Early-Positive Approaches to Support (E-PAtS): A new family carer support programme developed by the Tizard Centre.

Background
- Challenging behaviour has a significant negative impact on people with a learning disability and those who support them.
- Challenging behaviour often starts in childhood and without intervention endures into adulthood.
- Early support in childhood may prevent challenging behaviour from developing and improve outcomes for people with LD, and their families.

Why a family carer programme?
- Brief and low cost.
- Sustainable and empowering for family carers.
- Well evidence-based.
- Family carers are best placed to offer support and often the most motivated to do this.

Why a new programme?
- There are many programmes for family carers of typically developing children however these rarely meet the additional needs of family carers of children with LD.
- Programmes for family carers of children with LD do exist – Confident Parenting, Stepping Stones Triple P, Incredible Years, etc.
- These existing programmes are well evidenced however they are designed to provide support after challenging behaviour has developed.

Developing the group
1. Deciding on the content areas
   - Based on principles of positive behaviour support.
   - Risk factors for development of challenging behaviour.
   - Known areas of difficulty for children with LD.
   - Advice from other professionals.
2. Initial working party meeting
   - Attended by a range of professionals who were experts in at least one of the topic areas, and a family carer.
   - Discussed what should go in each session, extra resources, how to run the group.
3. Developing the session content
   - Using feedback from the focus group and the literature.
4. Family carer focus group
   - Invited 7 family carers to offer advice on the format and content looking back on what would have been useful for them.
5. Feedback from working party and focus group.

The E-PAtS programme
- For family carers with a child aged 0-5 where developmental delay/LD has been suggested.
- 7 x 2.5 hour sessions, facilitated by a professional and family carer.

1. Working together - Introduction, accessing services
2. Looking after yourself - importance of looking after yourself
3. Sleep - How to help your child sleep well.
4. Communication - supporting your child to communicate
5. Fostering life skills through active development - developing skills and independence
6. Responding to challenges - responding to challenging behaviour
7. The next steps - tying it all together

The workbook
- The passport – specific information about the child in relation to session content to be shared with others.
- Top tips from other family carers.
- Service directory & additional resources.

Aims
- Equip families with the confidence, skills and resilience to help meet their child’s current and future needs.
- Provide support for families to help them understand their child better.
- Provide a forum for families to meet each other and share experiences.
- Help identify the needs of a family and signpost to additional support if needed.

Piloting the programme
- Initial pilot involving families in Kent.
- Mencap is being funded by NHS England to deliver 9 further pilots in Newham, Greenwich and Barnet.
- Plan to run more pilots across other areas of the UK, some as part of a wider Family Support Programme Mencap has developed.