HOME START Reading

Helping Reading parents give their children the best possible start in life

Because childhood can't wait



Early support. Stronger families. Better futures.

We're here for families when life feels overwhelming, offering early intervention support for parents with at least one child under five who are struggling to cope.

Our aim is to help parents give their children the best possible start in life. We do this primarily through weekly home visits from trained volunteers, carefully matched with each family. We also provide specialist group sessions that build confidence, reduce isolation and help parents create a safe, stable home for their children.

Our approach is practical and non-judgemental. Through trusted relationships and support tailored to each family's needs, we help parents build their confidence, skills and resilience so their children can thrive and look forward to a more positive future.

Each year we support **300+** mums, dads and children across Reading

Support we provided last year

135 services provided to families

152 children supported

50 families matched with a volunteer

23 mums attended Mums in Mind courses

38 families joined Mums in Mind Baby Groups

Families we support

46%

Single parent families

Main practical challenges

- Money worries
- Isolation
- Getting out and about

Top wellbeing concerns

- Anxiety
- Stress
- Exhaustion

The difference we make

Parents say our support helps them feel stronger, more confident and better able to cope

Measurable improvement for families

Percentage of families who reported improvement in each area last year

90%	90%	78%	77%	74%	77%	80%	83%
Managing children's behaviour	Involvement in children's learning	Ability to cope with or combat isolation	Parents' self esteem	Ability to cope with children's physical health	Ability to cope with children's mental health	Ability to cope with demands of multiple children	Uptake of other relevant services and support

> I don't know where you found J from but she is making me into a better person because of her non-judgemental attitude and the way she is. She makes me feel safe and happy.

> You offered invaluable support to me and my family through one of the hardest times of my life.

> Having a volunteer to check on us every week and discuss any emotions was what got me through my therapy. I wouldn't have done it without her.

With your help we could give more struggling families the support they need to thrive...



£1,000

provides a family with a volunteer for nine months, giving practical and emotional support through challenging times



£2,000

funds an eight week baby group, building parents' confidence and connections and helping babies develop through play



£5,000

covers a specialist eight week Mums in Mind course for mums experiencing post-natal depression and anxiety



£10,000

funds the recruitment, training and supervision of a new cohort of home-visiting volunteers to support more families

Every family's story is different

The stories shared are representative of the families we support.

Names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

A new beginning

Elena had left an abusive relationship with her two young children and been placed in temporary accommodation.

Everything was unfamiliar and overwhelming. As she struggled to rebuild their lives, faced with daunting bureaucracy, Elena felt alone in a system she didn't know how to navigate.

How we helped

We matched Elena with a volunteer, who became a trusted presence each week. She helped her understand forms, letters and emails, access local services and rebuild her confidence. As chaos subsided, anxiety dropped and Elena's self-esteem grew. She started to make decisions for herself and her children again and the future no longer felt defined by fear.

Holding it all together

Rising costs and reduced working hours had left Daniel and Grace and three young children struggling to make ends meet.

Without family nearby, they felt increasingly isolated. Ashamed and not wanting to burden friends, Grace stayed at home and often skipped meals to make sure the children didn't go without.

How we helped

When Grace confided in her health visitor, she referred them to us. Their volunteer helped them untangle practical problems, access support they hadn't realised was available and get involved with free local activities. With her help they realised they weren't alone and gained new confidence in their ability as parents. Money was still tight but the family was stronger and better connected.

Finding his voice

Noah had been a cheerful little boy, but stopped talking after a frightening experience.

He became withdrawn and anxious and was overwhelmed by everyday situations. His mum, Jodi, didn't know how to help him and felt like she was failing as a parent.

How we helped

Their GP referred the family to us. Noah looked forward to their volunteer arriving each Tuesday. Through patience, play and encouragement, he began to feel safe and understood. As she saw him coming out of his shell, Jodi relaxed and started to feel better equipped to support him. A few months later Noah started talking again and was back to his bubbly self in time to start pre-school.



Could you help us be there for more local families when they need us most?

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