

contact a family
for families with disabled children

incorporating
The Lady Hoare Trust

in contact



The newsletter of Contact a Family West Midlands
www.cafamily.org.uk/wmids

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Happy New Year!

Hello, and welcome to our first newsletter of 2011. Last year was an amazing time for us, meeting so many inspiring families and their children. We managed to get out to many areas throughout the West Midlands, and plan to continue to do so during the coming months.

On page 3 you will be able to read about some of the successful events held during 2010, and also find out what we are planning for this year, here's just a taster...

**Family Fun
at Ludlow
Castle!**

**A tour of
Coventry City
Football Club!**

**Sleep
workshop**

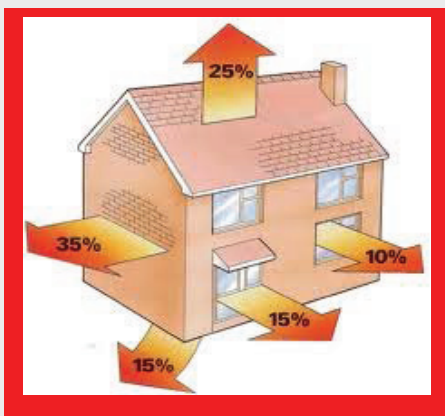
**Cooking at
a Cookery
School!**

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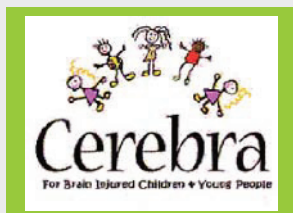
The weather outside is frightful – 10 top tips to keep warm and save money this winter

- **Tip 1 – Insulation... wrap up** You can lose up to 35% of the heat from your home through the walls and up to another 25% through the roof. Look into getting loft and cavity wall insulation, it could save you up to £265 according to the Energy Savings Trust (EST). Most energy companies have discounts on these products and some schemes offer it for free.
- **Tip 2 – Heating... turn it down** Turn down your thermostat by just 1°C and cut your fuel bills by up to 10%, saving about £55 a year (EST). Keep furniture away from radiators so the heat can get out and consider using radiator panels behind your radiators. Turn radiators in unused rooms down or off.
- **Tip 3 - Hot water... use less** Zipping up your hot water cylinder with a lagging jacket could save you £35 (EST). If possible have a shower rather than filling a bath as a five minute shower uses about 30% less water.
- **Tip 4 – Lighting... switch!** Energy saving light bulbs last up to 10 times longer than ordinary light bulbs. Just one will save you around £40- £65 in its lifetime (EST).
- **Tip 5 – Cooking... keep a lid on it** – the saucepan that is! Use just enough water to cover vegetables, or use a steamer. Boil water for pans in a kettle (it's quicker and cheaper!). And chop it up... cooking smaller pieces of food is quicker and therefore cheaper.
- **Tip 6 – Washing... cooler** Washing at 30°C uses about 40% less electricity than at a higher temperature because about 85% of the energy a washing machine uses goes into heating the water.
- **Tip 7 – Appliances... go 'A' rated** Domestic appliances account for about 47% of households energy bills. Look out for the energy efficiency rating if you buy new ones. "A" rated appliances are the most efficient and cheapest to run.
- **Tip 8 – Don't standby... switch off** Appliances can use a shocking amount of their original energy consumption when on standby or left on charge, so get into the habit of turning them off. An average household can save £30 a year by just doing this! (British Gas).
- **Tip 9 – Curtains... draw them closed** Shutting the curtains, especially lined ones, will stop heat escaping through your windows and doors after dark, but don't pull them over radiators or you'll lose heat.
- **Tip 10 – Get involved... it's a family affair** Get the whole family involved in thinking about ways to save energy; they'll become very energy conscious and may well think of something we haven't!



Future Events – Please call Jan or Liz on 0121 415 4624 for booking, or further details on any of the following events. There will be more to come too, so please check our website for updates...

Tuesday 24th February Tour of Coventry City Football Club and meet Dave Busst and 2 current players, for dads (or male carers) and your disabled child



Friday 25th March 'Solving Children's Sleep Problems' with Pattie from Cerebra at Brunswick Healthy Living Centre, Leamington Spa

Thursday 3rd March Drop in with Marches Family Network (information and refreshments) at Leominster Community Hall, 10.00 – 12.00

Thursday 7th April Disability Living Allowance (DLA) workshop with Marches Family Network at Leominster Community Hall, 10.30 – 12.30



Tuesday 12th April Cookery workshop at Brompton Cookery School, just outside Shrewsbury 10.30 – 2.00



Tuesday 28th June A workshop around issues related to incontinence, with June from Promocon

Tuesday 24th July Family event at Ludlow Castle

Past events

Our two workshops "Working with our children to improve behaviour which we ran with Marches Family Network were appreciated by the parents who attended. The first was for those with primary aged children, the second for those with secondary aged children. One parent commented "Really valuable event. My first opportunity to meet with other parents in similar positions"

Parents are asking for a workshop specifically on the topic of puberty and sexuality in the future.

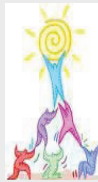
Our family worker, Amy, led our first Disability Living Allowance workshop at Prospect Hall, Birmingham on a snowy day at the end of November. We plan to offer this workshop in other areas of the West Midlands so let us know if you would like it in your area.

Spotlight on...

We hold a database of many groups, service providers and provisions throughout the West Midlands, and try to feature just some of them in our Newsletter. If you would like us to spread the word about your group, please let Liz know on 0121 415 4624.

Sahara (Support) Carers Group

This group is open to all Asian families who live within the Dudley Borough and have a child from the age of 0-18 years with a disability. We offer services such as form filling and information, arrange trips and outings, monthly Sahara Support coffee morning group, community events, training courses for parents/carers and group confidence building and communication sessions. Sessions take place Mondays & Wednesdays at Dudley Muslim Forum, Northgate House, 89 High Street, Dudley, DY1 1QP. To join the group please call Jag on 07789 140 241.



Walsall Dyspraxia Support Group

For young people, parents/carers and professionals with an interest in dyspraxia and developmental coordination delay. Meets last Wednesday of every month from 7 – 9pm at Harmony Domiciliary, 78a Mill Lane, Walsall, WS4 2BH
Email: dyspraxia@hotmail.co.uk

Marches Family Network in Leominster, Hereford offers...

Play days, play schemes, buddying service, information and advice, linking with other families, seminars and workshops, family trips and outings, regular newsletters and family support.

Coventry Autism Resource Base

Providing information and resources to people affected by, or with an interest in autism.

Wednesdays and Thursdays term time only from 10.30 – 4pm (6pm on Thursdays)
Resource Base, Exhall Grange Campus, Easter Way, Ash Green, Coventry, CV6 4BX

Email: coventryresourcebase@nas.org.uk



Call 01568 614 908 for more details

Solihull Down Syndrome Support Group

Regular coffee mornings, activities for children and siblings, and family social events.

£25 annual membership fee.
Call Liz at Contact a Family on 0121 415 4624 for more details

Short Break Holidays

in partnership with Birmingham City Council

Birmingham Outdoor Living Service is working closely with Birmingham Children's Commissioning Team to provide high quality, integrated, meaningful and flexible short breaks for children with a range of disabilities and their families. They provide short breaks during weekends and school holidays giving children and young people opportunities such as horse riding, abseiling, archery, bird watching, bush craft skills and much more.

See www.outdoorlearning.bham.org.uk
Or call 01562 710 227 or 01568 750 234 for availability and booking.

Spotlight on...



New service reaches out to children in the Midlands

A national charity that provides support for families of children with conditions like autism, dyslexia, cerebral palsy and Down's syndrome has launched a new outreach service for people in the Midlands.

bibic is a children's charity based in Somerset which offers practical help, free of charge, to families from around the UK - setting up individual therapy programmes which families can then use at home. Each year around 400 children and their families are helped by the charity and now, with funding from the National Lottery, the charity is able to bring its unique service to the West Midlands.

Kylie Holdback is bibic's outreach therapist for this area who will be working with children, young people and their families to help them tackle conditions affecting their social, physical, communication and learning abilities.

Kylie, who grew up in Balsall Common and graduated from Coventry University, has experience of giving practical and emotional support to children and will be working closely with each family to create a therapy programme which will give them the skills and strategies they need to support their child,

She said: "The charity has a six-month waiting list for children who want to join the therapy programme at our Somerset headquarters. I am looking forward to giving Midlands' families the opportunity to access the same level of support without the wait or the long journey." Families wanting more information about the bibic outreach service should contact Kylie Holdback on 07899 898261 or email Kylie.Holdback@bibic.org.uk.

Hydro Pool and Sensory Room for hire

Options for life have a Hydro Pool and Sensory Zone at their Acorn Lodge centre on Vicarage Road in the Root end part of Oldbury. These facilities are fully accessible with changing beds and a ceiling track hoist for easy transfer to and from the hydro pool.

They can be hired for 30 minute sessions at £15 for a slot or £25 for both.

Please note that you will have exclusive use of the facilities you have booked, including the changing areas. Please bear this in mind when calculating the length of your visit. Please contact Leanne on 0121 552 3010 for further details and booking.



Spotlight on...

The LIME Magazine...

... is a magazine for Parents and Carers of Children with all Special Needs. It is a bi-monthly 64 page full colour magazine, which contains features from a child psychologist, a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist and a special needs health visitor. It also contains articles from parents and people who have grown up with a disability. There are regular book and product reviews, as well as competitions with great prizes. Since the launch of The LIME, in June this year, it has received rave reviews. The LIME (which stands for Look Into My Eyes and see the person behind the disability) prides itself on being upbeat and positive, as well as extremely informative and up to date, and it is not political in any way.

The LIME Magazine also runs alongside the Registered Charity ICT4Autism which provides adaptive computing technology for children with Autism and other Neurological Disorders. Part of the profit from the sale of The LIME Magazine goes to the charity ICT4Autism. Work done with the charity is regularly reported in the LIME Magazine. Recently the charity had a big event where five Sony Vaio Touch Screen Computers with Clicker Software were given to five deserving children in the presence of Patron TV & Radio Presenter Paul Ross. More details will be printed in the December/January Issue of The LIME.

The cost of the LIME works out at less than £2 per month, with a subscription costing £22.50 for 12 months.



AutismRadioUK was established by **Kevin Healey**, and it's the first **Autism Radio Station** in the United Kingdom, which will broadcast locally, nationally, and worldwide. Kevin realized that people with **Autism** face lots of social barriers, so by establishing the radio station it will bring down those social barriers and improve communication across the spectrum for those with

Autism & Asperger syndrome.

The studio is run by volunteers who are on the spectrum, each presenter will have their own dedicated show playing music from the 60's to the current day including talks, interviews, competitions etc.

The listeners of **AutismRadioUK** have the ability to ask questions live on air and get honest and truthful advice.

AutismRadioUK presents knowledgeable and experienced hosts, providing answers to many important questions and issues. AutismRadioUK cover a wide range of topics about **Autism** and the issues that surround it.

Email: studio@autismradiouk.co.uk Tel: 01782 624775
Text: 07806 397222



Spotlight on...



Kidz in the Middle **Thursday, 10th March 2011** Jaguar Exhibition Hall, Ricoh Arena, Coventry

Come and visit one of the largest, Free UK exhibitions totally dedicated to children with disabilities and special needs, their families and carers, and the professionals who work with them. Find information on mobility, seating, beds, communication, access, education, toys, transport, style, sensory, sports, leisure and much more....



Naidex is the biggest new product showcase in the UK with thousands of products on show to aid independent living - including wheelchairs, scooters, adapted vehicles, pressure relieving beds, walking aids, recliner chairs, stairlifts, access equipment, daily living aids and much much more!



Information Event

St Lukes Church Centre
Great Colmore Street, Birmingham, B15 2AT.
Wednesday 23rd February between 10.30am – 2.30pm.

Information from local and national charities, societies and companies covering a wide area for both children and young people with sight loss and their families.

Shropshire Annual Information Day on 17th February 2011 10am – 2pm

Information available on Benefits, Youth Services, Sports clubs, support groups etc. Specialist equipment on display including trikes, car seats etc. Display of cars available on the Motability Scheme. Refreshments and children's activities available at the event. For further details, please contact: Sarah Thomas (PACC) – 0845 6012205 or email enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk
Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sundorne, Shrewsbury, SY1 4RQ

'Reach for it' – Family Fun Day for disabled children and their families

Sunday 6th March 2011 from 11am – 5pm at Burntwood Leisure Centre
The day will focus on the following types of activities; football, table tennis, cricket, swimming, crafts, soft play, cheerleading, golf etc.

Please call Mark Fosbrook for a booking form on 01785 619398 or email mfosbrook@staffordbc.gov.uk

Spotlight on...

We are always coming across some great websites and here are some we've recently discovered. If you know of any others please let Liz know on 0121 415 4624 so we can spread the good word!

www.wellchild.org.uk

www.disability-grants.org

www.dudeswithdyslexia.co.uk

www.asteens.co.uk

www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

www.disabilitybits.co.uk

If you are reading somebody else's copy of 'in contact' please let us know so that we can add you to our database! You'll then find out about information, up and coming events, and activities straight away!

If your young person is over 19 years of age, may we remind you that whilst you are welcome to continue receiving our newsletter, our funding is for families with disabled children and young people up to 19 years old.

Here's how you can help us at Contact a Family, to continue our good work...

Text **Family** to 70007 and donate £3 to Contact a Family. You will be charged £3 plus one message at your standard network rate. Contact a Family will receive a minimum of £2.40 from each message sent.

Give as you shop

Every time you shop on-line you could be donating money to Contact a Family, at no extra cost to yourself. Buy.at offers a portal through to a host of well-known retailers - including M&S, Asda, and Staples. If you click on the links through the Contact a Family web shop on Buy.at we will receive a commission on any purchases you make.

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LOTTERY FUNDED

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Tel: 07905 722005

Rizwana Pathan – Volunteer Parent Representative (Warwickshire)
Tel: 024 7634 9612

National Freephone Helpline
0808 808 3555