

News release

23 December 2009

Children's Centres' Christmas Celebration

Sunderland Children's Centres have been helping the city's younger mums and dads to learn more about important family issues during a special young parents' Christmas event.

Over 100 parents under the age of 19 and their families attended the event, which is held at the City Library annually – doubling previous attendance figures.

Santa was there to hand out gifts to all the boys and girls, while Messy Play and Story Time taster sessions were available for young parents and their children to enjoy together. A professional photographer was on hand to provide Christmas card photographs of the children and families spent time trying their hand at ceramic painting.

Parents were also given the opportunity to relax in style with a pre-Christmas pampering session and crèche facilities were provided to ensure this was stress-free.

A wide range of health information and advice was available throughout the event on a number of topics. Parents were asked to give their opinions on a new pregnancy website due to be launched in the New Year, which provided invaluable feedback on the site's design and content.

Holly Golden, a young Washington mum, said: "The Children's Centres' Christmas event was great and the information stalls were really informative. The Fire Service explained how to keep my home safe and I found out about the risks of drinking alcohol.

"The Children's Centre information stand also advised me about support for childcare as I would like to go back to work. My little girl, Mia Louise was so excited to receive her present from Santa and she also had a Christmas photograph taken,"

Councillor Pat Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children and Learning City within Sunderland City Council, added: "This annual event is a great way for young parents to get to know each other and share their experiences in a fun and informal way. Raising a child can be a daunting

prospect at any age, so it is important that younger parents feel supported and not overwhelmed.

“The event invited parents to create family memories through the use of photography and fun activities, to relax and play with their children, but also to find out valuable information on topics such as sexual health and home-safety. Specialised events for our younger parents such as this can allow us to ensure that they are receiving the appropriate advice and support which they need to help give their children the best start in life.”

Sunderland Children’s Centres offer regular support all year round to parents under the age of 19 through their Young Parents Groups. For more information parents can contact their local Sunderland Children’s Centre or call the Families Information Service on 0191 520 5505.