

in contact

The Contact a Family newsletter

Lambeth

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Local office

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30 Not Out – Contact a Family celebrates our 30th anniversary

Find out how we plan on celebrating 30 years of strengthening families with disabled children

For the last three decades, we have been strengthening families with disabled children across the UK by providing advice and information and putting them in touch with others whose child has the same condition for support. We have also campaigned for better rights for families, but the campaign goes on.

Throughout our anniversary year, we will be celebrating our achievements and continuing to raise awareness of some of the many issues for families with disabled children.

In London, we will also be celebrating with a Big Day Out planned for 5th August 2009 at Hyde Park. There will be lots of fun activities for children, including circus

skills, puppetry and storytelling and balloon making. We will be in contact with more details about this event closer to the date.

And if you can't make 5th August, don't worry, as we have also developed a toolkit to help you organise your own Big Day Out throughout August. By doing this, we're hoping to encourage families with disabled children to get out and about and enjoy play and leisure together. The toolkit includes hints and tips for organising a Big Day Out Picnic, as well as games ideas for children and adults to enjoy during the picnic. Web: <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/30notout.html>

Aminda and Roxanne



**30 years of
strengthening
families with
disabled children**

Drop-in session

We run advice sessions for parents and carers across the borough at the following children's centres. Please contact the office for further details.

The Mary Sheridan Centre
Tuesdays, 10am-12pm, 7th July, 4th August and 1st September.

Stockwell Children's Centre
Tuesdays, 21st July, 18th August, 15th September and 29th September.

Maytree Children's Centre
Tuesdays, 14th July, 8th September and 22nd September.

Lambeth I Count Register

I Count is a register of children with a disability who may require services from health, social services, education or voluntary organisations. The information is used to help plan local services.

Parents and guardians on the register are consulted in the development of services and will receive information on new services, entitlements and benefits. They will also receive an I Count card, which can be used to gain discounted entry and to avoid queuing at many leisure facilities, for example The London Eye, London Zoo, London Aquarium, theatres and sports grounds.

For more information and to register

Web: <http://www.i-count.org>
Tel: 020 8770 8201

Contact a Family Lambeth workshops and events update



The recent SEN workshop

Here at Contact a Family Lambeth we've been busy running special events and workshops, including an open day and pampering session at Coin St Neighbourhood Centre. Parents enjoyed a massage with our therapist and were able to speak to key professionals about local services for parents.

We also ran a Special Educational Needs Workshop at Clapham Manor Children's Centre. Parents were able to meet professionals in this field from the Early Years Service Inclusion Team, Parent Partnership and the Family Information Service.

The workshop was a great success and parents were able to discuss their concerns about their child starting school and find out about the support available in this area.

Forthcoming events

In addition to the Big Day out on 5th August, we are running a series of pamper sessions and information days at Woodmansterne Children Centre on the following days: Wednesday 29th July, 1-4pm; Thursday 6th August, 9-12am; and Wednesday 12th August, 1-4pm.

A range of health professionals will also be available on these days to discuss local services for your child and there will also be fun activities for the children.

Call the office for more information and to book your massage slot. Massages and creche spaces must be booked in advance.

Managing behaviour

We are also running a workshop on managing behaviour at Larkhall Children's Centre on Monday 14th September. If you are interested in booking a place, please contact the office for further details.

Brockwell Park Lambeth County Show

Contact a Family staff are also planning to attend the Brockwell Park Lambeth Country Show and to have an information stall in the Community Children's Services Tent. This will be a fantastic event for all the family with music, entertainment, animals, arts and crafts and children's activities. This event takes place on 18th-19th July, and we look forward to seeing you there.

What makes my family stronger report

New report from Contact a Family finds lack of services, attitudes towards disability and lack of support from professionals creates barriers to leading ordinary lives for families with disabled children

To mark the start of Contact a Family's 30th anniversary, we have published a new report into the experience of families with disabled children living in 2009. *What makes my family stronger* will be used to campaign for better lives for all families with disabled children throughout our anniversary year and beyond.

The report is based on the results of an online survey through which we asked families about their social, emotional and practical experiences of raising a child with a disability. As well as gathering statistics, the survey asked families for their comments, which are used to illustrate the reports findings throughout.

The results of the *What makes my family stronger* survey indicate the three main barriers standing in the way of families leading ordinary lives – lack of services, attitudes towards disability, and lack of support from professionals.

Srabani Sen, Chief Executive of Contact a Family, said: "Families with disabled children want to lead ordinary lives. However, they face practical, physical and emotional challenges over and above families with non-disabled children. Our research highlights that often the difficulties come from a lack of support from professionals and understanding from society. Most families have to fight for services that should be theirs by right to

help their children and themselves overcome daily challenges and lead independent lives."

Summary of key findings:

- Almost 70% of respondents said that understanding and acceptance of disability from their community or society is poor or unsatisfactory.
- Over 60% of families said they don't feel listened to by professionals.
- Over 60% of families said they don't feel valued by society in their role as carers.
- Over 70% of respondents said their child's access to play and leisure specifically for disabled children is poor or unsatisfactory.
- 50% of families with disabled children said the opportunity to enjoy play and leisure together is poor or unsatisfactory.

Srabani Sen added: "It is shocking that in the UK today, attitudes towards disability from professionals and members of the public are contributing to the difficulties that families face. Families with disabled children have enough hurdles to overcome without having to cope with prejudice and ignorance."

Families biggest priorities for making them stronger:

- They want more opportunities to enjoy play and leisure and want a real choice in the activities they can take part in.
- They want to see their child reach their full potential.

- They want a support package to meet their child's needs and flexible and regular short breaks.

Contact a Family is calling for:

- the government to invest in a UK-wide disability public awareness campaign with a focus on children's disability
- everyone working in a public facing role in the UK to be given disability equality training
- disability awareness should be made part of the school curriculum and covered in Citizenship classes.
- the much welcomed and significant investment in short breaks services in England to be sustained and included in the next Comprehensive Spending Review
- fair access to short breaks for all families with disabled children and the use of eligibility criteria should not be used by local authorities as an excuse to limit access. There must be equality of short breaks services across the four nations
- the government to commit to reviewing carers benefits and set a clear timetable for reform
- a reduction in the higher risk of poverty for disabled children. We urge the government to undertake a DLA take-up campaign with a particular focus on ethnic minority families, whose take up of the benefit is particularly low.

To read the report in full, please visit Web: <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/wmmfs.pdf>

Links with other organisations

Whippersnappers

Whippersnappers is a community group based at Brockwell Lido who provide a range of activities for children in the borough. These include pre-school music and story telling, workshops and theatre productions.

They run a Tuesday group for children with disabilities and additional needs between 11.30am–3pm, on the first Tuesday of every month. This includes discussion, activities for parents and a music session for children.

For further information, contact Caroline Burghard, Tel: 020 7738 6633, Web: <http://www.whippersnappers.org>

Lambeth Family Link

Lambeth Family Link provide after school care for children and young people with special needs in Lambeth. They also provide a one to one linking service to families in Lambeth via Direct Payments. They run a range of clubs and organise outings for families.

In order to access their service, you must become a member and your child must be registered with the Children with Disabilities Team at Lambeth Social Services.

A referral must be made by a social worker to access this service. For further information, Tel: 020 8671 8939.

See and learn language and reading kits for children with downs syndrome

The Downs Syndrome Educational International have devised a See and Learn Language and Reading programme.

The ready to use kits are freely available online and provide instructions, materials and checklists to help families to support their child's early language development.

Web: <http://www.see-andlearn.org>
e-mail: enquiries@downsed.org



Mailing list

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Contact a Family Lambeth

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Freephone helpline: 0808 808 3555

I am: a parent/carer
 a parents' group contact
 a professional

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