

**B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK**  
**Newsletter March 2016**



**Welcome to our B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK Newsletter.** Greetings Babywatching community! Many developments since the last Newsletter, and we hope that you will find all kinds of interest here from the long awaited **research results** to news about **forthcoming trainings**, to **stories from different B.A.S.E.®Babywatching groups** being run all round the UK, to exciting news about **our new Patron**. We'd love to hear about your **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching practice**: so if you've noticed something you'd like to share, or had a great comment from a child, parent or teacher, let us know - we're all learning from each other.

**B.A.S.E.®BABYWATCHING UK**

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**RESEARCH**

As many people will remember we've been longing to have some actual results from properly conducted research on **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** practice in the UK. It's been a very long time coming! But we are truly delighted to at last have evidence of what we've all known for a long time from our observations and in our hearts - **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching works!!**

The research was conducted by **Shannon Snelling**, a psychology student at Queen Mary University of London, under the supervision of **Dr Michael Pluess**. Group leaders and Mentors **Sharon Rubens** and **Michele Crooks**, teachers and Headteachers in their schools all worked phenomenally hard to organise the research, run the groups, communicate with parents and support Shannon in collecting the data for her analysis. **Kulsum Ismail**, our wonderful administrator, has been enormously helpful too. We are hugely

grateful to them all.

And none of it would have been possible without the driving energy, passion (and diplomacy!) of co-founder **Griselda Kellie-Smith**, who has been alongside and behind the process every single step of the way: inspiring, nurturing, supporting, cheering on, and above all, holding onto the hope for everyone that they'd get there in the end. And they have.

So now, when you're asked - where's the evidence base - you can show them! Have a look at our website for the full research (under **NEWS**), and on **p.3** of this newsletter for a summary.

***Congratulations and thanks to everyone involved for time and effort enormously well spent.***

And a lovely footnote - Dr Pluess' mother in Switzerland knew of his interest in **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** in Germany and noticed it was now in the UK. Dr Pluess then contacted us to offer the possibility of research. So thank you as well, Frau Pluess!

## FUNDRAISING

As you may remember from our last Newsletter, **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK** is now a charity. We've recently put in a bid into a grant giving charity which seeks to promote the life-chances of children and young people through education, so we'll let you know what happens there. What would be helpful is if you could let us know if you come across grant-giving charities, foundations or trusts which have aims compatible with **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK**.

If you've experience of writing grant applications, and would be willing to give us a hand, either from writing an application or from checking through what we've done with your experienced eye, we'd be delighted to hear from you as well. It will all help take **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** into more schools and thus help more children experience less anxiety and aggression, and benefit from more calm and more empathy, and so be able to settle to learn.

## OUR NEW PATRON!

Hugely exciting news that the incomparable and extremely generous **JOOLS HOLLAND** is now **Patron** of **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK!**

We couldn't be happier to have him on board, as someone who cares passionately about children's well-being and opportunities.

**Welcome Jools:** we are very grateful and look forward to working with you over the years to promote **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** together.



## WEBSITE

There's lots more content on the site now (including the research paper), thanks to Griselda and Kulsum, so do check it out and please pass on the word to others who are interested.

*If you'd like to see other kinds of content there, please let us know, all feedback welcome.*

## DIARY DATES:

**B.A.S.E.®BABYWATCHING TRAINING will be on FRIDAY JUNE 16<sup>th</sup> 2017 (London)**

The one-day experiential course is Part 1\* of becoming a Babywatching Group Leader.

***Please pass the date on to anyone you know who might be interested:*** from your school, another school nearby, another teacher or teaching assistant, or someone who works with children or young people in another setting or role. They don't have to start a group straightaway - they can come to train as a way of finding out if this way of working is for them, or something they'd like to do in future. It might be your Headteacher, who really wants to know what you're doing for him or herself in all those wonderful weekly sessions! Or a parent who has experience of working with children, who would like to get more involved in some way. Or one of your colleagues, who you'd loved to co-lead with.

(\*The second part of the training is of course on-the-job, in running groups with children for up to a year, with the support of your Mentor - **B.A.S.E.® Babywatching** is very hands-on!)

## There will also be a MENTORS' Training on SATURDAY JUNE 17<sup>th</sup>

If you've run a **B.A.S.E.® Babywatching** group for a year, and you and your Mentor feel you are ready, please do contact the Office to find out more about training as a Mentor.

**And if you'd like a B.A.S.E.® 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.

## RESEARCH SUMMARY



**HERE IS A SHORT SUMMARY of the research undertaken by academics from the Department of Biological and Experimental Psychology, Queen Mary, University of London, evaluating the efficacy of B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** over a period of ten months from Sept 2015 to June 2016, in primary/junior school. The sample group of 161 children (53.8%

boys, 46.2% girls) was split into a control group and an intervention group. Empathy, prosocial competences, conduct problems, emotional problems, hyperactivity, and problems in peer relationships were assessed by teachers at three time points - before, during (five months in) and at the end of the programme.

At the first assessment, before children experienced **B.A.S.E.® Babywatching**, the children in the intervention group were significantly more at risk than children belonging to the control group. They were rated higher by their teachers for conduct problems and emotional problems and as being less prosocial and having less empathy.

### **What were the results?**

According to ratings provided by teachers it was found that the children allocated to the intervention group had significantly more problems *before* the intervention compared to children in the control group; however, *after* the intervention, there were no longer any significant differences between the groups. The results of the study suggest that the of **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** programme i) allowed children belonging to the intervention group to reach levels of social

competences comparable to that of their peers in the control condition  
ii) reduced emotional problems in the intervention group to levels comparable to children belonging to the control group.

### **What can we conclude from this?**

Results of this study suggest that the **B.A.S.E.® Babywatching** programme could potentially be an effective programme in promoting positive change in prosocial competence, conduct and emotional problems in children. Further research will always be helpful.

**The full QMUL research paper is available on our B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK website – [base-babywatching-uk.org](http://base-babywatching-uk.org) under NEWS**



## ARTICLE

Also on our website you can find an article we had published in **Nursery World** with some great case studies. [base-babywatching-](http://base-babywatching-uk.org)

[uk.org/download/653eb270-afd3-11e6-8367-cf1cea4e2cd2/](http://uk.org/download/653eb270-afd3-11e6-8367-cf1cea4e2cd2/) **Please spread the word!**



*From Nursery World*

## **TELLING THE STORY**

**From Child Psychotherapist, Schools Counselling Partnership, B.A.S.E. Group Leader and Mentor TONI MEDCALF:**

*At Perivale School in Ealing we recently had a mother volunteer to be a Babywatching mum due to the changes she had seen in her son following his participation in a group last year. He had previously been quite rough and aggressive with his siblings and she had concerns about how he would be when the new baby arrived.*

*However, since the day she was born he (her son) has been nurturing, wanting to really take care of her and he has also been kinder to*

*his other siblings. Mum is delighted and now wants other children to have the experience that her son had.*

**From BASE Group Leader and Mentor PAUL CUTLER (UKCP registered Child Psychotherapist):**

*We are excited that our next group at Grafton (top primary school in London in the latest Key Stage 2 league tables published at the end of 2016) will involve one of the Mums from our first Babywatching group. She spontaneously volunteered to be observed after half-term when her third child is expected.*

*Mum told me that her eldest son (then in Year 1 and who also shared the same birthday as the baby girl he watched) "loved" the Babywatching group and talked so much at home about it. "It was so significant", she added. The children now in Year 2 continue to ask about the baby and her welfare. I observe delightful interactions in the playground between the children who watched and their new class teacher commented on what a considerate class they are.*

*Our next group will be with a Reception class and we are looking forward to seeing*

*how it will help meet EYFS targets for emotional development. I have worked as a therapist in the school for 12 years and so enjoy the experience of leading the groups.*

*I have also agreed in principle to run a targeted group with older boys in a special educational school in Enfield.*

**From Child and Adult Psychotherapist, BASE Group Leader and Mentor, SHARON RUBENS:**

**THE THERAPEUTIC POWER OF LAUGHTER....**

**Teacher's vignette from her Babywatching session with her reception class:**

*During our session yesterday we were all crying with laughter. Class RB (Reception class) and Baby J have learnt that they can catch each other's attention and make each other laugh. J is now pulling herself up to standing when holding Mums hands and wiggling her bottom. The children and her just thought it was hilarious and the more they laughed the more she did it. The laughter was infectious! Sometimes we all just need to let go and have a good giggle.*

*It was just such a wonderful start to the morning and my class in particular are so much better throughout the day when we*

have Babywatching to start the day!

We talked about some new feeling words which haven't come up before - proud, nervous and shy.

**B.A.S.E. ®Babywatching mother's response:**

*I loved the giggles today. Laughter is good for the soul. All those feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters released during laughter are great medicine for us all.*

*Babywatching makes me and J happy! It is a lovely way for us to start the day too!*

**From Group Leader MANDY WILLIAMS:**  
**Evaluation from Jade Kearney, Class Teacher, Hertford Infants Year 1**

*Mandy Williams led the Babywatching programme from Sept 16 - Feb 17. The class teacher observed the programme over a total of 15 sessions.*

***What did you gain from observing the programme?***

*It gave me time to observe the children in my class, to see them in a different way. I was able to learn about their home experiences through what they shared, for example when they talked about their siblings.*

*It was great to see them connecting the baby's experiences to their own lives. Child A, for example, was always talking about what she would share with the baby.*

***Are there any moments that stick out in your memory?***

*The children writing cards to the baby when she was ill. They had real motivation to write to her and there was such concern for her well-being, it was really heart-warming and the most writing I had seen for some pupils!*

***Would you like to comment on the experience of any children specifically?***

*I think it has been really rewarding to observe Child B during Babywatching. In Reception she was an elective mute/chose when to speak and I have seen her share and talk about the baby confidently with different adults. Child C started later on in the Autumn term and was new to English. She has really enjoyed Babywatching and has shared a lot of thoughts, I think this really gave her confidence with her language skills when she was new and has certainly helped them develop.*

***Did Babywatching get explored/discussed/practised at any other time***

***outside of Babywatching time as far as you are aware?***

*When we were looking at growing up Babywatching was talked about a lot. It was also a useful tool for our baby clinic role play area and acted as inspiration for the children's role play.*

***What would you say to another member of staff if they were to ask you about B.A.S.E. ®Babywatching?***

*I would say that it's great for the children to consider someone other than themselves and to talk about it freely, considering another person's needs and emotions.*

*I would say that Babywatching allows the children to do this in a safe environment.*

***What is your understanding of the impact that Babywatching may have had in this class?***

*I think that Babywatching alongside other interventions has supported the development of emotional literacy and well-being of a number of pupils. I also think it has shown some children who have not got babies in their lives what a baby's world is like and how much we grow and change from 0-5. The children are so interested in (the baby) doing new things and gaining more teeth.*

***Is there anything that could be changed to improve the programme?***

*The children sitting on the floor rather than chairs may help them keep their feet still. Also, a specific focus for each session for the children to think about, although I know that this was done partly through questioning.*

An additional question Mandy has added for the next group -

***What do you think the children noticed or were most interested in about the baby and mother's relationship?***

If you'd like to contribute a story, reflection, overview, or comment from anyone involved in your **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** group experience in your school, please let us know. It's always great to read what people are up to. Thanks to all our contributors for a really vivid insight into how the work is having such interesting and fruitful effects, from confidence in speaking to writing skills to the development of empathy at home and at school.

We hope you feel as heartened reading these as we do!

**UK GROUPS**

As of February 2017, we have 28 active **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** groups round the country, with several more in the pipeline, in the following places:



So that's six committed areas, with several groups on the go in most (Wales and North Yorkshire are pioneering, so just one group each this year), people sharing ideas, communicating with each other and building **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** communities together.

What we'd like to do this year is to really increase that number, both of schools and contexts within the committed areas, and also the number of committed areas.

Maybe where you are is the next one to really get going! Whatever support you need, whether it's in finding a Mentor, how to talk to your Headteacher, how to find a parent or how to assess what impact the **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** group is having for the children participating, please feel free to contact us, and we'll do our best to help.

**The 16<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL ATTACHMENT CONFERENCE**

**hosted by B.A.S.E.®Babywatching founder Dr Karl-Heinz Brisch will take place in Ulm, Germany, 29/09 - 01/10 2017**



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**FINALLY - thank you everyone for your commitment and enthusiasm. We look forward to sharing B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK's continuing development with you.**

*Warm wishes*

Andrea Perry, Editor and Co-Founder,

**B.A.S.E.® Babywatching UK**

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