With the ongoing pandemic still facing us in 2021 our pivot to an online Parenting Week campaign was stronger from the work put in by the Parenting NI team in 2020, making it an easier transition for planning events and celebrations in advance of Parenting Week. We continued to spread the Parenting Week messaging through social channels, newsletter campaigns, virtual events and collaboration with other organisations to ensure an exciting week of activities were planned to celebrate parents. This included a coffee morning and mindfulness session conducted by Mind Wise along with a number of practitioner workshops including a seminar from renowned research scientist Suzanne Zeedyk on the power of connection. We also hosted some fantastic online Top Tips sessions for parents to get involved and make themselves a priority.

Parenting NI wishes to thank all those who participated with special thanks to Suzanne Zeedyk, Pip Jaffa OBE & Mind Wise this year.
Parenting NI first launched Parenting Week in Northern Ireland back in 1999. This year, Parenting Week falls on the 18th - 22nd of October with the theme ‘Reset and Reconnect’.

Leading Parent support charity, Parenting NI encourages all parents and families to Reset and Reconnect on week commencing October 18th which is the start of Parenting Week. Parenting Week is all about celebrating all that parents do today, and every day. The resilience of parent’s and those in parenting roles has never been more evident than throughout arguably, one of the most difficult and challenging years to date.

Charlene Brooks, Parenting NI Chief Executive says,

“Parents have told us they have been disconnected from many of their social networks and supports, and have felt isolated during the last 18 months – therefore the theme of Reset and Reconnect was chosen, by parents, to encourage families to take time to reflect on a difficult year but more importantly consider how to move forward through reconnecting with friends, family or even with nature”.

Charities, schools and organisations across the sector are being called upon to get on board and show their support for parents and families by participating in the Week. Parenting week is a great platform to celebrate, acknowledge and thank parents and also to encourage them to think positively about the future ahead.

Reflecting on a difficult year, Declan O’Neill, a father and member of the Dad’s Project Steering Group said,

“Now is the time to look forward and focus on making memories and cherishing all the little moments we can with loved ones. Everyone has had a tough year, that kept us separated from our support networks, and that is why our family will be choosing to reset and reconnect by enjoying quality time with our extended family and making up for what was lost throughout the ongoing pandemic.”
He added “It has shown us not to take anything for granted, and to enjoy all of the little moments, like getting out for nature walks, taking the children to the park or celebrating important milestones with our family. Parenting Week gives us a chance to press the reset button, giving yourself a pat on the back for making it through an unpredictable year, but also staying in the now and reconnecting with yourself, your friends, and your family. Suzanne Zeedyk, renowned research scientist who will be delivering an online webinar for practitioners in celebration of parenting week., commenting on the importance of reconnecting said,

“We’ve learned all too well, over the past 18 months, just how important connection is. The separation from family, friends, colleagues and even acquaintances has been one of the hardest things to bear about lockdown.”

She added “While that statement may at first glance seem an obvious, once you realise that the science tells us human beings have a biological need for connection, the idea becomes more profound. Human beings are social creatures, wired deep within our biology to need relationships that feel safe and affirming.”

Parenting NI are calling upon individuals and organisations to get involved and celebrate parents and the contributions parents make, not only to their children’s lives, but to the wider community. Parenting NI will be hosting a number of fantastic activities to celebrate throughout the week including a virtual coffee morning, Top Tips sessions for parents, training workshops for practitioners and plenty of free activities, tips and information on how to reset and reconnect this Parenting Week. But Parenting week is not only about one organisation – its about all individuals, groups and organisations.

Parenting NI would encourage everyone to make a pledge to show your support for Parenting Week, and shout it loud and proud from your favourite online platform– why not think of innovative ways to acknowledge and celebrate the role that parents play and promote what you are doing to reset and reconnect this Parenting Week tagging @parentingni or using the hashtag #parentingweek
This year's theme was chosen by parents, after arguably one of the most difficult years for parents and their families, Reset and Reconnect was chosen to give parents the opportunity to pause, reset and consider how to reconnect and who to reconnect with this Parenting Week. We devised a number of mental health and nature Top Tips to encourage parents to put down their phones, and reconnect with nature. These Top Tips also focused on the importance of play for children and how to also help the entire family get involved with the theme of resetting and reconnecting, and once again disconnecting from digital devices and focusing on ways to improve their own confidence and mental health.

**Mental Health & Nature Top Tips**

- **Increased use of electronic devices can increase levels of stress.** Why not unplug devices and spend time in nature walking the dog or on a bike ride with the children to help you unwind.

  Support Line: 0808 8010 722
  parentingni.org

- **Introduce your child to the wonder of growing flowers or veg from seed.** Tending seedlings can produce feelings of empathy and watching their growth demonstrates resilience and hope. This can be a good starting activity if you find being with other people challenging.

  Support Line: 0808 8010 722
  parentingni.org

**Daily tips for play**

- **Play teaches children how to make friends, work as a team and take turns.** Playing together gives siblings an opportunity to form strong bonds that last a lifetime.

  Support Line: 0808 8010 722
  parentingni.org

- **Physical play helps develop co-ordination, balance, strength and stamina and ball games can help develop hand to eye coordination.**

  Support Line: 0808 8010 722
  parentingni.org
BEGINNING THE WEEK WITH A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Parenting NI kicked off Parenting week with a special video from our CEO Charlene Brooks. Charlene is keen to ensure that Parenting Week is embraced by as many individuals, organisations and groups as possible across the week every year. Parenting Week is all about celebration – it’s about encouraging everyone to pause and reflect on the importance of the role of parents, and what a remarkable difference they make in families, communities and society.

Charlene noted that Parenting NI have been privileged to lead on Parenting Week for over 20 years and introduced the theme of ‘Reset and Reconnect’ as chosen by parents for 2021. After a difficult year, it was time to reflect, pause and consider how to reconnect and who to reconnect with for parents and families. Charlene noted that reconnections could be made with friends, family, a faith group; It could be taking the time to reconnect with nature, and disconnect from your digital devices. The opportunities were endless under the chosen theme, and the benefits would be considerable, not only for parents but for the whole family.

Charlene suggested that as organisations, businesses and different groups we can celebrate & acknowledge the role that parents play during Parenting Week and asked that they get involved in sharing supportive and informative messaging, and sharing how they were choosing to celebrate parents.
Our first event of the week was an incredibly successful coffee morning and mindfulness session, which we ran in collaboration with Mind Wise. We got some fantastic feedback from some of our attendees and it was the perfect way to kick off a week of resetting and reconnecting.

Parenting Week
Reset & Reconnect

Parenting Week Events
Coffee Morning & Mindful Session

Our first event of the week was an incredibly successful coffee morning and mindfulness session, which we ran in collaboration with Mind Wise. We got some fantastic feedback from some of our attendees and it was the perfect way to kick off a week of resetting and reconnecting.

Parenting Week Virtual Coffee Morning
with Parenting NI

Tues 19th Oct
10.00am
Online via Zoom.

Join us for a virtual zoom coffee morning where we will discuss all things parenting and have a mindfulness session from Mind Wise in celebration of Parenting Week!

Email info@parentingni.org to sign up

#parentingweek
We received some fantastic comments and feedback from the coffee morning and mindful session hosted by the wonderful Elaine Hanna and Michelle McGlade-Buick as our PNI representatives, with many taking away techniques to use in everyday life. Below is a particularly wonderful comment from a participant.

"I found the Parenting NI Parenting Week coffee morning with Mindwise brilliant! It was a chance to switch off and take a breath and focus on yourself. I thoroughly enjoyed the relaxation that Mindwise provided. Self care is so important and it was a great reminder to take time out for ourselves."

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

A GROUNDING RAINBOW

Reach for 5 things you can TOUCH

Observe 4 things you can SEE

Yell 3 things you can HEAR

Gulp 2 things you can TASTE

Breathe 1 thing you can SMELL
We had a fantastic turn out to our Top Tips for Parents sessions and fantastic results from our survey surrounding the relevance of topics which included The power of the parent child relationship, Helping your child with homework and The importance of play.

Come and join us for FREE online sessions to find out more about the following topics:

**Tuesday 19th October 2021**
8.00pm - 9.00pm
The power of the parent child relationship

**Thursday 21st October 2021**
8.00pm - 9.00pm
Helping your child with homework

**Monday 25th October 2021**
8.00pm - 9.00pm
The importance of play

Online session details will be sent following registration.
Register now at: toptipsforparents.eventbrite.co.uk

Support Line: 0808 8010 722
www.parentingni.org

These sessions have been funded by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for parents living within the geographical boundaries of the SHSCT area, however PRIORITY will be given to THOSE LIVING IN THE PORTADOWN, CRAIGAVON & BANBRIDGE areas.
100% of parents strongly agreed that they have a better understanding of this topic area.

100% of parents would recommend this session to others.

89% of parents strongly agreed, and 11% agreed that they had a greater awareness of how to deal with issues of concern.

100% of parents strongly agreed that the session was relevant to them.
GETTING CURIOUS: PRACTITIONER WORKSHOP

Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk is a research scientist fascinated by babies' innate capacity to communicate. Since 1993, she has been based at the University of Dundee, Scotland, within the School of Psychology, where she now holds an honorary post. We estimate that, in the past 10 years, well over 100,000 people have heard her speak live, and many more have watched videos or read her books and blogs.

Suzanne now works closely with organisations throughout the world, holding on to the same goal with which she set out: We need to increase awareness of the decisions we take about caring for children, because they are integrally connected to our vision for the kind of society we wish to build.

We had a number of practitioners attend from local organisations to listen to Suzanne and we received some brilliant feedback about the workshop.

"A fantastic seminar hosted by Parenting NI. This seminar gave me time to rethink my practice"

The session lasted for 2 hours and was introduced by our CEO Charlene Brooks along with the former CEO & Parenting NI ambassador Pip Jaffa OBE.

Suzanne explored our chosen theme of 'Reset and Reconnect' and the power of connection. Suzanne also had a discussion with a parent regarding the science of connection & the impact it made in her life as a parent. This exclusive content was also shared on our social platforms for a limited time.
SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Parenting NI had a strong social media plan across our social media platforms: Facebook & Twitter, with 3 - 5 posts going out per day on each platform & an ongoing posting and reposting strategy daily on Twitter. We had a huge amount of support & involvement from schools, various charitable organisations, individuals and a variety of MLA's & councillors.

We shared a variety of the resources we had created for Parenting Week, links to our podcasts, hosted a competition and shared links to sign up for upcoming free sessions and events! The variety of material shared was very successful and helped us reach a diverse range of people via our social platforms in the absence of being able to hold physical events. Although the lack of face to face events is still disappointing and we have missed being able to host physical events, the relaxing of rules along with proper social distancing and PPE allowed some of our PNI colleagues to get out to live events and to meet supporters and MLA's to discuss all things Parenting Week which we also promoted through our social channels. It was another successful online campaign!

Some of the organisations who helped spread the word of Parenting Week

- Altram
- Aware NI
- Belfast Hour
- Belfast Men’s Health
- Book Trust NI
- Brain and Spine Foundation
- BCM NI
- CAFRE
- CYPSP
- CO3
- Child Brain Injury
- Dept of Health
- Disability Action NI
- Early Years Org
- Edwards & Co.
- Employers for Childcare
- Family Connections
- Family Mediation NI
- Health & Social Care Board
- ICHI Health Alliance
- Inspiring Women in Leadership
- Libraries NI
- NIACRO
- NICIE
- Organ Donation NI
- Playboard NI
- Probation Board for NI
- Public Health Agency
- Thrive Newtonabbey
- Volunteer Now
- Youth Justice Agency
Following: **5445**
(+788 Followers from 2020)
153K impressions over the week up from 110k impressions this time last year
106 new followers
321 mentions from other accounts
7705 profile visits

Following: **11,034**
(+1505 Followers from 2020)
13,072 people reached with Parenting Week content
Engagement: **Up 121%** on the previous week
Video: **4533** engagements across the week
Competition reached **1.8K people**

Website visits: **4135**
Avg. Session Duration up by **14.57%** on the previous year
(amount of time someone spent searching our website)
7.58% increase in new users

Sign-Ups: **239**
Open Rate: **27.9%**
Our most popular content in the NL was Charlene welcoming everyone to Parenting Week & Top Tips!
We were delighted to take the opportunity to advertise Parenting Week in the Helping Hands Guide which ran in print and online across the following high profile newspapers:

- News Letter
- Derry Journal
- Mid Ulster Mail
- Portadown Times
- Larne/ Carrick Times

Helping Hands had an estimated reach of over 100,000 combined NI Readers across the province.

We were delighted to receive a video message of support from Kate Nicholl, the Lord Mayor of Belfast. It was fantastic to have the Lord Mayors support in celebrating Parenting Week along with the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council lighting Lagan Valley Island purple on the first day of Parenting Week.

We are so thrilled to have Cllr Kate Nicholl, Lord Mayor of Belfast pledge to support parents this ParentingWeek and help us spread the word about the importance of celebrating parents, and everything they do! Get involved by making your own pledge to support parents and their contribution to society, or let us know how you are choosing to reset & reconnect this week! 💜

Lord Mayor of Belfast
Councillor Kate Nicholl
Our CEO Charlene Brooks was delighted to meet Koulla Yiasouma, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People who has showed continuous support for Parenting Week and parents over the years. Koulla also took the Parenting Week Pledge, to support parents & celebrate their contribution to society.

It was also fantastic to see how other businesses & organisations decided to celebrate and acknowledge parents this Parenting Week. The Newry Early Years Children & Family Centre celebrated parents by making almost 40 packs containing a treat, tea & coffee and a poem, written by a staff member.
We managed to achieve a huge range of cross party support for the campaign this year. We met with members from Alliance, the DUP, UUP, SDLP, Sinn Féin and the Green Party and secured online support and promotion from a number of the party members.

We received video support from Health Minister Robin Swann, Naomi Long, Minister for Justice & Edward Poots, Minister for Agriculture as they got involved in acknowledging and celebrating parents & the importance of the role they play in society.
POLITICAL SUPPORT

Our meetings with a variety of MLAs, councillors and some of our very own Parent Champions involved discussions around the real need for strong support for parents in our society. 2021 has been an incredibly difficult year for parents, with many families struggling to juggle working from home arrangements while kids have been off school due to COVID infections or if a pupil in their class tested positive for COVID, making it extremely tough to navigate quick changes to daily routine and work. Keeping these issues at the forefront of the political landscape is key to change and we would like to sincerely thank everyone from all of the parties who took the time to meet with us & discuss our aims for the future along with embracing Parenting Week.