

Toy Service – Sunday Dec. 2nd

First of all THANK YOU. We may worry you won't remember to bring a toy or gift for another child or young person, but you have never let us down. So this is a real thank you on behalf of not only the children that will receive them but also the parents or carers and of course the Family Workers who will select and wrap the presents. All the toys will be taken tomorrow to the Action for Children Family Centre on Berryfields - for both there and other smaller centres in surrounding areas - and then all the toys will be individually selected with a child in mind and either wrapped by the Centre or given to a parent or carer to wrap and give on Christmas Day.

Not only are we thanking you all for bringing toys and gifts, but both here and in my home I have several bags of beautifully knitted items – garments for tiny babies, but also hats and mittens which are so important plus blankets for cots, pushchairs or prams which are in great demand, so thank you to all the ladies who spend many hours knitting.

We talk about the Family Centre but where is it and what does it do.

Not just **1 very large centre** on Berryfields run by Action for Children

Smaller outreach centres – **Stewkley, Wing, Wingrave, Ivinghoe, Pitstone**

Valuable for single parents with young children who are housed in these villages and can feel very isolated.

The Centres help in all sorts of ways. They run all sorts of groups such as Play and Grow, Little Learners, Multilingual Baby and Toddler groups and Bumps & Little Learners etc. all to help with child development and understanding etc. but also **Post Natal** classes and more specialist groups on **Parenting courses** and workshops learning about health and cooking.

Also **Specialist clinics** run by professionals with developmental checks for speech & language, teeth, etc.

Additional help for those with special needs including the **Sparkles Club** for children with Downs syndrome.

The staff also **visit and give support to** families who are not coping very well which is where many of your toys will be going, helping to manage money and look after a home.

Also a **signposting Centre** when help is needed for family members with disability, those suffering domestic abuse, support with drugs and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and access to funding for childcare. .

However, **our help today** is by giving toys and gifts to children who will have very little, if anything this Christmas, so again A HUGE THANK YOU on behalf of all those children who will now enjoy receiving presents this Christmas. Thank you.