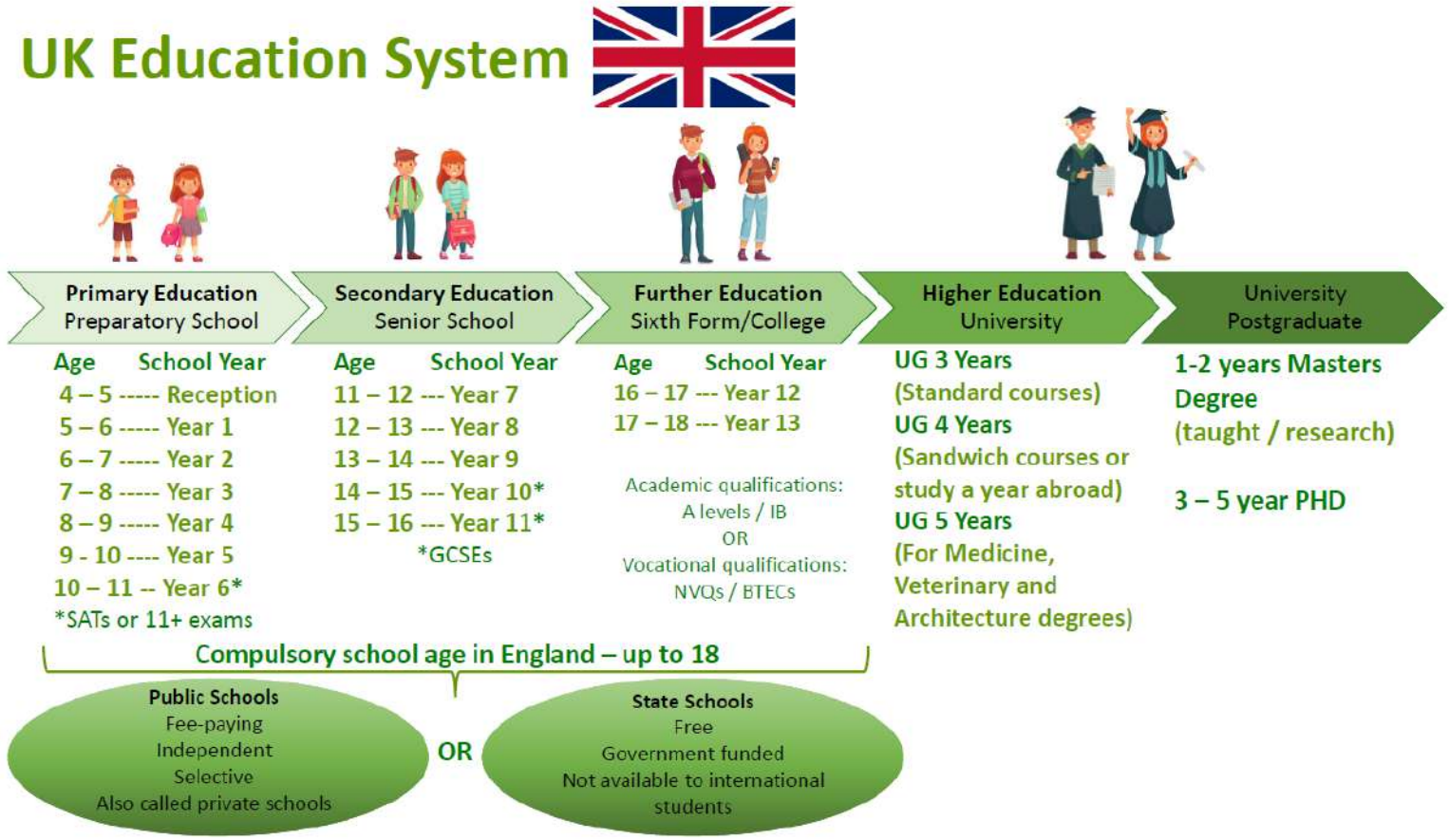




How does the school system work in the UK?

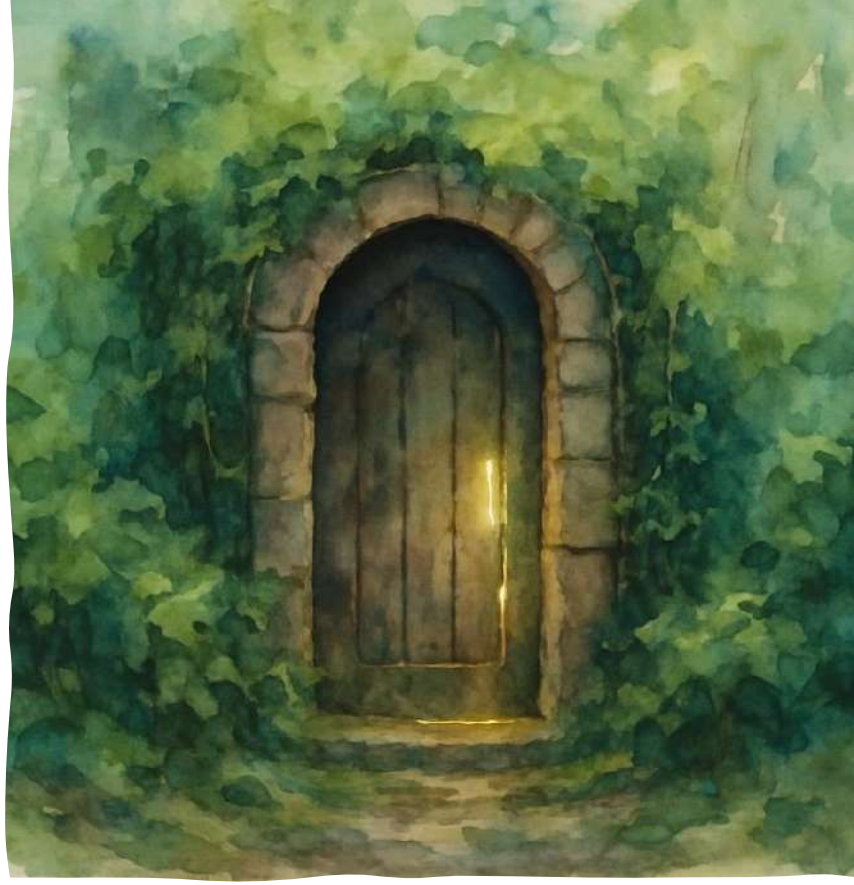
Across the UK there are five stages of education: early years, primary, secondary, Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE).

Education is compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16.



Time together

If you are not confident in your reading use visual storytelling too



Flying Start Support

Giving young children in Luton a Flying Start in life

https://www.flyingstartluton.com

OTHER KEY SERVICES:

Luton Children & Adults Community Health Services

https://bedslutonchildrenshealth.nhs.uk/services/bedfordshire-and-luton-0-to-19-health-visiting-and-school-nursing-service/

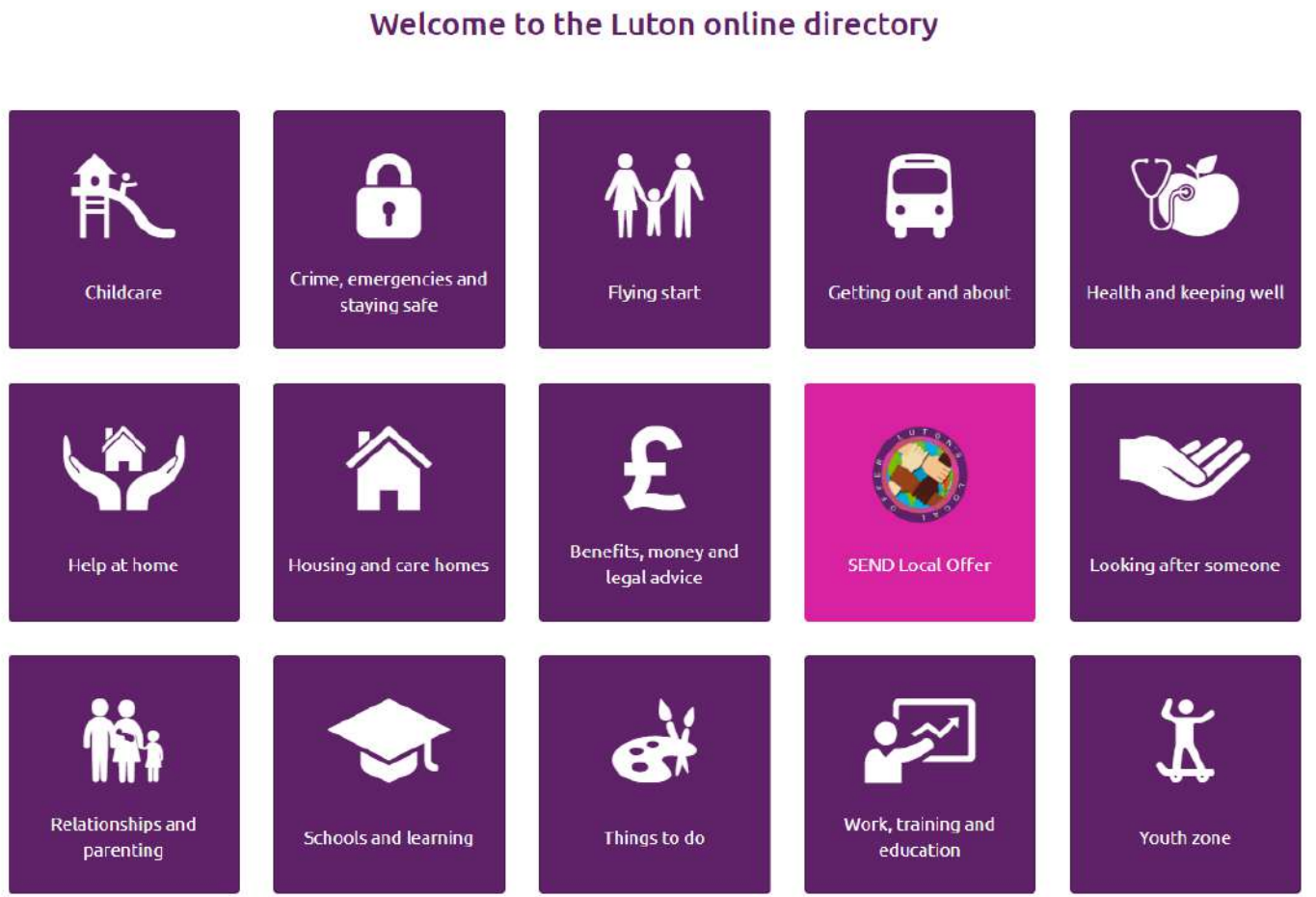
- If you have a health-related concern for your child, then please contact the Health Hub:

  0300 555 0606

- They can also be contacted through Parentline - a confidential advice and support text messaging service for Luton parents and carers of children aged 0-19 years **07507 331886**

Support: Luton Online Directory

https://directory.luton.gov.uk/kb5/luton/directory/home.page



Men's groups

Elliott Rae's: specialises in helping organisations support working fathers, improve men's mental health and engage men in conversations around gender equality

https://musicfootballfatherhood.com/

Luton Men's Group Our men's group offers a safe, comfortable and informal space, where you have the opportunity to talk about everyday topics and issues. Groups are facilitated by a recovery worker, with discussions and activities that promote positive mental health and well-being. The group runs weekly face to face from our Luton Wellbeing Centre. Referrals can be made by completing the referral form on our website.

https://www.mind-blmk.org.uk/how-we-can-help/luton/mens-group/

For more information, please contact:
hq@mind-blmk.org.uk / 0300 330 0648

Men's groups cont

Men's Advice Line -

https://directory.luton.gov.uk/kb5/luton/directory/service.page?id=rXQj2BPc-Eo

Man's Dem Chat -an online group for Black Men

https://www.youtube.com/@mansdemchat6105

Talk Club

https://talkclub.org/clubs/luton/

And remember…

A great dad doesn't just raise children—he shapes generations	Your consistency today becomes their confidence tomorrow.	A father's courage teaches children how to face the world.	The best dads build character before success.	Your presence matters more than perfection ever could
You don't need to be flawless to be unforgettable	The legacy of a father is built one ordinary day at a time.	What you model becomes what they believe is possible	Your example teaches louder than advice ever could.	Fatherhood is choosing patience when frustration is easy.
	A father's guidance becomes a child's inner voice.	A father's discipline creates safety, not fear.	A dad's strength lies in showing up again and again.	

- You’re allowed to grow while you lead
- Not every victory is visible. Keep going
- Your family needs you healthy, not just strong
- One step forward is still forward
- It’s okay to ask for support - you don’t have to carry everything alone
- You don’t have to have all the answers to be a great dad
- Your commitment matters more than your mistakes