

Press Release

19 September 2006

The Message of Massage



What may be an indulgence for many of us is proving to be a useful weapon in the battle against the school bully. School children as young as three years old from Alexandra First School in Ashington are benefiting from a pioneering programme which uses simple massage to help them to learn respect and build self esteem.

Through daily sessions, which only last ten minutes, they have been taught to give their permission for their classmate to massage their back, head, and arms. They remain fully clothed, and the massage sequence is made into child friendly games and stories such as making a weather map or making a party pizza.



Head Teacher, Paul Craig said "Since starting the programme last Easter, there has been a remarkable reduction in the number of children with behavioural problems, and we now have hardly any reports of bullying from parents. It has clearly broken down the barriers between children who dislike each other, and between the different genders. So much so, that we often see children in the playground giving each other a massage.



The sessions easily fit in with our timetable, as they are whilst we take the register with gentle music playing in the background. Teachers report that the children calm down after playtime, and are better able to concentrate on their lessons afterwards."

Lynn Munro, the only trained Massage in Schools Instructor in Northumberland, is working with teachers and schoolchildren throughout the country. She has had a lifetime of nursing experience, and believes strongly in the Massage in Schools Programme.

"The results have been amazing." she said, "Because the children have to give their permission to be touched, they feel empowered. As a result aggressive behaviour is dramatically reduced, so much so that an OFSTED inspector Roger Brown recently stated that he

would like to see the programme as part of the curriculum in all primary schools.

Touch is the first sense that we develop, and we all underestimate its importance for communication and learning. The classroom massage also improves concentration, co-ordination and memory, and so helps teachers as well as their pupils.”

The Massage in Schools Programme has the vision that every child attending school will experience positive, nurturing touch everyday... everywhere in the world. It is being used very successfully in schools as part of Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship Education (PHSCE) and contributes to the “Healthy Schools Awards”, (Emotional Health and Wellbeing). Youngsters trained by Lynn and her team demonstrated the massage at the recent awards ceremony at Alnwick Gardens in Northumberland.

The results have been backed up by scientific studies. They have shown that Cortisol levels (the hormone which is produced when under stress) is lower in children who receive massage. It eases depression, improves sleeping habits, and increases the production of the hormone Oxytocin (the calming and healing hormone).

Further information:

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