

## B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK Newsletter April 2016



### Welcome to our first B.A.S.E.®Babywatching Newsletter since we became a charity

This is a hugely positive development, one we've been working towards for a long time, preparing statements and answering questions for the Charity Commission. We're delighted that we are now in a position to fundraise. We've received one grant, which has helped us to get the office much better organised, and, as you probably know by now, to be in a position for our wonderful new PA and Administrator **Kulsum Ismail** to join us for 16 hours each week.

### B.A.S.E.®BABYWATCHING UK

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**Kulsum** comes to us from a career break, ready to get back into part-time work. She has a keen interest in Babywatching and comes from a secretarial and administration background.

We are delighted to have Kulsum as part of the team, and she is already proving herself to be a huge asset. Having a physical office has made a big difference compared with the 'virtual office' which consisted of many e-mails and telephone calls which was so much harder for an Administrator to manage.

At the end of last year, we said goodbye and a huge thank you to **Helen Cruthers** who'd supported us as a part-time Administrator on very few hours, for more than 18 months. Helen's inimitable way of organising us with multi-coloured charts will long be remembered! Along with her kindness, sensitivity and great good humour.

### FUNDRAISING

Of course going forward, we'll need more funds, so, if anyone can point us in the direction of grants we can apply for (or help us apply for), people you know who might be interested to donate - or if you'd like to run a marathon, abseil down a building or any other act of derring- do on behalf of B.A.S.E. Babywatching - please let us know! It will all help take Babywatching into more schools and thus help more children experience less

anxiety and aggression, and benefit from more calm and more empathy, and so settle to learn.

**THE NEW WEBSITE** is now up and running, and much improved, thanks to Griselda's tireless work and attention to detail - thanks also to everyone who gave feedback en route. We hope you'll find it much easier to navigate. There's lots more content now, which we hope will be of interest to established Babywatchers as well as those who might like to find out more and get involved. *If you'd like to see other kinds of content there, please let us know, all feedback welcome.*

### 2016 London B.A.S.E.® BABYWATCHING TRAINING will be on FRIDAY JUNE 10<sup>th</sup>

The one-day experiential course is Part 1 of becoming a Babywatching Group Leader. The second part of the training is on-the-job, in running groups with children for up to a year, with the support of your Mentor. ***Please pass the date on to anyone you know who might be interested:*** from your school, another nearby, a colleague, someone who works with children or young people in another setting or role. We're delighted to say that this training will be facilitated by two of our UK trainers; four of us were trained by Dr Brisch in Munich last year. It's great that we've now got the chance to do more trainings each year around the UK. **One was organised in March in Ealing by Director for Schools Counselling Partnership and Group Leader, Toni Medcalf**, with two mothers

and babies generously sharing their relationships with us. One participant commented:

*“A very enriching day, highlighting how a simple, natural relationship between mother & child can make such a significant impact.”*

**A third Group Leader training will be held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June on the Isle of Man.**

**So if you'd like a Babywatching training in your area**, please contact Kulsum and we'll see what we can do. We aim to keep costs to a minimum; as you know, we want Babywatching to be a low cost, sustainable programme, and this will continue to be the case for training as well. **And please encourage people to book for June 10<sup>th</sup>.**

### **MENTORS' Day**

We'll be having a day exclusively for mentors on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June, to enable us all to share good practice and come up with a core list of guidelines that we hope will be helpful for future people taking on this key role. If you've not got going with a group yet, and need a list of the Mentors who can support you at every step of the way, please contact the Babywatching UK office.



### **RESEARCH**

**As people may know, we are delighted that Dr Michael Pluess, Senior Lecturer in Developmental Psychology at Queen Mary, University of London, approached Babywatching UK to propose research on the model in UK schools. Having got ethical clearance, he is supporting psychology student Shannon Snelling to run a pilot study with Babywatching groups in two schools, with incredible and dedicated support from Group Leaders Sharon Rubens and Michele Crooks, to whom we are extremely grateful.**

**Here are comments from Shannon, Michele and Sharon on the work so far.**

#### **Shannon writes:**

*Currently research is being conducted by a research team at Queen Mary, University of London, who are comparing children experiencing B.A.S.E Babywatching with other children of the same age not partaking in the programme yet. We are looking specifically at effects on pro-social behaviour, conduct problems, empathy and children's academic achievement. Upon completion of the project in July, our hypothesis would be that children who have experienced B.A.S.E Babywatching would be found to have increased in pro-social behaviour and empathy, and show fewer conduct problems. We also expect that these children will show increases in academic achievement, greater than expected had they not undergone the intervention.*

#### **Michele writes:**

*So far, the research has been a process of data gathering and this can occasionally feel like a box*

*to tick or a 'paper' weight. However, the information gained from the parents and teachers can sometimes help us to 'see' the children in different contexts, and perhaps gain a deeper understanding of them, particularly the ones that don't 'stand out' because they're so 'good'! It also encourages those comparative conversations between the teachers and yourselves about different children and how they present in Babywatching. We've also been collecting children's pictures and excerpts from their feelings 'post' sessions, as well as monitoring the children's SDQ's. Although some of this information is more qualitative, it is really delightful to read. Research will hopefully prove what we've already experienced as Group Leaders when observing children's reactions and empathic development, and will hopefully provide the 'evidence' that Babywatching is a highly effective whole class intervention that will 'sell' it to Head Teachers who have not had the privilege of watching it first-hand.*

#### **Sharon writes:**

*Practical and logistical demands aside, the research process has heightened our consciousness and thinking about the ways individuals and groups are responding to Babywatching in schools. It is prompting assessments of which children may benefit most and whether groups should be whole class or focused, targeted groups in the future. Hopefully the results will reflect our experiences of the positive impact of Babywatching on children's pro-social and emotional development.*



