



# Labour Friends of Sure Start

## Lily's Story

I volunteer for the parent and baby group at a Sure Start Children's Centre. I chat with parents and make sure everything is going well, and encourage them to let their children try out new things.

The centre I volunteer at has recently had to close its Council run nursery due to spending cuts. Whilst other services still run out of the building, it's very sad to see rooms still full of toys but with no children playing with them.

Many of the staff that ran the nursery have been redistributed to other areas of the Council, and have started doing admin work - despite being highly trained childcare professionals with years of valuable experience.

There seems to be a common misconception that Sure Start Centres are places where parents can come and have a cup of tea and a chat - that they're essentially glorified play centres. They do so much more! I think this means we have a long but vital job in showing what these Centres do and the services they provide. Hopefully this would encourage even more families to use them and also create more public opposition to their closures.

To see the dedication and skill of the Sure Start professionals is impressive but also touching. I know they're literally changing lives: I can see it each week when I come in to volunteer.

Mothers and babies much happier having received advice on healthy sleeping routines, children trying out activities or interacting with other children for the first time, or even parents developing friendships.

I've realised the full importance of Sure Start Centres in my short time volunteering. They are a lifeline to so many families, especially women. Sure Start was one the best achievements of the last Labour Government and it needs our full support. Public awareness is the first step.

Spread the word!

*Lily, from Manchester.*