

GINGEBREAD HAS CHOICES!

In the last edition of the newsletter (March 04) we brought you the news that Gingerbread would no longer be able to provide the highly successful training program: CHOICES because funding had been withdrawn. We're delighted to let you know this month Gingerbread has been able to secure ESF (European Social Fund) monies through the Dept of Employment & Learning and CHOICES will be able to continue for the next two years! This means that all lone parents who wish to avail of education and training opportunities at their local college can do so.

CHOICES can help you:

- ☺ Change career direction
- ☺ Study the course you would like to

- ☺ With the cost of fees; childcare; and travel
- ☺ Study in your own locality

This means that you can:

- ✓ Achieve a recognised qualification of your choice.
- ✓ Gain work experience in an area related to your course.
- ✓ Receive one to one career advice & guidance.
- ✓ Build your self-confidence.
- ✓ Greatly improve your employment prospects.

If you are interested in returning to study and Choices may offer you that chance then call **TRAINING ON 028 9023 1417** and register for September 04!

Lastly, a big **THANK-YOU** to all of you who took the time to contact your MLA and let them know about the situation. We greatly appreciate your support.

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VISUALLY IMPAIRED?

In an effort to help our members and/or their family and friends who are visually impaired we have decided to reduce the number of articles in this edition of the newsletter and increase the print size used. Let us know what you think! Is it working??

PLEASE NOTE: the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Gingerbread NI.

EMPLOYERS FOR CHILDCARE - MONEY SAVING CHILDCARE VOUCHERS

Employers For Childcare is a registered charity set up to assist working parents by encouraging businesses to invest in childcare. They offer childcare voucher schemes which can represent huge savings on childcare costs for both parents and their employers.

Childcare vouchers are a valid method of paying for all registered childcare including, childminders, day nurseries, crèches, playgroups, after-school and holiday clubs.

Working parents can save up to 11% on the costs of registered childcare - which can

be the equivalent of up to one month's free childcare per year

Companies which provide childcare vouchers for employees can save up to 12.8% on national insurance contributions

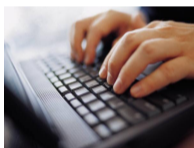
To find out more about how Employers For Childcare "childcare vouchers" can help you save on childcare costs contact:

Joannah McStravick

T: 028 9261 0661

E: employersforchildcare.org

W: www.employersforchildcare.org



TRAINING

- ✓ Meet new people!
- ✓ Learn new skills!
- ✓ Gain qualifications!
- ✓ Have fun doing so!

Contact us about **COMPUTER TRAINING FOR BEGINNERS** (Ballymena, Belfast and Derry) and **TRAINING TO BE A TRAINER** (Belfast only) courses?

Gain great qualifications in a relaxed, friendly environment with well-qualified and experienced tutors. We have a free on-site crèche (Belfast & Derry only) for those with pre-school age children and we can pay up to £5 per day towards travel costs. Call us today to find out more and register for your place on the next course in September 04:

Ballymena 2563 8086

Belfast 9023 1417

Derry 7137 7066.

BEEF & TOMATO CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 500g Stewing Steak (cut into cubes)
- 1 large onion (chopped)
- 3 sticks of celery (sliced)
- 1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 x 15mls oil
- 2 x 15 mls flour
- 125-250mls beef stock
- 1 x 15 mls tomato puree
- 1 x 15 mls Worcester sauce

Method

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C / gas 4 / 350°F.
- 2 Heat oil in pan. Add beef, in small quantities (about 6 cubes), to seal (brown) the meat and remove to drain on kitchen paper. When browning the meat is finished place onion in pan and fry gently until softened. Return all of meat to the pan.
- 3 Sprinkle the contents of the pan with the flour. Blend the tomato puree, Worcester sauce and 125mls of the stock. Add to the pan and mix through.
- 4 Add celery and tomatoes. Cover and bring to the boil. Transfer the contents to a casserole - you may need to add some more stock at this stage - and cook in the pre-heated oven for 1-1½ hours.
- 5 Serve with mashed potatoes.



LONE PARENTS TO HAVE THEIR SAY

Gingerbread is investigating the circumstances of one parent families living in the WH&SSB area. This major piece of research will take place over the coming months.

The Chair of the WH&SSB, Karen Meehan, has urged lone parents to take part commenting: 'The Western Board is committed to tackling inequality and Gingerbread has been at the forefront of articulating the needs of lone parents for the past 25 years. Together, if we can make a difference to children's health, this will, in turn, make a difference to future generations. We recognise

the link between disadvantage and the negative impact it has on health and this research is a good way for the Board to hear the needs of a very disadvantaged group. We need to talk to lone parents, both male and female, about their specific needs and this is a real opportunity for them to influence decision makers.'

As an added incentive there's a prize draw for £250 of Tesco vouchers for questionnaires completed and returned by 30/06/04.

It is vital we hear from as many lone parents as possible. We know the basic facts but this is

the first time a comprehensive assessment has been carried out in the WH&SSB area and gives recognition to the fact that one in four children is growing up within a one parent family. We want to make sure that the views of one parent families are heard and that a co-ordinated response is developed to meet their needs.

So if you'd like to have your say copies of the questionnaire are available from Maria in our Derry office. Call her on 028 7137 7066 or e-mail maria@gingerbreadni.org.

ADVICE TALK - YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q. I am worried about my children's behaviour since I separated from my partner last year. How can I help to express themselves so that I know that this will hurt them more in the long term.

A. Children all react to divorce and separation differently, some finding the changes harder than others. Most children deal with the situation better than expected, especially if what is going on is explained to them in a way that they can understand. **Tell them it is not their fault** - and then tell them again. It is important to reassure children that they are not to blame and that, where possible, they may still see both parents. They can easily believe that something they have done may have caused one of their parents to

leave or can make them come back.

Tell Them What Is Happening - Children will often feel that they have no power over what is going on, especially if they are not sure what is going on. You may feel you are protecting your child or children by keeping things from them. The opposite is true. Tell them in a way they can easily understand, limiting the amount of detail you give them. **Listen To Them** - children will feel that they have no say in what is going on and will want to be listened to but bear in mind that they may not want to have ultimate responsibility for decision-making. **Not in front of the children** - Fighting in front of the children or insulting your ex-partner hurts the children. The children should not be involved or be witness to these arguments.

Contact our Advice Service for more information on parenting advice and information on support services for you and your children.

**Freephone:
0808 808 8090**

*Good advice isn't just priceless with Gingerbread it's free! Call us:
0808 808 8090*

BITS ' N' BOBS

USEFUL CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Gingerbread NI
Advice HelpLine:
0808 808 8090**

Autism NI 028 9040 1729

Barnardo's 028 9067 2366

Blind Centre 028 9050 0999

**British Association of Counselling
0870 443 5252**

Cerebral Palsy 0808 800 3333

Child Care NI 028 9065 2713

Children's Law Ctr 028 9024 5704

**Citizen's Advice Bureau Belfast
028 9050 3000**

Consumer Line 0845 600 6262

Diabetes UK 028 9066 6646

Home-Start 028 9046 0772

There are schemes in 26 areas so call to
find out where your nearest scheme is.

**Make a Wish Foundation
028 9080 5580**

Men to Men 028 9024 7027

Men's Helpline 028 9023 7779

Meningitis Trust 0845 6000 800

Mencap 028 9069 1351

NIMBA 028 9332 9933

NIPPA 028 9066 2825

**National Asthma Campaign
028 4176 2811**

**National Council for Divorced &
Separated 028 9083 8422 / 9042 3583**

**National Deaf Children's Society
028 9031 3170**

**NI Association for Mental Health
028 9032 8474**

**NI Dyslexia Association
028 9065 9212**

**Parents Advice Centre Helpline
0808 8010 722**

Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

**Samaritans 028 9066 4422 or
08457 90 90 90**

SVP Helpline 028 4461 6557

Women's Aid 028 9033 1818

**Worker's Educational Assoc
028 9032 9718**

HOW TO CONTACT US:

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DERRY

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BALLYMENA

18a Thomas Street
Ballymena

Co Antrim BT43 6AU

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E: enquiries@gingerbreadni.org

W: www.gingerbreadni.org