

contact a family

for families with disabled children

Sept/Oct 2007

**HELPING FAMILIES IN WANDSWORTH WHO CARE FOR CHILDREN
FROM BIRTH TO 19 YEARS WITH ANY DISABILITY OR ADDITIONAL NEED**

- ☐ Support groups
- ☐ Information & Advice
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Holiday & social activities for all the family
- ☐ Links with other organisations

That was summer!



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News from the office

Hope everyone has had a great summer and enjoyed the great British weather with the children - it was certainly variable wasn't it?

Our events got off to a fantastic start with a beautiful day for the Brighton trip and then again for Chessington. However, the sunset experience of the London Eye was more of a watercolour image as the heavens opened. More about the trips next time....

Goodbye from Johanna

Hi everyone,

With great sadness I am leaving Contact a Family at the end of the summer. I have decided to go back to university and study to be a midwife. I have had such a lovely time over the last year and it has been amazing to meet so many of you. The summer trips were such a success and I had such a brilliant time doing them. I also want to say a big thank you to Rosie and Tracy for their constant support over the last 12 months.

I will miss working for such a great project, and thank you to everyone for their kindness.

Johanna

Welcome Becky

We are delighted to welcome Becky Jones to the team to take over from Johanna. Becky joins us from a background in working with disabled children during her university days and from another children's charity, NSPCC, where she works in the fundraising team. It has been a real boon to be able to get Becky on board before the end of the summer programme so she has been able to see first hand some of the organisation required to make the summer programme run smoothly.

The AGM was a huge success - thank you to all who attended - the 'Teen Tamer' certainly left us with some very valuable tips! Your project team has worked very hard over the summer and we are all now getting back into the swing of term time activities - see entries from our family workers. There are several parent groups running - do come along to them if you can make it - sharing ideas and experiences with other parents is always a great way to pick up new ideas that have been tried and tested by other parents

Early Years Team North - formerly Battersea Surestart

Family worker Cree Summers 020 7223 1119
Katherine Low Settlement, 108 Battersea High Street
Email c.summers@surestartbattersea.gov.uk

Battersea Network Group - an informal group for any family within the North locality who has a child or children with special needs. Come along and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee in a relaxed group of people.

Tues 18th September Education Psychologist 10.30am - 12.00 noon.
Tues 16th October speaker to be confirmed 10.30am - 12.00 noon.

**All families, please note my working hours have changed to
Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.**

Early Years Team West - formally Roehampton Surestart

Family worker Claire Hayes 020 8789 0012
166 Roehampton Lane
Email claire.hayes@cafamilly.org.uk

In the coming months we hope to be able to set up a **support group for parents of children with ADHD and behaviour problems**. This is due to run on Wednesday mornings after the autumn half term. If you are interested in coming please let me know so that I can get an idea of numbers. **We will be giving priority to families in the west locality area who have not attended an ADHD group before.**

We also hope to make use of the local facilities in our community including **Alton Activity Centre multi-sensory area (Thursdays)** and **Gwendolen House Nursery (Fridays)** for regular sessions for families with young children with special needs.

Please could families note that from September onwards I will be working all day Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. To find out more about any of the services we offer here in Roehampton please call me or drop by.

Early Years Team South

Family worker Jill Caterham 020 8767 3645
Bedford House, Balham High Road
Email jill.caterham@cafamily.org.uk

It has been lovely to meet several families living within the South Locality. I have received some excellent suggestions for future meetings/ groups. A number of families have expressed anxieties around their children starting nursery.

Drop In session for parents - an informal group for any family within the South locality - Tooting, Balham and Earlsfield, who has a child or children with special needs. Come along and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee in a relaxed group of people.

Wednesday 3rd October Theodora - Education psychologist 10.30am - 12.00 noon .

Theodora will be talking about the issues around transition - what it is like for you and your child when they start in nursery school or reception at school

Please let me know if you are interested in attending.

Please note my hours of work have changed, **I now work 9-5pm Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.**

Other Groups and Meetings

We hold regular meetings at our office at 1 Siward Road for all families in Wandsworth who have a child of any age (0-19) who has special needs.

Family worker: Tracy Banks
Project Manager: Rosie Noble
Project and Events coordinator: Becky Jones

You can call us on 020 8947 5260 to speak with us or make an appointment to come in and see us or you can email any of us on wandsworth.office@cafamily.org.uk



Open meetings - please come along

Parent network meetings

When: Thursday 27th September 10 -12noon
Thursday 1st November 10 -12noon

Where: At our office - 1 Siward Road, SW17 0LA

Who: All parents/carers are welcome to come along and chat over a cup of tea or coffee about any issues that they want to discuss. The mornings are very informal and the parents/carers who already attend are very friendly, so if you would like to join us, please call us on 020 8947 5260 so we have an idea of how many biscuits to buy!

Residential schools meeting

When: Tuesday 18th September 10 -12noon

Where: At our office - 1 Siward Road, SW17 0LA

Who: Any parents/carers whose children live away from home in a residential setting. The long summer break is now over so now is the time to come in and discuss with other parents/carers how things are progressing for you and your child. The meetings are informal and other parents may well be able to understand the issues that may arise, so do come along - ring us on 020 8947 5260 so we know who to expect and what to buy.

'Being more involved' meeting

When: Wednesday 19th September 11 -12noon

Where: At our office - 1 Siward Road, SW17 0LA

Who: Anyone who is interested in influencing service provision and being involved in decision making around Children's services.

Do call Rosie on 020 8947 5260 for more information

Steering Group meeting

When: Wednesday 19th September 12.30 - 2.00pm

Where: At our office - 1 Siward Road, SW17 0LA

Who: Parent members of our steering group - other parent/carers please feel free to call us if you would like to join this meeting. We meet every two months and have a lunch as well as looking at what Contact a Family is doing and what is going on in the borough around disabled children. Meetings are very friendly and are led by the parents. We look forward to hearing from you if you would like to come.

Do call Rosie on 020 8947 5260 for more information

You can make a difference!

Parent participation - What's that?



More and more decisions are being made about developing services for disabled children and there is increasing emphasis on getting the views of the children themselves, and of their parents/carers.

The new Children's Services Team in Wandsworth will be looking to seek out the views of parents on many issues and it is vital that the voice of parents of disabled children is heard.

Contact a Family has long been the champion for ensuring that participation of parents in decision making is organised, and meaningful, and together with the Council for Disabled Children produced a booklet around the different ways for parents to get involved in their local boroughs. The guide is available from the office and we would be pleased to send it out to those parents wishing to be more involved.

It covers all the principles of parent participation such as 'Getting involved as an individual', 'Participating in working and planning groups', it looks at confidence skills, and 'influencing national policy and practice' and is full of examples of where participation of parents has been effective and beneficial.

Professionals in Wandsworth need to hear from parents about what it really like for their children so don't be shy - we are keen to hear from any parents who are interested in this area of joint working with professionals to try and improve the services for disabled children and we have set up a meeting for an informal discussion to look at the issues further - come along to the office on **Wednesday 19th September at 11.00am** before our Steering group meeting which is already made up of committed parents for a coffee and to find out more.

Please call the office if you are interested in joining this exciting new initiative on 020 8947 5260.