

B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK
NEWSLETTER January 2018



Welcome to our first 2018
B.A.S.E.®Babywatching UK
Newsletter

Happy New Year to everyone

From **MICHELE CROOKS**, our CEO, who has been working really hard to support and develop **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** across the UK

Thank you for all your wonderful Babywatching energy from 2017. We begin 2018 with lots of exciting news. Quite a few Group Leaders will be starting groups in January, some for the first time – we wish them well and look forward to hearing how things go.

Other Group Leaders are now in their second term of group leading for this academic year. The children from these

groups will no doubt be delighted to see ‘their’ class baby again after the Christmas break, observing changes and seeing how mum/dad are continuing to subtly adapt their parenting skills to match their baby’s needs.

Paul Cutler’s ‘School Readiness’ group starts this term, and we have more news about that further in the Newsletter. There are also notes from Kulsum, from the **Babywatching UK** office, and from Griselda and Andrea.

As CEO, I continue to feel so privileged to hear all the amazing anecdotal stories of transformational change that people are witnessing in **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** groups. Teachers tell me of the positive changes they see in the children: the way they share, communicate better with both adults and their peers, and are much kinder to each other. I also have wonderful stories from my Babywatching volunteer parents! There are three mums in Leicestershire who have all volunteered for the second time around (congratulations to them) and have said if

they plan to have any more children, they’ll come back for a third time! That truly is dedication – but joking aside, it really is a measure of how much they value their experience in the group. And hopefully encouraging for anyone trying to find parents for their own **B.A.S.E.®Babywatching** group.

Looking ahead, new training dates have been circulated for 2018 (*please contact the office for more info*), and we would be delighted to discuss local trainings for school clusters/groups/trusts. If this would be of interest, please ask.

I’m confident that 2018 will continue to unfold Babywatching’s powerful story, of which we are all a part. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and energy, and let us know how we can help you develop your part in rewarding ways this year. *Michele*

B.A.S.E.®BABYWATCHING UK
50 Peterborough Road London SW6 3EB
0207 731 5946
www.base-babywatching-uk.org
info@base-babywatching-uk.org

From **KULSUM ISMAIL**, our Babywatching UK Administrator, the kind and calm star of our office

The London office is here to help and provide an information point. We love to hear your news and stories, so please keep in touch and share your thoughts, views and any new ideas you may have. One of the important things that we always badger you all about (sorry!) is knowing when you start and end your groups. This information is so valuable and helpful to us in tracking and monitoring where our **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** groups are happening, and to get a sense of how many groups we have running. We would really appreciate it if you let us know as soon as your groups start, and we have made the process easier – we hope! – by creating a form which you can complete and send me by email. If you don't already have one, please do email me kulsum@base-babywatching-uk.org

Also ... did you know that we can help with SDQ's? If you're struggling with making or recording results for the SDQs, please let me know at the London office by email.

Also ... did you know that we have other resources we can share with you? Perhaps you would like to introduce **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** to a school in your area, we can email you a presentation to help you explain the model to your headteacher or teachers. Or perhaps you are a newly trained or established) Group Leader and need to send a letter to your class parents informing them about your **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** sessions: we've got a template you can use.

Or perhaps you may be looking for a Mentor in your area but are unsure of who is nearby. Have a look on our website, or email the office and we can put you in touch with someone suitable.

Finally, we keep all the material from the training sessions and update it, so if

you've trained with us in past years and need any documents from your pack in electronic version or have misplaced them, we can send you replacements. Please keep in touch and we'll do our best to help.

Kulsum



From **PAUL CUTLER**, Grafton and Oaktree **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** Group Leader and Mentor, and UKCP registered Child Psychotherapist, doing a fantastic job running an innovative group and reporting back on what's happening.

We are into our third year of **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** at Grafton and excited to see the programme embedding into KS1 and Early Years including our new venture to investigate how it may support the development and school readiness of under 5's in our Nursery. Things are due

to get underway in January 2018 after a planning meeting (in 2017) with our specialist SENco for Early Years and KS1, the Nursery Class Teacher, myself as Group Leader and roving Mentor Griselda, at which we were able to establish how we will measure a baseline and ensuing changes.

It was wonderful for last year's group to continue after the summer holidays, as the children transitioned into Year 1 from Reception, and to work with such a committed Mum and Dad (who were parents at our school). Reflecting on the experience, last year's Reception Class Teacher wrote the following words.

*"As discussed, I just wanted to make a few points about the benefits we saw during the **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** project in Yellow Class last year:*

- We had a number of children with social and emotional needs in that class, and the programme seemed to resonate with a few of those children in particular.

- One looked-after child in the class seemed to engage emotionally in the sessions and made a number of comments relating to her own experience as she watched the mother and baby interact. Some of the comments she made during the sessions reflected her own very different experience of being cared for in her early years - and the sessions seemed to stimulate a deeper emotional attachment to these experiences than I saw at other times when she talked about her home life. I think the sessions had a positive impact on her ability to express some of her feelings and memories. Another child with a challenging home life responded in a similar way, talking about some of the negative aspects of his experience during the sessions (when he did not do so at other times).

- Over the course of the programme, the comments and observations from the children as a whole gradually became more insightful and linked to the feelings and wellbeing of the baby and the mother, and were less focused on actions. I believe

there was a positive impact on the children Personal, Social and Emotional development - and the sessions themselves gradually became more settled and engaging as this developed. The children definitely developed an attachment to the baby who visited the class and often talked or asked about him.

I would be happy to support any further sessions in Early Years."

At Oaktree, we have an offer from a new Mum and Baby as the group was so successful last year. More of that next time! *Paul*

.....
From GRISELDA KELLIE-SMITH, co-founder of Babywatching UK and roving B.A.S.E. @Babywatching Mentor, as Paul describes her. As with so much, Griselda does roving extremely well!

It has been an interesting, helpful shift of gear to have Michele as our new CEO two days per week, working with Kulsum who

is with us for three days. Michele brings excellent networking enthusiasm and breadth of thinking with her background in education and psychotherapy. But despite her creative, boundless energy she needs the support of all of us to help **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** grow this year. As well as the important and excellent work being done in schools by you all, we are thinking laterally about how to widen the reach of B.A.S.E. Where might it be wanted? Social Services, both groups of children and training for Social Workers? Women's refuges? Children's Homes? Youth Offending teams? If you have any ideas, please let Kulsum know in the office.

Personally, it has been an enormous help to me to have Michele with us. As you probably know she has been a wonderfully effective Group Leader in Leicestershire schools since the start of **B.A.S.E. @Babywatching** in the UK. Adding Mentoring and then Training to her skills package means she brings a wealth of experience and knowledge as

well as her teaching and psychotherapeutic thinking. Michele, Kulsum and I have monthly meetings in London which works well.

I am enjoying staying in touch with groups through being the roving Mentor (to fill in where other Mentors are not available). Last term I enjoyed visiting Brighton and West London schools and next term am excited about mentoring the School Readiness project that Paul Cutler has worked hard to get up and running with a willing teacher and SENCO at his north London school, supported by the Headteacher. Many people's needs and enthusiasms to co-ordinate!

Babywatching is employing a Speech and Language therapist to do a small piece of research to support and add to the usefulness of this pilot project with children in the Nursery, getting ready for their first term in school.

Like Michele, Paul is also a very skilled and experienced Group Leader and Mentor. However, the Advisory Board has agreed that all of us who lead groups

benefit from having a Mentor visit once a year, just to check-in, stay in touch, share skills and ideas. We feel one hour, annually, of sharing ideas, creativity and energies is money well-spent.

As this is a small change from the original directive given at trainings to date, we would ask you all to let us know what you think of the idea of staying in touch through an ongoing mentoring visit. I am looking forward to re-connecting with a couple of Group Leaders, now Mentors, to catch up and to share ideas. *Griselda*

NEWS FROM POLAND

Last year we trained some Group Leaders and Mentors from Poland. They have stayed in touch with us and are doing some very innovative work with mothers and children in a Specialised Support Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence. Here is a snippet from an interesting article they wrote which they shared with us in December. The full article - 'The Power of Empathy' is available on our website.

One part of our programme was

B.A.S.E.® Babywatching (Babywatching against Aggression and Anxiety for Sensitivity and Empathy). Children sat in a circle watching a mother taking care of her child, and how the interaction between them develops and what happens. The Group Leaders encouraged the children to talk about what they were seeing. The second part (of the programme) was an empathy workshop for mothers. The final part was a workshop with the mothers regarding the psychological development of a child. Our collaboration with the B.A.S.E.® Babywatching group addressed the mothers' and the children's needs. We hope that this experience will help participating families to better cope with their experiences of domestic violence and help them to recover their inner balance. We also believe this comprehensive knowledge will help mothers to develop better contact with their children, and be more empathic in everyday situations, so that the children have an experience of empathic relationship.

.....

From ANDREA PERRY co-founder of Babywatching UK, trainer and Newsletter editor

Thanks to everyone for your contribution to B.A.S.E.® Babywatching in 2017. It was great to meet the new trainees back in the summer (hard to remember how warm it was!) and to once again share that sense of what B.A.S.E.® Babywatching has to offer. Griselda and I also met with Dr Brisch last summer when he was in the UK at the International Attachment Conference at UCL. Amongst others, he introduced us Dr Margareth Lafontant, from City University New York (CUNY) an incredibly determined and resourceful Associate Professor Developmental and Special Education in Brooklyn, keen to establish Babywatching in New York with the support of her colleague Dr Janis Bloomfield-Alves whom we also met. Griselda's roving has even taken her there to help! - a very kind use of some of her precious holiday. We look forward to hearing how Margareth gets on this year.

In this Newsletter Michele has referred

to the great stories she hears from teachers and parents; Kulsum has referred to the SDQ's some people use to try to measure effects for children for being in the groups: Paul has given us a wonderful account of a teacher's speaking about the children's experience. Despite all the information we try to gather in these different ways, it can sometimes feel hard to know what difference we are making. But my feeling is that we must not forget that already, since 2012 when B.A.S.E.® Babywatching began in the UK, many, many little (and some not so little) lives have been touched and benefited from everything everyone has done to set up and support the groups. Amazing, really. It would be so lovely to have a UK map with a tiny light in each home where a child, parent or baby, or teacher has participated in a B.A.S.E.® Babywatching group, and have a sense of what that's meant for them.

Maybe we won't know for a generation! Maybe when some of those children grow up and perhaps of have

their own children, maybe something will come back to them, something they've not thought of for years: *'Looking at him in your arms, I've just remembered that when I was a child we used to sit around and look at a baby as tiny as he is. Wow! I'd forgotten all about that til now ... this woman used to ask us to notice what the baby was doing and to wonder how the baby felt ..wow, it was great, I loved those groups, and now I've got one of my own! I wonder why he's reaching out to me like that – oh look, he's smiling!'* – and they'll pass on the memories and the questions and the wondering to their partners and families; and so it will go.

And we won't be there, and we'll never know: but I'm quite sure it will happen, here and there, now and again. Even tiny tweakings in the direction of attunement and empathy, of once a week for 20 minutes for 10 weeks, can be passed on intergenerationally, I truly believe.

So I wish everyone a wonderful 2018. Good luck, whatever your involvement with [B.A.S.E.®Babywatching](#). I hope you find it rewarding to recognise the genuine difference you can make. *Andrea*

.....

Social Media and Networking

B.A.S.E. ® Babywatching UK has joined twitter! Please join us for updates and information [@BASEBabywatch](#) or link from our website.

We look forward to seeing you there!