

How Playgroup Helped my Special Son

June Owens

My first recollection of the PPA was on the 24 June 1981 when I was standing in the room attached to a playroom in the Rhuddlan Children's Centre, Rhuddlan. My son had been diagnosed with developmental delay and we had been sent there for him to be assessed to decide which course of education he was going to take, in other words School.

The first thing which I clearly remember was the very friendly welcome from both parents and staff and looking through the window there were two Playgroup staff singing and dancing and talking to the children. It made me realise that there were a lot of others like my son and there were certainly more like me coming to terms with the situation.

Judith, who was the Playgroup leader, made me feel very much at home and joined us for a drink after the session. I remember feeling this PPA was going to be a great help and a tower of strength to me. The playroom was also fitted out with lots of climbing frames etc. The more I attended the more I realised what great services they provided. We had a Social Worker, Doctor, Speech Therapist, Nurse, Psychologist and Physiotherapist all under one roof which was marvellous.

As time progressed Judith set up a committee to run the parents' group in conjunction with the professionals and we had a wonderful rapport so the Centre was a very happy place I remember mothers coming there to have a break and discuss the future treatments, schooling and their feelings which, of course, I can tell you was very important.

We joined together with the PPA and held numerous fundraising events, including Bingo. After 25 years I am still in touch with some of the parents and still see the Playgroup Leader occasionally.

Finally, without my being sent to PPA, I would have missed out so much because my son would probably not have come on as much and I would never have been able to cope with the realisation of the extremes of his handicap.