

## My Story

Well, I'm Stephen. I'm a single parent to two children, a son age 10 and a daughter age 4. I first learnt about the Wyre Forest and Hagley Project (WHP) from my children's school who put me in touch with a WHP Home School Link Worker.

I had some concerns with my son's lack of confidence and social skills. From the outset I was sceptical as my children had been through a horrible time during a divorce. I felt I was drifting from one day to the next with the children and not achieving anything positive. This is when the WHP Link Worker asked if I was interested in a course for parents which was being run at a local school for 8 weeks.

I was sceptical beforehand so for me to attend being a single father, knowing that the chances were high that the rest of the people on the course would be mothers, was even worse. I was going to be the only father there! Nevertheless, I attended.

As the weeks passed on the course, we would come away with a different strategy to work with when situations arose in the home. Very quickly found them to be working out for me, simple and effective ideas (not like shouting at them to get them to follow the basic request you have asked of them - this often ended up in an escalation trap which before I found myself quite often falling into).

I also found I had a big problem with my son going to bed at night. I factored in one of the exercises of the course 'making clear, calm requests'. I found a change straight away.

I completed the course and went on to a further course which was aimed at my daughters age group and to date I can say again: the simple strategies I employ are making a calmer household and, being a single parent, it's what I need to allow me to concentrate on other household items.

I found my Link Worker, as well as the others that ran the course, to be very relaxed and approachable with any questions or concerns. If I was asked to recommend this course I would say 'yes'. Without the support, I would not be where I am now with my children.

Stephen

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Being a mom of 4 children, life is very busy, but rewarding seeing them grow into independent adults. My 4<sup>th</sup> child, however, has been more challenging than the other 3 and after becoming increasingly concerned about their behaviour I enrolled on the Family Links course which was recommended by the WHP Home/School Link Worker.

I was worried at first that people would label me as a bad parent and I felt a bit ashamed.

However, after meeting the course leaders and chatting to the members of the group I soon realised there is no shame in asking for help, after all, parenting does not come with an instruction manual and all children are different. Also, we were there for the same reason – to help our children and have a happier home life.

I have gained lots of good ideas about positive discipline and how to communicate better with my child.

I feel the challenges will come and go but I feel I have a good set of tools to help me deal with the situations as they arise.

Jayne

