

T Together

Issue 19 Spring 2008

The newsletter of the Warwickshire Parent Partnership Service

NEWS/DEVELOPMENTS

The Integrated Disability Service (IDS)

The Integrated Disability Service (IDS) is now co-located in three locality bases, enabling services to be responsive to local community requirements within Warwickshire.

This service brings together professionals from education, health and social care. It provides a range of services to support children and young people with additional needs and their families/carers – at home, at school and in other settings. One contact opens the door to specialist staff teams:

- **Teaching and learning:** supporting and supplementing the work of schools and pre-school settings, enabling youngsters with additional needs to achieve.
- **Occupational therapy:** providing assessments and a range of therapeutic interventions.
- **Social care:** responsible for the assessment and provision of services, including individual and family counselling, short breaks and homecare.
- **Connexions special advisers:** linked to Warwickshire special schools, they offer information and guidance for young people aged 13 to 19, supporting them into positive destinations when they leave school.
- **Portage:** a home-based teaching programme for pre-school children with developmental delay, which aims to help children and parents and carers gain new skills through play activities.
- **Child development services:** three child development services provide a co-ordinated, multi-agency assessment and follow-up service to pre-school children with complex needs.

- **Key worker:** a named person who acts as a source of support for the family and a link by which other services are accessed. They ensure the co-ordinated delivery of a family service plan.

The mission of IDS is to make a difference by:

- challenging barriers to opportunities
- offering seamless and connected routes to services
- delivering local services
- listening and reflecting the views of those they work with
- working together in effective partnerships
- making changes and new developments based on what works.

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Diary date

We have a change of venue and date for our next coffee morning drop-in.

The new venue is Stockingford Junior School and the new date is Tuesday, 20 May (10am to 11.30am).

Our drop-in sessions are designed to support parents and carers who may have questions about any aspect of their child's special educational needs – either in primary or secondary schooling. They are very informal, and you are welcome to stay for a coffee and maybe meet other parents and carers who have similar issues. We can also signpost you to other agencies that can offer specific support.





Leamington Dolphins – change of day

Leamington Dolphins is a swimming club for children with disabilities and their siblings.

When? The club's evening has now changed to Sunday, 5.30pm to 6.30pm (term-time only)

Where? Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre

Cost? Tuition is free; pool admission is £1.75 per child (carers free)

The club now has exclusive use of both pools for the first half hour, and two lanes are roped off in the large pool for the second half hour.

For more information, phone Mary on 01926 430025 or 07817 110359.

Dyslexia drop-in centre (1.30pm to 4.00pm)

Supporting parents with any concerns they may have about their child's difficulties.

Race Leys Junior School, Bedworth

Drop-in sessions take place on the first Friday of every month, the next being:

- Friday, 2 May 2008
- Friday, 6 June 2008
- Friday, 4 July 2008.

There's no need to book – just drop in.

Water Orton Primary School

The next session will be Monday, 19 May. There's no need to book – just drop in.

'Living with teenagers' lunch club

Where? Newton Hall, Lower Hillmorton Road, Rugby

When? Wednesdays, 12pm to 2.30pm

The lunch club has been developed by and for parents of teenagers, and offers a safe and supportive environment in which parents can:

- share experiences and receive support from other parents in similar situations
- explore and develop new strategies for dealing with the behaviour of their son or daughter
- increase their confidence as a parent
- have an enjoyable lunch and meet new people
- learn new practical skills.

Phone 01788 331256 to book or just drop in.

Would your school be willing to host a drop-in session?

A drop-in session offers parents and carers the opportunity to drop in to school to talk to us about their child's SEN, meet other parents, look at information, and be signposted to other agencies.

If your school would like to host a drop-in session, please contact Susan Higgins on 024 7658 8464 or email pps@continyou.org.uk.

Special needs

There are some children who have a special need

There are some children who can't write and read

But let's treat them the same as the rest

Let's make them feel like they're the best

They have some problems here and there

Let's show them that we really care

Don't bully and tease, because in the end

They could be a very good friend.

Written by Anna-Maria Manktelow, age 10, from St Thomas More Primary School, Leicester. Taken from *Like everyone else*, by NASEN.

We need your help for Working Families

Working Families has received funding to produce a booklet for parents of disabled children about finding work. They need to hear about your experiences – what helps and what doesn't. Have you got advice or tips for other parents?

They also need people to comment on their booklet. Have they got their priorities right? Have they left out the issues that bothered you most in your job search? They want the booklet to be based on real experiences and to address the real barriers to work for parents of disabled children.

Please contact Janet Mearns if you can help, or if you have any questions: phone 020 7017 0072 or email janet.mearns@workingfamilies.org.uk.

Handling SEN teenagers' behaviour

We are hoping to run a free, four-week course on handling SEN teenagers' behaviour. This will give you useful tips and strategies – and offer an opportunity to share your experiences with other parents and carers. If you would be interested in attending, please call our office on 024 7658 8464.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

What is the CAF?

The CAF is a new way of working with children and young people. It involves listening to you and your child to find out your child's needs, and what is working well in your child's life. An action plan, agreed with you and your child, is also put in place to make sure your child gets the right sort of help. The CAF is voluntary – you and your child can choose to be involved. When your child needs extra support, it's important to find the best way forward as soon as possible. Your family is put at the heart of decisions made about your child.

How will the CAF help my family?

The CAF exists to help you support your child. It can lead to a quick solution or can help to identify extra support if needed. The CAF will ensure that everyone involved with your child, such as teachers and health visitors, works together to support your child. The CAF will help your child receive the right support at an early stage before their needs increase. As the CAF is a shared assessment, you and your child will not have to repeat the same story to lots of different workers.

When is the CAF used?

The CAF can be used if you or someone who works with your child would like them to receive extra support. It will help to identify your child's additional needs, and other workers required to support your family.

How does it work?

If you and your child agree, a worker will ask you and your child some questions to find out what help and support your child might need. This information is recorded on a simple form. You and your child will agree what should be put on the form, and you will be given a copy. Older children may feel able to discuss their situation on their own with the worker. A young person's wish to keep information confidential from parents may be respected by the worker, where this is in the young person's best interest and welfare.

What happens next?

Based on the information you and your child provide, all those who can help your child will work together to provide the support your child needs. Only workers who need to know about your child will share your child's information.

Who is a lead professional?

If a number of people are providing support to your child, one of these people may be appointed as a 'lead professional'. This person will keep you informed, listen to your views, support you and be your point of contact. The lead professional will also co-ordinate all the services supporting your child. You and your child will have a say in who should be the lead professional.

What is happening in Warwickshire?

This new way of working is being rolled out across the county and should be completed by the end of this year.

Questions and answers

Question: *Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that my child's school abides by the SEN Code of Practice, for example, organising review meetings and requesting a statutory assessment?*

Answer: The headteacher is responsible for implementing the SEN Code of Practice, although this is often delegated to a member of staff known as the SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator).

The SENCOs are responsible for checking that the school is complying with its statutory duties.

Question: *My child has a learning difficulty – does this count as a disability?*

Answer: The Disability Rights Commission defines disability as 'impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities':

- 'Impairment' covers physical or mental impairments (including learning difficulties).
- 'Long-term' means it has lasted or will last for at least twelve months.
- 'Substantial' means something more than 'minor or trivial'.
- 'Duty' is: not to treat disabled pupils less favourably; and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage, that is, to make reasonable adjustments for the pupils.

This duty excludes provision of aids/services or alterations to the physical features of the school.



Contact us

If you have something that you would like to share with other readers, something you have found helpful or something that has made you laugh, please let us know: phone Susan Higgins on 024 7658 8464 or email susan.higgins@continyou.org.uk.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Useful websites

**Autism and Oliver:
a personal account –**
www.thepeacefamily.force9.co.uk

There are lots of online games which could be enjoyable for the holidays and beyond. The Peach Family also share their experiences, and record their son Oliver's progress over the years.

Dyslexia Magazine – www.dyslexia-parent.com.magazine

This online magazine provides access to a range of articles that support the inclusion of those with dyslexia. Devised for parents, but also useful for schools.

Online jigsaw puzzles –
www.magickeys.com/books/jigsaws

This free online resource allows users to complete jigsaws. The number of pieces in the jigsaw can be selected (6 to 90), making this a good resource for gradually increasing the skills of pupils with visual perception or discrimination difficulties.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) – www.ncb.org.uk

Founded in 1963, NCB is a charitable organisation that acts as an umbrella body for organisations working with children and young people in England and Northern Ireland. Through working in partnership, sharing knowledge, resources and services, they have created a powerful, authoritative and influential voice to improve the lives of children and young people.

The Autism Education Trust (AET) –
www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk

AET raises awareness and gives information about autism. There are many events planned in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol and Hull throughout the year. Visit their website for details.

You can receive their e-newsletter by emailing info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk

If you know of any other useful websites or organisations, please send us the details.

Bedworth Extended Schools –
www.bedworthschools.co.uk

Do you know what is going on in the Bedworth area – both for you and for your children? If not, find out by visiting this website.

Clinical psychologists –
www.special-mates.co.uk

Clinical psychologists at Rutherford Clinic have been working for the past two years to develop a national support network for parents and carers of children with disabilities. It is an online service, providing:

- specialist information on causes, treatments and management
- support networks
- online disability videos
- books and DVDs
- counselling services
- psychological tests
- specialist equipment
- disability articles by other parents
- grants and benefits
- (for older children) disabled employment services.

Mencap – www.mencap.org.uk/willsandtrusts

Mencap has organised a series of free seminars around England with regard to how best to leave someone with a learning disability money in a will, how inherited money will affect benefits, and so on.

They have also produced a free booklet about writing wills and setting up trusts for the benefit of a loved one with a learning disability.

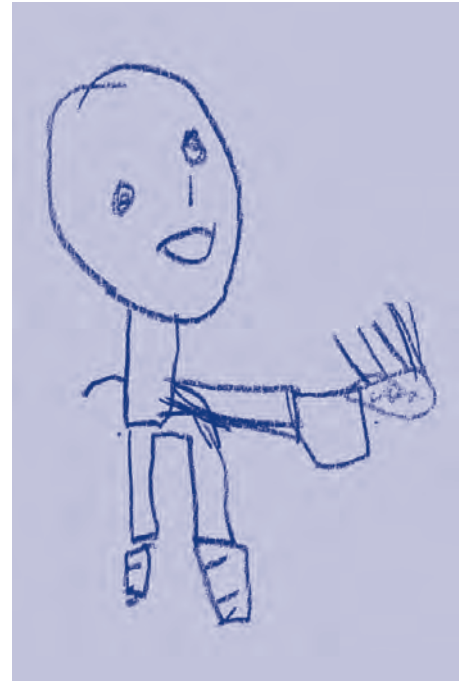
To request information, phone 020 7696 6925, email willsandtrusts@mencap.org.uk or visit their website.

AMBER Music Awards –
www.ambertrust.org

These music awards are grants that help pay for music lessons, music therapy sessions, the purchase of musical instruments, software and other equipment, concert tickets and travel related to musical activities.

The awards enable blind and partially sighted children up to the age of 18 (including those with additional disabilities) to access and enjoy music, thereby making a significant difference to their lives. Parents or carers can apply on their behalf.

Email info@ambertrust.org for more information.



Drawings urgently needed

For our next newsletter we would like to use some new and exciting drawings. So, get your pencils out and start drawing. Send us your pictures – and you may see your drawing in print!

Thank you to Kieran Thaker (aged 5) and Dhylan Thaker (aged 4) for providing the drawings for this issue.



The members of the Parent Partnership team are:

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

They can be contacted at ContinYou:

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Building learning communities

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