

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS NEWSLETTER

A quarterly newsletter sent to you by the **Special Guardianship Support and Permanence Teams**

Welcome...

Hello!!! Our Easter event is still fresh in my mind, and I wonder whether the lamb holding had anything to do with it. We had a great time, and it was lovely to see those of you that came. We have some photos inside so keep your eyes open for those.

As we approach summer we can look forward to warmer days and time outside. We have some fun summer activities in this edition to help with that. For some children this is a wonderful time where they can relax and let the days roll by, and for others the lack of routine can be really tricky, and we hope that you will find the articles on trauma and control helpful. On top of all that we have a lot more useful information so please do take a look. As always, we welcome any feedback you have and if there is a topic you would like us to cover, please do get in touch.

See you soon,

Gemma.



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Just a thought

The importance of smaller steps



SUPPORT

Special Guardian Monthly Support Groups

An invitation to all Special Guardians in Leicestershire.

If you have ever considered going to one of these groups but something is holding you back, please get in touch with the contacts below they are waiting to hear from you and help you. They are eager to meet new people as well as welcome the old.

The special guardians that run these groups are lovely kind people wanting to listen and share experiences, please try the groups if you are looking for unique support from people that understand.

These support groups are a really good place to discuss experiences, seek advice and receive support from other Special Guardians over a drink in a relaxed environment.

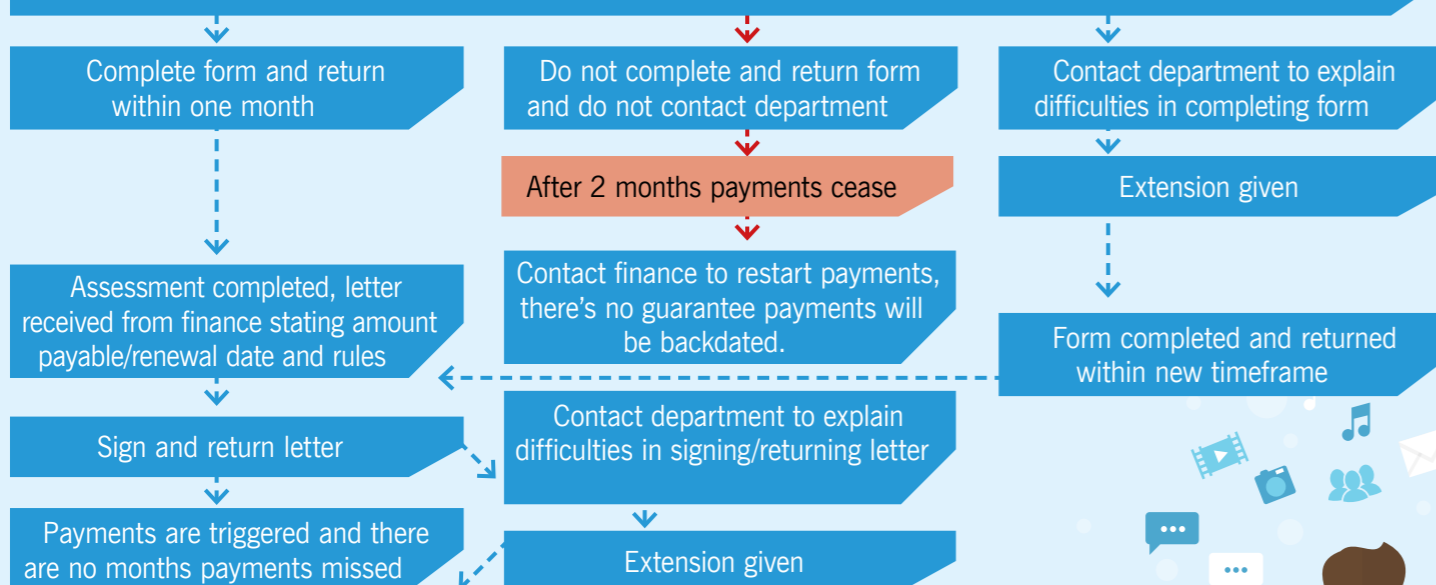
They are run by Guardians for Guardians and as such you may find that you share similar experiences, however, we are available to attend if we are invited.

If you feel that there is a need for a group in a different location and you would like to start it up please contact us and we would be happy to help you locate a venue and get started sgosupport@leics.gov.uk or **0116 305 3051** and ask to speak with someone in the SGO team.

Hinckley		
Children & Family Centre, Granville Road, Hinckley, LE10 0PP		
The last Friday of every month	10am - 12.30pm	Marie Chapman: 07853 525843
Coalville		
Marlene Reid Centre, 85 Belvoir Street, Coalville		
2nd Friday of every month	10am - 12 noon	Debbie Hancox: 07900 505 055 Heather Mcpherson: heather@heathermcperson.co.uk
Braunstone Town		
Children & Family Wellbeing Centre Kingsway North, Braunstone Town, Leicester, LE3 3BD.		
The last Wednesday of the month	10am - 12 noon	Rosemary Campbell: 07748 841 838

When you receive your annual financial assessment there is a time frame for completion.

Special Guardians receive financial assessment form



If anything has changed in your circumstances and it's not yet time for your annual assessment, please let us know as it may alter your payments. Contact us and we will send out a finance form for you to complete.

When you receive your annual financial assessment there is a time frame for completion.

If you anticipate any problems in meeting the deadlines contact us on **0116 305 3051** or via fps.finance@leics.gov.uk so we can give you an extension.



EASTER EVENT 2024

Thank you to everyone who came, It was a windy day but no rain thank goodness!

Our event this year had lots of activities including a easter word hunt that when completed could be swapped for a chocolate egg! Walking and grooming the Shetland pony, holding lambs and stroking sheep. Below are some pics of the fun we had.

It always such a pleasure to see you at these events we will continue to listen to your feedback and act on your suggestions.

Events still to come this year: We will be sending you further information for the Summer event to your email address so keep checking but in the meantime I hope you can save the date. **August 22nd 2024.**



SGO Events 2024

August 22nd 1.00pm - 3.00pm
Summer Event
Location: The Pavillion
October 21st 1.00pm - 2.30pm
Family Day
Location: TBC
November 31st 1.00 pm - 3.00pm
Christmas Event
Location: TBC

Make sure you are signed up to our mailing list for updates:
SGOsupport@leics.gov.uk



ACTIVITIES

SUMMER FUN

The summer holidays are very nearly here, having the children off school for weeks with unstructured time can be daunting for both parents and children alike. Making a few plans to look forward to or be motivated toward can help add a little much needed form to the holidays. There doesn't have to be a plan every day and they don't have to be expensive. Here are some fun summer activities that provide a mix of physical exercise, learning, and fun, making for a memorable summer that you can enjoy with young and older children:

1 Beach Day (bus, train, or drive to nearest one):

Build sandcastles, dig holes, collect seashells, and splash in the waves.

2 Water Play (if you're not near the sea):

Set up a sprinkler, paddling pool, or slip 'n slide in the garden, use buckets and watering cans for fun.

3 Nature Walks (anywhere):

Explore local parks or nature trails, looking for bugs, birds, and interesting plants and leaves.

4 Picnics (anywhere):

Pack a lunch and have a picnic at a park or in your garden if it rains make a den indoors and have it there.

5 Outdoor Art:

Use pavement chalk, paint with water on a fence or slabs, or try leaf and bark rubbings.

6 Gardening:

Plant flowers, vegetables, or herbs and teach how to care for plants.

7 Story Time:

Visit the local library for story sessions or read books under a tree or in a den.

8 Biking or scootering:

Go for a ride on safe, kid-friendly paths.

9 Visit a Farm:

Many farms offer tours where kids can see animals and learn about farm life.

10 DIY Obstacle Course:

Set up a simple obstacle course in the garden with cones, ropes, and other safe objects.

Get a Little Messy - Paper Mache Summer Bowls

How to make paper mache paste from flour and water

This really is one of the easiest and least messy DIY Paper Mache Recipes!

Step 1

Mix one part flour, with two parts warm water. Pour the water in gradually and keep stirring.

Step 2

Try and remove as many lumps as possible. It should look like thick soup – but not TOO thick. If it is too thick, it will not apply or soak into the newspaper as well – but you can always add a little water to make it runnier again!



Your Papier Mache Mixture is ready for use! it should last in your fridge for up to around a week.

1. Once you have your basic paper mache glue ready you can get started on your paper mache projects. You will of course need strips of newspaper, simply dip your paper in the paper mache paste and start working on your projects. Be sure you have a nice clear work area before you get started!
2. **Select a suitable mould.** Beginners are better off starting with a typical bowl shape. You will be using the outside of the bowl placing it upside down on the table.
3. **Cover the mould in Vaseline or cling film.** This is important because it helps to get your project off the mould. If you don't have enough covering the mould, the project may break as you try to remove it.
4. **Dip a strip of paper into the paste.** Wipe off the excess - whilst it should be covered in paste, do not have it dripping. Place the strip onto the mould and smooth it out. Repeat with each strip until the bowl is entirely covered with a single layer (you can smooth it with your hands or use a paint brush).
5. **Leave the first layer to dry, prepare a second layer.** Leave the double layered project overnight to dry. This will allow the base of the bowl to harden thoroughly. Keep in a warm, dry spot.
6. **Put on another few layers the following day.** This will strengthen the bowl and thicken it. Leave to dry. Repeat until the mould is covered with paper to about the depth of 1cm.
7. **Remove the mould from the project once it is fully dried.** Slip a spatula between the paper and the mould. Gently separate the two items and lever the mould out.
8. **Trim the rim of the bowl to get rid of the jagged edges** (scissors adult supervision)



9. **Decorate.** The bowl is now ready for any type of decoration that fits with your needs. Suggestions for decorating include using collage, painting, using bits of wrapping paper, etc. Ensure that the decoration method is dry before proceeding to the next step.
10. **Optional:** Varnish the new masterpiece. This will protect the bowl from dust and spills and can be done with PVA glue. The bowl is not suitable for use as a food serving item - it is only a decorative object. However, such an object can have many uses, including display, a place to keep things in or a gift or just a talking piece.



Reflecting on your parenting style



Changing your parenting approach can be necessary for various reasons, recognising the need for change and being willing to adapt can lead to more positive outcomes for both children and parents. Some of the reasons for change are explored below:

Child's Developmental Needs:

As children grow, their physical, emotional, and psychological needs evolve. What works for a toddler may not be suitable for a teenager. Adapting parenting styles to match these changes ensures that children receive appropriate guidance and support.

Behavioural Issues:

Persistent behavioural problems might indicate that the current parenting methods are ineffective. Adjusting strategies can help address these issues more effectively.

Emotional Well-being:

If a child is displaying signs of stress, anxiety, or depression, it may be a sign that they need a different kind of emotional support or discipline.

Family Dynamics:

Changes in family structure, such as divorce, remarriage, or the addition of new siblings, can necessitate a shift in parenting to accommodate the new dynamics.

Cultural or Social Influences:

Exposure to different cultural or social environments can impact a child's behaviour and attitudes. Adapting parenting methods can help align with positive influences and mitigate negative ones.

Feedback from Education and Health Professionals:

Recommendations from teachers, counsellors, or doctors can provide insights into areas where parenting adjustments may benefit the child's development and well-being.

Personal Growth:

Parents' own personal growth and changing perspectives can lead to a realization that their parenting style needs to evolve. Self-reflection and a desire to improve can drive changes in how they interact with their children.

Effective Communication:

As children develop their own personalities and communication styles, adapting how parents communicate can help maintain a healthy, open relationship.

Peer and Social Pressures:

Children's interactions with peers and the pressures they face socially can require parents to adjust their approaches to provide better support and guidance.

Health and Safety Concerns:

New health and safety concerns, such as the rise of digital media use and its associated risks, may require parents to adopt new rules and monitoring strategies.

Adapting your parenting approach involves being flexible and responsive to your child's needs and circumstances. Here are several strategies to help you adapt effectively:

Understand Developmental Stages:

Children go through various developmental stages, each with unique characteristics and needs. Educate yourself about these stages to tailor your approach accordingly.

Listen and Communicate:

Foster open communication with your child. Listen actively to their concerns and feelings and respond thoughtfully. This builds trust and understanding.

Set Realistic Expectations:

Recognize your child's individual strengths and weaknesses. Set achievable goals that encourage growth without overwhelming them.

Be Consistent, Yet Flexible:

Consistency in rules and expectations provides security but be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances and your child's evolving needs.

Model Desired Behaviours:

Children learn a lot by observing their parents. Demonstrate behaviours you wish to instil, such as patience, empathy, and responsibility.

Encourage Independence:

Support your child in taking on age-appropriate responsibilities. This fosters confidence and independence.

Stay Informed and Reflective:

Continuously educate yourself about parenting through books, articles, and workshops. Reflect on what works and what doesn't and be willing to adjust your strategies.

Build a Support System:

Seek advice and support from other parents, family members, or professionals. Sharing experiences can provide new perspectives and solutions.

Prioritise Self-Care:

Taking care of your own physical and emotional well-being enables you to be a more effective and patient parent.

Embrace Mistakes as Learning Opportunities:

Both you and your child will make mistakes. Use these moments to teach resilience and critical thinking skills.

Adapting your parenting style is an ongoing process that requires patience, empathy, and a willingness to grow alongside your child.

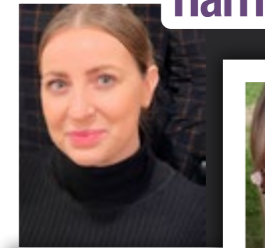
Special Guardian Advice Line

0116
305 6645

Thursday
9am - 12 midday.

It will be operated on rotation by one of our team and we are looking forward to hearing from you.

Harriet



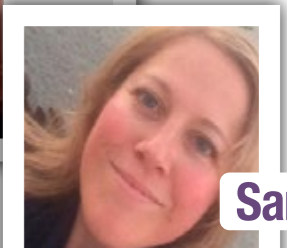
Sheryl



Lisa



Sarah



Please call us for any questions you may have, to request advice or seek reassurance. If the line is unavailable please email sgosupport@leics.gov.uk Special guardians and professionals are both welcome to use this line.



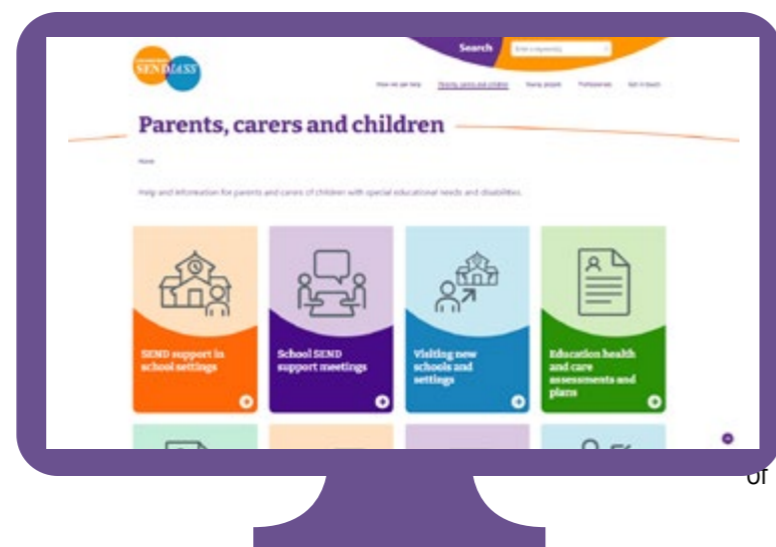
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services

They provide free, impartial and confidential advice and support for SEND children or young people aged 0 to 25 years.

All local authorities must arrange for parents, carers children with SEN or disabilities or young people with SEN or disabilities to have access to Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) in their area.

Staff are trained and have accurate and up to date knowledge of:

- Education, social care, and health law relating to SEND
- National and local policy and practice in meeting SEND
- SEND processes including Tribunal.
- We support children and young people (between the ages of 0- 25) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers to help with any concerns or questions.
- We do this by providing a free, impartial and confidential service through our website and online resources.
- You can also contact us through our telephone helpline



Call: 0116 305 5614

**Duty line opening times:
Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.**

An answerphone service is in operation outside of these hours

Email: info@sendiassleicestershire.org.uk

www.sendiassleicestershire.org.uk

An opportunity to make a difference

FAMILY ROUTES
Research project about the experiences and needs of adoptive and special guardianship families

Are you aged 12-25 and left foster or residential care in England on an Adoption or Special Guardianship Order?

Are you an adoptive parent or special guardian of a young person aged 12-25, who came to live with you from care in England?

If you answer yes to either of these questions, we would love to hear from you! Take part in this brand-new, ground-breaking study about the lives of teenagers and young adults and their adoptive and special guardianship families. The research involves an interview or questionnaire about your family life, including things that are going well or things you might be struggling with. You'll be asked about your family, important relationships, school/college, wellbeing, and any support needs.

Visit the study website to find out more.

- Scan the QR code, or
- Visit: <https://familyroutes.ipsos.com>, or
- Contact family.routes@ecorys.com or 08081759341 to register your interest.
- Young people aged 12-17 years will need parent/carer consent to take part.
- Everyone who takes part will receive a thank you voucher of up to £20 (£20 for taking part in a family interview, £10 if you complete the online survey only).

Taking part is so important!
What you tell us can make a real difference. Family Routes is funded by the Department for Education. The study aims to learn how services need to change and develop to better support young people as they become adults and lead to improvements in the ways that families are supported.

ECORYS REES CENTRE Ipsos

Family Routes is a brand-new, ground-breaking study about the lives of teenagers and young adults and their adoptive and special guardianship families. The research aims to give a voice to these families through interviews and questionnaires about family life, including things that are going well or things families might be struggling with. Questions ask about families, important relationships, school/college, wellbeing, and any support needs.

The study is funded by the Department for Education and is being run by Ecorys UK, in partnership with Professor Julie Selwyn at the Rees Centre (University of Oxford) and Ipsos. Previous similar studies have led to the government introducing new support for families like the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund and extra support in schools. So, taking part really does matter, as families views and experience can make a difference. Thank you.

Visit the study website to find out more.



- Scan the QR code, or
- Visit: <https://familyroutes.ipsos.com>, or
- Register by emailing family.routes@ecorys.com (please include a phone number) or ring the study team on 0808 1759341.
- Young people aged 12-17 years will need parent/carer consent to take part.

Trauma and Control

Trauma in children can significantly impact their sense of control and overall psychological well-being. When children experience trauma, whether from abuse, neglect, witnessing violence, or other adverse events, their sense of safety and predictability in the world can be severely disrupted. Here are key aspects of how trauma affects control in children and strategies to help them regain a sense of control:

Impact of Trauma on Children's Sense of Control

- **Loss of Predictability:** Traumatic experiences often come with a sudden loss of predictability and stability, leaving children feeling helpless and vulnerable.
- **Emotional Dysregulation:** Trauma can lead to difficulties in managing emotions, resulting in increased anxiety, fear, anger, or sadness.
- **Behavioural Issues:** Children may exhibit behavioural problems such as aggression, withdrawal, or regressive behaviours as they struggle to cope with their experiences.
- **Cognitive Effects:** Trauma can impair a child's ability to concentrate, remember things, and process information effectively, affecting their academic performance and daily functioning.
- **Trust Issues:** Trust in others can be severely impacted, making it challenging for children to form healthy relationships with peers and adults.

Strategies to Help Children Regain Control

- **Create a Safe Environment:** Ensure that the child's physical and emotional environments are safe and predictable. Consistent routines and clear boundaries help children feel more secure. Empowerment through Choices: Allow children to make age-appropriate choices. This can be as simple as choosing their clothes or deciding what to eat for a snack, giving them a sense of control over their environment.
- **Validation and Support:** Acknowledge the child's feelings and experiences without judgment. Providing consistent support and reassurance helps in building trust and security.
- **Therapeutic Interventions:** Engage in trauma-focused therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT) or play therapy. These can help children process their trauma and develop coping strategies.
- **Building Resilience:** Teach coping skills and resilience-building techniques. Mindfulness, relaxation exercises, and critical thinking skills can empower children to manage stress and regain a sense of control.
- **Parental and Caregiver Support:** Support for caregivers is crucial, as you play a significant role in the child's recovery. Access resources and education on trauma to enhance your ability to support the child effectively.



- **Consistent and Open Communication:** Encourage open communication, allowing children to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. This helps in building trust and understanding.

Long-Term Considerations

- **Monitoring Progress:** Regularly assess the child's emotional and behavioural progress. Be attentive to signs of ongoing distress or new issues that may arise.
- **School Involvement:** Work with educators to ensure the child receives appropriate support in the school setting. This might include special accommodations or counselling services.
- **Community Resources:** Utilize community resources such as support groups, recreational programs, and other services that can provide additional support and normalcy for the child.

By addressing the impacts of trauma and implementing strategies to help children regain control, caregivers and professionals can foster a supportive environment conducive to healing and resilience.



Understanding what we can and can't control is crucial for maintaining mental well-being and effectively navigating life's challenges. Here's a breakdown:

What We Can Control

- **Our Actions:** The choices we make, how we behave, and how we respond to situations.
- **Our Thoughts:** While it's natural for thoughts to arise spontaneously, we can influence and reframe our thinking patterns.
- **Our Effort:** The amount of energy and dedication we put into our tasks and goals.
- **Our Attitude:** How we choose to view and interpret our experiences, including our outlook on life. Our Values: The principles and standards that guide our behaviour and decisions.
- **Our Reactions:** How we choose to respond emotionally and behaviourally to external events and other people's actions.
- **Our Self-Care:** How we manage our physical health, mental health, and overall well-being.
- **Our Goals:** The objectives we set for ourselves and the steps we take to achieve them.
- **Our Boundaries:** The limits we set in our relationships and interactions with others.

What We Can't Control

- **Other People's Actions:** How others behave and the decisions they make.
- **Other People's Thoughts and Feelings:** What others think and feel about us or other matters.
- **Past Events:** What has already happened; the past cannot be changed.
- **Future Outcomes:** The ultimate results of our efforts, as they are influenced by numerous uncontrollable factors.
- **External Circumstances:** Situations like the weather, natural disasters, or economic conditions.
- **Genetics:** Our inherited traits and predispositions.
- **Timing:** When certain events occur or when opportunities arise.
- **Life's Uncertainties:** The unpredictable nature of life and unforeseen events.



By focusing on what we can control, we can reduce stress, enhance our sense of agency, and improve our resilience. Accepting what we can't control helps us to let go of unnecessary worries and concentrate our energy on constructive and meaningful pursuits.

Whilst it's important that we as adults are aware of the limitations and possibilities for ourselves, this knowledge of what we can and can't control, can be shared with your children in a way they can understand, and you can help them to relate it to their daily life.





At the heart of our communities, our Family Hubs have been established to support families, children and young people across Leicestershire. Working with partner organisations our Hubs provide a one-stop shop and offer advice, information and resources to help families navigate every stage of life; from pregnancy, through your child's early years, later childhood and into young adulthood.

familyhubsleicestershire.org.uk



If you have any comments, suggestions, ideas or questions about the newsletter, please email: sgosupport@leics.gov.uk or call **0116 305 3051**

Useful websites:

www.frg.org.uk

(family rights)

www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

(inform, support & empower)

www.gov.uk

(any government service such as benefits, passports, education, pupil premium)

www.childcarechoices.leics.gov.uk

(help/advice with childcare)

www.specialguardiansupport.org.uk

(login required contact 0116 305 3052)

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-virtual-school>

(help with pupil premium and school related issues)

www.healthforteens.co.uk

(advice and quizzes regarding teenage health issues)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/my-activity-passport

(an interactive guide to activities)

<https://yoopies.co.uk/c/press-releases/blacklivesmatter>

parents guide to BLM explanations

<https://www.today.com/parenting-guides/how-talk-kids-about-race-racism-t179138>

conversation starter

<https://guidetoallyship.com/>

how to be active against bias injustice

www.kooth.com

free online counselling and support for young people

<https://cafcass.clickrelationships.org/mediation-2/>

for mediation of co-parenting and other

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/resources/> Trauma informed therapeutic resources

www.yourmodernfamily.com

tips and parenting ideas

<https://firstcontactplus.org.uk/about-us/>

a range of services

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-oWUZNhEXo

What is Therapeutic Parenting?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-IYIkDIkgk

Understanding Your Traumatised Child

CLOSED FACEBOOK GROUP:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/226771768010284/>

?ref=share

for peer support and interest

<https://bit.ly/mentalhealthLLR>

Directory of mental health services for children