

Useful Contacts

Directgov

Website: www.direct.gov.uk
Has the widest range of information on public services.

Fairplay

Tel: 01246 347540
Website: www.fair-play.co.uk/surestart
In partnership with Chesterfield Surestart Fairplay have increased services available to children with additional needs.

Aspergers online

Website: www.assupportgrouponline.co.uk
Emma Thomson developed this site to increase understanding of Asperger's Syndrome.

If you would like to receive this newsletter in another language, large print, or audio version please contact us on **01246 273154**.

Derby and Derbyshire Parent Partnership

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News from the local authority...



Improving life for local people

Review of Special Education in Derbyshire, carried out by David Hart.

On 5th September, the Council Cabinet agreed the

final report of the Special Education Review. It follows the consultation with parents, teachers and governors which ran from February to May. This enabled us to focus on the most important changes which we will now move to carry out.

We'll revise our approach to early years, making provision clear. There are roles for Children's Centres, mainstream settings, special schools and diagnostic and assessment nurseries in this.

We'll develop special education through mainstream, enhanced and special schools. The Support Service for Special Educational Needs will continue its work with children in primary schools. They'll develop agreements with schools and emphasise both their direct teaching role and other contributions.

Special schools will become still more special, to meet the needs of children and young people with the highest level of difficulties. They'll work in closer partnership with Local Authority services and mainstream schools.

Special schools are part of the "Building Schools for the Future" process. Priorities for building redevelopment, if funds become available, are Peak School in Chinley, Alfreton Park School and The Delves. We will meet needs by placing children within Derbyshire wherever we can. We will move to a single Children's Services model to manage all the residence provided in special schools.

Enhanced resource schools will continue but we will make their role and funding clearer. We'll work to set up new enhanced provision for primary children with autism in Amber Valley or Erewash and with physical difficulties in the North East of the county. We'll pay particular attention to the needs of pupils with hearing difficulties, physical difficulties and learning difficulties and disabilities in any building plans, including enhanced resource schools.

We'll review the Educational Psychology Service and we'll look further at Behaviour Support Service.

As we develop 14-19 services, we will consider the needs of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

All settings and services will be involved in making the outcomes of the review a reality. We can make some of the changes by altering how we work. Other changes will need longer but we hope to have made good progress by the end of 2006-2007.

David Shaw – Deputy Director, Children & Younger Adults Dept.



Issue II Winter 2006

A neutral service encouraging partnership between parents and all those involved with children who have special educational needs in Derby & Derbyshire.

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Have you enjoyed reading this newsletter?

If the answer is "yes" please pass it on to a friend. If you would like to receive future copies please contact us at either our office in Chesterfield or Derby and we will add you to our mailing list. If you have an email address so much the better, we can send you a link to an online copy.



Extra Special

Derby and Derbyshire Parent Partnership

Changes at Parent Partnership

Hello and welcome to another edition of Extra Special. There have been a lot of changes since our last edition. In Derby City the team have moved again – back to the Beaufort Street Business Centre and a bigger office. Ranjit Johal left the Service in May and Michelle Lowe has been covering her post in Derby on a secondment basis since then. Pauline Chambers, another Support Worker in Derby, has enrolled on a course at Nottingham University and has taken a years unpaid leave. We are pleased to welcome Stef Hill and Maura Mansfield to the Derby City branch of the Service. Karina Venables now has the Derbyshire Support Worker post for South Derbyshire and Erewash on a permanent basis and will be sharing the Derby City office. Angela Leedham will now pick up new cases in Amber Valley and continue to support parents in Bolsover.

The Government are funding new posts to support parents whose children are moving between schools. These posts are called "Choice Advisers" and will be part of the Parent Partnership team in Derbyshire. We are pleased to welcome Maria Finnegan who will be based in the Derby office covering Southern Derbyshire until October 2008. In Northern Derbyshire we have seconded Pauline Nunn and Tracy Rawlinson until 31st March 2007 when we will look to fill the post for the next 18 months.

Lucy Ball our Southern Derbyshire Exclusions Support Worker left the Service in September 2006 to join Derby City Local Authority. Ann Phillips joins the team in her place, initially on secondment until 31st December 2006.

I am sure all of our staff will continue to provide an excellent service for parents and carers in Derby and Derbyshire. I hope that you enjoy this newsletter and do let us have your comments.

Ollie Pardo
Co-ordinator

Are you thinking of claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for your child?



It can be a complicated process, but help is available. "Tell It Like It Is!" – is a guide to claiming DLA for a child with disabilities or special needs by the Disability Alliance. They can be contacted at www.disabilityalliance.org/tel.htm

You can also ask for help with completing the complicated DLA form from Derbyshire Carers. Telephone 01773 743355 for the name of your local Support Worker

Information about DLA and other benefits is also available from Derbyshire County Councils "Welfare Benefits Helpline" on 0845-1202985. The helpline is open weekdays from 1.00 – 4.30 pm.

The Benefits Agency also offers support filling in the form. Their number is 0800 882200.



The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Derby and Derbyshire Parent Partnership.

Have you heard about whizz-kidz?



Whizz-kidz is a national children's charity and has been Tesco Charity of the Year for 2006. Whizz-kidz aims to give disabled children and young people independent mobility.

They provide customised wheelchairs, tricycles and other specialised mobility equipment, wheelchair training, information and advice.

Independent mobility enables disabled children to experience the everyday things that able-bodied children often take for granted, such as going to mainstream school, playing sport and being able to participate fully in family life.

To be considered for funding, your child would need to have permanently restricted mobility or movement and be under 18 years old. The application must also be supported by your child's therapist. You must already have approached the NHS Wheelchair Service or Local Authority to find out if it can provide the mobility equipment.

1 Warwick Row
LONDON SW1E 5ER
Tel: 0207 233 6600
Fax: 0207 233 6611
Email: info@whizz-kidz.org.uk
Website: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

What can I do if.....?

Q My child has a statement of special educational needs. The Local Authority has agreed to name my preferred school on the statement, however, as it is not my local school the Authority say it is not obliged to provide transport for my child. What can I do?

A In this situation the Local Authority is not obliged to meet transport costs for your child (SEN Code of Practice 8:87). Neither is this an issue that can be dealt with by SENDIST (Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal). There is a route of appeal through your local Area Education Office (Derby, Ripley, Chesterfield or Buxton). They can advise you of the process, however, there is no guarantee of success. Your local Parent Partnership Worker can also offer you help and support with the process. Contact us at either of the numbers below.

New information to help families with disabled children manage debt...

According to research by the charity Contact a Family, families with disabled children are more likely to be in debt than other families, because it can cost up to three times more to raise a child with a disability. It's to help families in this situation that Contact a Family has produced two new, clear and easy to use factsheets.

Mark Robertson of Contact a Family said: "People can find confronting their debts difficult, but the worse thing they can do is leave them to pile up. Our factsheets give people all the information they need to get their finances back on track - and rid their lives of a major source of worry".

The factsheets - "Dealing with Debt - for Families with Disabled Children" can be downloaded from www.cafamily.org.uk. Alternatively, telephone Contact a Family's helpline 0808 808 3555, or email helpline@cafamily.org.uk.



Magazines



Tired of all the usual suspects? Want something more informative?

Insight

A new bi-monthly magazine from RNIB full of information on living and learning for children and young people ages 0-25 with sight problems, including those with complex needs.

Annual subscription of 6 issues is £21 and is available in various formats.

For more information ring 020 7391 2375.

To subscribe contact insightmagazine@rnib.org.uk

Or visit the magazine homepage at www.rnib.org.uk/insightmagazine.

The Education Welfare Service Explained...

Every child and young person has the right to an education and one of the roles of the Education Welfare Service is to make sure that they all achieve their full potential by attending school.

It is our statutory responsibility to help children attend school or receive a suitable education from ages 5 to 16. We know that if children are not being educated in a structured way then they are not learning. To help children attend school, we work in partnership with the schools and other agencies, giving children and their families the support they need.

Each school has a named Education Welfare Officer - EWO. We work closely with schools to monitor and analyse attendance, with reports produced on a regular basis. Where the analysis shows up problems, or where a school identifies attendance issues, we work with the school on initiatives to improve the situation. For example, if a school regularly has a high number of children arriving late then we might support the school by staffing the gates, talking to the late-comers to find out if there are any reasons why they are not at school on time.

We support both schools and families, acting as a bridge between the two. We are a welfare service and so we work with parents to tackle the reasons why children do not attend school. This includes home visits to talk through issues such as bullying, relationships with peers and teachers and other barriers to progress. We work to empower parents to take responsibility for making sure that their child attends school. Where there are issues about attendance we help them to feel comfortable visiting the school to discuss solutions.

There may be complex reasons why a child is failing to attend school regularly, so partnership working is very important. We work in partnership with other agencies such as Connexions, the Police, the Youth Offending Service and many others.

Whilst we try to do everything we can with parents to make sure children attend school, there are legal sanctions that can be used if all else fails. Even when this happens, we do our best to help parents, explaining legal processes and helping them to prepare for court hearings or attendance before panels of governors or councillors. Fortunately, these cases are rare and most of our work is rewarded by better attendance and, ultimately, young people leaving school with a better education.

Linda Foster - Senior Education Welfare Officer, Derby.
Tel: 01332 716013

John Phillips - Education Welfare Officer, Derbyshire.
Tel: 01246 204851