



THE SPRINGBOARD TO CONFIDENCE FOR YOUR CHILD

Help your child develop the vital physical skills and confidence needed for life with Tumble Tots, Britain's leading activity play programme. We've been developing children's motor skills and confidence through physical activity since 1979 through 480 centres nationwide.

Over 60,000 children from just six months through to seven years old already enjoy the Tumble Tots physical play programme every week. All sessions use unique equipment and are run by leaders specially trained to bring out the best in your child.

Your child will learn not only agility, balance, climbing and co-ordination appropriate to his or her age but also essential listening and language skills, so useful in school and later life. Tumble Tots is probably the most fun your child can have while learning new skills and developing positive personality traits. Put his or her energy to good use – give them a headstart and find out more today.

Your child can enjoy

- A sense of belonging to a friendly, fun club – where each child matters
- A Tumble Tots T-shirt which will instil a sense of pride
- Action songs and rhymes which develop language and listening skills
- Learning to mix and share with other children.



Visit www.tumbletots.com, ring 0121 585 7003 for details of your nearest Centre or write to us for an information pack at
Tumble Tots UK Ltd, Blue Bird Park, Bromsgrove Road,
Hunnington, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 OTT.



into a FBU (Financially Bankrupt Unit)! Maybe being a grown-up is all about meeting the mortgage and being stressed...

This is our final class – I know I have been totally institutionalised when I'm excited to see nibbles and wine. As usual, I recount my success story of the week. At my three-year-old's request, we have our lunch on the stairs. It's dark and dingy, but she loves it and tells me about an unhappy incident from nursery. The quality time really seems to be paying off. During tea-break, I ask the others how they've found the course. Acupuncturist Susan tells me that while some things have got better, others have got worse. "The problem was that I raised my expectations, so when things failed, it seemed so unfair. Then I'd start to slip back to my old ways and shout and get stressed," she explains.

Four weeks after the course finishes, I ring Miriam and Margaret. Margaret says it's been hard to keep up with the skills without the weekly pep talk, but in general they are happier now as a family than they were before the course. "We are more positive with the children and they like being able to have their say at the family meetings. It hasn't helped with the sibling rivalry but not all the theories work out," says Miriam, who claims the best thing that came out of the ten weeks for her was the no TV. However, she thinks that the course was unrealistic in its expectations. "We're not going to turn into super-calm mothers in ten weeks. Glean from it what you can and leave behind the rest."

For my part, I have to say I enjoyed the ten weeks. Maybe I'm just a sucker for a semi-circle of sympathetic faces, but I liked hearing about my classmates' successes *and* their failings – it made me realise how normal my own problems were. The skills themselves have been useful, although some more than others. DP keeps everyone happy – the children flourish and it's hard to see the bad when you're constantly telling them how good they are. However, I have yet to be convinced by RL as empathising with my three-year-old's demands for the whole cake just seems silly! Having not grown up surrounded by other children, what I know about childcare was been learned in haste over the last few years. The course definitely extended my repertoire of tricks and, in that respect, made me a calmer parent. These days when a tantrum kicks off, I try to think of the best way to deal with it rather than go into a blind panic and join in.

What I wasn't prepared for is how much I would end up reflecting back on my own childhood and the influence that it has had on the way I parent. I am lucky to be able to pass on many good things from my background, but there are others I'd like to change. I am trying to be more positive and not just through gritted teeth. Rain? Hey, let's go and splash in puddles! A parking ticket? Well, he's just doing his job. (The bastard.) Doing a parenting course may not be the key to ever-lasting household harmony, but I think any effort to make the family unit a happier, more aware environment should be encouraged.

And every now and then, Gillian's voice will pop into my head, saying something along the lines of, "Catch them doing it right" and then I'll remember to tell my daughter how independent she was for getting dressed on her own. That's got to be a good thing ■

For more information on parenting classes contact The New Learning Centre on, tel: 020 7794 0321 or visit www.tnlc.info. Parentline Plus (24 hour helpline), tel: 0800 800 2222. Parent Network Scotland, tel: 0131 561 4162.

