

"Development of a support group for children and their families following a burn injury"

In 1989 I was fortunate to be given the opportunity through the Winston Churchill Fellowship, to spend 6 weeks in Eastern USA and Canada, studying the long term rehabilitation of burn survivors. I visited adult and children's burn units and rehabilitation centres in New Jersey, Boston, Washington DC, Pittsburgh and Toronto. I obtained many new ideas during my Fellowship, but the area that I was most drawn to was the well developed psychosocial support available to children with burn injuries and their families which, at the time was very much less developed in the UK. I was particularly impressed with the school reintegration programmes, witnessing a variety of methods to ease burn injured children's return to school. Support groups for children and their families were also part of the rehabilitation experience in USA at that time. On my return to the UK I set about, with the help of colleagues, the development of these two areas. 25 years on, child and family support for children and families is now a well established part of burn rehabilitation in Birmingham. Below are details of just some of the input available:



Development of a school reintegration programme for burn injured children in Birmingham

The 'Back to School' programme aims to give children returning to school a positive feeling of self worth by providing emotional support and educating their peers about burns and treatment, so promoting understanding and acceptance. It is available for children aged 4-16; for primary aged children puppets are used within a structured school performance in order to communicate in a non threatening, child friendly way. Parents normally initiate a 'Back to School' performance which, following agreement with the school, is performed by members of the burn rehab team to the child's class, year group and other groups of children with whom they are likely to have contact. The content is adjusted dependant on the child's age and at the end the audience can ask the puppets questions. Time is also spent providing burn prevention and first aid education as well as advising teachers about practical issues surrounding the child's return to school.



Enzo's Friends - 'having fun together'

Enzo is the name of our friendly dragon which can be seen at the top of this poster, he is the mascot of our burn support group. Enzo's Friends has developed over the last 12 years from being run by rehab staff in addition to their paid jobs to now having a funded coordinator post. We now have a well developed web site, regular news letters and events for different age groups throughout the year ranging from swimming, theatre trips, cookery classes, teddy bear picnic and Xmas party to name but a few. This year we also have a family attending a national family burn camp with a staff volunteer. Whatever the event our aim is to provide the opportunity for families to meet others with similar experiences and to encourage return to social activities.



Kate Whiting – Principal Occupational Therapist, Burn Centre, Birmingham Children's Hospital –1989 Fellow