

News release

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Children's Centres Launch Online Baby Health Check

Parenting in Sunderland took another step into the digital age with the launch of a new website designed to give parents help and advice about their baby's development.

The NHS Baby LifeCheck website was launched at a special event during a Baby Days session at Sunderland Children's Centre Monument yesterday.

The site is aimed at parents of babies aged five to eight months and can provide checkpoints allowing parents to ensure their child's development continues at a healthy rate. It also helps to answer many common questions that parents may have and can be used to explore specific issues such as teething, speech development or immunisation.

After being introduced to the service parents were given the opportunity to try out the website, while healthcare professionals from Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust were on hand to pass on their expert advice.

The event was well attended with parents from the community gathering to try out the new website. Corrinne Greener, 32 from Penshaw, brought along son Joseph, aged eight-and-a-half months. She said: "The launch has been great; I've had the chance to find out lots of useful information. Being a new mum can be very scary and often you are quite embarrassed about asking people for advice - if parents have a question, I think the website is a really good first stop."

Councillor Pat Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City within Sunderland City Council, added: "Safety and development is important at all stages of a child's life, but at such an early age it is crucial that parents have all the information they need to make the best decisions for their baby. By simply logging on to the internet and accessing the site, either at home or at their nearest Children's Centre, parents can easily reassure themselves about concerns they may have, and find help and support when a problem becomes apparent."

Sunderland's 17 Children's Centres are designed for children aged from birth to five years, and bring together health services, early education, childcare, parenting support, and help for parents looking to find work or training – helping to ensure that every child has the best start in life.

Judith Addison, a health visitor based at Houghton Health Centre, said: "Answers to the website questions will tell you where you are doing well and how to get more information and support to help you make the best decisions for your baby. It also suggests things you might like to think about doing to help keep your baby healthy, happy and safe.

"If after visiting the website any parent has any concerns or questions about their baby's health, they should contact their health coordinator at their nearest Sunderland Children's Centre or their own GP or health visitor."

The Baby LifeCheck service can be accessed 24 hours a day, online and is free of charge and fully confidential. Visit the website at www.babylifecheck.co.uk