



Relationships Matter in Leicestershire

Why do relationships matter?

Here in Leicestershire, we believe that strong, thriving communities are built by people who have strong, thriving relationships with their partners, children, colleagues, neighbours, and friends. We are stronger together. Our relationships and friendships shape who we are, they are important to our wellbeing and how we cope with life's ups and downs. Safe and supportive relationships in all aspects of life are crucial for both children and adults. Good relationships make us happy. Research shows us that when people feel connected, they are less likely to experience mental and physical health problems.

When we talk about relationships it isn't just about having lots of friends or having a partner, but it is about the quality of all the relationships that we have, for example school children and their teachers, young people and youth workers, friendship groups, adults with a support worker, neighbours, work colleagues. All good relationships are based on trust and respect and an ability to understand each other's points of view, even if we don't agree on everything.

Family Relationships

In Leicestershire, a group of organisations have been working together to understand the importance of relationships and how strong relationships really support families to do well. This is particularly true at times of change or challenge in our lives – for example relationships can support us through bereavement, starting school and school transitions, changing jobs, pregnancy, and other significant life changes.

We know that children learn about relationships from the adults that are around them. We also know that sometimes we can become 'stuck' with unhelpful thinking in relationships and sometimes this can lead to conflict and argument. Again, the research tells us that conflict and argument between adults in a family can be harmful to children if it is frequent and not resolved. Of course, this doesn't mean that adults shouldn't argue - arguing is normal and can be part of a healthy relationship if both

parties are able to compromise and problem solve together. The key is in learning how to communicate better, how to argue better. And children who see parents and carers arguing well are learning problem solving skills of their own.

Our Vision

We want Leicestershire to be a place where good quality relationships are supported and encouraged to thrive. We want all organisations who work with children and families to be confident in providing relationship support or in providing signposting to other services who can help if help is needed.

The purpose of this document is to encourage thinking and reflect about the quality of relationships whether that be at home, at work, at school. As an Early Help Partnership, we have identified several commitments that we will make to support good quality relationships and strengthen the message that relationships matter in Leicestershire.

Our commitment:

1. We will continue to work in partnership, alongside children, young people and families to promote the importance of good quality relationships.
2. We will support all organisations who work with children and families to access good quality training and information. This will include information and training on trauma informed practice. Trauma informed practice is an approach which understands that when people are exposed to trauma it can have an impact on an individuals' ability to feel safe, develop trusting relationships and may impact on how they behave and respond in different situations. We will provide people who work with families with the skills and resources to start conversation about relationship quality with the families they work with.
3. We will develop and share information and resources for families to self-help, alongside clear information about where further help can be found
4. We will develop information and guidance so that families and people who work with families, know where they can get further help if it is needed.