



About diagnosis: Practical and financial help

Assistance and support to help you with your child's care

- Benefits and tax credits
- Medical advice
- Transport
- Early support
- Children's centres
- Useful organisations



Whether your child has a diagnosis or not, there is support and help available. This guide is intended only as a brief introduction – ring the helpline for more detailed information.

Health benefits

There are a range of health benefits you may be entitled to. These cover things like the cost of prescriptions, buying glasses, going to hospital and some dental care.

Medical advice

Your GP is your first point of contact for medical advice and referrals for treatment or tests. However, you can talk over any issue and receive basic medical advice from NHS Direct, Tel: 0845 45 46 47 or for Scotland NHS 24, Tel: 0845 24 24 24 (both 24 hours).

Services from your local authority

The relevant team or department might be called 'children's services' or 'social services'. In Scotland it may be called the social work department and, in Northern Ireland, the health and social services trusts. Ask for an assessment of you and your child's needs – you do not have to have a diagnosis yet. Depending on your families assessed needs, you may get practical help such as a service to enable you to have a break. Other help might include equipment or direct payments to help you buy in services. Call the helpline for a copy of our quick 'Disabled children's services in England and Wales' or 'A guide to assessments and services Scotland'.

Benefits and tax credits

Depending on your individual and family circumstances there may be benefits or tax credits you can claim. For example Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is the main benefit for disabled children and you can claim it if your child has extra care or supervision needs, or difficulty walking. It doesn't matter if you have a diagnosis for your child or how much money or savings you have but your child has to meet certain criteria to get it.

As a parent of a disabled child you are often entitled to a number of benefits and other help. The Contact a Family leaflet 'A checklist for parents' and 'Benefits, tax credits and other financial help' details some of the more common ones and is available at web: <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/Checklist.pdf>

Help with transport and getting around

If your child gets the high rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance you can use this money to access the Motability scheme (see Useful organisations for contact details), where you can hire or buy a car, wheelchair or scooter to suit your child's needs. You can also qualify for free road tax for your car if you or your child meets these criteria.

The Blue Badge scheme gives parking concessions to children and adults who get the high rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or who have severe walking problems. Contact your local council for details.

Aids and equipment for daily living

In general, your local authority is responsible for providing equipment for daily living and non-medical needs (usually on a free loan basis). This includes help with arranging adaptations to the home or any additional facilities your child needs.

Your health authority is responsible for providing equipment to meet nursing or medical needs. It can be supplied through the NHS on a free loan basis, with certain items being prescribed by the GP or a consultant. This might include special beds and bed equipment, hoists, incontinence, feeding, mobility and hearing aids.

In addition, equipment to help a child access the curriculum may be arranged by a school or local authority.

Please see our guide 'Aids, equipment and adaptations', available free from our helpline.

Early Support

Early Support is a way of working that encourages the services that are already available to work together better and to work in partnership with families.

The Early Support Family Pack is for families with a child under five years of age who are being supported on a regular basis because their child needs additional help. It's likely to be most useful to families who are in touch with a range of professionals like health, education and social services, and whose support needs to be well coordinated.

Although Early Support operates in England only, anyone can have access to materials such as the family pack.

For more information visit Early Support at Web: <http://www.earlysupport.org.uk> or contact our helpline for a list of their materials.

Children's centres

Children's centres are places where children under five years of age and their families can get help from a range of professionals. They are being opened in local communities across England and while the support they offer will vary it should include:

- information and advice to parents and carers on a range of subjects such as childcare, looking after babies and young children and local early learning provision
- drop-in sessions and other activities for children and carers at the centre
- support for families with additional needs including parents with disabled children.

Similar types of centres exist in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

For more information and to find your local centre visit Web: <http://www.tineyurl.com/hxhlo> or contact our helpline.

Help with pre-school education – Portage

Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families in England and Wales. The aim is to support the development of young children's play, communication and relationships. In Scotland a similar service exists called Pre-school home visiting.

For more information see the National Portage Association at Web: <http://www.portage.org.uk>
New parents can e-mail: parents@portage.org.uk

Or call our helpline for details of the Scottish service in your area or if you don't have access to the internet.

Educational assessments

If your child has a particular condition or health problem which has caused concern from an early age (under two), they may be referred to the local authority (LA) for an educational assessment. If you, as a parent, request an assessment this must be carried out. Statements for children under two are rare and are usually made because the child has complex needs or a particular service is required, for example home-based teaching.

Call our helpline for a copy at 'Special educational needs England and Wales', 'Additional support for learning Scotland' and 'Special educational needs Northern Ireland'.

Contact a Family in your area

Contact a Family has a team of offices, family workers and volunteers around the country. We provide a range of services, depending on where you live. This might include a home visiting service by a family worker, a local newsletter, and events and workshops for families caring for a disabled child. Importantly, our local staff and offices will be able to put you in touch with the best sources of help in your area.

For more information ring the helpline or visit Web: <http://www.cafamily.org.uk> and click on 'in your area'.

Useful organisations

■ ACT (The Association for Children's Palliative Care)

Brunswick Court, Brunswick Square,
Bristol BS2 8PE

Helpline: 0845 108 2201

Web: <http://www.act.org.uk>

ACT works with professionals in supporting families whose child has a life threatening or life limiting condition.

■ The Challenging Behaviour Foundation

c/o The Old Courthouse,
New Road Avenue, Chatham,
Kent ME4 6BE

Tel: 01634 838739

Web: <http://www.thecbf.org.uk/>

Provide information and support to parents and professionals caring for individuals with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour.

■ National Association of Toy & Leisure Libraries

1A Harwood Street, London NW1 8DN

Tel: 020 7428 2286

Web: <http://www.natll.org.uk>

Can give you details of your nearest toy library.

■ Kids

6 Aztec Row, Berners Road,
London N1 0PW

Tel: 020 7359 3635

Web: <http://www.kids.org.uk>

Information on education and support for disabled children, young people and their families including education for under fives, play and leisure, family support services, training and advice.

■ Family Fund

Unit 4, Alpha Court, Monks Cross
Drive, York YO32 9WN

Tel: 0845 130 45 42

Web: <http://www.familyfund.org.uk>

Provides grants and information for families looking after severely disabled or seriously ill children under 16 years of age.

■ Assist UK (previously Disabled Living Centres Council)

Redbank House, 4 St. Chad's Street,
Manchester M8 8QA

Tel: 0870 770 2866

Textphone: 0870 770 5813

Web: <http://www.assist-uk.org>

Gives details of centres across the country where aids and equipment can be seen and tried out.

■ Motability

For enquiries about the Motability car schemes, contact:

Motability Operations

City Gate House, 22 Southwark
Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB

Tel: 0845 456 4566

(8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri)

Minicom: 0845 675 0009

For enquiries about the Motability wheelchair and scooter schemes contact: **Route2mobility**
Montgomery House, Newbury Road,
Enham Alamein, Andover,
Hampshire SP11 6JS
Tel: 0845 60 762 60
Web: <http://www.motability.co.uk>

■ Face 2 Face

Tel: 0844 800 9189
Web: <http://www.face2facenetwork.org.uk>

Provide a network of trained volunteer befrienders who can help parents who've recently learned that their child has a disability.

■ Home-Start

Tel: 0800 068 63 68
Web: <http://www.home-start.org.uk>

Have a network of trained parent volunteers who support other parents who are struggling to cope, for example because of post-natal illness, disability, bereavement, the illness of a parent or child, or social isolation.

Getting in contact with us

Free helpline: **0808 808 3555**
Open Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm;
Mon, 5.30–7.30pm

www.cafamily.org.uk
www.makingcontact.org

Contact a Family Head Office:
209-211 City Road, London EC1V 1JN

Tel 020 7608 8700
Fax 020 7608 8701
Textphone 0808 808 3556
Email info@cafamily.org.uk

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