

Parent Newsletter

ISSUE 2

NOV 09

Families in Hartlepool are missing out on tax credits and help towards their childcare costs

Are you entitled to claim tax credits?



- Tax credits are payments from the Government.
- If you care for at least one child or young person who normally lives with you, you may be entitled to child tax credit.
- You may also be entitled to working tax credit if you work but earn a low wage.
- The childcare element of the working tax credit can pay for up to 80% of registered/approved childcare costs.
- The amount of tax credits you get depends on a number of things including:
 - How many hours you work
 - How many children live with you
 - If you pay for childcare
 - If you or a child has a disability
 - If you are 50+ and coming off benefits.



**Contact the Tax Credit Helpline on 0845 300 3900.
Alternatively visit their website to see if you qualify:**

www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/do-you-qualify.htm

Alternatively, contact FISH. We're here to help!

GOOD NEWS ON COUNCIL TAX AND HOUSING BENEFIT

Did you know that Child Maintenance is now disregarded in full when you claim Council Tax /Housing Benefit?

Also from 2nd November 2009 Child Benefit is also being disregarded.

This means that anyone who receives Child Maintenance and/or Child Benefit is now more likely to qualify for help with their Council Tax and rent.

To find out if you could benefit from these new rules contact the Benefits Section, Hartlepool Borough Council, Level 2, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY.
Tel: 01429 284188. Email: benefits@hartlepool.gov.uk

KNOCK YOUR FINANCES INTO SHAPE

As part of Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership we, at Hartlepool Council, can help you open a bank account or savings account to make it easier to keep track of your spending and control your money. Please call Margaret on (01429) 284183.

Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) is not a benefit but a scheme which helps protect your State Pension. You should get Home Responsibilities Protection automatically if you're getting Child Benefit in your name for a child and you have given the Child Benefit Office your National Insurance number.

Changes from April 2010 for parents and carers

Home Responsibilities Protection is being replaced for people reaching State Pension age on or after 6 April 2010.

From 6 April 2010, parents and carers will be able to build up qualifying years through new weekly credits for the basic State Pension and additional State Pension. If you are a parent or carer, you will get a credit for each week in which you are getting Child Benefit for children aged under 12 (previously under 16). Some of the detail around these changes is subject to further parliamentary approval.

There will be no limit to the credits awarded to parents and carers after April 2010, as long as you meet the qualifying rules.

If you reach State Pension age on or after 6 April 2010, complete tax years of Home Responsibilities Protection you have already built up before 2010 will be converted into qualifying years up to a maximum of 22 years. These qualifying years will also count towards bereavement benefits.

NEED EXTRA HELP FINDING THE RIGHT CHILDCARE? YOU NEED BROKERAGE!

We know that lots of people find their childcare through recommendation or by using the internet.

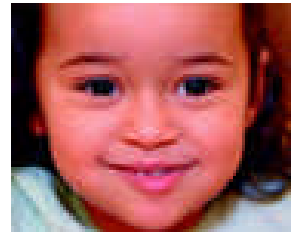
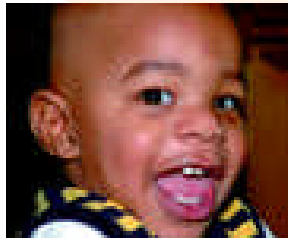
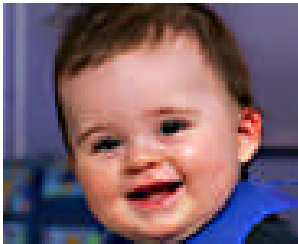
But what do you do when you are new to an area, new to using childcare or new to being a parent?

You can ring FISH and through an informal, confidential conversation we will find out what you need from your childcare. You may need an early start or finish late sometimes, you may need help finding childcare that's on your route to work or college, you may not be sure what is the difference between a childminder and a day nursery or you or your child may have complex needs.

We will deal with every family individually and work with providers to find the childcare that is best for you and your child. We can also make appointments for you to visit providers and support you on these visits.

Along the way we can advise on ways to help with the cost of childcare and refer you to other services that may be able to help you and your family.

What's more Brokerage is free and you can be assured that any childcare discussed will be Ofsted registered. Contact FISH - 01429 284284



Limited number of free two year old childcare places

Are you (or your partner) out of work at the moment? Do you want to get back into work or into training that could ultimately lead to work? SureStart has a LIMITED number of funded childcare places for children aged **two years** that live in key areas of the town. You must be prepared to work closely with your local SureStart Children's Centre in order to improve your employment and training opportunities. For more information contact the Families Information Service Hartlepool (FISH) for an application form and more detailed information on eligibility criteria. FISH – 01429 284284.

MY FIRST MONTHS



Stick my photo here

I can....

- I am taking much more interest in the world around me. I especially look for faces I know.
- I can hold things now—my clothes or your hair.

We can....

- Playing games with me helps me to learn. I feel close to you when we play together.
- I love playing games with you. I'm also starting to like games like 'peek-a-boo'.

0 - 3
month

I can....

- I recognise your voice. I learnt it before I was born.
- I prefer to listen to your voice than any other.
- I can copy you. If you stick your tongue out at me or pull funny faces to get my interest.

We can.....

- Playing games with me helps develop the connections in my brain.
- Singing to me helps me calm down.

3 - 6
month

I can....

- I have started to play with the sounds that I can make with my mouth.
- I'm learning who is who, so I might be a bit worried about people I don't know.

6 - 9
month

We can...

- I love hearing you talk to me. We can play together. You can copy some of the sounds that I make, then later I will want to copy the sounds you make.



MY FIRST BIRTHDAY

I can....

- I'll stop and look if you call my name.
- I start to wave and point. I can use speech sounds to talk to you. Over the next few months, I will say my first words, like 'mum-mum' and 'hi-ya'

9 - 12 month

We can....

- Talk to me in short sentences. Talk about what I see around me or noises that I hear. When you say the same things lots of times, I will get to



I can....

- I can understand one word at a time, if I have heard them lots. Favourites 'milk', 'cup' and 'teddy'
- I can point to something and ask for it by making speech sounds, although it might be hard to work out what I am saying.

12 - 18 month

We can....

- I love it when you play music or sing to me—I can join in action rhymes with you. Try 'wind a bobbin up' or 'row row row your boat'



About me...

My name is.....

Date I was born.....

I weighed

I was when I first sat up.

My favourite thing at the moment is

.....

Please go to www.ican.org.uk/resources to download chatter matters baby poster to order your own copy of the Chatter Matters DVD.



Family Back Packs

Do you want a family visit with a difference? Why not borrow a Museum Explorer Family Backpack.

The packs contain a variety of activities for families to use together, and are especially suitable for keeping younger family members interested on a visit to a museum or art gallery. They are free to use and can be found across the North East.

In Hartlepool we have them at the Art Gallery, Maritime Experience and the Museum of Hartlepool. All the museums taking part can be found at <https://fsd.hartlepool.org.uk>, search for "backpack".



Joke:
What do you call a
snowman in the
summer?

Answer:
A puddle!



Exploring your environment (EYE)

EYE is a 3 year project which aims to get everyone involved in learning more about the natural environment, and helping to protect it for the future. By recording your wildlife sightings, you can help build up a detailed picture of the region's species and habitats – a valuable resource which can be used to help conserve the rich variety of life in the region.

Play your part by logging on to the website www.eyeproject.org.uk, and record the animals and plants you have spotted. You might make a sighting sitting in your back yard or even when out shopping, so keep your eyes open.



Make your own Winter Cookies

Ingredients: 1/2 cup unsalted butter, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 large egg yolk, 1 teaspoon vanilla extract, 1 1/2 cups of flour, 1/8 teaspoon salt.

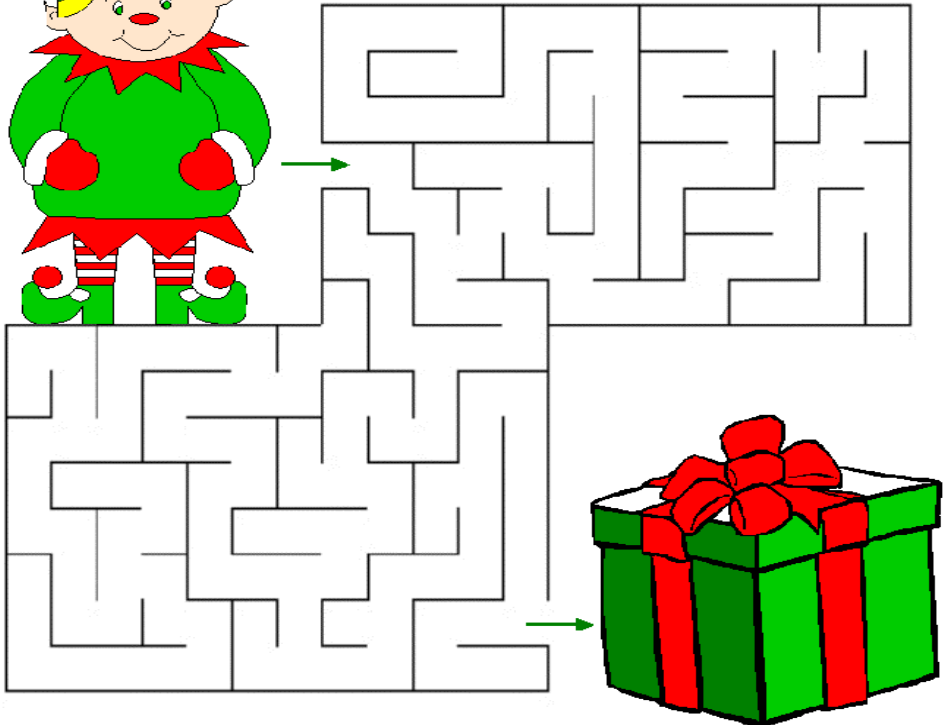
Cooking Instructions: Heat oven to 180 C/Gas Mark 4. In a large bowl beat the butter until smooth. Add the sugar. Beat the mixture until combined. Beat in the egg yolk until combined. Add vanilla. Beat until combined. Add flour and salt. Beat mixture until combined, scraping side of bowl occasionally.

Between two sheets of waxed paper or plastic wrap with a rolling pin roll the dough to 0.5 cm thickness. Cut out shapes. Reroll and use scraps until all dough used.

Bake in the oven for 15—20 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven, cool then decorate as desired.



Can you show Elfie the way to his present?



COME AND VISIT US

Monday - Friday
9.30am - 5.00pm (4.00pm on Friday)

Hartlepool Central Library
124 York Road
Hartlepool
TS26 9DA

Contact us by
Telephone - 01429 284284
Fax - 01429 279192
Email - FIS@hartlepool.gov.uk

Or visit our websites
<http://hartlepool.fsd.org.uk>
<http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk>

If you would like to stop receiving the newsletter or get your own copy by post or e-mail or have any ideas please complete the attached form and return to FIS or email FIS@hartlepool.gov.uk

Name

Address

.....

Ideas

Tick box if you wish to cancel subscription



**Sure Start
Children's Centres**

