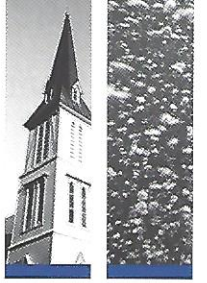


Current events



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New support for first-time parents in Addington

WORDS & PHOTO: TRUUS DINGEMANSE

More than 2,000 babies were born to first-time parents in Christchurch last year. Becoming a parent can be a lonely journey, and many new parents find themselves unguided, un-informed, and isolated. Community connections can be especially challenging in post-quake Christchurch.

That is why Anglican Care Community Development has launched the SPACE programme (Supporting Parents Alongside Children's Education) at St Mary's Anglican Church in Addington. SPACE helps first-time parents build new connections and access parenting information. At SPACE, parents have the opportunity to connect with other parents and share their experiences. It provides a safe place for parents to explore different perspectives on child development and parenting so they can choose what works best for them.

Weekly sessions include the opportunity to meet and get to know other new parents; discussions about child development and parenting topics; play sessions with equipment that supports baby's learning and development; and rhymes, music, and books for babies. Qualified facilitators along with other professionals share their collective knowledge and experience with the group.

"It has been very helpful," says a mother attending a SPACE programme. "As a first-time mum it's a bit like 'I don't know what to do.' They have heaps of information, and you can share stories and tips with each other which is really good."

Kathryn Byfield, Family Community Development Worker in Addington, believes SPACE is an important part of continuing to build community in the area. "We hope to start another group out of the Anglican Care Community Development office in St Martins," she says.

Further information about the SPACE programme can be found at www.space.org.nz. For information about joining a SPACE programme in Christchurch contact jan.chris@accd.org.nz or phone 03 332 7143. ■



Parents and babies at the Addington SPACE programme.