

T Together

Issue 15 Winter 2006

The newsletter of the Warwickshire Parent Partnership Service

NEWS/DEVELOPMENTS

Carers' special grant

Bursary fund

This fund is available to carers living in the Borough of North Warwickshire. Priority will be given to those caring for fifty hours a week or more for someone who is meeting social services priority one or two.

Carers can apply via an application form for a percentage of the cost of one of the following:

- someone to go on holiday with the carer and the cared-for person, who would take part responsibility for the cared-for person. This would enable the carer to have a holiday without the strains that they live with on a day-to-day basis at home
- someone to assist the cared-for person to have a holiday without their carer. This would enable the carer to have a complete break from caring
- someone to assist in the hire of specialist equipment and transport.

Emergency payment scheme

The scheme covers such things as washing machines, driving lessons and specialist equipment, up to £200 per item.

Application forms are available from:
North Warwickshire CVS
Community House
Coleshill Road
Atherstone CV9 1BN

Tel: 01827 721228

Access arrangements

This is the time of year when many parents start to worry about SATs, GCSEs, and other formal examinations. It can be particularly worrying for those whose children have special educational needs.

It is, therefore, vital that parents are aware that their children may be entitled to support through access arrangements, formerly known as 'special arrangements'. These arrangements are appropriate for:

- children with a statement of special educational needs, or those who are currently going through a statutory assessment (or reassessment) of their special educational needs
- children who receive additional support in school through School Action or School Action Plus, and whose learning difficulty or disability significantly affects their access to tests
- children who are unable to sit and work at a test for a sustained period because of a disability, or emotional, social or behavioural difficulties
- children for whom English is an additional language, and who have limited fluency in English.

If a child receives additional support during the week as a result of their learning difficulties, they may be entitled to access arrangements.

Diary dates

SEN drop-in/advice coffee morning

Monday, 4 December 2006 –
Manor Park School, Nuneaton

Parent information events

Proposed dates:

Saturday, 12 May 2007 –
Leamington Spa

Saturday, 16 June 2007 –
Nuneaton

For more information about any of these events, call **Susan Higgins** on **024 7658 8464**.

The type of support permitted includes: extra time; scribe; prompter; transcripts; sign interpreter; modified papers; word-processor; practical assistant; alternative accommodation; bi-lingual translation dictionary; rest breaks; reader; live speaker.

Access arrangements have to be applied for by the school on an individual basis. The local authority approves access arrangements for national curriculum assessments and for GCSEs; for other formal examinations, the examination boards decide what can be allowed.

Guidance for examining centres (usually schools) is published every year.

For more information, visit www.qca.org.uk.

New look!

We thought it was time to give our newsletter a makeover – and hope you like the new look and feel. We look forward to receiving your contributions for the next issue. And, if your son or daughter would like to see their drawings in one of our future newsletters, please get in touch.

Centre/South SENSIS

This support group is run by parents for parents with children with special needs. The group meets every month at St Andrew's Parish Centre, Church Lane, Shotton, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Call Karen Varga on 01789 490607 or Kris Reid on 01789 550760 to find out more.

East

Fun morning for dads and children

Fun, football ... and much more are offered at Rugby Parents' Centre (Claremont Road) on Saturday mornings. Dads, step-dads and male carers are invited to come to the centre with children of toddler age upwards.

Come and have fun while seeking out your 'feel good factor'.

To find out more, call 01788 579488.

Nuneaton/ Bedworth and North Warks

STOMP

STOMP offers respite care for children with special needs up to five years of age, every month on a Saturday morning from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Where? Bedworth Heath Children's Centre, Smorrall Lane, Bedworth

For more information or to book a place, phone 024 7664 4276.

SEN drop-in/advice coffee morning

Monday, 4 December – 10am until 12 noon

Are you confused or in need of some guidance about your child's special educational needs?

If so, come along to our drop-in sessions, hosted by Manor Park School, Nuneaton. These sessions are designed to support parents and carers who may have questions about any aspect of their child's SEN, either in primary or secondary schooling.

The sessions are very informal, and you are welcome to stay for a coffee and maybe meet other parents/carers with similar issues. We can also signpost you to agencies offering specific support.

This is a pilot scheme in the Nuneaton/Bedworth and North Warwickshire area – if successful, it will roll out across the county.

County-wide

Home-Start

Carefully trained home visiting volunteers give free, emotional and practical support to any parent with at least one child under five.

Visiting families in their own home, volunteers represent a lifeline to families finding it hard to cope.

If you are a parent who would like to receive support, or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact:

Cathy, Chelle or Yvonne
119 Hillcrest Road
Nuneaton CV10 9HH
Tel: 024 7639 3248

Karen, Boughton Leigh Infant School
Wetherell Way
Rugby CV21 1LT
Tel: 01788 553237

Volunteers receive training, support and all out-of-pocket expenses.

Workshop – Sleep problems in children who have an autistic spectrum disorder: what works?

Who?

Presentation by Dr David Bramble, Consultant Psychiatrist

When?

Wednesday, 13 December 2006 – 10am to 4pm

Where?

Dudley College, The Broadway, Dudley DY1 4AS

Cost?

Parents/unwaged: £30; People with an ASD: £30; Professionals: £90

The workshop aims to help you solve your child's sleep problem or, at the very least, help you better understand the interplay between autism, sleep and children's development.

To find out more, call 0121 450 7575.

Selecting toys for specific disabilities

Your child's ability, sensitivities and differing learning styles should be considered when choosing toys.

Play should highlight their positive capabilities, skills and interests, rather than what they cannot do.

Top tips

Physical

Stable, adjustable constructions that support the body with large handles/buttons and knobs.

Visual

Bright, high-contrasting colours. Large, easy-to-activate buttons and levers.

Hearing

Lights to stimulate visual interest. A variety of sounds/vibrations with adjustable amplified controls.

Speech and language

Pretend play activities, social interaction or group games.

ADD/ADHD

Open-ended activities with no right or wrong way of doing these, and physical activities.

Autism

Music and rhythm activities to encourage social skills. Flash cards or magnetic play sets to encourage fine motor skills.



Services available to children in Warwickshire

Learning and Behaviour Support Service (LABSS)

How LABSS works

LABSS operates as an independent business unit within the local authority, with funding delegated to schools. An annual subscription can be purchased at the beginning of the financial year so that a dedicated specialist teacher and/or specialist teaching assistant can be allocated to provide a weekly or fortnightly visit to support learning and/or behaviour.

Providing support

LABSS staff work with the school to provide a programme of support for individuals or groups of children. They will also train school staff in techniques and provide additional resources. Schools often request LABSS to provide training for the whole staff on their training days or at after-school sessions.

LABSS works in partnership with the local authority and other support agencies, and aims to ensure that schools provide an inclusive environment that addresses the needs of all children.

LABSS staff usually work with children on School Action Plus/statements and can attend meetings with parents as part of the cycle of individual educational plans (IEP)/annual reviews. They can also provide notes for the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) on the child's progress, and will often collect the child's views and feelings on their progress and the support they receive.

Working with parents

Parents are really pleased to put a face to the name they so often hear. They feel able to talk to LABSS staff, who will

often explain to them in more detail how to support their child at home – as well as loaning additional materials, if appropriate.

Sometimes, parents are confused by processes and LABSS will signpost them to other support and, in particular, to the Parent Partnership. Our display at the annual parents' conference gives everyone an opportunity to look at resources and talk to someone from LABSS. We also support special interest groups where parents and professionals meet to share ideas, for example, the Dyspraxia Interest Group.

LABSS monitors staff performance and carries out customer satisfaction surveys. This year, to broaden feedback, parent questionnaires have been given out to schools and these will be returned to the Parent Partnership. LABSS wants to know how to improve the way it works with parents and schools.

The Dyslexia Friendly Strategy

The Dyslexia Friendly Strategy hosts termly drop-in meetings for everyone, including parents, in each area so that they can see resources and ask questions. All schools have access to additional training in supporting dyslexia and several schools now have 'Dyslexia Friendly' status.

Transition

For several years, LABSS has worked successfully with the local authority to support vulnerable children during transition from primary to secondary schools. This involves specialist teaching assistants working one-to-one with students during the summer term of Year 6 (primary) and in the first half of the autumn term (secondary).

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL)

This year LABSS has been involved with other agencies in the delivery of the SEAL materials to schools. Schools have had access to free updates and training in Wave 3 literacy and numeracy provision. The Fischer Family Trust Wave 3 literacy programme has been a popular purchase by schools and will continue to be on offer next year.

Promoting anti-bullying

One of the ways in which agencies have worked together has been by creating a countywide definition of bullying:

'When a person's or people's behaviour, over a period of time leaves you feeling one or more of the following:

- *physically and/or mentally hurt or worried*
- *unsafe and/or frightened*
- *unable to do well and achieve*
- *different, alone, unimportant and/or unvalued*
- *unable to see a happy and exciting future for yourself*

... it could be bullying. When a person (or people) has been made aware of the effects of their behaviour on another person, and they continue to behave in the same manner, this is bullying.'

A booklet will accompany this definition to highlight what parents and carers can expect from an agency in response to reporting a bullying concern. This is currently being drafted and will be launched and publicised to agencies and families soon.

It is hoped that sharing a definition will help people to recognise bullying behaviour more easily. If this can be achieved, multi-agency partnerships will be better able to tackle incidents that arise.

For more information, visit www.ncb.org.uk/aba.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Useful websites

4Children – www.4children.org.uk

A national charity offering support and resources for local authorities, schools and childcare providers.

BAPT play therapy – www.bapt.uk.com

Answers a variety of questions on play therapy, such as:

- Is something troubling your child?
- What is play therapy?
- How can play therapy help my child?
- What will happen in a session?
- How long does play therapy take?
- Will it be confidential?
- What can I do to help?
- How do I find a play therapist?

For more information, call/fax 01932 828638.

climb-uk – www.climb-uk.info

Provides: straightforward definitions and explanations of behavioural and learning difficulties; useful information about behavioural and special needs issues; and information about how, where and when to look for and access services in order to help parents to meet the needs of their children.

For more information, call/fax 020 7834 0033.

DISCS – www.warwickshire.gov.uk/discs

The Disability, Inclusion, Sensory and Communications Service (DISCS) website has moved to the above address.

My web, my way – www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility

This new website has been developed and maintained through a partnership between bbc.co.uk and AbilityNet. The site provides advice and help to all people who would benefit from making changes to their browser, operating system, or computer to be able to view bbc.co.uk and the rest of the web in a more accessible way.

National Childminding Association – www.ncma.org.uk

Works with childminders and agencies to support and promote childminding.

National Youth Agency – www.nya.org.uk

Offers advice, support, guidance, a newsletter and useful publications.

Parenting forum – www.parenting-forum.org.uk

The national umbrella organisation for those working with parents. Helps you to find parenting classes in your area.

Ragdoll Foundation – www.ragdollfoundation.org.uk

Supports projects, activities or events which promote the education of children through the arts. It is particularly interested in funding work with early years (0 to 8) and work that is creative and innovative.

SEN Teacher – www.senteacher.org

Offers ideas for computer games and activities for children with SEN.

Sibs – www.sibs.org.uk

For people who grow up with a brother or sister with special needs, disability or chronic illness.

Warwickshire CIS – www.warwickshire.gov.uk/earlyyears

Warwickshire Childcare Information Service (CIS) is a free information service covering all aspects of childcare and early years education.

Tel: 0845 0908044

Other useful resources

Admission to cinemas for carers

A new ID card allows carers free entry to the cinema when accompanying the person they care for.

To obtain an application form, call 0151 348 8020 or visit www.ceacard.co.uk.

Going to the dentist: a guide for people with autism and Asperger's syndrome

This guide, published by the National Autistic Society (code NAS625), includes helpful strategies on making going to the dentist as painless an experience as possible.

To order the guide, visit www.nas.org.uk or phone 0845 458 9911.

Guide for parents of children with a disability

To receive your free copy of the Rugby guide, phone the Guidepost Carers Support Service on 024 7638 5888.

HFT Family Carer Support Service

HFT has a holiday information booklet providing information on holidays and support that can be given.

For more information, call 0117 9302600 or email info@hft.org.uk.

Recreation and leisure activities in North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth for children with disabilities

To receive a copy of the booklet, phone Susan Higgins on 024 7658 8464.

Special Abilities manuals

Special Abilities has produced five disability information manuals:

- *For adults with a disability*
- *Information manual for children and young people with disabilities*
- *Special educational needs manual*
- *Parent advocacy and rights of disabled children and carers*
- *Disability awareness activities.*

Cost: £6 each; three for £16; five for £27 (prices include p&p)

For more information, call 01924 385977.

Text 2 Talk

Warwickshire Police run a confidential bullying and racial incident line for children aged 10 to 18.

The number to text is 07786 200 999.



The members of the Parent Partnership team are:

- **Sue Robus:** Co-ordinator
- **Sue Higgins:** Support Assistant
- **Sally Park:** Caseworker
- **Janet Gaten:** Assistant Co-ordinator
- **Dawn Lamont:** Caseworker

They can be contacted at ContinYou:

Tel: 024 7658 8464

Fax: 024 7658 8441

Email: pps@continyou.org.uk

Website: www.continyou.org.uk/pps



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