



Parent-Infant
— FOUNDATION —

Vision & Strategy

2019-2024



**Investing in the
emotional wellbeing
of babies is
an investment
in all our futures**



Foreword

The Parent-Infant Foundation, originally Parent Infant Partnership (PIP) UK, was founded in 2012 to establish a network of parent-infant relationship teams across the UK.

The small, determined group of people involved in setting up the charity understood clearly the importance of supporting early relationships. They saw expert parent-infant support as vital for relationships with infants from conception to age two where there were difficulties.

From 2013, we worked alongside local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and third sector partners in funding and supporting the clinical work of six parent-infant partnership teams in Liverpool, Enfield, Brighton, Croydon, Newcastle and Dorset. This has been a great foundation on which to build our ambitious mission and has shaped the future strategy that we present here.

We are proud of all we have achieved, but we want to see faster progress. We also want to ensure quality and build evidence as the pace quickens, to grow a network of parent-infant relationship teams. And these priorities underpin the development of this strategy, so that in a further five years, more UK families will receive specialised parent-infant provision as part of a pathway that supports the emotional wellbeing of ALL babies.

Tim Loughton MP, Chair of Trustees





The importance of the first 1001 days of life for laying the foundations of lifelong health and wellbeing is well established. We also know that the expectation and then arrival of a baby is life-changing for parents and can bring challenge as well as joy.

Families receive a range of support, from universal to specialist, for physical or developmental difficulties, but support for relationship difficulties is harder to find.

Through the Rare Jewels Report, this year we have highlighted the patchy provision of parent-infant relationship teams across the UK and how we want to see support available for all families with early relationship difficulties.

But to do this, we need to work much more strategically, harnessing the expertise and enthusiasm within local areas, whilst at the same time championing the emotional wellbeing of babies and young children to national policy and decision makers.

I believe our five-year strategy, developed with a range of stakeholders, increases our ambition. This will provide life-changing results for more families with a child under two, having a legacy throughout their lives.

Dr Beckie Lang, Chief Executive





Relationship Foundations

'Human relationships, and the effect of relationships on relationships, are the building blocks of healthy development. From the moment of our conception to the finality of death, intimate and caring relationships are the fundamental mediators of successful human adaptation.'¹

The first 1001 days of life, from conception to age two, is a time of unique opportunity and vulnerability. It is a period of particularly rapid growth, when the foundations for later development are laid. During this time, babies' brains are shaped by the interactions they have with their parents. The evidence is clear: at least one secure, responsive relationship with a consistent adult is a vital ingredient in babies' healthy brain development, and their social and emotional wellbeing. Persistent, severe difficulties in early relationships can have pervasive effects on many aspects of child development, with long term costs to individuals, families, communities and society.

Early emotional wellbeing is an important factor in influencing to what extent individuals will be able to make the most of life's opportunities. This includes succeeding in education and making a positive contribution to society and the economy, and how they will manage later relationships with partners and their own children.

The early parent-infant relationship builds the foundation upon which all later development rests.

1. Jack Shonkoff and Deborah Phillips (Eds) (2000) *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*. Washington DC: The National Academy Press.



What does the Parent-Infant Foundation want to achieve?

Our vision is that all babies have a sensitive, nurturing relationship to lay the foundation for lifelong mental and physical health.

The majority of babies receive the benefit of a secure, nurturing relationship but at least 15% of babies² do not. These are the babies we worry about the most. The lack of emotional connection and interaction from a supportive and nurturing adult can have long-term effects on mental health and social, cognitive and language development.

There are many reasons why early relationships can be disrupted including emotional, social, environmental and physical factors. Specialised parent-infant relationship teams are multi-disciplinary teams with expertise in parent-infant relationships.

They provide valuable direct support to families where there are severe, complex, and/or enduring difficulties in early relationships. They can help parents to overcome difficulties, build on existing strengths and develop new capacities to provide the sensitive, responsive and appropriate care needed for their baby to thrive.

As well as working directly with families, they also act as expert advisors and champions, enabling other local services to do more to protect and promote healthy parent-infant relationships in all families.

2. Van Ijzendoorn MH, Schuengel C, Bakermans-Kranenburg MJ. Disorganized attachment in early childhood: meta-analysis of precursors, concomitants, and sequelae. *Dev Psychopathol.* 1999 Spring;11(2):225-49.



From 2012 to 2018, we began our journey towards this mission.

- We supported the development of six parent-infant partnerships (PIPs) in England both financially and operationally
- Those teams directly supported almost 500 families in therapy and almost the same number again through consultation and advice with other professionals
- Those teams also trained or advised over 3500 professionals in their understanding of parent-infant relationships
- We have developed a data portal for local parent-infant teams to begin creating a hub of evidence on which to build improvements in practice
- We have been providing the secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group: Conception to Age Two. As well as regular meetings to engage MPs and civil servants, there has been the production of the 1001 Critical Days Manifesto (2013), the *Building Great Britons* report (2015) and the culmination of evidence for the first 1001 days leading to the production of the seminal text book *Transforming Infant Wellbeing*
- Through the APPG, the 1001 Critical Days Movement has been created. Together, the member organisations campaign for parent-infant relationships across Whitehall and Westminster, contributing to and influencing select committee inquiries and parliamentary consultations
- In 2016, we created and launched the UK-wide Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, which now runs annually in June
- We have built a collaborative network amongst existing parent-infant relationship teams
- Alongside this, the Parent-Infant Foundation has become a team of seven staff, with an expert advisory group and a strong board of trustees



The development of the six PIP teams, and the creation of OXPIP and NorPIP before us, provided a wonderful foundation upon which to build the next phase in our strategy.

We value that foundation now in terms of:

- Deep and broad insight to the changing and challenging financial and political landscape locally and nationally
- Warm, collaborative relationships with a range of partners also committed to improving the emotional wellbeing of babies and young children
- Learning, for us and the sector, about the wide range of challenges facing parent-infant relationships in today's communities
- Increased awareness about the ongoing need for support, and the various forms and interventions that can do this

These are all elements we want to build and develop further over the next five years to achieve our mission.

We now know that the Parent-Infant Foundation has a unique role in bridging the gap between frontline delivery, local commissioning and national decision-making when it comes to parent-infant relationships for families with the most complex and persistent difficulties.

Our mission is to support the growth and quality of specialised parent-infant relationship teams in the UK.





Making the biggest difference to parent-infant relationships across the UK

The Parent-Infant Foundation brings the sector together through collaborative leadership. We work to advance thinking and practice, improve collective understanding, provide a much-needed national voice, and campaign for policy change.

If we are to achieve our vision of all babies having a sensitive, nurturing relationship, we believe we can make the biggest difference by:

1. CONNECTING

Through collaborative leadership we will bring together, support and enable the whole sector – everyone who works with and cares about parent-infant relationships – to share learning, support one another and speak with a united voice so that we can achieve more for all babies.

2. CATALYSING

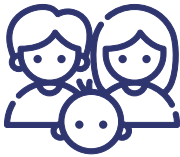
By bringing together local and national voices, and bridging the gap between academics, professionals and decision makers, we can drive changes that will lead to better relationships between babies and their parents.



We will do this specifically by:

- **Enabling and expanding** specialised parent-infant relationship teams
- **Promoting and driving quality** across the network of parent-infant relationship teams
- **Giving babies and the services that work with them a clear and compelling voice** that shapes the national and local policy and practice agenda

Our delivery is underpinned by our core values:



Relationship-based

We connect and collaborate widely to enhance all parent-infant relationships



Baby-focussed

We put babies and their emotional needs at the heart of everything we do



Outcomes-orientated

We're driven to achieve the best for babies, informed by data, evidence and practice





Our five-year strategic priorities

We want to see faster progress, particularly in scaling up services. This isn't sustainable via our previous model: we must work more strategically, harnessing the collective expertise and enthusiasm within local areas to enable parent-infant relationships to thrive across all communities. We are no longer setting up one team at a time. Rather we are providing the collaborative leadership to enable a collective growth across the UK.

To achieve our mission, we will be working in four main areas:

1. To improve availability of specialised parent-infant relationship teams across the UK

The provision of specialised support for parent-infant relationship teams is patchy. In 2019, we could find only 27 teams across the UK. Most babies in the UK lived in an area without a specialised parent-infant relationship team.

By 2024, the Parent-Infant Foundation will:

- Build the basic foundations and the capacity to enable local areas to establish and grow their own specialised parent-infant relationship teams
- Work with local partners to ensure the provision of parent-infant relationship teams in every nation of the UK
- Drive at least a 50% growth in provision across the UK of specialised parent-infant relationship teams. In ten years, we want to see all areas benefitting from such a team.



2. To improve service standards and quality

Whilst all existing teams provide a valuable and valued service to families, unlike other mental health services, specialised parent-infant relationship teams do not yet have clear, nationally-recognised quality service standards.

By 2024, the Parent-Infant Foundation will:

- Lead the sector to co-develop a set of clear and robust peer-reviewed quality standards for teams
- Create a national scheme to drive quality within parent-infant relationship teams

3. To build evidence of the clinical and economic benefits of services

We want to support this new and developing sector to grow the evidence of the impact that specialised parent-infant relationship teams create locally and nationally.

By 2024, the Parent-Infant Foundation will:

- Continue to develop systems for robust data collection and analysis, to help teams confirm the short- and medium-term changes they make to parent-infant relationships
- Develop the capabilities to state the cost-benefit impact and the cost savings of investing in specialised parent-infant relationship teams
- Contribute to and generate evidence for practice and policy to support healthy parent-infant relationships



4. To achieve policy change by being a leading voice in the sector

We believe that for every child to receive a sensitive and nurturing relationship, babies need to be at the centre of local and national decision-making.

During each year of this strategy, we will be working to achieve at least one policy change that will positively support the increase of specialised parent-infant relationship teams across the UK.

Our ambitions can only be achieved in collaboration with others so we will continue to build the 1001 Critical Days Movement, bringing together people from across the sector and providing a strong, united voice at a national and local level across the UK.

Whilst striving for change in the provision and quality of parent-infant relationship support, we will continue to build a strong, effective and sustainable organisation.

Our priorities here are to:

- a) Operate the Parent-Infant Foundation with a diverse funding platform to support our sustainability and stability
- b) Be bold in communicating what we do, so that we can achieve our roles as a connector, a leading voice in the field of babies' emotional wellbeing, and to campaign for change effectively
- c) Hold ourselves to account by sharing our progress against this strategy in our annual reports





Building Foundations

We start our five-year journey with strong foundations to build on.



The Parent-Infant Network

Starting with the initial PIPs, we now support a network of specialised parent-infant relationship teams across the UK. The Network's aim is to facilitate sharing of resources, good practice and help with common challenges, and to foster a shared drive to improve the reach, quality and impact of teams.

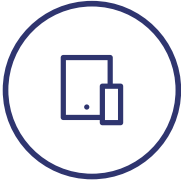
The Network offers two face-to-face events each year and we plan to deliver several webinars on topics of shared interest into 2020. Networking and collaboration are further facilitated through the Network newsletter.



Policy and campaigns

We co-ordinate the Conception to Age Two All-Party Parliamentary Group and the 1001 Critical Days Movement. In 2019, we co-ordinated the production of two infographics on babies' emotional wellbeing, aimed at decision makers. We also launched our report *Rare Jewels: Specialised Parent-Infant Relationship Teams in the UK*³ which made twelve recommendations to national and local policy makers regarding the importance of and need for parent-infant teams.

3. Hogg, S. (2019). *Rare Jewels: Specialised Parent-Infant Relationship Teams in the UK*. Parent Infant Partnership UK.



Quality standards

Via the Parent-Infant Network, we are developing a set of service standards for teams which will complement the Association of Infant Mental Health UK (AIMH UK)'s competencies for individual practitioners. We continue to co-create these standards with a view to teams being able to gain accreditation through a peer review process.



Bespoke development, implementation and strategic consultation, advice and mentoring

Through our work directly setting up and supporting services since 2013, and our close relationships with other specialised parent-infant relationship teams around the country, we have accumulated a great deal of learning about how to establish strong and effective services in different community settings.

Our existing knowledge is shared through our Development and Implementation Toolkit which is available on our website and forms the basis for ongoing learning, supporting local investment and partnership working.



UK-wide footprints

We want to see progress across the UK. In 2019, we saw the launch of the first specialised parent-infant relationship teams in Northern Ireland and Wales. In late 2019, we start working with Scottish partners to support the development of a trailblazer site in Scotland.



Summary

This five-year plan is ambitious, bold and optimistic.

It is built on the needs and experiences of parent-infant relationship teams and the families they support. It reflects the experiences and knowledge gained since the charity began in 2012 and takes into account previous successful achievements.

It is rooted in the Parent-Infant Foundation's unique position as the voice of parent-infant relationship teams across the UK.

We thank everyone who has supported our work, past and present. Together, we will see all babies receiving a sensitive, nurturing relationship to lay the foundation for lifelong mental and physical health.







Parent-Infant
FOUNDATION

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