



2025 impact report



Our vision

To enable all children to have the best start in life and their families to thrive within our community.

Our mission

To provide supportive activities, programmes, and courses that foster learning and enjoyment for pre-school aged children and their families, so that children develop and learn to realise their potential, parents have the skills and confidence to be parents they want to be, and families are connected to each other and the community enhancing their mental health and wellbeing.

Welcome from our Manager

2025 has been a brilliant year for GroW, increasing our reach and impact through the introduction of new activities.

We have developed our service to pregnant women by starting a midwife-led Community Birth group and a new antenatal class. As well as providing information, these projects also give parents the opportunity to build social networks, get to know the GroW team and therefore have more support in place right at the start of their parenting journey, before they have had their baby.

We have also started an outdoor nature group, through a Thriving in Nature grant, working with other local charities to open up the wonderful green spaces that we have in Wantage for our families to enjoy and to promote learning and enjoyment in a different setting.

Other highlights have been our Out and About sessions in the summer for new residents at the Kingsgrove and Wellington Gate developments. We have also increased the number of Family First Aid, Baby Massage and Parenting Puzzle courses provided.

Collaboration with other local organisations has been a theme this year, from providing surplus food with the Cornerstone café, to activity sessions from the South and Vale Active Communities team. We are also working closely with the local primary schools and health professionals, such as the Oxford Perinatal Mental Health team and social prescribers. All these partnerships build a stronger and deeper offering for our families.

Thanks to our amazing supporters, we can continue to grow and be there for our growing community of families with young children. Your support also allows us to look to the future, and develop our service even further to meet the needs of our community. On behalf of everyone at GroW Families, we want to thank everyone who has supported our work in 2025.

Sarah Stephenson
GroW Service Manager



"GroW has helped me immensely over the last year. The group has helped me make some lifelong friends. The team were so supportive when my daughter received her diagnosis, being a listening ear and celebrating her slow growth successes. The power of someone taking my daughter for 10 minutes whilst I had a coffee was immensely helpful. The support helped me survive some of the hardest moments of my life. The community couldn't be without them, I just wish they were available every day of the week!"



Our service



We are a small, experienced team bringing families with babies and young children together in a welcoming and safe environment, to help them create supportive social networks, ease loneliness and isolation, and offer a listening ear, useful information and signposting to other services.

Our Core Services:

- **5 weekly Stay and Play groups** for families with babies and children between 0-5 years old in a variety of locations around the expanding area of Wantage and Grove to make our services accessible to those who may feel isolated.
- **2 weekly "Bumps and Beyond" sessions** supporting pregnant parents-to-be and new parents with babies.
- **GroW Outdoors** - activities and play in a natural, outdoors environment
- A monthly **session in a local care home** interacting with older members of our community
- A programme of **courses** - Family Links parenting and antenatal courses, family first aid courses and baby massage courses.

All our groups are free of charge and open to all (donations are always welcomed).

Our Stay and Play sessions offer activities covering the EYFS areas of development, with craft activities, messy play, a healthy snack including two portions of fruit/veg, stories and singing.

Families are referred to our groups by or with Homestart volunteers, nursery nurses, health visitors, social services professionals and other health professionals, such as the Oxfordshire Perinatal Mental Health Service.

Collaboration with other organisations in Wantage is also a vital part of our support to families. For example, working with a local community café offering food vouchers to our families, and working with Sustainable Wantage to run toy and clothes "swap shops", working with Betjeman Park trustees to run our Outdoor group.



755

families reached



260

sessions delivered



5,412

**individual
attendances**

"I just wanted to take some time to say thank you. Since I moved back to Wantage back in September, it's been a whirlwind of moving houses, changes with family, surroundings and life as a whole. But thankfully in this difficult time we had GroW play sessions to be a consistency, play place and break from the world around us and something for us to look forward to each week with a time of chaos.

I truly believe the group has played a massive part in my child's development as where we were living before had nothing like this and I felt that my daughter was behind socially and with her speech and communication. She now joins in more and focuses not only on activities but the routine of songs and activities at the end and also other children around her. The joy it brings to see what a positive impact this has had not only for her but for me as a now single mother after leaving a bad experience has helped me too.

I am so grateful for all you do and this community extremely benefits from people like you and the work you do, The Wantage area would be lost without you."

grow
Grove and Wantage
Family Community Group

Our impact

OUR IMPACT (CHILDREN)

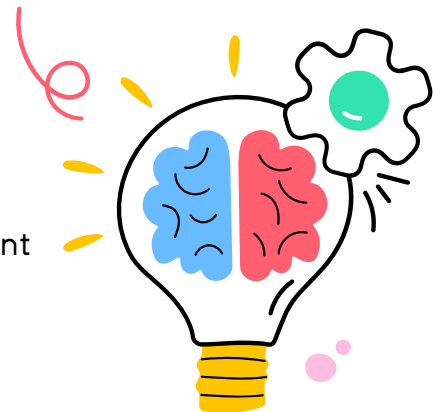


90%

of parents agree children enjoy their time at GroW

85%

of parents agree GroW helps children with their development



69%


of parents agree GroW helps children with their preparation for starting school

**Our values: WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE,
SUPPORTIVE, NON-JUDGEMENTAL,
RELATIONAL, EMPATHETIC, PROFESSIONAL
EXCELLENCE, TRUSTED, ACCESSIBLE**

OUR IMPACT (PARENTS AND CARERS)

- 90%** of parents/carers felt that **GroW** helps them to get **'out and about' with their child**
- 86%** of parents/carers were **able to meet other parents while attending GroW**
- 82%** of parents/carers reported that **GroW** makes them **feel supported**
- 79%** of parents/carers reported that **GroW** helps them **stay well**
- 69%** GroW sessions helped parents/carers introduced **new food, activities or ways of engaging with their child**





I am very grateful for these GroW groups. They have helped me in many ways! My main gratitude was that they were there for me and my son when no one else was.


I had given up hope, I was struggling with my son and started feeling lost and drained. I had asked for help several times from the health visitors and doctors but was always told that there was no appointments or that someone will get back to me. However the GroW groups were there for me and my son. They listened to me, they understood me, they didn't judge or pass it off, they helped me. Since then they have checked in every week, made sure we are being seen to and offered support and help.

I have been going to these groups since my son was 8 weeks old. This group helped me so much, if it wasn't for this group me and my son wouldn't have gone out and I believe I wouldn't have coped mentally. My son was in hospital a lot when he was younger (we are still in and out of hospital!). So we struggled to get out or meet new people or to learn about each stage / milestones. My family are not around for us, my friends were always busy so we felt lonely. These groups offer so much support and were always there for us each week. They made me feel welcome and made the groups feel warm and less scary going on your own. The staff there always came over and chatted and checked in on us. We always looked forward to these groups. It was our weekly highlight. It got us out of the house, it made me get dressed and look forward to something each week. It gave me and my son a special bond and memory that I will cherish forever.

During our time at the group, they introduced us to other parents who had babies at a similar age to my son. Since then I have two lovely mums who are now my best friends and speak to every day.

I was worried about eating/choking so they offered for me to come in and feed my son in the groups as they were first aid trained in case he would choke. This helped me feel at ease and was able to finally offer my son harder foods. They also informed me of their first aid class, which I was able to sign up to.

I am very thankful for these groups, they are amazing and have supported a lot of mums and dads out there. I am very thankful for everything they have done for us and are still doing for us. We love the groups.





We are a charitable community group supporting families who are expecting or have babies and children under 5 years old in the OX12 area - Wantage and Grove and surrounding villages.



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