

## description of specialist terms

*in alphabetical order*

An **audiologist** carries out hearing tests and can help a child obtain hearing aids should they need them.

A **clinical psychologist** can offer advice on eating, toileting and behavioural difficulties. Parents may also find it helpful to talk to them about how their child's difficulties impact on the daily life of the whole family.

A **community dentist** can provide advice on diet and planning for healthy teeth as well as provide dental services to children who find mainstream dental services difficult.

A **continence advisor** can provide advice and practical help if a child is incontinent. If the child is over 3 they can provide help with getting nappies or incontinence aids.

A **dietician** can advise on food, diet and nutrition where a child is reluctant to eat, needs to be on a special diet or has difficulties in chewing and/or swallowing.

An **educational psychologist** can assess a child's development and provide support and advice on learning and behaviour to parents and teachers working with the child.

A **family doctor (GP)** will be the first point of call for medical help and advice. They can ask for your child to be seen by another specialist.

A **health visitor** can give practical advice on day to day matters such as feeding, sleep, teething, development and behaviour. Some health visitors have specialist roles such as involvement with children with disabilities.

**Nursery nurses** can provide educational and fun activities in nursery and playschool settings to stimulate and help a child's development.

An **occupational therapist** pays particular attention to hand-eye co-ordination, perception and manipulative skills. They can advise and provide suitable aids to help with everyday activities such as feeding, dressing, toileting, bathing and play in younger children and writing skills in older children.

**Parenting skills classes** are sometimes run locally to help parents improve their relationship with their children and find strategies to deal with common problems faced by parents.

A **paediatrician** is a doctor who specialises in looking after babies, children and young people. A paediatrician can coordinate and liaise with other agencies involved in the management, care and education of the child and family.

A **physiotherapist** helps in the management and development of movement skills. There are a number of ways in which children can be helped. These may include exercises to strengthen weak muscles and games to improve coordination and motor skills.

**Portage** is a home-teaching service for pre-school children with delayed development. The **Portage Home Visitor** works alongside parents offering practical help and ideas to assist with the development of play, communication, relationships and learning for young children.

A **child and adolescent psychiatrist** is a doctor who specialises in problems that affect the ways a young person thinks, feels or behaves. They might want to meet the whole family before deciding what help is appropriate. They can prescribe medication and might suggest a child be seen by a clinical psychologist.

A **special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)** is responsible for coordinating support for children with special educational needs. This can begin at an early age well before the child starts school.

**Specialist nursery/play school** can be provided by the Local Education Authority or voluntary organisations where additional support is provided to help promote a child's development.

A **social worker** supports children and families by advising them on practical and financial issues, telling them about local services and sometimes helping to arrange the support they need.

A **speech and language therapist** helps children learn to communicate, either through speech or other methods. They can also help if there are problems with eating, drinking and swallowing.

**Sure Start children's centre** provide advice and support on education, health and childcare to children under five and their families living in their local area. By 2010 there should be one in every community.

If you have a disabled child, **Contact a Family** can help you access further information and advice, e.g.

- organisations who provide advice on dealing with communication, continence or behaviour problems
- support groups for specific medical conditions
- advice on your rights and entitlements.

### how to contact us

**Freephone helpline 0808 808 3555**

**Textphone 0808 808 3556**

open

Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm,  
Monday evening 5.30pm to 7.30pm

**Language line available**

or email

helpline@cafamily.org.uk

or visit our website on

www.cafamily.org.uk

This leaflet has been produced by Contact a Family as part of the **Parents and Paediatricians Together** project and funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Contact a Family  
Registered Charity number 284912



**contact a family**

working with The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

## concerned about your child?

it is never too early to seek help or advice

feeding ▶

speech ▶

coordination ▶

teeth ▶

toilet training ▶

learning ▶

behaviour ▶

sleep ▶

this leaflet tells you about some of the people who may be able to help



