

HOW TO 05

Caring for a Child

Carers Information Service

If your child has a disability, a chronic health condition or special educational needs (SEN), there are a number of organisations that can help you. This factsheet has general information about local support organisations, social care, education, health, work, specialist equipment, getting a break and leisure activities. Please note that any organisations listed are included for information only and listing does not mean recommendation.

This factsheet is part of **How To... A Guide for Carers in Croydon**. You can download the full series of factsheets from our website www.carersinfo.org.uk. You can also call us on 020 8649 9339, option 1, or visit the Carers Support Centre.

Information, advice and emotional support



Local support

Croydon Local Offer

localoffer.croydon.gov.uk

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, all local authorities must produce a Local Offer of services for children and young people with SEN. The Croydon Local Offer is available online and leaflets can be downloaded.

Home-Start Croydon

020 8667 0207

contact@croydon-homestart.co.uk

www.croydon-homestart.co.uk

Supports local families, in their own homes, who are experiencing difficulties or suffering stress, and who have at least one child under five years of age. Experienced volunteers offer free and confidential emotional support weekly (two-to-three hours) helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

Jubilee Parenting

jane.carey@croydon-jubilee.co.uk

www.croydonjubileechurch.blogspot.co.uk/p/parenting.html

Runs Chill 'n' Chat support groups for parents, carers and grandparents of children or young people with a disability or SEN. Groups run during term-time only and there is no need to book. Groups are based at Woodlands Children's Centre and Kensington Avenue Children's Centre.

Parents in Partnership (PiP)

020 8663 5626

office@pipcroydon.com

www.pipcroydon.com

Supports parents of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities aged 0-25 in Croydon. Provides specialist support, training, parent forum and up-to-date local knowledge and information.

St Giles Parent Group

020 8680 2141

Support from a Family Support Worker for parents of a disabled child aged 4-19. Monthly meetings open to all parents, not just those with a child attending St Giles School.

Young Carers Service

020 8649 9339, option 2

youngcarers@talkofftherecord.org

www.talkofftherecord.org

Offers wide range of support to young people aged 7-25 caring for someone due to disability or illness. Provides information, advice, emotional support, counselling, trips and activities, Young Carer's Assessments, educational support, family support and groups. Specialist support is available for young carers with a parent who has a mental health problem and for young adult carers (aged 18-25).

Specific conditions

Croydon Deaf Children's Society

07951 611 190

info@croydondeafchildren.co.uk

www.croydondeafchildren.org.uk

Information, advice, practical and emotional support and special events for children with a hearing impairment and their carers.

Affiliated to the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS).

Croydon Mencap

020 8684 5890

www.croydonmencap.org.uk

Information, advice and support for people with a learning disability and their carers. Runs 'Chill n Chat' drop-in groups for children under 5 with additional needs and their carers.

Croydon Young People's Substance Misuse Service

020 8686 3945

info@turning-point.co.uk

www.turning-point.co.uk/croydon-young-peoples-substance-misuse-service.aspx

Single point of access drug and alcohol service offering support to young people across the borough.

Diabetes Parent Support Group

mhn-tr.paediatricdiabetes@nhs.net

Monthly support group at the Carers Support Centre for parents with children or young people with Type 1 Diabetes.

National Autistic Society (NAS)

Croydon Branch Parent Group

07833 293 263

croydon8@nas.org.uk

Coffee mornings and information and advice for parents and carers of a family member who has received a diagnosis, or is waiting for a diagnosis, of autistic spectrum disorder. Meets at the Carers Support Centre.

National Autistic Society (NAS)

Croydon Family Support

020 3005 4335

croydon.familysupport@nas.org.uk

www.autism.org.uk

Information, advice, and support offered to families of children and

young people with a diagnosis of autism through home visits and autism-specific courses. Also offers short breaks (trampolining sessions and a youth club) and social skills groups (Lego and football skills) for children and young people in the borough. Telephone support is available for families with a child awaiting diagnosis and for young adults aged up to 25. Activities are organised during the school holidays. Self-referrals are accepted via phone or email.

Life-limiting conditions

Rainbow Trust Children's Charity

01372 363 438

enquiries@rainbowtrust.org.uk

www.rainbowtrust.org.uk

Practical and emotional support for children and young people aged up to 18 and their families.

Shooting Star CHASE (Hospice)

01483 230 960 (Guildford)

020 8783 2000 (Hampton)

www.shootingstarchase.org.uk

Inpatient care at Christopher's Children's Hospice (Guildford) and Shooting Star House (Hampton) for children and young people aged up to 19, as well as home care and practical and emotional support for families.

Together for Short Lives

0808 8088 100

Support for children and young people with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition, and their families. Includes helpline, advocacy and an online support group.

National support

Challenging Behaviour Foundation

0300 666 0126

support@theCBF.org.uk

www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk

Information, advice and support for parents and carers of people with a severe learning disability who use challenging behaviour.

Contact

0808 808 3555

info@contact.org.uk

www.contact.org.uk

Information, advice, support and publications for families caring for a disabled child.

Down's Syndrome Association

0333 1212 300

info@downs-syndrome.org.uk

www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

National organisation for people with Down's syndrome and their families. Provides online information, a telephone helpline, local support groups, employment programme, sports programme and training.

Genetic Alliance

020 7831 0883

contactus@geneticalliance.org.uk

www.geneticalliance.org.uk

National organisation for people affected by genetic conditions.

National Autistic Society

0808 800 4104 (Helpline)

0808 800 4106 (Parent to Parent)

www.autism.org.uk

National charity for people with autism (including Asperger syndrome) and their families. Parent to Parent service gives emotional support to parents and carers of children or adults with autism and is provided by trained parent volunteers.

National Deaf Children's Society

0808 800 8880

helpline@ndcs.org.uk

www.ndcs.org.uk

National charity for deaf children and their families. Provides information, events, equipment loans and a helpline.

Sibs

01535 645 453

www.sibs.org.uk

Information, advice and support for siblings of disabled children and adults.

SWAN UK

020 7831 0883

info@undiagnosed.org.uk

www.undiagnosed.org.uk

Information and support for families of children and young adults with undiagnosed genetic conditions.

Early years

Finding out that your child has a disability or SEN can have a big impact on you and the rest of your family. You may have a mixture of different emotions and wonder how you will cope. It's important to remember that these feelings are normal and you aren't alone. Some families find it helpful to talk to other families via online forums or by joining a local support group. If you want to talk to someone or would like information about local support groups, you can contact the Carers Information Service on 020 8649 9339, option 1.

Health

In the early years, your main points of contact for your child's health will most likely be your health visitor and your GP. Your child may need regular hospital visits or appointments with consultants or specialists depending on their condition and health needs. Your GP will be able to refer your child to any specialists they might need.

Development

You may notice that your child is slower to develop certain skills than other children of their age. This is called developmental delay. Professionals may mention the term 'developmental milestones'. These are key areas of development, including physical, learning, social and communication skills. If you are concerned about your child's development or your child is not meeting developmental milestones, talk to your GP or health visitor.



Childcare and early year's education

There are a number of early years settings your child may attend, including nursery, pre-school, holiday play schemes and childminding. You can also access support from children's centres.

The government runs a number of schemes to assist with childcare costs. You can get help with childcare costs for two-year-olds if you receive certain income-support benefits. Three to four-year olds can receive at least 15 hours a week of childcare, rising to 30 hours if you (and your partner if they live with you) are working for at least 16 hours a week. You may also be entitled to Tax-Free Childcare support from the government, as long as you or your partner are working for 16 hours a week or more. For more information, visit: www.gov.uk/help-with-childcarecosts.

All early years settings should have arrangements in place to support children with SEN. If your setting cannot meet your child's needs, your child may need an Education, Health and Care Plan. Ask your setting's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for more information.

Many disabled children attend a mainstream nursery or preschool, but some children with high levels of need find a specialist setting more suitable. For more information on specialist nurseries and pre-schools, please call the Early Years SEND team on 020 8604 7263 or email senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk.

Disabled children's register

Every local authority must have a disabled children's register. Croydon Council is now working in partnership with Nimbus Disability to provide an Access Card for children and young people on the register. See the Leisure section for more information.

Local support

Best Start Croydon

www.croydon.gov.uk

Best Start children's centres offer services, activities, support and peer-to-peer parent training courses for families with children under 5. Participating centres include:

- Aerodrome Children's Centre (020 8688 7710).
- Byron Children's Centre (020 8763 6285).
- Crosfield Children's Centre (020 8654 7566).
- Kensington Avenue Children's Centre (020 8764 2923).
- New Addington Children's Centres (01689 847 136).
- Purley Oaks Children's Centre (020 8325 4517).
- Selhurst Children's Centre (020 8684 3777).
- Shirley Children's Centre (020 8777 2119).
- Woodlands Children's Centre (020 8916 0543).

Rainbow Group

020 8655 5684

rainbow@crosfield.croydon.sch.uk

Group for two-to-four year olds with severe to profound multiple learning difficulties. Referrals must be made via the 0-25 SEND Social Care team. See the Social Care section for contact details.

SNAP Childcare

020 7729 2200

info@snapchildcare.co.uk

www.snapchildcare.co.uk

Specialist childcare and nanny agency for babies and children with SEN or a disability. Can also provide personal assistants, care workers and therapists.



Social care

Getting support

As the parent of a child with a disability or SEN, it's important to get the right support. If you feel you need a break, you can access short breaks, such as after-school clubs and holiday clubs. You can use some short break and play services without having an assessment. The Local Offer has a list of available short breaks and leisure activities: localoffer.croydon.gov.uk. See the sections on Short Breaks and Leisure below for more information.

For children with more complex needs, you may receive more ongoing support from children's social care. In Croydon, the SEND Social Care Team supports children and young people with a permanent and substantial disability.

Ask for an assessment

Under the Children Act 1989 (section 17), local authorities have a legal duty to assess every child who is or may be 'in need', including disabled children. However, having an assessment does not necessarily mean that you will receive support services; you will only receive support services if your needs are assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria. If you feel your child needs an assessment, contact Croydon's SEND Social Care Team on 020 8726 6500 and ask for an assessment of your child's needs and your needs as a family.

If you are refused an assessment and you feel you should have received one, you may wish to make a formal complaint. Contact has a template letter which you can adapt: www.contact.org.uk.

Preparing for your assessment

An assessment will usually be conducted by a social worker, taking a comprehensive look at your child's needs and your situation as a family. Prepare for your assessment by thinking of the extra support you provide your child on a daily basis. Be clear what your child struggles with as well as their strengths and take copies of any letters from professionals with you. You can ask a friend or relative to come with you to support you.

Support for yourself and for siblings

The person conducting your child's assessment should also consider your needs as a family. If you are a parent carer and feel your needs have not been taken into consideration during your child's assessment, you can also request a parent carer needs assessment under the Children and Families Act 2014. This is separate to your child's assessment. To request a parent carer needs assessment, contact the 0-25 SEND Team (020 8726 6400). Siblings who have a significant caring role can also request their own assessment as a young carer from Off the Record's Young Carers Service (020 8649 9339, option 2). For more information on Carer's Assessments and Off the Record's Young Carers Service, see our *Getting Support from Social Care* factsheet.

After your assessment

After your child's assessment, the social care team will decide if your child is eligible for support. If your child is eligible, they will agree a support plan with you, explaining how they will meet your child's eligible needs. If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), any support provided by social care should also be included in their EHCP.

Direct payments/ personal budgets

If you are eligible for support from social care and want to arrange support yourself, you can receive direct payments. A direct payment is money directly paid to you to meet your child's eligible needs. This is often to directly pay a personal assistant, but could also be for equipment, travel to activities, etc. Direct payments are not counted as income and will not affect your entitlement to benefits. If your child is assessed as being eligible for support, you must be offered direct payments, but you do not have to take up the option. If you are already receiving support from social care, you can ask to be transferred to direct payments. See the Useful Contacts section for more information.



Useful contacts



SEND Social Care Service

020 8726 6400

www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/cyp-disabilities

The SEND Social Care Service supports disabled children and their families. Contact them for information about assessments, safeguarding, short breaks and the disabled children's register.

Children's Continuing Care

020 3668 1300

www.croydonccg.nhs.uk

Disabled children and young people under 18 with complex health needs may be able to access care for their health needs under Continuing Care. This is funded by the NHS. Eligibility for continuing care is assessed using the National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care.

Croydon Sensory Support Service

www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs/sen-education/sen-specialist-provision/csss

Supports education for children and young people with hearing and visual impairments. Children and young people are primarily referred via a teacher or health professional. Runs resource centres, including:

- Primary Hearing Centre (020 8689 9038).
- Secondary Hearing Resource Centre (020 8656 2987).
- Peripatetic Visual Impairment Service (020 8760 5784).

Direct Payment Support Service

020 8726 6000 ext 19509

direct.payments@croydon.gov.uk
Helps with creating a support plan and managing direct payments, including recruiting staff and managing the responsibilities of being an employer. Also holds a list of payroll services that can help with the paperwork involved in being an employer.

Education

Your child may need more support at school. Mainstream nurseries and schools support children with a wide range of special educational needs (SEN) and your child should be properly included.

Education, Health and Care Plans

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled children enjoy an inclusive education. If the school can't meet your child's needs out of their own resources, your child may need an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). EHCPs explain how the local authority will meet your child's special educational needs. They should cover educational needs but also include health and social care needs. In Croydon, KIDS SENDIASS (020 8663 5630) provides information and support to families with a disabled child or child with SEN on education issues. SEN mediation is provided by Global Mediation (020 8441 1355).

Preparing for adulthood

If your child has a statement or EHCP, they should have a transition meeting in Year 9. The transition meeting looks at the young person's ambitions for the future and considers what support will be put in place to help them prepare for adulthood. The head teacher, the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) and any other relevant professionals should be involved. After the meeting, a transition plan should be created and reviewed annually until the young person leaves school. In Croydon, the Post 16 SEND Team is responsible for planning transition in education for young people with SEN. They can be contacted through the 0-25 SEND Team on 020 8726 6400.

Local support

The Carers Information Service provides EHCP drop-ins with an advice worker on fortnightly Wednesday mornings during term-time. Contact us for future dates.

Croydon Council Special Educational Needs Hotline

020 8604 7263 (Hotline)

020 8760 5783 (Hearing

Impairment Service)

020 8760 5784 (Visual

Impairment Service)

senenquiries@croydon.gov.uk

www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs/sencroydon/sen-croydon

Contact point for any matter relating to your child's special educational needs – including children with a statement or EHCP.

Croydon Dyslexia Association

08442 496 949

cdahelpline@hotmail.co.uk

www.croydondyslexia.wordpress.com

Information, advice, screening service and specialist literacy workshops for primary and secondary pupils. Open meetings for people with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties and their families and carers.

Global Mediation

0800 064 4488

sen@globalmediation.co.uk

www.globalmediation.co.uk

The special educational needs (SEN) Mediation provider in Croydon.

Provides mediation for people considering making an appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal (SEN). The law says that you must receive advice on mediation before going to tribunal, but you do not need to try mediation if you do not wish to.

KIDS SENDIASS

020 8663 5630

croydon@kids.org.uk

Support to children and young people in Croydon with a disability or SEN, and their families. Provides support with Education, Health and Care Plans, preparing for adulthood, solving disputes with schools and professionals and support with meetings. Provides a term-time SEN advice drop-in on Fridays, 10am-12noon at the Carers Support Centre.

Parents in Partnership (PIP) Parent Forum

020 8649 9339 (option 7)
jane.speller@pipcroydon.com
www.pipcroydon.com

The Croydon Parent Forum enables parents and carers to influence services affecting disabled children in Croydon.

SOSISEN

020 8538 3731

www.sossen.org.uk

Provides an SEN helpline, advice centres, workshops, one-to-one advice and factsheets. The advice centre at the Thornton Health Salvation Army is usually open on the first Monday of every month during term-time. Appointments are on a first-come, first-served basis.

Springboard Tuition

020 8686 0393

www.webfronter.com/croydon/springboardtuition

One-to-one and small group tuition for children who are temporarily out of mainstream school – usually as a result of illness or disability. Referrals to the service should be made by a health or education professional after the child has missed 15 or more days of school.

National Support

ACE Education Advice

0300 011 5142

www.ace-ed.org.uk

ACE Education Advice provide independent advice on a wide range of education issues. The advice line is run by volunteers.

Cerebra

0800 328 1159

www.cerebra.org.uk

Downloadable education guides for families.

Contact

0808 808 3555

www.contact.org.uk

Education advisers are available on the helpline to help with any aspect of education and SEN. Website offers comprehensive information on all aspects of SEN, including EHCPs, exclusions, school transport and post-16 education.

Council for Disabled Children (CDC)

councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Umbrella body for the disabled children's sector. Provides a range of guides for parents and disabled young people, as well as support for professionals in the sector.

Independent Parental Special Education Advice (IPSEA)

0800 018 4016

www.ipsea.org.uk

Free legally based advice for families who have children with SEN. Appointments must be booked in advance. All advice is given by trained volunteers. Also runs an SEN Tribunal Helpline.

Special Needs Jungle

www.specialneedsjungle.com

Parent-led website with information, free resources and opinion articles on SEN and disability issues.



Transport and Travel

Disabled children or children with SEN in Croydon may get travel assistance from Croydon Council if their disability or SEN reasonably prevents them from walking to school. Travel assistance may involve: independent travel training, a travel pass, a personal travel budget or transport vehicles. See Croydon's 5-16 Travel Assistance Policy: www.croydon.gov.uk/transportandstreets/policies/school-transport/travel-assistance-or-ages-5-16.

There is a separate travel policy for young people aged 16 or over in education or training: www.croydon.gov.uk/transportandstreets/policies/school-transport/travel-assistance-for-ages-16-25-in-education. If the young person is attending a further education course suited to their educational needs, but cannot travel due to their SEN or disability, you or the young person can apply for assistance. If assessed as eligible, Croydon Council provides similar options to pre-16 school transport. In addition, in a small minority of cases, a taxi service may be provided for young people with the highest level of need.

For more information and to apply, contact the Passenger Transport Team or speak to KIDS SENDIASS (020 8663 5630).

Passenger Transport Team

020 8686 2215

passenger.transport@croydon.gov.uk
Contact for day-to-day issues regarding home to school transport.

Special Educational Needs Transport Advocacy Service (SENTAS)

07986 768 085

info@sentas.co.uk

sentas.co.uk

Provides information on SEN home to school transport. Also provides an advocacy service for a paid fee.

Travel Assistance Commissioner

020 8760 5454

jackie.s.wright@croydon.gov.uk

Responsible for overseeing travel assistance in the London Borough of Croydon. Can provide information on travel assistance provision and appeals.

Health



Parents with a disabled child may come into contact with a variety of health professionals as part of their caring role. As well as providing medical services for the child these professionals can also be good sources of information, advice and support. If the child has been referred to a specialist health service such as physiotherapy, be aware that there may be a waiting list. It is a good idea to keep a note of the referral date and be ready to chase up the referral if necessary.

Chatterbox Groups

020 8714 2594

faith.brooks1@nhs.net

Drop-in groups for Croydon families with children aged 0-6 who have concerns about their child's talking or interaction. Run by Speech and Language Therapy staff in Croydon Children's Centres.

Children's Hospital at Home

020 8274 6428 / 07659 144 802

(via pager 8am-8pm)

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/services/Childrens_Hospital_at_Home

Provides nursing care, palliative care, care coordination, continuing care and play therapy for children with complex health needs or requiring palliative care. Offers an emotional support service for children with a life-limiting condition and their siblings.

Community Special Care Dentistry

020 3299 3480

Dental service for children and adults with special needs and/or disabilities that prevent them from accessing a high street dentist

Croydon Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

020 3228 0000

www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/camhs

A multi-disciplinary service for children and young people with a severe mental health problem.

Support includes assessment, advice, treatment and training. Referrals must be made by a professional such as a health professional, social worker, educational psychologist or teacher.

Crystal Children's Development Centre

020 8274 6850

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/crystal-childrens-development-centre

Provides a range of specialist screening, assessments and treatments for children in Croydon, including audiology, medical services, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy. Services are by appointment and may require a health professional referral.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Complaints Services

020 8401 3210

ch-tr.pals@nhs.net

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

Information on NHS services and assistance with complaints or concerns about treatment and care.

Money matters



There are a range of benefits available to families with a disabled child or child with SEN. The benefits system can be complicated, but don't let that put you off; you can get support to check you are claiming everything your family is entitled to. Contact Croydon Welfare Rights Teams on 0800 731 5920 for telephone benefits advice, or visit the Carers Support Centre to book a benefits appointment. You can also find general information in our *Money Matters* factsheet.

Other financial help

There are a range of charities and trusts that provide grants to individuals to meet a range of needs relating to caring for a disabled child. There are also other charities who provide direct support, such as by providing a holiday. See the list of Useful Contacts for details of grant giving organisations. For a longer list, see our *Grant-Giving Organisations* factsheet

Useful contacts

Contact

0808 808 3555

info@contact.org.uk

www.contact.org.uk

Helpline gives detailed information on financial support available to families with a disabled child.

Croydon Welfare Rights Team

0800 731 5920

www.croydon.gov.uk/advice/benefits/welfare-benefits/project

Comprehensive casework service to families who have a disabled child.

Family Fund

01904 621 115

info@familyfund.org.uk

www.familyfund.org.uk

Provides grants to families of disabled or seriously ill children or young people aged 17 or under.

Turn2Us

www.turn2us.org.uk

Free online benefit checker and grant searcher.

Working

Juggling work and care can be a difficult balancing act. As a parent or carer of a disabled child, you have certain rights and protection in law to help you manage paid employment and your caring role.

Telling your employer

It's your decision whether or not to tell your employer that you are a carer. Some people find it helpful as their employer may be more understanding about their situation. Your employer may also have additional policies which go above and beyond legal requirements.

Childcare

Under the Equality Act 2010, childcare providers cannot discriminate against disabled children and must make reasonable adjustments. They can charge more for a disabled child but only for any extra costs such as employing more staff. Make sure your childcare provider is properly registered with OFSTED: (0300 123 1231). Contact has more information on finding good childcare: www.contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/work-childcare.

Time off for dependants

Every employee has the right to take a 'reasonable' amount of time off work for an unexpected event that affects a dependant. The legal right to time off for dependants only applies to unforeseen events. So for example, if your child was suddenly ill and needed to come home from school and there was no other childcare, you could use this right.

Parental leave

As a parent, you have the right to take up to 18 weeks in total (not per annum) unpaid parental leave to take care of your child until they are 18, within certain rules and restrictions. The rules are:

- You must be an employee and have worked for your current employer for one year or more.
- You must give 21 days' notice.
- Leave must be taken one week at a time unless your child receives Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), in which case you can take a day off at a time.
- You can take up to four weeks of your leave in one year, unless agreed otherwise by your employer.
- Your employer can delay leave by up to six months if the leave would particularly disrupt the business. However, they must follow certain procedures to do this.

Flexible working

If you have been in your current job for 26 weeks or more (unless you are an agency worker or office holder), you have the right to ask for flexible working. Your request can be turned down, but only once the correct process has been followed. You can only make one request every 12 months. Your request must be in writing and include certain information, such as:

- The nature of the flexibility you are asking for e.g. flexi-time, working from home, etc.
- When you wish to start flexible working.
- If you have made any previous requests (and if so, when).
- The impact your request, if any, would have on your work and how this impact could be resolved.

Your employer has up to three months to respond to your request. Flexible working requests can only be turned down for a good business reason; for example, because it would be too costly to the business or it would not be possible to reorganise

work amongst existing staff. Some employers have an appeals system if you are turned down, but there is no legal requirement to have one.

Useful contacts

ACAS

0300 123 1100

www.acas.org.uk

Provides employment information, advice and early conciliation service (early resolution support before cases reach tribunal).

Working Families

0300 012 0312

www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Information on employment rights for parents on disabled children. 'Waving not Drowning' project provides information and support to parent carers who work or want to work.



Equipment

The right equipment can help you and your child get the most out of life and make daily tasks a lot easier. The services listed below can advise on the most appropriate equipment for a child, and in some cases provide the equipment directly – although some organisations will charge for this.

Local support

Children's Occupational Therapy Service

020 8274 6850/54

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/childrens-occupational-therapy

Provides advice, equipment and assessments for re-housing if your current property is unsuitable. Referrals can be made for adaptations to an existing property and help with funding applications to pay for major adaptations.



Croydon Wheelchair Service

020 8665 9313

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

Provides specialised buggies and wheelchairs to disabled children with mobility problems. A referral is required from a GP, physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Waiting times are likely to apply.

MERU

01372 725 203

info@meru.org.uk

www.meru.org.uk

Custom-made equipment for disabled children and young people aged 0 - 25 years who live, or attend school or college, in London or south east England. Referral must be made by an appropriate health or care professional.

National Support

Cerebra

0800 328 1159

info@cerebra.org.uk

www.cerebra.org.uk

Innovation Centre designs and sells equipment for disabled children and website lists second-hand equipment available to collect. Also offers a lending library, sleep service, research team and a holiday home for parents.

Fledglings

01799 541 807

enquiries@fledglings.org.uk

www.fledglings.org.uk

Helps parents and carers of disabled children to find solutions to practical problems by providing advice and information, as well as sourcing and supplying equipment. They specialise in finding unusual items not readily available elsewhere.

Newlife – Foundation for Disabled Children

0800 092 0095

www.newlifecharity.co.uk

Offers free loans of essential equipment to children with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition. Also provides equipment grants for children with a significant disability that affects their daily life, and Play Therapy Pods. Families can self-refer but their application must be supported by a professional.

Whizz Kidz

020 7233 6600

info@whizz-kidz.org.uk

www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

Mobility equipment not available from the NHS for disabled children aged up to 17.

Leisure and Short Breaks

Under the Equality Act 2010, disabled children should not be discriminated against when provided with services such as leisure services or facilities. Discrimination is when you are treated unfairly because of something related to your disability. This could be reduced mobility, need for extra toilet breaks, behavioural issues, difficulties using public transport, etc. Leisure services are also required to make reasonable adjustments to include disabled people. For more information, visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

In addition, local authorities must offer a Short Breaks Statement for Disabled Children to provide you with

a break from caring. In Croydon, short breaks available for parents and carers of a disabled child or child with SEN include term-time activity schemes, one-to-one support and support to attend mainstream provision (after-school clubs, sports activities, arts and drama, youth clubs, etc.). Croydon's EISS Summer Schemes also run summer activities during the school summer holiday period.

You can find information about short breaks on Croydon Council's website www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/cyp-disabilities/shortbreaks-care or by contacting the 0-25 SEND Social Care Team on 020 8726 6400.

Aerodrome Children's Centre

020 8688 7710

childrenscentre@aerodrome.croydon.sch.uk

www.aerodromeprimary.co.uk

Free sensory room that can be booked for one hour slots dependent on availability. Also run a range of other free activities.

Access Card

020 8604 7263 (Croydon SEND Hotline)
www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/croydon-disability-register-and-access-card/access-card-application
A free discount card to all children and young people on the Croydon disability register. Visit www.accesscard.org.uk for information on included venues. To be eligible, your child must be diagnosed with a permanent and substantial disability, be living in Croydon and be aged 18 years or under.

African Youth Development Association (AYDA)

020 8688 6000
admin@aydacentre.org
www.aydacentre.org
AYDA Centre offers mentoring and workshops for young people, with a particular focus on young people with a learning disability, as well as offering advice and a support group for parents.

All 4 One Youth Club

07990 790 183
paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk
After-school club for young people with disabilities, autism and SEN aged 8-18 at Waddon Youth Centre. Runs during term-time on Wednesday afternoons. Costs £3 per session.

Anti-Gravity Trampoline and Gymnastics

01883 620 971
james@ag-tc.co.uk
www.ag-tc.co.uk
Special needs trampolining classes in Caterham for children aged four and over with any disability, and their siblings. Classes held on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

The Arc

01883 330 380
www.the-arc-caterham.co.uk
Run a weekly soft play session for children with special needs of all ages. As well as the play space there is a café and accessible changing facilities.

Bensham Manor School

07990 790 183
paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk
After-school club for young people with disabilities, autism and SEN aged 18-25 at Bensham Manor School. Runs during term-time on Monday afternoons. Costs £3 per session.

Boomerang Youth Club

07990 790 183
paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk
Term-time youth club for young people with disabilities, autism and SEN aged 18-25 at Waddon Youth Centre. Runs during term-time on Thursday evenings. Costs £3 per session.

Bridge

020 8771 4570
office@beulahfamilychurch.co.uk
www.beulahfamilychurch.co.uk/ministry/bridge-respite-club-children-special-needs
Respite club which runs every second Saturday of the month at Beulah Family Church for children aged 4-11 with special needs. Club is aimed at local families, who should call to discuss their child's needs.

Cinema Exhibitor's Association Card

023 9224 8545
www.ceacard.co.uk
Cinema discount card for disabled people. Allows people aged 8 and over, who are receiving Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Armed Forces Independence Payment or who are registered blind, to get one free ticket for someone accompanying them to the cinema.

Croydon BMX

020 7993 9883
www.facebook.com/CroydonBMX
Inclusive BMX sessions at Norbury Park for anyone with a disability or additional needs.

Free Cakes for Kids

www.freecakesforkids.org.uk
Croydon Council Leisure Centres
Community service to families run by volunteers to provide birthday cakes to families who find it difficult to provide a cake for their child.

Croydon Council Leisure Centres

www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/sports/spssc
All of Croydon's leisure centres are accessible, including accessible swimming pools for those in wheelchairs. Some run specific activities for disabled children, including swimming lessons, and free entry for carers accompanying disabled swimmers. Free swimming for under 16 year olds is available during summer holidays.

Croydon School of Gymnastics

020 8683 1885
croydonsog1@btinternet.com
www.croydonsog.co.uk
Gymnastics classes for disabled children of school age.

Disability Challengers

01483 579 390
information@disability-challengers.org
www.disability-challengers.org
Provides inclusive play, summer play schemes, and leisure for disabled and non-disabled children aged 2-25. Please note that schemes for young people aged 12 upwards are for disabled young people only.

Disabilities Youth Project

07990 790 183
paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk
Youth clubs and holiday clubs for children and young people aged 8-25 with disabilities, autism and SEN.

Fabulous Youth Club

07990 790 183
paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk
After-school club for young people with disabilities, autism and SEN aged 8 – 18 at Waddon Youth Centre. Runs during term-time on Tuesday afternoons. Costs £3 per session. Contact organiser for details.



Gambado

020 8662 6910

beckenham@gambado.com

www.gambado.com

Indoor play venue. Beckenham branch holds SEN Nights on the first Monday of the month (excluding bank holidays), 5pm- 6.30pm, during term-time for disabled children and young people aged 0-12.

Goldcrest Youth Club

01689 867 366

Evening youth club for children with SEN eight and over. Sessions run on Thursday evenings, 7.30pm-9pm at Goldcrest Youth Club, New Addington. Run By Play Place.

Go Wild with Us

07729 769 663

www.gowildwithusuk.com

Outdoor inclusive activities, including an after-school club at Pinewood Scout Centre in Shirley (costs £3 per session) and half-term activities.

Joe's Cinema Club

07794 217980

Joe.bowen68@yahoo.com

Monthly social group for like-minded people aged 16 plus.

Kids Out

01525 385 252

info@kidsout.org.uk

www.kidsout.org.uk

Brings fun and happiness to disadvantaged children. Provides Big Day Out with local Rotary Clubs, Fun Days and Phyzzpod sensory spaces.

Knots Arts

07947 212 485

hello@knotsarts.com

Runs a Croydon Youth Club for young people aged 13-25 with social communication difficulties. Activities include art, sport, games, music, photography, discussion and cooking. Costs £2 per week.

Mencap Chill and Chat 0-5

020 8684 5890

www.croydonmencap.org.uk/services/chill-and-chat

Drop-in 'Chill and Chat' sessions for children aged 0-5 with SEN on Tuesday (Mailing Close Children's Centre) and Friday mornings (Shirley Children's Centre). Term-time only.

Mencap Saturday Club

info@croydonmencap.org.uk

www.croydonmencap.org.uk

Activities club for young adults with a learning disability. Run by Croydon Mencap and held fortnightly on Saturdays. Costs £8 per session.

Merlin's Magic Wand

01202 440 060

admin@merlinsmagicwand.org

www.merlinsmagicwand.org

Provides the means for disabled or disadvantaged children aged 2-18 to visit Merlin Group attractions such as Legoland, Sealife Centres and Madame Tussauds. Grants may be awarded to pay for the cost of travel.

NAS Saturday Club

07920 711 601

Bi-weekly Saturday club for young people with autistic spectrum disorder aged 11-19. Based at Waddon Youth Centre.

Phab

07930 202 242

info@phab.org.uk

www.phab.org.uk

Runs inclusive youth clubs for disabled young people and their friends and family.

RAP Sports Courses - Croydon Sport and Physical Activity Team

020 8760 5592

sdo@croydon.gov.uk

www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/sports/youth-sports/team-sports

Sports activities and coaching after school, at weekends and during school holidays for children aged 5-18 with disabilities and SEN.

Rutherford School Saturday Club

020 8688 7560

david.orable@garwoodfoundation.org.uk

www.rutherfordschool.org.uk/what-we-do/our-specialities/saturday-club/

For children and young people aged 6-19 who have profound and multiple learning disabilities, sensory impairment and/or complex medical needs. Sessions are held every Saturday, 10am- 3pm.

Slide Dance Company

07949 136 485

info@slidedance.org

www.slidedance.org

Runs dance projects for children and young people in Croydon with or without disabilities.

Special Blend Youth Club

07990 790 183

paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk

Youth club for young people with disabilities, autism and SEN aged 18-25 at the Sir Philip Game Centre in Addiscombe. Runs during term-time on Monday evenings. Costs £3 per session.

Waggy Tails Club

07939 573 211

info@waggytailsclub.co.uk

www.waggytailsclub.co.uk

After-school club that gives young people aged 13-18 with a disability or special needs the opportunity to work with and train dogs in a monitored environment.

Wheels for Wellbeing

020 7346 8482

info@wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk

www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk

Cycling opportunities for disabled children (aged three and over) and adults. Bases in South Norwood, Lewisham and Herne Hill.

Holidays

There are a number of grant-giving organisations that may be able to help fund a break, leisure activity or provide leisure or play equipment for disabled children. For more information, see the *Grant Giving Organisations* and *Leisure and Holidays* factsheet.

The Adamson Trust

www.theadamsontrust.co.uk

Grants awarded to help the cost of a holiday or respite break for disabled children aged under 18. Trips must be taken before their 18th birthday.

Alice's Escapes

01229 581 665

enquiries@alices-escapes.co.uk

www.alices-escapes.co.uk

Holidays for children aged up to 16 with terminal or life-threatening conditions and their families. Also offers bereavement breaks to those who have lost a child. Referrals by health professional only.

Birchington Convalescent Benefit Fund

www.churchsociety.org/aboutus/managed/Fund_Birchington.asp

Small grants to enable children from families on a low income to obtain convalescent care or a break following illness.

CCHF Bursary Fund (Outward Bound)

01931 740 000

www.outwardbound.org.uk

Previously CCHF All About Kids. Provides bursary funding towards outdoor adventure courses with Outward Bound.

Camp Quality UK

0121 288 4745

www.campquality.org.uk

Free holidays for children aged 5-16 with a potentially life-limiting condition that has a significant impact on their daily lives.

Diabetes UK Supported Holidays and Family Weekends

020 7424 1000

www.diabetes.org.uk

Offers one-week holidays for young people with diabetes aged 7-18 and family weekends away for young people with diabetes and their families.

Donna's Dream House

01253 752 222

len@donnasdreamhouse.co.uk

www.donnasdreamhouse.co.uk

Provides free family holidays at a house in Blackpool for children and teenagers with life-threatening illnesses and recently bereaved siblings and families.

Family Fund

01904 621 115

info@familyfund.org.uk

www.familyfund.org.uk

Provides grants for families of disabled child aged 17 and under, including grants for holidays and short breaks.

Family Holiday Association

020 3117 0650

grants@familyholidayassociation.org.uk

www.familyholidayassociation.org.uk

Free holidays at UK holiday parks, such as Butlins, or grants towards other UK holidays, for families on a low income with a child under 18 who have not had a holiday in the past four years. Families must not be eligible for help from the Family Fund.

Happy Days Children's Charity

01582 755999

enquiries@happydayscharity.org

www.happydayscharity.org

Contributes to family holidays, day trips and group activity holidays in the UK for disabled children.

The Harriet Davis Seaside Holiday Trust for Disabled Children

01834 845 197

helen@harriet-davis-trust.co.uk

www.harriet-davis-trust.org.uk

Subsidised self-catering holidays in Pembrokeshire in fully adapted and equipped accommodation for families with a disabled child.

Holiday Homes Trust

020 8433 7290/1

scout.holiday.homes@scouts.org.uk

www.holidayhomestrust.org

Affordable holidays in accessible caravans at UK sites for families who are disadvantaged, whether through disability, income or circumstance.

Kensington Foundation

01253 761 444

kentrust1@hotmail.com

www.kensingtonfoundation.com

Daisy Chain Project offers respite breaks in Blackpool for families caring for a sick or disabled child (no age limits). Accommodation is rent-free with a £125 booking fee per family.

The Respite Association

01775 820 176

help@respiteassociation.org

www.respiteassociation.org

Funding for respite for carers living on a low income. Also offers free breaks for carers at caravans in Skegness and near Blackpool.

Sebastian's Action Trust

01256 391 854

bluebells@sebastiansactiontrust.org

www.sebastiansactiontrust.org

Respite holidays in the Hampshire countryside in a purpose-built holiday home for families with a child or young person with a life-threatening or life-limiting medical condition. Facilities include a hydrotherapy swimming pool, games room, multi-sensory room, and music and art room. Day visits also available. Holidays are free but donation welcome. Families must meet eligibility criteria, which can be found online.

**Carers
Information
Service**

HOW TO
05

Caring for a Child

Every effort has been made to ensure the contents of this factsheet are correct, but the Carers Information Service cannot accept responsibility for information that is inaccurate or for the quality of the services listed. All the How To... A Guide for Carers in Croydon factsheets are available at www.carersinfo.org.uk to download, where they will be regularly updated.

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Written by Amy Deakin

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