

Smile Group

This support group for parents meets about once a month. We meet in Hilltop School in Maltby because they make us feel really welcome and give us a free room as well as free tea and coffee. What more can we ask? Only a few of the parents have children at Hilltop. The others come from all over Rotherham. Liz Manson, educational psychologist, organises the group.

This is a group of caring parents who have children with special problems that most parents do not have experience of. We try to share ideas about how things might be made better but none of us claims to be an expert with all the questions, never mind all the answers. It is not a pressure group or a group that judges your parenting skills in any way.

We usually have a topic for each session and we may have a speaker from outside to start off the discussion or Liz will do it. Sometimes parents will lead the discussion with help from Liz. Sometimes we have a general discussion with no specific focus. We want to look at the issues people have as parents at home and share ideas about how we might tackle these for the benefit of the whole family.

Attendance at the last group was quite small so we looked at toileting issues as this was of particular concern to two of the families. We abandoned talking about puberty as we had advertised as this was more relevant to the people there. The problems were not exactly the same so we looked at trying to sort out exactly what was going off and make a bit of a plan accordingly for each family. We did agree for both that the summer holidays were the best time to start.

The contact person to find out what is happening is Liz Manson. You can reach her by email on liz.manson@rotherham.gov.uk or on Rotherham 822580. This is open to any Rotherham parent with a child with a significant level of special educational needs.

ROTHERHAM PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

Summer 2008 Newsletter

Our aim is to provide flexible services for parents and carers whose children have learning difficulties, disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN) in order to empower them to play an active and informed role in their child's education. Our target is to help parents, carers, professionals and schools work together to raise the achievement of these children.

For more copies of this newsletter, ring 01709 823627. Audio copies on tape are also available on this number.

www.rotherhamparentpartnership.com

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Every *Disabled* Child Matters

We are delighted that Rotherham Local Authority has signed up to Every Disabled Child Matters and has made a commitment to:

- Know how many disabled children live in Rotherham and that all agencies are planning services on the basis of this knowledge
- Providing a key worker service in our Authority giving support to families who are accessing more than one specialist service
- Resourcing Parent Partnership Service sufficiently to provide advice, information and support to parents of disabled children and young people who have been excluded from school
- Giving parents and carers accurate and timely information and advice on the full range of services available to them and their families
- Ensuring all staff have received both Disability Equality Training and training to ensure that they have core competencies to work with disabled children; relevant staff have received specialist training and other staff know how to contact them for information
- Involving disabled children in drawing up our Disability Equality Scheme and in monitoring its effectiveness in eliminating discrimination
- Explain via the Children and Young Peoples' Plan how specialist services will be provided and make all universal services including extended schools and children's centres accessible to disabled children
- Set targets in the Local Area Agreement for the level of service to be delivered to families with a disabled child
- Involve disabled children and families in the planning, commissioning and monitoring of services in our area, including both specialist and universal services

protected by the Data Protection Act.

Schools must have a retention schedule, listing how long they will retain records and what will be done with them when they are no longer needed.

Recommended retention periods are:

- Pupil's work and incident reports - Current year + 1 year
- Pupils' records in secondary schools and SEN files - pupil's D.o.B + 25 years
- SEN Statements - Pupil's D.o.B. + 30 years

Parents can request:

- School policies
- Results of consultations
- Details of how monies have been spent
- Information on complaints about a school (details identifying individuals may be omitted)

To make a request for information:

- It must be put in writing
- You do not have to say why the information is wanted or refer to the FoI Act
- A response must be received within 20 working days
- Any charges to you must be notified before receiving the information

A school need not comply with a request for information if:

- The information is not held
- The cost threshold has been reached
- The request is considered vexatious or repeated.

For further information and more detail about the Freedom of Information Act 2000 see www.ico.gov.uk or ring 01625 545745.

Cyber Bullying - Laugh at it and you're part of it!

www.direct.gov.uk has an online campaign about Cyber Bullying. The website looks at finding out more about the problem and even has a questionnaire for young people to fill in to see how clued up they are about the issues. It gives tips on:-

- How to avoid it
- What you can do about it
- Staying Safe online
- Getting help.

Why not visit the website to find out more.



Freedom Of Information

Did You Know?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into force on 1.1.05. It gives people right of access to information held by and about public authorities and is intended to promote a culture of openness of public sector bodies.

There is a legal right for anyone to ask a school or local authority for access to information held. However, information requested about an individual, such as pupil's school records, is

The IC Electronic Bulletin

This bulletin is issued on a regular basis and provides a wide range of information on Children & YP with Disabilities/Special Needs. You can sign up to receive it yourself.

Names can be added or removed from the electronic address list by contacting Peter Limbrick on p.limbrick@virgin.net or tel/fax: 01497 831550

Progress magazine is a useful transition guide for 13 to 25 year olds with special needs. It covers the move into adulthood when many life changing decisions are made and when vital information is needed. It would be useful to young adults, parents, carers and professional advisers. For more information go to www.progressmagazine.co.uk

Linking Autistic Families LAF is a local friendly support group for parents and carers who have a child with a diagnosis of ASD or AS.

If you want to find out more about the condition or what help is available or you want to meet with other parents/carers you will be made welcome.

Meeting on Fridays between 12.30 and 2.30pm at The Ferham Centre, Ferham Road, Rotherham S61 1AP



September 19th
October 3rd & 17th
December 5th & 19th

For more information—e-mail Sharon Ellis at shazis@btinternet.com

Rotherham Active Ability - Sports and Physical Activity Opportunities for People with a Disability. Contact RMBC Sports Development on 01709 822489 for more information.

Some other useful contacts;

Federation of Disability Sports Organisation 01924 279305

Inclusive Fitness Initiative 0114 2572060

Disability Sports Events 0161 953 2499

NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY COURSES



Supporting Siblings Tuesday 16th September 08 or Monday 13th October 08 -(10am - 2.15pm)

Anti Bullying Tuesday 21st October 08 - (10am - 2.15pm)

Anger Management Tuesday 25th November 08-(10am-2.15pm)

Courses are open to parents/carers of school age children, young people or adults, with a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Places are free to parents/carers.

Ring 0191 568 0732 for an application form.

Well Child's Helpline and Information Service offers information resources, advice, reassurance and signposting to anyone with a question about young people's health.

The Helpline takes health enquiries from parents/carers, and children/young people, as well as queries on topics of child health and well-being e.g. on questions of immunization, nutrition, childhood diseases.

Helpline: 0808 801 0330

What's New - Bullying

Parent Partnership now has a new book to offer on loan to parents and carers. "Bully Blocking - Six Secrets to Help Children Deal with Teasing and Bullying" is a book by Evelyn M. Field. The book is broken up into three parts.

Part one - "Understanding bullying" covers:-

- Bullies and targets
- What causes Bullying
- The damage done.

Part two - "Taking Action" has information on:-

- Your child's attitudes
- How Parents can help
- What school's can do

Part three - "The six Secrets of Relating" has information on:-

- Regulating your feelings
- Understanding why you are bullied or a bully
- Building self esteem
- Becoming a confident communicator
- Creating your own "power pack"
- Developing a support network.

If you would like to have the book on short term loan contact us on 01709 823627.

Bully Blocking by Evelyn M. Field is published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers (ISBN Number 978-1-84310-554-1)



Action For Kids?

Action For Kids is a small, national charity which supports disabled children, young people, their parents and carers. It is based on creating independence, providing opportunity and offering support.

- Mobility Equipment Provision Service for children and young people aged 2 to 26 across the UK. They provide a range of equipment including trikes, walkers, communications aids and powered wheelchairs. They also offer a wheelchair maintenance and repair service.
- Work Related Learning Services for young people aged 14 to 26 (within London and Hertfordshire)
- Family Support Services for disabled young people and their families. With a confidential telephone and email helpline service across the UK offering guidance and support on disability related issues.

For more details please visit <http://www.actionforkids.org/>

Understanding your child's behaviour

Contact a Family has a fact sheet available to download at www.cafamily.org.uk/behaviour.html which gives examples of challenging behaviour many families experience from their young children. The fact sheet also gives hints and tips on how some of the behaviours may be dealt with as well as some of the more obvious things to avoid.

You can also get a free copy by ringing 0808 808 3555.

Free Book

We will give a free copy of 'The sleepover' (aimed at foundation/ infant level children) to the first person that rings parent partnership on 01709 823627.

The book is about three friends that are having a sleepover but one of them uses a wheelchair and is going to have difficulty getting upstairs for bedtime. The three girls imagine different ways of overcoming this problem.



Information sheet on eating disorders in people with learning disabilities

We have an information sheet available on eating disorders and eating distress in people with a learning disability by Dr Lorna Stewart a clinical psychologist and Rick Robson a senior nurse of learning disability. Ring parent partnership on 01709 823627 for a copy.

Research into links between Food and Behaviour

Food and Behaviour Research is a Scottish based charity looking at the latest evidence on links between diet, brains and behaviour - and the implications this has for policy and practice. For further information go to www.fabresearch.org

Free activity materials to encourage early language and literacy development (birth-preschool)

To download materials go to:

<http://www.wlearning.com> and click on the purple button that says "Free Parent Education Handouts" on the home page.

These materials include activities for adults and young children that encourage early language and literacy development. They are appropriate for all children with and without disabilities. The *preschool* materials cover 1) language development, 2) phonological awareness, and 3) general print awareness.

The *Infant-Toddler* materials include twenty home and community activities for adults and children up to 3 years that encourage early language and literacy development.

Local News

The A.S.A.P Group (parents of Autistic children) recently had an application accepted to become the National Autistic Society Branch in Rotherham. The group hopes this will be a very positive move in raising awareness in Autism and accessing more help/advice from a national organization.

The group has changed name to:

The National Autistic Society Branch Rotherham (formerly ASAP)

Regular meetings take place at:

The Meadows childrens centre, Catcliffe Primary School, Rotherham Road, Catcliffe, Rotherham. S60 5SW

Contact:

Cheryl Wilson 01709 320173

email cherylwilson2002@hotmail.com

Domestic abuse is a crime

Domestic abuse is about power and control, and can involve physical, emotional and financial abuse, usually by a man towards a woman. You, and your children, may be abused by a partner, ex-partner or family member. Abuse is rarely a one off event- it tends to get worse over time. You don't have to put up with it.

If you would like advice, information, somewhere safe to stay, or simply want someone to listen, you can ring:

National domestic violence helpline

Freephone: 0808 2000 247

Male helpline

Freephone: 0808 8010 327

South Yorkshire police

Emergency: 999

Other enquiries: 0114 220 2020

Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT)

CAPT is a charity website that supports child accident prevention. They are trying to reduce injury rates because of the number of children who are seriously injured, disabled or have died due to accidents. The website sells leaflets and safety packs that include home safety, a home safety leaflet, a leaflet about babies and a child safety ideas booklet. For further information visit www.capt.org.uk.

Reducing Fuel Poverty in Rotherham

For information on affordable warmth schemes in Rotherham contact Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Home Energy Team on 0800 073 1311. The team can provide information about the wide range of grants and benefits which are available to support people on low incomes, with disabilities etc.

This phone call could save you £££££

Working in Partnership through Early Support (0-5 years) Training

This training costs £70 but 5 FREE PLACES ARE AVAILABLE FOR EACH COURSE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

The course aims to enable participants to:

- Share experiences, understanding and knowledge
- Focus on shared outcomes
- Utilise existing skills and foster the acquisition of relevant new skills
- Improve partnership working between families and the practitioners who support them

You will be working alongside Nursery Workers, Early Years Health Professionals, Early Years Practitioners, Social Workers and others supporting children aged 0-5 years

10th Sept and 17th Sept 2008

30th Sept and 7th Oct 2008

All courses 9.30am to 4pm

To book a place please contact Pam Hawkins on 01709 822556

Carers in Rotherham

There are approx 30,000 carers in Rotherham (12.2% of the adult population)

Carers in Rotherham save the local economy £462 million per year, an average of £15,260 per carer

Many carers don't claim the benefits they are entitled to

Over 7,000 local people provide more than 50 hours of care per week

Carers Health

Those providing high levels of care are twice as likely to become permanently sick or disabled themselves

Carers report higher levels of stress, high blood pressure, heart problems, physical injury, back strain, anxiety, depression, and low self esteem

Resources in Rotherham

Carers Forum and Information Centre -Rain Buildings,

Carers Emergency Scheme

Carer's Grant, which is linked to service areas, and provides Social work support, Respite, Day services, Home care, Crossroads

Carers Handbook

Continuing Care Packages from Primary Care Trust

Carer's Registers (held by GPs)

PCT also contract with Crossroads (contract with Primary Care Trust)

Summary of issues from the new National Carers Strategy, published 10th June 2008, "Carers at the Heart of 21st Century Families and Communities"

Please note the figures below are the amount available nationally, and that this will be spread over more than one year.

An extra £150m over two years to double the amount of respite care £6 million to support young carers.

£38m will help carers who want to combine a job with their caring role.

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A further £61m will be aimed at enhancing support to voluntary organisations and ensuring NHS and Social Care professionals focus on the specific emotional and health needs of carers. Benefit issues remain unresolved: carers' allowance at £50 a week is the lowest benefit of its kind in the UK, there will be a green paper on benefits later in the year.

New Additions To Parent Partnership Library

The following books are now available in Parent Partnership. Anyone wishing to borrow a book can ring 01709 823627.

Different Dads

Bully Blocking

Being Bullied DVD

Someone Very Important Has Just Died

Parenting a Child with Asperger

Syndrome, 200 tips and strategies

All Cats have Asperger Syndrome

1001 Great Ideas for Teaching and

Raising Children with ASD

How to Live with Autism and Asperger Syndrome

Freaks, Geeks & Asperger Syndrome

Do you Understand Me?

Can I tell you about Asperger Syndrome?

Different Like Me - book of autism heroes

Homespun Remedies, strategies for children with ASD and other disorders

Kids in the Syndrome Mix of ADHD, LD, Asperger's Tourettes's

Bipolar and more

Yoga for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders



Partners in Policymaking

Partners in Policymaking is a leadership training and development course for disabled adults and parents of disabled children. There will be approximately 35 participants on the course, and these will be people who, think that life could be better for disabled children and adults, want to improve the way things are now but may not be clear where to start

The course will provide information, training and skill building to participants so they can gain the knowledge and confidence needed to campaign, work and advocate for a better future for disabled people. The programme is underpinned by a strong values base of inclusion and disability equality.

The course is held on Friday and Saturday once a month for eight months. the participants get a pack of information, books and DVD's at each session.

The course is free to participants, with reasonable expenses paid and support provided when needed. This will be arranged on an individual basis.

A course will run from November 2008 for the Yorkshire & Humberside Region.

For further information contact;
Maria Rules 07729383482



New Resource for People with Autism

Signpost is a new Website resource from the National Autistic Society for people diagnosed with an autistic spectrum disorder and their families. It has been designed to give parents/carers and people with ASD, personalised information which is relevant to their own situation. The website requires information on age, which area you live in as well as how long ago you were diagnosed. Using this information the website will then issue you with a personalised profile and detailed information on ASD and Aspergers.

For more information visit www.autism.org.uk/signpost

Drop-In Advice Service

Do you have any queries about Welfare Rights? Welfare Rights Worker Eddie Hodgson runs an advice and information project mainly around Disability related issues.

The venues and times are:

Arnold Children's Centre, Longfellow Drive,
Herringthorpe, Rotherham.

Every 2 weeks on Thursday morning 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Middleton Hall, Dinnington

Tuesday morning 10:00 - 12:00 noon

Thurcroft Welfare Hall, Katherine Road.

Thursday afternoon 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Ring 01709 822446 for more information.

Recognising Fathers

Several studies have identified the lack of support for fathers of children with learning disabilities. Support for parents is often targeted at mothers and fathers may find it difficult to ask for help. Services do not always communicate with fathers who then become marginalised in discussions and decisions about their children.

Fathers often have to be the main bread-winner for their family and may be under a lot of pressure at work. They also need time off to attend visits to hospitals and other services.

National policies are beginning to realise the important contribution that fathers make to family life. Strategies need to be developed to promote this contribution and further their involvement.

During 2005 and 2006 the Foundation for People with Learning Difficulties carried out interviews with 21 fathers who have a child with a learning disability.

They talked about:

- the things they do to support their family
- how their paid employment has been affected
- their support network
- their experiences of services

This information has been used to produce a report which identifies how policy and practice can be changed to improve support for fathers and families as a whole. Copies can be downloaded free from the Foundation for People with Learning Difficulties website www.fpld.org.uk.

Disability Equality Duty

The disability equality duty requires all public bodies to prepare and maintain a Disability Equality Scheme and involve disabled pupils, parents, staff and interested members of the community in doing this.

The duty applied to all primary schools from December 2006 and to all secondary schools from December 2007.

The written schemes need to include priorities for actions and outcomes and all schools are required to show that they are putting the schemes into practice on a daily basis.

Taking part in this scheme in your child's school would be a great way to use your experiences to improve life for disabled children. Could you offer some time? If so speak to the Head teacher at your child's school.

Could you help us please?

We are Scope Rotherham Day Service, a local organisation providing support and opportunities for disabled people. We have received £41,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and are planning a project on Oral History. We aim to discover the stories of disabled people's lives as they tell them. How did life differ if you were a child in the 1960's compared to life today? Was life hard for you and your parents?

Would you be prepared to talk about your experiences to our members? We would love to hear from you. We would like to hear from people of any age, with any disability or their carers.

Please telephone us on 01709 830820 or email: francis.riley@scope.org.uk

Parent Councils

Several schools in Rotherham are developing Parent Councils. Parents are often keen to be involved in their children's education but don't always know how they can do this. Schools with high level of parental involvement often perform better than others, children also do better when their parents are involved.

They give parents an opportunity to meet, share ideas and feedback to school. They give parents a voice and enable them to contribute to school decision making. They help develop partnership between parents and schools. Parents take on an advisory and consultative role.

They are not fund raising groups and do not have power to make decisions in the way the Governing Body does.

Want to know more?

Speak to your child's Head Teacher.

See 'Setting up a Parent Council DCSF Resource Pack' at www.governor.net.co.uk and search parent councils

Or Human Scale Education's website: www.hse.org.uk

