

Colin and Lisa live in Risca with eight of their children, aged between 16 and three.

Colin's poor behaviour towards his family had affected everyone involved, but Flying Start Caerphilly gave him the chance and the encouragement to turn everything around for the better

A bad situation

With eight of their eleven children still living at home, it is not at all surprising that Colin and Lisa's family life could sometimes be stressful and that tempers could become frayed. It was, admits Colin, largely because of the fact that he was often unable to control his own temper that Social Services stepped in to try and address the situation. "I am prepared to hold my hand up and say that I was pretty awful as a husband and father and I'm not proud of the fact," he says. "I didn't have any respect for my family and no control over the children so things weren't good at home and I believe it is only because of the intervention of Flying Start that everything is so much better now."

Dechrau'n Deg
Flying Start

Life-changing learning

Colin and Lisa were referred to the Flying Start Parent Nurture Programme which has, he says, completely changed his life. "In only the ten weeks it took to complete the course I learned so much about parenting and how to approach situations I'd handled badly before and my attitudes changed completely. I discovered that there are much more effective ways to deal with everything than by losing your temper and shouting and it's amazing how much calmer and more relaxed our life is. We enjoy doing things together as a family, like each other's company and basically are much happier than before."

Incredible difference

The Parent Nurture Programme enabled Colin to see how his anger was affecting his relationship with both his wife and his children and showed him ways to step back from potential conflict and to address a situation differently and more effectively. "Instead of flying off the handle I learned to think things through, practice 'time out' and calm down, and it has made an incredible difference to us all," he explains. "We all used to get angry and worked up, probably mostly because of my attitude, but we definitely have much more respect for each other - and I respect my children more. I understand them better so I treat them better and their behaviour has improved a great deal in return."

Admiration

Apart from the Parent Nurture Programme and the other courses, including Family Lives, he has subsequently taken, Colin has greatly appreciated the support of his Flying Start Family Support Worker for whom, Colin says, nothing is ever too much trouble.

"I can always ring and talk to him about anything, and he'll often come and see us at home for a chat and a cup of tea. Having someone who is prepared to make such an effort on our behalf has been an enormous help and I have nothing but admiration for people like this who give their time to help."

Change of heart

Colin had started taking his youngest children to the weekly Dad's Group, at Pantside Integrated Children's Centre, and actively enjoyed spending time with them and other parents and children, so much so that, even though the youngest, Thomas, is now at school, he still goes every week. "It's unusual I suppose to go on my own but everyone is so friendly and I would miss the company," he says. "We have started some woodwork projects which is great, and if there's someone there who needs a hand with their own children then I'm happy to help out. Flying Start also asked for our suggestions and we're hoping to get an allotment between us and grow some vegetables. I'm absolutely amazed by what they have done."

An unbelievable transformation

As a result of their tense home situation Colin and Lisa separated briefly last year but are now reunited and living much more happily as a family. "Flying Start is nothing short of unbelievable in the way it and the team members have transformed my life," he says. "Everything I have been involved with through them has been incredibly rewarding and I am so grateful that our lives have been changed so much for the better."





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