

Contact a Family NI is a member of the Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance [CDSA], a consortium of organizations from across the disability and children's sectors. The aim of the group is to focus on informing and influencing strategic policy issues that impact on children and young people with disabilities and their families. It is jointly chaired by Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) and Disability Action.

CDSA wants to ensure that policy impacting on the lives of disabled children and young people and their families is informed by their needs and circumstances and will urge the Northern Ireland Assembly to make children with disabilities and their families a priority within the Programme for Government.

The CDSA Manifesto was launched in December 2009 to:

- Promote the rights and best interests of children and young people with a disability;
- Raise awareness of the exclusion experienced by children and young people with disabilities in their daily lives; and
- Recommend actions that will help address the barriers they encounter.

The “Key Asks” of the group are:

**Priority funding for disabled children and young people
Research on the circumstances and experiences of children with disabilities**

Accessing Services

- Accessing mainstream public services
- Accessing disability specific services

Empowering children and young people with disabilities and their families

- Information
- Active Participation in Decision Making
- Bullying

Theme 1 FAMILY SUPPORT (INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR SIBLINGS and/or DISABLED PARENTS)

- Family support
- Short breaks
- Child care

Theme 2 SUPPORT AT KEY STAGES

- Early identification and intervention
- Access to Early Years' services
- Transition services and support
 - Leaving hospital
 - Leaving school
 - Becoming more independent

Theme 3 HEALTH AND WELL- BEING

- Mental health of disabled children and young people
- Physical health of disabled children and young people
- Support provided to children with complex health needs

**Theme 4 ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN PLAY, RECREATION,
LEISURE, SPORT AND CULTURAL LIFE**

Theme 5 CHILD POVERTY

Theme 6 EDUCATION

- Disability and special educational needs
- Educational attainment
- Pre-school provision for disabled children
- FE and HE provision for young people with disabilities
- Suspension and expulsion
- Alternative Education Provision (AEP)
- Transport to and from school
- Assessment and statementing of children with special educational needs
- Limited participation of children and young people in decision making
- SENDO
- Access to curriculum and examinations

THEME 7 PROTECTION FROM ABUSE

46 organisations in Northern Ireland have signed up to and endorsed the Manifesto.

Download a copy of the manifesto at