

News release

15 June 2010

Sun and Fun in the Park

A unique event celebrating the importance of families saw hundreds of parents and children from Sunderland getting together to enjoy a day of summer fun and games.

The free 'Fun in the Park' event was held at Usworth Park, Washington. Families were encouraged to spend quality time together and make the most of the free activities provided by Sunderland Children's Centres.

Droves of families from the area took advantage of a wide range of games and sessions such as hook the duck and messy play. Children were also entertained by performers who played to the crowds throughout the day.

Organisations from the area were on-hand to provide parents with information on employment, volunteering opportunities and healthy living. These included Jobcentre Plus, regional dental care services, Northumbria Police and Gentoo.

Sunderland Children's Centres hosted stalls to help make sure families knew about the wide variety of free services available to them throughout the city's 17 centres.

Louise McDonald, 38 from Washington, regularly attends soft play and Busy Bodies sessions at Sunderland Children's Centre Washington (Rainbow Family Centre). She took three-year-old son Archie along to the event and said that he thoroughly enjoyed getting to run around outside.

She said: "There were a lot of games and activities to keep the children entertained and Archie was particularly happy when he won a mini dancing competition. There were stalls put on for the adults too and I picked up a lot of useful information on things like home safety and protecting children from the sun. It was nice to see so many families getting outside and playing together."

Raj Singh, Extended Services Manager for Children's Services within Sunderland City Council, said: "A supportive family network plays such an important part in bringing up a healthy,

confident child and the long-term positive effects can spread throughout the community. Children's Centres provide a safe and welcoming place for families to spend time together during those all important early years of a child's life."

Sunderland's 17 Children's Centres bring together health services, free play activities and early education, childcare, parenting support and help for parents looking to find work or training. The centres are developing strong links with local organisations and community groups to help provide every child in Sunderland with the best possible start in life.