

Children with Disabilities

"When I found out that Josie was disabled I didn't know how I was going to cope. I just didn't think I'd be able to do it alone. Pretty soon I realised I didn't have to."

- Disability affects some 15% of people in the UK at some time in their lives
- Your child is protected by the Disability Discrimination Act
- The government, your local council, education and health authorities are there to help
- You may be able to receive financial help to assist with caring for your child
- There are many forms of extra services and support available to you and your child
- Support groups, parent groups and other organisations are out there to help you cope

Common sense and the law

If your child has a disability the future may seem like a daunting struggle, not just for them, but for you too. The word 'disabled' covers a very wide range of different conditions and it is estimated that some 15% of people in the UK experience some form of disability at some time in their lives. Remember you and your child are not alone. The government, local council, health and education authorities provide a wide range of benefits, facilities, support and advice for disabled children and their carers.

Legal protection

Your child is especially protected by law. The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less favourably than other people because of their disability. It also requires them to make reasonable adjustments to make their services accessible to disabled people.

Health

From the start, your GP and local health authority are there for you. They'll provide the help and advice you need to discover and assess your child's disability. They'll help you plan the treatment, therapy, equipment and ongoing medical care that your child may need.

Benefits

There are several specific benefits that you could receive to help you with the costs of caring for a disabled child. These include Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance, help with extra housing costs and Carers Blue Badge scheme. And don't forget free dental treatment and prescriptions, help with the cost of glasses, and in some circumstances travel to hospital, school meals, and even road tax exemption.

Education

Depending on their kind of disability, your child may benefit most by attending a special school - an environment specifically designed to match their educational needs. Alternatively your child may receive the extra support they require through the Special Needs provisions available in a mainstream school. Your education authority and health service providers will help you assess your child's special educational needs and recommend the most appropriate way forward for their education.

Extra support

Your council can provide extra support for you and your child. This can include special leisure facilities, holidays, short breaks and many additional services for particular needs. Also there are many local, national and international organisations and charities specially set up to provide further help, advice and support to people just like you.

Make contact

On the left you'll find a list of contacts that you may find useful. You're not alone, so make contact today and get the support you need.

WARNING SIGNS

Some children's disabilities are diagnosed fairly early. Others take time to appear or happen suddenly. If you think your child may have some form of disability, contact your Health Visitor or GP for advice.

ACTION

Don't think you have to go it alone. Get as much information as you can about your child's condition. Find out what services, support, benefits and advice is available and make contact.

WHAT TO SAY

There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents of disabled children. Contact them and tell your story. There will be others out there just like you.

PREVENTION

You can't prevent your child's condition. But you can minimise the disability they experience by ensuring that they get the best support available, and by remembering that they have rights.

CONTACTS

- *Children's Information Link 01274 437503*
- *Bradford Early Years Childcare Service 01274 431813*
- *Social Services Childrens Advice Team 01274 437500*
- *Contact a Family (Support for Parents) info@cafamily.org.uk*
- *Bradford District Autistic Support Group Speech and Language Service. Infor@badasg.co.uk*
- *Childcare Link 0800 096 0296*
- *Ofsted Complaint Line 0845 601 4772*

*Check the Bradford ACPC website for the latest phone numbers:
www.bradford-acpc.com*