

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



Kidz have a Whizz at Bikes & Trikes Event!

125 parents and 172 children had the chance to try out a range of mobility equipment at our Bikes and Trikes event in June. Families came from across the region to try out specialist bikes, learn circus skills, meet other families and have some fun. The event was a joint venture with Link-Upp (Birmingham), Whizz-Kidz and Contact a Family. Special thanks to Sinclair Thomas – bronze Olympic medal winner (pictured below) – and all the suppliers who gave their time to make the day a success.



Sarah Lee (Development Officer)
Jean Mitchell (Development Assistant)
Shazia Malik (Asian Development Worker)

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Tel: 0121 415 4624 Fax: 0121 415 4922
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Gaye Cowley (Family Worker)
Tel: 01527 876715

National Freephone Helpline 0808 808 3555



Funding for Contact a Family West Midlands

We're delighted to announce that we have received funding for the next two years from the Parenting Fund. This money will help secure our office base, work with the *Carers Support Initiative* to give information and support to parents of teenagers and help us develop a support service for parents in Birmingham whose first language is not English (see item on Language Bank).

While this is very good news we still need more funding for our work in the rest of the region. This means that we will have to reduce our newsletter to 2 per year and we cannot mail out multiple copies to organisations and groups – so please bear with us while we work to secure more funding.

Link-Upp Language Bank

We are working with Link-Upp to set up a new service for parents in Birmingham whose first language is not English. This project will be recruiting bi-lingual parent volunteers who will:

- provide families with information and support
- help them access services
- make links with parent support groups

We are looking for Bi-lingual parents and carers who can help us to design the service. The commitment is one meeting per month for the next six months to give views about how to promote the service, how the service could work and the training and support needed for volunteers.

If you are interested, please call Sarah on **0121 415 4624** for more details.



Helping families to claim their full benefit entitlements

Contact a Family's Pounds for Parents campaign aims to provide parents with access to professional expertise, information, and one-to-one support and advice

The campaign funds parent advisers and a welfare rights specialist who are available via our freephone helpline **0808 808 3555**, Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and Mondays 5.30pm to 7.30pm, to check benefits and tax credits.

All calls are completely confidential. The Language Line is also available to ensure helpline callers, who prefer to speak in a language other than English, can also access the support and advice they need.

Families are also welcome to contact the West Midlands Asian Development Worker, who

speaks Urdu and Punjabi. Shazia has been contacting organisations and working with parents in the community to provide one-to-one support on DLA and funding through grant making trusts and charities. She is very interested in encouraging families to get more involved, and is looking for parents who are interested in becoming volunteers for the campaign, as well as families who are prepared to share their stories with others through the media. If you would like to get involved please call Shazia on **0121 472 0415** or e-mail: shazia.malik@cafamily.org.uk

Contact a Family News

New Participation e-newsletter

Launched at the end of July, this new free Contact a Family e-newsletter focuses on issues around parent participation. The newsletter will be available every two months and will be a resource for parents and those working to develop parent participation. Subjects covered include:

- Articles on parent participation work around the UK
- Funding opportunities
- Section to post questions or ask for information/advice from others
- Legislation/policy updates;
- Good practice
- Celebrating successes
- Resources

To receive the new e-newsletter, visit Web:
<http://lists.cafamily.org.uk/lists>

New Publications

Factsheet: Finding and paying for childcare

Good childcare can be an issue for any family, but it may be particularly important and often more difficult if you are looking after a disabled child. This factsheet helps parents by advising them on how to access quality childcare.

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/findchildcare.html>

Pamphlet: Parent checklist

Parents of a disabled child are often entitled to a series of benefits and other help. This pamphlet contains a selection of the most common, briefly explaining what they are, and who is entitled to claim them. This PDF can be downloaded from

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/checklist.pdf> .

Alternatively, call us on Tel: **0121 415 4624** and we will post you a copy.

Do you want free independent financial advice about how to invest your Child Trust Fund voucher?

Every family whose child was born on or after 1st September 2002 is entitled to a Child Trust Fund voucher from the Government worth at least £250.

Many families don't do anything with the voucher when it arrives – and lose valuable interest as a result. The Government eventually chooses an account for you at random which may not be the best one.

From 7th August 2006, Contact a Family has secured some funding to pay for families to

receive an hour's confidential, free, independent financial advice over the telephone about which would be the right Child Trust Fund account for your family.

Contact a Family will pay an experienced investment adviser to give you this advice. If you haven't made a decision about what to do with your voucher, or you think you may have made the wrong decision, call the Contact a Family helpline, Tel: **0808 808 3555** to book a telephone appointment or E-mail: <mailto:helpline@cafamily.org.uk>

Change of e-mail address

The e-mail address for the West Midlands office has changed to westmids.office@cafamily.org.uk. From 1st November 2006 our old e-mail address, westmids@cafamily.org.uk will no longer work.

Please remember to update your address books.

Transition

The period of change from being a teenager to adulthood presents many challenges for young people with special needs and their family. Important decisions about the future need to be made concerning choices about living arrangements, post-secondary education, employment goals, finances, community and social involvement. These issues are often complex and benefit from proper planning.



If your child has a statement of special educational needs this should be reviewed every year with the Local Education Authority (LEA). In School Year 9 (13-14 yrs) there is a special review meeting. It is at this time that the *Transition Plan* is made with the young person, parents/carers and the LEA. Representation from Social Service, Health Service, school staff, an advocate or Connexions personal adviser, may also be present.

The Transition Plan should identify clearly:

WHAT needs to happen
WHERE help is needed
WHO will provide help
WHEN will it be done

The transition plan is drawn up using the ideas from the people who attended the transition review meeting. The plan is important because it provides an opportunity to review personal accomplishments, strengths, hopes and dreams, and what type(s) of support is required. Every year the school head teacher should arrange a review meeting to look at the transition plan until the young person leaves school. Leaving School is a very challenging time and you might not find a comprehensive network of services available after full-time education. The following section lists a number of organisations and resources which may be able to offer information, advice and support.

Education & Training

Education Grants Advisory Service (EGAS): Offers guidance and advice on funding for post 16 education in the UK. Tel: **0207 254 6251** (Mon/Wed/Fri 10am-12pm & 2-4pm) Website: www.egas-online.org

SKILL: A national charity that promotes opportunities for young people and adults with any kind of disability in post-16 education, training and employment in the UK. Helpline/Information Service Tel: **0800 328 5050** (Tues 11.30am-1.30pm/Thurs 1.30-3.30pm). Email: skill@skill.org.uk Web: www.skill.org.uk



Jobcentre Plus: A Disability Employment Advisor (DEA) can provide support with an employment assessment to produce an action plan for getting a job.

Adult Day Centres: They can offer support and training and are usually run by the Social Service Department and voluntary organisations. Referral for a place is through a social worker.

AFTER 16: A website for young people and families, offering information about opportunities and services after school, benefits, transport, employment, friends, health and more www.after16.org.uk

Transition

MOVING ON UP: A website for young disabled people from minority ethnic communities.

www.movingonup.info

Sexuality



Growing Up, Sex and Relationships: Contact a Family has published a series of booklets looking at how being disabled might impact on issues around sex and relationships for young people. The booklets offer guidance on what support is available to young people as they start to form intimate relationships. There are three booklets, aimed at young disabled people, parents and teachers. To request a copy contact the West Midlands office on **0121 415 4624**.

Transition

Contact a Family – Factsheets

'*Special Educational Needs – England*', provides a brief introduction to the processes involved in creating a statement. '*Transition in England and Wales*', identifies the main areas that parents & young people need to think about in planning for the future. To request a copy contact the West Midlands office on **0121 415 4624** or download, <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/factsheets.html>

Transition Pathways

A series of resource packs that can be used by any one involved in supporting a young person in transition into adult life. Information and guidance is given in step by step work books to help clarify each stage of the process. For more information, contact Chris Sholl on 07947 917554 or Fran Dancyger on 07974 954605. Prices range from £5.00 per guide to £40 per pack.

Email: transitionpathwaypartnership@yahoo.co.uk Web: www.transition.co.uk

Transition Information Network: An alliance of organisations and individuals with the aim of improving young disabled people's transition to adulthood. They produce a magazine "My Future Choices" for young people. Tel: 020 7843 6006.

Email: TIN@ncb.org.uk Web: www.myfuturechoices.org.uk

Connexions Service: Confidential Youth Service for 13-19 year olds offering guidance and support about getting where you want to be in life. Also provides support up to the age of 25 for young people who have learning difficulties or disabilities. For details of your local service telephone **0808 001 3219** or visit Web: www.connexions-direct.com

Living Accommodation



National Centre for Independent Living: NCIL is a national organisation providing information; training; expertise and policy development on all aspects of direct payments and independent living. Their aim is to enable disabled people to have more choice and control by allowing them equal access to an economic, social and cultural life. They maintain a directory of Social Services' Direct Payments schemes; and information on other Local Support Schemes. Tel: **0207 587 1663** Web: www.ncil.org.uk

Assist UK leads a UK wide network of locally-situated Disabled Living Centres. Each centre includes a permanent exhibition of products and equipment that provide people with opportunities to see and try them and find out what might suit them best. Tel: 0870 770 2866.

E-mail: general.info@assist-uk.org Web: www.assist-uk.org/

Managing Stress

A parent of a child with disabilities may find themselves calling upon inner reserves of energy and tenacity they never thought they had, when coping with the many facets of their child's health and well being. It is a common experience for many parents to encounter difficulties in finding clear-cut information on what type of services are available to them. The journey is often hard fought for and can be stressful in many ways, taking its toll on the body physically and/or psychologically.

Examples of Stress Responses

- Palpitations • Nausea • Fatigue • Sweating
- Dry mouth • Crying • Hyperventilation • Irritability
- Migraine • Pessimism • Loss of confidence
- Depression • Ill health

If you are worried about your own stress levels or symptoms of stress always consult your GP. In addition, seeking practical advice and support where possible with reference to specific problems will often prove beneficial to helping you manage stress.

Medical and Health Care Information

Contact a Family Directory:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/dirworks.html>

Gives short medical description of many conditions and related support networks.

Medical Information on the Internet:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/info.html>

Provides advice on the identification of reliable information on the Internet

The NHS & caring for a disabled child

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/health.html>

Benefits & Finance Advice

Contact a Family Factsheets: *Dealing with debt-England & Wales, Tax Credits – Overpayment, Tax Credits Guide, Working & Caring for a disabled child.* Factsheets available only on our website (no printed alternative): *Tax Credits Overpayments, Child Tax Credit & Income Support, DLA for children*

with learning disabilities, Help From The Social Fund, Help With Council Tax Bills.

All factsheets can be downloaded

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/factsheets.html>

Support

National/Local Support Groups

For information contact the Helpline Tel: **0808 808 355** or the West Midland office Tel: **0121 415 4624**.

Language: Contact a Family Language line is available for parents whose first language is not English. Tel: **0808 808 3555**.

Positive Parenting offers training and support to develop confidence in parental skills.

Tel/Fax: **0121 427 3333**.

Email: Birmingham@parent.org.uk .

Web: www.positiveparenting.info

General & Legal Advice

Carers UK: Tel: **0808 808 7777**. Wed-Thurs 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm (Advice, advocacy, counselling crisis support).

Parent Partnership Service: For local offices contact the National Parent Partnership Network Tel: **0207 843 6058** (SEN)

Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB): Tel: **0207 833 2181** for information about your nearest local office. Open 8am-6pm or visit Web: www.adviceguide.org.uk

The Disability Law Service: National registered charity that provides confidential and free legal advice for disabled adults, their families and carers. Tel: **020 7791 9800**

E-mail: advice@dls.org.uk

Web: www.dls.org.uk

The Children's legal Centre: Tel **01206 873 820** (SEN, advocacy)

Bailey Wright & Co. Solicitors: Tel: **0121 244 6600** (SEN)

For further information about Contact a Family publication and services mentioned above contact the West Midlands office on **0121 415 4624** or Helpline on **0808 808 3555**

Events

“Free Wheeling”



3rd November 2006

10.30am - 2.30pm

Prospect Hall, 12 College Walk, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LE



The aim of this Information Workshop is to enlighten parents about the variety of mobility equipment available to them, the costs involved and how to find accessible help with funding. Whizz-Kidz will give a talk about the range of choice in wheelchairs, walkers, buggies and trikes etc., the NHS will provide information and guidance on Statutory Funding & the Voucher Scheme and Contact a Family will provide information on Charitable Trusts and how to put together effective applications.

To book your place contact Holly Pyke at Whizz-Kidz on **0121 472 3261** or Email: birmingham@whizz-kidz.org.uk

Supported by Link-Upp Birmingham

Part of the ‘End Child Poverty Campaign’



Link-Upp Birmingham



Half-Term Holiday

Link-Upp Birmingham: Cinema Outing

For Children with Special Needs, Siblings and their Parents

Tuesday 24th October 2006, 10.00am

Venue: The Warner Village Cinema at “Star City”, Nechells, Birmingham



The film that will **probably** be seen is “Hoodwinked”, the animated film that tells the *true* and very funny story of Little Red Riding Hood! **However**, this may change. The film shown will be suitable for all children and will be

confirmed nearer the date, but do not delay. **Places will be limited.** Book early or you might miss out altogether!

Call **0121 415 4445** or **07767 086 417** to reserve a place. Cost: £1 per person.



Please note that parents are responsible for their own children at the event.

Link-Upp Birmingham: AGM

Wednesday 22nd November
10.00am-2.30pm

Venue: Midlands Art Centre (MAC), Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, Birmingham

Once the general business agenda of the AGM has been conducted, there will be a Body Shop Pamper Party with a range of therapists and a chance to buy goodies. To book a place please telephone **0121 415 4445.**

Whizz-Kidz – Events, Information & Awareness Days

2006

- Walkers Product and Information Day – 13th October 2006
- Moving & Handling Awareness Day for Parents – TBC (November)
- Christmas open day / information day – 8th December 2006



2007

- Standing wheelchairs Product and Information Day – 2nd February 2007
- Powered wheelchair Product and Information Day – 9th March 2007
- 1st Birthday – Awareness Day – 13th April 2007
- Manual wheelchair Product & Information Day – 25th May 2007

Ongoing throughout the year:

- Review and advisory assessments (please call to arrange an advisory assessment with our therapist)

If you are interested in finding out more or would like to book a place on any of the above days please contact Whizz-Kidz on **0121 472 3261** or email: birmingham@whizz-kidz.org.uk



Whizz-Kidz Wheelchair Skills Training – Sandwell week commencing 23rd October 2006

- Are you aged between 5 and 18 and a user of any kind of wheelchair?
- Would you like to meet and have fun with other people who use wheelchairs?
- Do you want to learn new skills and gain more confidence?

Then sign up NOW for a free and all-inclusive Keep on Moving wheelchair activity scheme! Places are limited!

Contact Laura Evison on **0121 472 3261** or Email: birmingham@whizz-kidz.org.uk to find out more. Web: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/keeponmoving

Contact a Family West Midlands Volunteer Parent Representatives

All our local parent reps are parents of disabled children. For local information in their designated areas or a listening ear, please give them a call – they will be only too happy to help.

Sharon Baker	Worcestershire	01299 826 118
Rizwana Pathan	North Warwickshire	024 7634 9612
Sonia Tooray	Asian Communities Birmingham	0121 331 1248
Sharon Rousell	Wolverhampton	01902 727 039

The Contact a Family National Freephone Helpline **0808 808 3555**, is open Monday - Friday, 10am-4pm. The Textphone number is **0808 808 3556** and Language Line is available for parents whose first language is not English.