Why better parents make better kids

A SPECIAL EDITION OF NHS GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE HEALTH NEWS
RAISING kids can be fun, infuriating, frightening, wonderful, stressful, exhausting and sometimes, all those things in one day!

So it's not surprising that parenting is often said to be the toughest job of them all.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has joined forces with Glasgow City, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils to help parents tackle family life.

More than 900 practitioners, including health visitors, social workers and nurses, have been trained to deliver Triple P - a groundbreaking programme which gives parents the skills they need to build better relationships with their children, solve problems and become a more confident parent.

The Triple P parenting programme has been helping families around the world for more than 30 years and its simple strategies have been proven to work - time and time again.

Already more than 15,000 families in Greater Glasgow and Clyde have benefited from taking part in Triple P either through group sessions, on a one-to-one basis or by attending a series of three seminars.

Now it's your chance to take part and get some help with the big or small problems of family life.
TRIPLE P is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ parenting course but a programme that offers increasing levels of support to meet parents’ different needs.

It is available, free of charge, for parents of children up to 16 years of age. The programme is designed to give parents the skills they need to raise confident, healthy children and teenagers and to build stronger family relationships.

It doesn’t tell people how to parent but gives simple and practical strategies that can be adapted to suit parents’ own needs.

So how does it work?
PARENTS can choose anything from attending seminars or self-help books and DVDs to more intensive group courses or individual counselling sessions. Here we introduce just a few of the options available to you...

Group Triple P
THE idea that you will meet a group of other parents you don’t know and talk about the problems you have in raising your children will be scary to many people. But most parents find Group Triple P a supportive experience.

Because of the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of the weekly group sessions, parents are relieved to realise they’re not alone.

“Group Triple P is nothing but friendly,” explains parenting co-ordinator, April Montgomery. “Some parents can be apprehensive about joining a group and airing their difficulties in public.

“But soon they find that they’re in the same boat as everyone else.

“Group Triple P is a good way for parents to support each other and very often they’ll develop friendships with other parents.”

What is Group Triple P?
OVER two months a trained Triple P practitioner guides parents through their Group Triple P course. Group Triple P is ideal for parents who have problems at home or for those who are coping well, but would like to be ready for any issues that may come up. There are up to 12 parents in each Group.

In the first four sessions, parenting strategies are shared, discussed and practised in the group. Over the next three weeks parents put these strategies into practice at home supported by weekly calls from their practitioners.

The last week of the course sees parents return to their group to review progress and deal with any outstanding issues. To find out more about Group Triple P, speak to your health visitor, nursery or school teacher.
Primary Care Triple P

MOST parents agree that when you’re raising children there are ups and there are downs. The ups are great, but the downs?

Toddler tantrums, the child who refuses to go to bed, the son being bullied at school, the daughter who’s telling lies, the brothers and sisters who can’t play together without fighting – there are so many problems that can make home life harder than it should be. Fortunately, if parents are troubled by a particular problem that keeps recurring, Primary Care Triple P can help.

What is Primary Care Triple P?

PRIMARY Care Triple P is a brief and personal way for parents to get help to tackle a specific issue.

For about four sessions of between 15 and 30 minutes, parents meet with a Triple P practitioner who’ll offer a range of ideas that can be tailored to suit the family’s needs.

To find out more about Primary Care Triple P, speak to your health visitor, nursery or school teacher.

Triple P seminars

WATCH the audience at any Triple P seminar and you’ll see heads nodding in unison – a sure sign that most parents know and recognise the common pitfalls of parenting.

Although a Triple P seminar takes just 90 minutes, parents say it gives them a stack of great new ideas to help make raising kids easier.

And with their take-home tip sheet as a reminder of what they’ve heard, parents can be confident enough to start using Triple P’s positive parenting suggestions straight away.

What is a Triple P seminar?

These information sessions last approximately 90 minutes and are currently offered through schools to parents of children starting primary one.

At the seminar, a trained Triple P practitioner such as a health visitor or school teacher will give you advice and ideas to help tackle the most common issues for parents. You can ask questions and listen to other parents’ questions.

To find out more about our seminar programme, speak to your nursery or school teacher.

Workplace seminars are also available for employees of companies in Glasgow that have achieved, or are working towards, the Healthy Working Lives Award. If you work in Glasgow and your organisation is working towards the Healthy Working Lives Award, you can find out more about Triple P or book a space on the workplace seminars by calling Mary McGibbon or Mariam Abbas on 0141 314 0024.

Triple P Baby

HAVING a child is a great joy but when you have a baby it’s straight into the most demanding yet fulfilling job of all – parenting.

That’s where the Triple P for Baby programme comes in.

Triple P for Baby is for first-time parents and it is designed to help parents give their baby a healthy and happy start in life. It covers topics such as developing a positive relationship with your baby, promoting your baby’s development, looking after yourself as a first-time parent and strengthening the couple relationship.

Parents taking part attend four group sessions before their baby is born and have four telephone support sessions after their baby is born.

Triple P Baby is a new programme being trialled in Greater Glasgow and Clyde through an independent evaluation by Glasgow Caledonian University. We’re looking for expectant couples to take part in the programme and help us evaluate its impact. If you are a first-time parent who is in a relationship and would like to have a chat about the opportunities to take part, please get in touch.

You can phone us on 0141 331 3360 / 077 6936 5272 or email us at TriplePBaby@gcu.ac.uk
Take a tip from the top - Triple P should be on every parent’s wishlist

Why health chief Linda de Caestecker believes we can all reap benefits

THE responsibilities that go with the task of being Director of Public Health in one of the UK’s biggest regions mean there’s little time for Linda de Caestecker to be a dreamer. But the Greater Glasgow and Clyde health chief does have a vision that she’s been striving to turn into reality for 10 years.

Linda explains: “I have long had the desire that every parent in Greater Glasgow and Clyde should have the opportunity to access a parenting group for support and advice - and that it would seem as normal and natural to access a service like Triple P as it would be going to ante-natal classes when you were pregnant.”

Having started her medical career in obstetrics, it was really when she came into public health that she became convinced about the importance of the early years of life in the health of the population. Linda has now argued for more widespread use of strategies such as Triple P for at least 10 years.

One obstacle in the early years of campaigning for Triple P was the question of whether it was appropriate for the NHS and local authorities to be telling people how to parent.

Linda responds: “It’s not about telling people how to be parents, it’s giving them tips that work and can support them as a parent. I think there is a role for health professionals, social workers and teachers in terms of promoting this service.”

Another obstacle has been the misconception that people might think you are a bad parent if you seek help through Triple P.

Linda stresses: “That is simply not the case; every one of us needs help as a parent. It’s true some people need a lot more help because they have never had the advantage of being well-parented themselves, or maybe there are other social or health issues. But even if you don’t have any difficult life circumstances you could still gain a lot from Triple P to help you be a better parent.”

While Linda is fully aware of budget constraints, she looks on Triple P as an investment for the future.

“In Greater Glasgow and Clyde we are training our existing staff in Triple P as staff such as early years workers and health visitors already have relationships with parents and it does not require new staff to deliver the programme.”
ONE reason Linda de Caestecker is so passionate in her support of Triple P is that she appreciates how much she could have benefited from the programme herself.

Although her family has now grown up, at one point she had four children (including twins) under the age of five.

Linda says: “When I was at that most difficult and busy time when the children were very small, I would very much have valued assistance from a programme like Triple P.

“There were a lot of people who offered help to me, but the most common offer was to take the kids off my hands for a while to give me a break.

“That was lovely, but often what I wanted was for help to be a better mum - to help me stop nagging at them so much.”

Linda recalls reading bedtime stories to the children, even though it sometimes felt like a real effort if she was tired herself. However, she stresses it was time well spent.

She explains: “I realise now just how precious those times were. One message I would stress to all parents of young kids is that they should always make time for their children, no matter how busy the parents may feel.

“Yes, children are demanding. Yes, it can be tiring to give them the attention they demand - but those times go past in a flash and before you know it, the children will be grown.

“You can’t get back that time with them, so it’s well worth the effort - and Triple P offers strategies to make sure you can get the most out of those times.”
Praising our children in public should become quite normal

IT’S no overstatement to suggest that Triple P could help change the way we all deal with our children.

Everyone will have seen a parent telling a child off in a supermarket, but how often do we see kids who are behaving well being publicly praised for that behaviour?

Linda says: “Implementing Triple P on the widespread scale could help change the norms in our society about how we treat our children. In time, it could become much more the done thing to see parents praising their kids for behaving well as well as managing behaviour effectively.

“It could make us all a bit more comfortable to show positive feelings. That in turn will make our kids better behaved - and improve life for the vast majority of families willing to take up the challenge and invest the time in being positive with our children.”

Practical tips really do work

TRIPLE P offers a host of practical tips for parents, and there are a few that Linda feels can come in particularly handy time and again.

One is for a parent always to stay calm when dealing with a child who is misbehaving.

Don’t shout at him or her, and always give clear instructions. It’s also useful to give them an alternative instead of just ordering them not to do something.

For example, if two kids are fighting - tell them to stop fighting and suggest that they play separately for a while instead.

If they are messing about with something that might be dangerous, why not tell the child to leave that alone and come over to you so that you can do a puzzle together.

Active Children
Eating Smart...

Helping parents to support their children to lose or maintain weight and make long-lasting changes to their lifestyle.

ACES is designed so adults, children and young people can learn some ‘tricks of the trade’ about healthy eating and have fun doing physical activity together.

Find your nearest ACES class call: 0800 027 0291
LASGOW mum Catherine Martin knew Triple P was working for her the first time she heard her four-year-old son Tye say “sorry” for misbehaving.

It was a word he’d never use, so to hear him acknowledge that he had been naughty was a big step in the right direction.

Catherine had endured a terrible year with Tye when he started hitting and biting people, running about everywhere, shouting and swearing - and refusing to sit down to eat.

She was introduced to Triple P through the staff at Lamlash Nursery and found some simple steps made a big difference.

Catherine said: “Among the strategies which really worked for me were quiet time; distracting him if he was not behaving as you would like - and constant praise when he did behave well.

“If Tye was being naughty, I would take him away and play something more positive with him. That worked really well. If he was really naughty you would take him away from all his toys and tell him to be quiet for a few minutes. We called it quiet time and that became a bit of a game, but it got the message through to him that what he had been doing wasn’t acceptable.

“While it was important to let Tye know when he was not behaving well, praising Tye when he did something nice has also helped him a lot.

“Triple P has made a massive difference. Before I started using the tips, Tye would constantly hit his big brother, Jay, who is now 10. Jay wouldn’t be in the same room as his brother, now they can play together for a wee while. That’s a huge step forward.

“But before Triple P, sorry was a word that Tye would never use. Now if he’s naughty and we put him in quiet time he will come back and say ‘sorry’.

“That might not seem like a lot, but for me it was a big sign that we were making progress.

“I’m sure there are lots of other parents out there going through the same type of problems as I was having. I would urge them not to be too embarrassed to ask for help. I was embarrassed by Tye’s behaviour, but the realisation that I wasn’t alone, helped me gain the confidence to do something about it.

“Triple P definitely worked for us, and we’re all better off for giving it a go. Tye, now 5, has just started school and is settling in well. He is still making progress, doing a lot better than he used to - and he will now listen to you when you talk to him.”
Triple P changed our lives

I wasn’t the only mum with a toddler who wouldn’t sleep in their own bed

Michelle Doyle
Parent

There was nothing really out of the ordinary in the problems young mum Michelle Doyle was experiencing with daughter Aaliyah.

The wee one was taking temper tantrums and wouldn’t sleep anywhere other than in bed with her parents.

What was slightly unusual was that Aaliyah was only one year old - but working on the premise that it’s never too early to seek help, Michelle contacted her health visitor in Easterhouse and she suggested trying Triple P.

Michelle decided to give it a go and now reckons it was one of the best decisions she and partner Khalid ever made.

Michelle added: “It was brilliant. Within a week I was having Triple P sessions in my house. I explained the problems I was having with Aaliyah taking tantrums and screaming. I also explained how I was trying to get her into her own bed – and that just wasn’t happening.

“I was given a lot of helpful hints and a booklet to guide me. But what was just as important was the confidence I got from talking to the practitioner. She helped me to realise that I was not the only mum in such a situation and that things would get better if we were willing to work at it.

“Perseverance was vital; it was always emphasised that we needed to want things to work out and had to be prepared to follow the advice through.

“It certainly wasn’t easy as Aaliyah would wake up every night and want to come into our bed.

“The simplest thing would have been to give in, but we stuck at it and the end result is that everybody is now getting a better sleep as Aaliyah is happy in her own cot.

“Things a lot more relaxed in the house. I’m not as tired, so I’m not as cranky during the day and not so likely to snap at Aaliyah. That makes everybody happier and things are certainly going smoothly.

“Using Triple P has also given me the confidence and the knowledge to deal with Aaliyah if she does take a temper tantrum. I now know how to react.”

Michelle is in no doubt about the benefits her family have derived from Triple P and reckons there is something in the programme for every parent.

She added: “Triple P has absolutely paid off for us. I would definitely recommend it to anybody - but would also warn them that it’s something that they have got to be willing to work at.

“It’s not always plain sailing, but if you are willing to follow it through, then the benefits your whole family can get are enormous … and well worth the effort.

“It offers fantastic advice, and perhaps just as important, you know there is always a helping hand out there if you need it.”
EVERY parent experiences some problems when they are bringing up children, but thankfully not too many suffer the difficulties encountered by Denise McCallum with son Lennon.

In her own words, life was a nightmare, with the youngster screaming, taking tantrums, refusing to sleep, hitting, nipping and biting his brother and sister - as well as chewing the table if things didn’t go his way.

It got so bad that Denise dreaded going across her front door because she couldn’t cope with the embarrassment she knew Lennon would create.

She sought help from a variety of sources, but it was only when she started on the triple P programme that she began to see some daylight at the end of a very dark tunnel.

And now after one-to-one and group sessions at her Glasgow nursery, Denise is lavish in her praise of the benefits the programme offers.

She said: “It has quite literally turned our lives around. It used to be tears and tantrums in the house ... now there’s a lot more laughter.”

Lennon has just celebrated his fifth birthday, but the problems began when he was just a baby.

Denise recalls: “He wouldn’t sleep on his own at all. For nine months it was virtually a case of him sleeping on my chest. I could walk the floor for hours with him, but the minute I put him down he would start screaming the place down.

“The then when he got to the stage of being in his walker, the tantrums started. He would even chew the table if he didn’t get what he wanted.”

The youngster’s behaviour had a huge impact on the whole family. Lennon would never settle with his dad, Steven, and he started hitting his sister Caitlyn (9) and her twin Quinn.

Quinn would try to stay away from Lennon, while Caitlyn simply screamed back at her wee brother if he started screaming.

Denise says: “It was causing real mayhem. I went to the doctor for help and was told that Lennon was just a mummy’s boy and would grow out of it.

“Things started to calm down a wee bit when Lennon was two and started nursery. He was fine at nursery, but when we got home and his brother and sister came in, that’s when the hair-pulling, punching and nipping started - and he even bit them on a few occasions. If Lennon didn’t get his way then all hell broke loose.”

Denise spoke to Royston Nursery head teacher, Kate McDougall, and she suggested Triple P. The initial sessions were on a one-to-one basis, and while they provided some helpful hints, Denise still felt a little isolated.

She added: “When the group sessions started, that made me realise there were other parents suffering the same sort of problems that I was. That gave me more confidence to go out and about more. The group sessions were so relaxed and informal. Everybody had different problems ... and different tips on dealing with those problems.

“One thing I learned is that I am the adult and if I can’t control the way I handle situations, then how can I expect a child to react properly. If I shout at him when he screams, he will simply scream louder. I’ve got to stay calm and be consistent in the way I deal with him.

“Praise is also so important. It’s got to the stage now where he will do something good - and if I don’t praise him immediately, he will say something like ‘Mum, was I awesome at that?’

“It’s such a nice feeling - and we’ll then do “high-fives” which makes everybody happier.

“My message to any parent having problems is simple - you are not alone - get help, it’s out there. Ask your nursery or doctor about Triple P. Don’t dismiss it by saying it won’t work for you. Give it a try. It’s done me and my family the world of good - and turned my whole life around. Our family life is so much happier.”
ACCENTUATING the positives and eliminating the negatives are key elements of the Triple P strategy, according to Royston Nursery School Acting Team Leader, Inderjit Kaur.

She became involved with the programme two years ago thinking it would be a useful tool in helping parents with children displaying challenging behaviours.

After completing her practitioner training, she started taking one-to-one sessions with parents needing support. But away from those formal sessions, Inderjit says she finds Triple P invaluable day-to-day when working with young children, along with fellow Triple P practitioner Fiona Bark.

The results, according to Inderjit, are significant. She CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
explained: “Fiona and I are implementing Triple P on a daily basis. Other colleagues witness the positive results we get from the strategies and as a result they implement the same procedures, giving us consistency throughout the nursery.”

Apart from emphasising the positive aspects of good behaviour, Inderjit says consistency and support is vital in dealing with a child’s individual needs. That’s where the “tip sheets” can be such an invaluable reference point for parents if problems arise.

Inderjit adds: “It’s also important to let parents and carers know they are not alone, that other mums and dads are experiencing difficult moments bringing up their children.

“One of the most satisfying things about the programme is when parents come to us and say they just can’t believe the difference Triple P strategies have made in helping turn negative things around.

“The basic function of Triple P is making families happier. Reducing stress with children makes parents happier, and as a result has a really positive impact on the whole family’s life and wellbeing.”

Fiona admits she didn’t know too much about Triple P when she set out on her practitioner training a year ago.

But having already seen the benefits parents have enjoyed from attending the group sessions, Fiona is now a firm believer in the value of the programme.

The Royston nursery teacher says simply: “It works. You can see a difference in the parents and the children.”

Fiona got involved in the programme when the opportunity came up through the Glasgow nursery.

After completing the training, she took her first group session and there were soon signs of progress.

Fiona adds: “One of the great things about the group sessions is that they build confidence. A lot of the mums were very nervous when they first started. However, as soon as they realised they were not alone - and other mums were having the same sort of problems - they lost that sense of isolation.

“Problems encountered were fairly typical, with kids refusing to leave mums alone when they were on the telephone; shopping trips could be real nightmare for parents as could bedtime with no real sleeping routine.

“Six parents completed the first course and there was nothing but positive feedback from them all. While there will always be challenges with kids, all the parents saw changes for the better in the way their children behaved.”
AS one of the first people in Glasgow to be trained as a Triple P practitioner, Sheila Quigley has had 11 years to see the benefits the programme brings to families.

The evidence is there from studies all around the world to show that the programme works. But for Sheila (left), nothing compares to the personal feedback from families who have been introduced to Triple P.

The health visitor explained: “When we are putting a group together, it can be big step for an anxious parent to even come along to a session.

“However, to see them overcome these hurdles, go through the groups - and then come back with positive feedback to say how much their lives have improved is hugely satisfying.

“The programme also pays off in the long term. I can’t help but think that if we can encourage parents to have a more positive relationship with their children then that’s got to have a positive impact on the family in future. The more that families are helped, the more this is spread through the community – and the more positive the outcome.”

One of the things that attracted Sheila to Triple P training in the first place was that it had already been researched and validated. She was working with the Starting Well project in the city and along with her colleagues, believed it was a great training opportunity - and a great service to be able to offer to families.

Sheila has been involved in delivering various aspects of Triple P since then, but believes the “tip sheets” to be one of the most useful resources.

She explains: “They are a great resource, covering a whole range of pre-school intervention issues such as home safety, sleep patterns, language development, eating problems – and many more.

“The tip sheets contain good basic advice which we can go over with families at Triple P sessions. The families then take these sheets away with them and have something that they can always refer to in their own home whenever they might need them.”

Another key element of Triple P is the fact that it is available to everyone.

Sheila adds: “It’s important that the help is on offer at an early stage and to every parent who wants it.

“Everyone has challenges with their children - some more than others.

“Some families get a great deal from just sharing their experiences in open group forums and realising they are not alone.”

Looking to the future, Sheila would like to see Triple P accessed by more and more parents.

She adds: “One of the strengths of Triple P is that it’s a useful programme for every parent - no matter how much or how little help they might need. I would encourage any family not to feel stigmatised by using Triple P. It’s helpful to all parents, so why not give it a try - it works.”
WHEN you consider Tracey Plant has three kids of her own - and spends all her working life with children - you might not think she would need to take on board too many initiatives from Triple P.

But after training in the programme, Tracey (above) admits: “I always thought I was quite a good parent, but the programme made me think about how my husband and I deal with our kids.

“I am already more aware of how we communicate with them, the importance of being consistent - and praising them at every opportunity.”

Tracey works with the Geeza Break voluntary group in the East End of Glasgow. After working on a one-to-one basis with families since around January, she has already seen a positive impact.

She adds: “Parents are looking at alternative behaviour strategies and how they communicate with their children.

“Many realise there are lots of different ways of dealing with behavioural issues rather than just chucking the kids in their room and leaving them there.

“When I visit families, they can be quite quick on the negative aspects of their children’s behaviour. I stress to them the importance of praising positive behaviour.”

As part of her efforts to get the positive message across to more families, Tracey is starting constant play sessions, where families are encouraged to come along to groups with their children and interact more with them in things like arts and crafts, music and drama.

Tracey came into Triple P with an open mind, but is now convinced of its value.

She says: “There was very much a feeling in the past that something like Triple P would not work with families in an area like the East End of Glasgow. My message would be that there are lots of different ways it can help any parent.

“I would not be delivering it to the families I work with if I didn’t think it would help them. And on a personal level, I wouldn’t be using any of the techniques in my own family if they didn’t work.”
Parents who have taken part in Triple P tell us how helpful it is.

Many parents enjoy the interaction with other parents as they pick up the tips and advice that Triple P can give them through local group sessions. Others prefer one-to-one sessions with someone such as a health visitor.

Now we want to explore a third “anytime that suits” option via specially designed internet courses.

The online Triple P courses are already used effectively in other countries and the cost of the programme is £100 per parent. We want to offer it here to 100 parents of children aged pre-school or primary school age as a free trial.

The online course has eight separate parenting modules. It’s designed for parents of children up to 12. It consists of interactive exercises, video clips, individual goal setting, downloadable worksheets and podcasts. It also includes review and reminder systems supported by text messages and emails.

Parents need only to spend 30 minutes per week online over a 14 week period. This is entirely flexible and can be condensed into a shorter course time if a parent wishes.

Ideally parents wanting to take part should have broadband computer access and should be keen to work through a self-directed programme.

Places in this initial trial are limited to 100. You need to be resident in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area with a child or children of pre-school or primary school age.

We will want to get your feedback on the course to help us decide whether this online programme should be used more widely.

All you need to do is email us with a few basic details about yourself and your child/children and we’ll get back to you to let you know if you’ve been successful and what the next steps are.

We’d love you to help us with this trial. Email us at centralparentingteam@ggc.scot.nhs.uk or phone 0800 027 7246 to register.
Adverts tell familiar story

TV commercial mum’s drama is a reality for many parents

A frazzled mother is trying to multi-task, cradling the phone under her chin, carrying on an important conversation and trying to put the groceries away at the same time.

But the tiny tot in her high chair isn’t happy. She’s banging her toy on the tray and making an almighty noise. Eventually Mum has to drop everything and deal with her daughter’s behaviour. But what should she do? What would you do?

That’s the scene set and the questions asked in a commercial that has been airing on STV throughout Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

It’s one of two commercials designed to reassure parents that raising children isn’t about what’s right and wrong, but about working out how to deal with misbehaviour in a way that’s best for everyone.

What Triple P strategies could you use?

Triple P’s Professor Matt Sanders says the mother in this scenario should understand that her daughter isn’t trying to annoy her.

“The little girl may want help with her blocks, or simply be finding it difficult to share her mum with the unknown person on the end of the phone,” says Professor Sanders. “She may just want mum to enjoy the game with her.”

Professor Sanders says giving the child a minute or two of attention when she seems to need it may be all that’s needed before the mother can go back to her chores. That direct attention can be enough to satisfy the child that their mum’s still there for them.

Even so, children still need to learn polite ways of interrupting, so it’s all about planning ahead for these kinds of high-risk situations, rather than reacting to them when they happen.

Simple Rules

“Setting simple rules can help,” says Prof Sanders. “Try saying something like: ‘Play with your quiet toys until Mum is finished putting away the shopping or finished on the phone’. Rules should tell your child what to do rather than what not to do. Positive instructions are more likely to be learned and followed than negative ones such as ‘don’t make that noise’.”

Professor Sanders says wee ones may only be able to occupy themselves for a short period of time.

“If you know you’re going to be on the phone for a while, explain ahead of time that you’ll be busy doing something important and cannot be interrupted.

“You can practise this. Pick up the phone and speak for two to three minutes. If your child continues to play, praise them for letting you speak on the phone. ‘Maggie, I’m really pleased that you played quietly while I was on the phone’.”

You could encourage your child by giving them a reward when they follow the rules. Tell them what they can earn - perhaps a favourite snack or special activity.

Eventually, as your child learns to occupy themselves you won’t need to remind them of the rules, rewards and consequences each time. Make sure though that the consequences of breaking the rules are consistent and make rewards less predictable by not always giving them out. And continue praising your child for occupying themselves when you’re busy - they’ve earned it.
Bedtime battles – a dad’s dilemma

A COSY night watching the telly turns sour in an instant, triggered by the three words parents the world over utter almost every night: “Time for bed”.

The boy’s around seven, but the statement triggers a toddler-like tantrum. “No, no, no!” he screams to his dad, who appears bewildered by his son’s outburst.

While this kind of reaction is at the extreme end of the scale, many children – from tots to teens – will, at some time, try to delay going to bed at night. So what would you do if you were in the TV advert dad’s place? How would you make sure the transition from couch surfing to lights out doesn’t become an all-out battle?

How could Triple P help?
Triple P’s Alan Ralph suggests setting up a family meeting in which every member agrees on clear rules about bed time.

“Make sure these rules are written down and posted somewhere as a reminder,” says Dr Ralph.

“The rules should include a clear routine for bedtime. They could be things like watching the end of a TV programme, cleaning teeth or getting into pyjamas by a certain time.”

Dr Ralph says one trap parents may fall into is springing the ‘It’s bedtime’ direction upon a child unexpectedly.

“Give the child a reminder around 15 to 30 minutes before the first action is required so they know it’s coming up to bedtime. Don’t surprise them at the last minute. Then, when the agreed time arrives, calmly ask your child to begin preparing for bed. If they co-operate, praise them, but be specific. Say something like: ‘Thank you for putting your pyjamas on straight away,’ rather than saying something vague like: ‘Good boy’.”

If you notice any changes at all, see your GP.

We know that some women feel uncomfortable about seeing their doctor for this kind of thing. But your doctor is there to help you. And wants to see you. You’re not wasting anyone’s time.

DON’T GET SCARED, GET CHECKED. nhsinform.co.uk

0800 22 44 88
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IT’S the goal of every caring parent to bring up healthy, happy children and sport can play a major part in helping achieve that aim.

With the focus never more intense than it has been in recent weeks, there’s no time like the present to get children involved in sport.

The feel good factor generated by the Olympics has given a huge boost to interest in the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Magnificent new sporting arenas are poised to open across the city, adding to the range of facilities that has already seen Glasgow win a place in the top 10 sporting cities of the world.

A key aim of those Games is to provide a sporting legacy for the youth of Scotland and the emphasis has been sharpened further by news of Glasgow’s bid to stage the Youth Olympics in 2018.

Away from major sporting events, efforts continue to get children involved in sport at grass roots level. Research has established that, apart from the obvious health benefits, an active lifestyle can enhance children’s self-confidence, boost their social skills, develop team values – and reduce feelings of anxiety, depression, tension and stress.

Through its Glasgow Life organisation, the city council is promoting the benefits of sport with a range of programmes and activities for children of all ages.

The health board’s Active Children Eating Smart programme is among a range of activities launched in a bid to help combat childhood obesity.

However, any bid to get children more active will stand a much better chance of success if the parents are fully supportive.

Triple P founder, Professor Matt Sanders, says parents who take a healthy interest in their child’s hobbies often build better relationships with their youngster.

Professor Sanders added: “Children feel appreciated if parents are supportive. Find out what your child is good at and offer some gentle encouragement in the right direction.

“Let them try a couple of different things, even if it’s just a kick about in your local park or a run around the track at the athletics.”

Kickstart an active lifestyle!
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Opportunities on your doorstep

COMPETITIVE sport isn’t the only way to stay active and fit... what about playing in a beautiful park, walking through the woods, flying a kite at the beach or just having fun in a leisure pool?

Throughout Greater Glasgow and Clyde the opportunities to get out and about and have great family fun are endless.

Perhaps a visit to the Waterfront Leisure complex in Greenock? It boasts a tropical wave pool and an ice rink amongst its many attractions.

A visit to Gleniffer Braes Country Park high up on the outskirts of Paisley is a great place to try fly a kite or go in search of spotting some exciting wildlife. Paisley is also home to the flagship Lagoon Leisure Centre.

Glasgow’s parks are world renowned and all have unique attractions and opportunities to have fun. Pollok Country Park is perhaps the jewel in the crown for the city having won Best Park in Britain in 2007 and then Europe’s Best Park in 2008.

The list of fantastic parks to visit in Glasgow is both long and inviting. Here’s a few names to get you out and about in the fresh air: Bellahouston Park, Botanic Gardens, Catkin Braes, Kelvingrove Park, Queen’s Park and Glasgow Green.