

# National Children's Day UK 2016 - Sunday May 15<sup>th</sup> 'Mindful, Heartful Childhood' - Adult Wellbeing Matters!

- for immediate release -

## **National Children's Day UK 2016 (NCDUK2016) aims to raise awareness about the importance of adult wellbeing for child wellbeing**

The aim of National Children's Day UK is to get as many people as possible to create events and activities that highlight and celebrate the Rights and Freedoms of Children. In 2016 we will be looking at how vital adult wellbeing is for the health and wellbeing of children.

**Current partners include: The Childhood Trust, The Parent Infant Partnership (PIP UK), Headspace.com, Action for Happiness, The Human Values Foundation, Mellow Parenting, Relax Kids, Eureka National Children's Museum, Mindfulness in Schools Project (MISP), The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA), The Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) 5x5x5=Creativity and Forest of Imagination.**

The wellbeing of the key adults in their world is essential for the healthy development and wellbeing of children. In the UK both parents and teachers are struggling to achieve a healthy work/life balance and are showing increasing levels of stress.

**Wendy Ellyatt, Chief Executive of the Save Childhood Movement said:**

*"National Children's Day UK is all about celebrating the rights and freedoms of childhood – but children need the company of loving and attentive adults who have the time and energy to share their worlds. Parents and teachers need more support and we hope that this year's NCDUK will help to raise awareness about the importance of adult wellbeing, the impact of social inequality and the need to achieve a healthy work/life balance."*

People can run any kind of mindful, heartful, big or small event that they want for the week up to and including the day. Happy parents, carers and teachers help to create happy, healthy kids!

The conversation continues on social media #NCDUK2016

- Ends -

**For more information, please contact**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS



LOTTERY FUNDED

### The Save Childhood Movement/NCDUK

- National Children's Day UK is an initiative of the Save Childhood Movement – [www.savechildhood.net](http://www.savechildhood.net). The movement was established in 2013 and consists of a growing collaboration of individuals and organisations that share a deep concern about societal values and wellbeing and the current erosion of natural childhood.
- The initiative has just received its second 'Awards for All' Big Lottery grant and is actively looking for national funders and sponsors.

The Big Lottery Fund is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery. The Fund is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK. Since its inception in 2004 we have awarded close to £6bn. The Fund was formally established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.

- The Save Childhood Movement is currently a totally voluntary organisation and, since its launch, has achieved significant support and a national presence. The movement's first patron is the ex Children's Commissioner for England and currently President of the British Medical Association (BMA), Sir Al Aynsley-Green.
- The movement has forty globally known expert advisors and has recently launched its new Ambassador's Programme.
- The first NCDUK took place in May 2014 and highlighted Children's need to connect with Nature. NCDUK2015 explored 'The Science and Magic of Play' with more than 250 events and activities taking place throughout the UK - and an estimated audience reach of 300,000+adults and children.
- Children's Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1954 as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children. The Assembly suggested to governments that the day be observed on the date and in the way which each considers appropriate. In the UK it is now held at the beginning of the summer.

### NCDUK2016 Core Partners

**The Childhood Trust** - <http://www.childhoodtrust.org.uk> is a charity with a single mission to alleviate the impact of child poverty. We do this by fundraising and working with selected charity partners using digital fundraising platforms such as [www.thebiggive.org.uk](http://www.thebiggive.org.uk). By

match-funding digital campaigns such as Summer Give, we enable small charities to acquire the skills to attract donations online. The public are incentivised to give during two online giving days because their donations will be doubled and gift aid added too, meaning a £20 donation becomes £45 to the charity project. In 2015, our first Summer Give raised over £0.5M for 18 projects running holiday provision schemes benefitting 3,718 children. To coincide with #NCD2016 our Summer Give will open at midday on May 16th when all public donations made will be doubled to the participating projects until midday on May 18th. Charities wishing to take part should enquire by emailing [info@childhoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@childhoodtrust.org.uk) during February as the final selection will be done at the end of March.

Childhood poverty has deep and long-standing implications. Children who suffer from poverty and deprivation are more likely to experience poor health and shorter life expectancy. They are also likely to have a higher incidence of learning difficulties, truancy, exclusion from school, anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy. School holidays present an additional challenge to families when the structure, supervision and meals provided at school are no longer there.

### **The Parent Infant Partnership (PIP) – [www.pipuk.org.uk](http://www.pipuk.org.uk)**

**The 1001 Critical Days** initiative has united politicians from across the political spectrum in acknowledging the importance of the 1001 critical days from when a baby is conceived until the age of two. It has support from Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer, Royal Colleges and over 100 leading child and family, health, education and social care organisations from across the UK.

PIP UK's task is to set up and support specialised services in local communities for families where there is a risk that the relationship between the baby and parents might be seriously compromised, for whatever reason. Intervention is offered from pregnancy until the child is aged two, the period of greatest neuroplasticity in the developing brain and when the foundations for the future personality are being laid down. A PIP multidisciplinary team provides a range of evidence-based therapeutic interventions that can promote positive interactions within the infant-parent relationship. Perinatal mental ill-health, substance misuse, past maltreatment, domestic violence, poverty and birth trauma are just a few of the significant risk factors that can have a negative impact on the caregiving relationship and so increase the risk of a very insecure attachment developing. Such risks may fill the mind of a caregiver, regardless of social position, and get in the way of forming a healthy, sensitive and joyful relationship with their baby.

### **Headspace – [www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)**

Founded in 2010 by Rich Pierson and Andy Puddicombe, the Headspace platform offers unique content varying from guided meditations to animations and videos via the Headspace website and mobile app, teaching users the techniques of mindfulness. Ranked as the number one Health & Fitness app on iTunes, and used by more than 5 million people in over 150 countries, the Headspace mission is to improve the health and happiness of the world by helping people to stress less, focus more and sleep better through the practical application of the Headspace meditation techniques. With no chanting, no sitting cross-legged, no incense and definitely no gurus – this is meditation for modern day living.

To help fulfil their mission, Headspace's Get Some / Give Some program donates free

subscriptions to non-profit partners. For every subscription sold, a second is made available to partners. NCDUK will use the subscriptions to reach disadvantaged families.

## Adult Wellbeing in the UK

- **Poverty:** There are currently **3.7 million** children living in poverty in the UK. That's over a quarter of all children. 1.7 million of these children are living in severe poverty. In the UK 63% of children living in poverty are in a family where someone works. *Barnardo's, Jan 2016*
- Four in ten babies don't develop the strong emotional bonds – what psychologists call “secure attachment” – with their parents that are crucial to success later in life. Disadvantaged children are more likely to face educational and behavioural problems when they grow older as a result – *Sutton Trust, Baby Bonds Report, 2014*
- Children and adults from the lowest quintile (20 per cent) of household income are three times more likely to have common mental health problems (than those in the richest quintile) - *Centre for Social Justice Report, Feb 2011*

*“The consistent thread running through our analysis of the problems associated with, for example, family breakdown, housing, looked-after children asylum seeking and the criminal justice system, is the high level of mental ill-health in our poorest and most disadvantaged communities. It is a key barrier to their transformation and to the unlocking of potential in young and old alike*

- Early child poverty has been linked to brain changes related to depression in older children. *“Children from poorer families are more likely to experience changes in brain connectivity that put them at higher risk of depression, compared with children from more affluent families.”* This is the conclusion of a new study by researchers from the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO. *“American Journal of Psychiatry, January 2016 <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/305208.php>*
- **Work/Life Balance:** Workers in the UK currently work the longest hours in Europe, take the shortest lunch breaks and enjoy the fewest public holidays. Childcare is expensive and difficult to find, care for older people is of inconsistent quality and financial support during family-related leave is lower than in some other parts of Europe. *TUC, Jan 2016*
- **Mental Health/Stress:** In England, women are more likely than men to have a common mental health problem and are almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety disorders.

In 2013, 6,233 suicides were recorded in the UK for people aged 15 and older. Of these, 78% were male and 22% were female.

10% of mothers and 6% of fathers in the UK have mental health problems at any given time.

source : 17.01.16 Mental Health Foundation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>

- **Teacher stress** is at an all-time high: a 2015 survey of 3,500 members of the NASUWT teaching union revealed that two-thirds of the respondents had considered quitting the profession in the past year. Workload was the top concern, with 89% citing this as a problem, followed by pay (45%), inspection (44%), curriculum reform (42%), and pupil behaviour (40%) In addition:

**83% had reported workplace stress**

**67% said their job has adversely impacted their mental or physical health**

**Almost half of the three thousand respondents reported they had seen a doctor because of work-related mental or physical health problems**

**5% had been hospitalised, and**

**2% said they had self-harmed.**

- Almost three quarters (73%) of trainee and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) have considered leaving the profession, according to a 2015 survey by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers. Almost eight in 10 (79%) of the 889 students and NQTs surveyed by the union said they did not feel that they had a good work-life balance and the amount of work they were expected to do was the most common reason for disliking their jobs.
- **Mindfulness** - People undertaking mindfulness training have shown increased activity in the area of the brain associated with positive emotion – the pre-frontal cortex – which is generally less active in people who are depressed. Many studies have shown changes in brain wave activity during mindfulness sessions and researchers have found that areas of the brain linked to emotional regulation are larger in people who have meditated regularly.

Mindfulness is increasingly being introduced to schools with initial research suggesting that children regularly using the practice are significantly less prone to depressive symptoms and experience higher levels of wellbeing. There are indications that younger children may exhibit less hyperactive behaviour, ADHD symptoms, and inattentiveness.

1-Oxford Mindfulness Centre (2015). About Mindfulness. [online] Available at: <http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org/about-mindfulness/> [Accessed 6 Oct. 2015].

2-Kerr, C. et al. (2013). Mindfulness starts with the body: somatosensory attention and top-down modulation of cortical alpha rhythms in mindfulness meditation. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 7

3-Lazar, S. et al. (2005). Meditation experience is associated with increased cortical thickness. *NeuroReport*, 16(17), pp.1893-1897

4-Weare, K. (2013). Developing mindfulness with children and young people: a review of the evidence and policy context. *Journal of Children's Services*, 8(2), pp.141-153.

5- Campbell, E (2013) Research Round-Up: Mindfulness in Schools, Greater Good Science Centre, Berkeley

