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## Incredible help to develop parenting skills

The Incredible Babies programme, which offers practical and emotional support to teenage mothers and mothers-to-be, has been running for more than a year in Sunderland and is proving a great success.

It is delivered by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, which works closely with Sunderland City Council's B2b+ and Young Mums' education provision to engage and support girls in education and training, up to the age of 20.

The Trust's early years mental health specialist Julie Fraser goes in to the setting each week and, in the past year, about 30 girls have benefited from the course, the youngest being 14 years of age.

Miss Fraser said; "Incredible Babies is about building parenting approaches for a positive parent/child relationship. The young mums develop their parenting skills by learning how to read their babies' cues and identifying ways to provide nurturing and responsive care, including physical, tactile, and visual stimulation, as well as verbal communication."

B2b+ has an on-site nursery, which has been identified as outstanding by Ofsted, where interaction between the young mums and their babies is encouraged, and this allows them to practise and observe the parenting skills which have been taught at the session.

Miss Fraser added: "We have had some fantastic feedback since we started the Incredible Babies programme. The girls have really committed to it and they say it has helped them to build a better relationship with their children; that they are more in tune with their babies and are able to pick up on signals such as when they are hungry or tired; that they know how to play with them and that they are, generally, more confident parents."

ends

*Pictured above: Some of the young mums and babies taking part in the Incredible Babies parenting programme, with B2b+ early years daycare practitioner Leanne Colquhoun and Young Mums higher level teaching assistant Kelly MacKenzie*

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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