

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

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

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 aged under five. Experienced volunteers offer free and confidential emotional support weekly (2-3 hours) to help to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

Jubilee Parenting

07906 398 017

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

Information, support and training for parent carers of disabled children or children with SEN. Runs the Croydon Parent Forum which enables parents and carers to influence services affecting disabled children in Croydon.

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 Project

020 8649 9339, option 2

youngcarers@offtherecordcroydon.org

www.offtherecordcroydon.org

Offers wide range of support to young people aged 7-25 caring for someone due to disability or illness. Support includes information, advice, advocacy, Carer's Assessments, one-to-one support and casework. Also provides workshops, respite (trips, activities, groups), counselling and art therapy. Specialist support is available for young carers with a parent who has a mental health problem.

Specific conditions

Autism Family Support – Croydon Resource Centre

020 8662 4663

linda.townsend@nas.org.uk

www.autism.org.uk/services/england/london/daytime-hubs/croydon-hubs/resource-centre

Information, advice, family support worker, phone support, advocacy and a resource library for carers of a child or young person aged 0-19 who lives in Croydon and has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition. Holds family fun days and leisure activities, a quarterly Dad's Club and termly workshops on autism-related topics. Families can contact the service directly.

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 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Parent Support Group

020 3228 0000

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

Offers awareness training for parents including an autism awareness course and a one-day ADHD course. Courses are available by referral from a medical professional and there is a waiting list.

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

marian.drennan@nhs.net

Support group for parents of children or young people with type 1 diabetes.

Croydon Dyslexia Association

08442 496 949

cdahelpline@hotmail.co.uk

www.croydondyslexia.wordpress.com

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

Croydon Mencap

020 8684 5890

www.croydonmencap.org.uk

Information, advice and support for people with a learning disability and their carers.

National Autistic Society 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 autism spectrum condition.

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

In-patient 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.

National support

Contact a Family

0808 808 3555

info@cafamily.org.uk

www.cafamily.org.uk

Information, advice, support and publications for families caring for a disabled child. Helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9.30am - 5pm

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 service open Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm, local support groups, employment programme, sports programme and training.

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. Helpline is open Monday to Thursday, 10am - 4pm and Fridays 9am - 3pm. Parent to Parent service gives emotional support to parents and carers of children or adults with autism and is provided by trained parent volunteers.

Sibs

01535 645 453

www.sibs.org.uk

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



Early years



Finding out that your child has a disability or special educational needs (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 'development milestones'. These are key areas of development, including physical, learning, social and communication skills. Contact a Family has a general list: www.cafamily.org.uk/media/736642/developmental_delay_poster.pdf. 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. Family Space has details of local children's centres and childcare providers, including pre-schools. Visit www.familyspacecroydon.co.uk or email child.care@croydon.gov.uk.

Disabled children's register

Every local authority must have a disabled children's register. It is worthwhile informing Croydon Council that your child has a disability, as it may be helpful when accessing services. Contact the 0-25 SEND Social Care Team to ask for your child to be added to the register (020 8726 6400).



Local support

Family Space

child.care@croydon.gov.uk
www.familyspacecroydon.co.uk
Information on childminders and different types of childcare, pre-schools and nurseries, holiday activities, parent and toddler groups, children's centres and extended schools, and leisure services for children.

PRISM

020 8663 5626
Group of organisations working together to support families of disabled children and children with SEN in Croydon. Member organisations are: Croydon National Autistic Society, Parents in Partnership, Jubilee Parenting and Woodlands Children's Centre.

Rainbow Group

020 8655 5684
rainbow@crosfield.croydon.sch.uk
Group for 2-4 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 overleaf 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.

National support

Genetic Alliance

020 7704 3141
contactus@geneticalliance.org.uk
www.geneticalliance.org.uk
National organisation for people affected by genetic conditions.

SWAN UK

020 7704 3141
info@undiagnosed.org.uk
www.undiagnosed.org.uk
Provides information and support for families of children and young adults with undiagnosed genetic conditions in the UK.

Social care

Getting support

As the parent of a disabled child or child with 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: www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs. See the sections on Short Breaks and Leisure for more information.

For children with more complex needs, you may receive more ongoing support from children's social care. In Croydon, the 0-25 SEND Social Care Team supports children and young people with a permanent and substantial physical and/or learning 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 Social Care on 020 8726 6400 or use the online contact form www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/adult-care/asc-assessing/ascreferral 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 a Family has a template letter which you can adapt: www.cafamily.org.uk/know-your-rights/disabled-childrens-services/making-a-complaint-about-services.

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 for support.

Support for yourself and for siblings

As the parent or carer of a disabled child, you have the right to have an assessment of your needs, known as a Carer's Assessment, under the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000. A Carer's Assessment is not usually necessary as social care should look at your needs as a family in your child's assessment. However, if you feel your needs have not been fully taken into account, you can request your own Carer's Assessment.

Siblings who have a significant caring role can also request their own assessment as a young carer from Off the Record's Young Carers Project (020 8649 9339, option 2). For more information on Carer's Assessments and Off the Record's Young Carers Project see our *Getting Support from Social Care* factsheet.

After your assessment

After your assessment, the social care team will decide if your child is eligible for support. If you are 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

If your child is eligible for support from social care and you want to arrange support for yourself, you can receive direct payments on behalf of your child. A direct payment is money directly paid to you to meet your child's eligible needs. This is often to directly pay for 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

0-25 SEND Social Care Service

020 8726 6400

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

Supports disabled children aged 0-25 and their families. Contact them for information about assessments, safeguarding, short breaks and the disabled children's register.

Direct Payment Support Service

020 8726 6000 ext 61925

julie.turner1@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.

Short breaks

Taking a break is very important when you are looking after a disabled child or child with SEN. For example, it can help you feel less tired and stressed and give you more time to spend with your other children. All 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/short-breaks or by contacting the 0-25 SEND Social Care Team on 020 8726 6400. For a list of youth clubs and after-school activities in Croydon, see the Leisure section.

Useful contacts

All 4 One Youth Club

07990 790 183

paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk

After-school club for young people with disabilities, autism and/or SEN aged 8-18 at Waddon Youth Centre. Runs during term-time on Wednesday afternoons. Costs £3 per session.

Bensham Manor School

07990 790 183

paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk

After-school club for young people with disabilities, autism and/or 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

Evening youth club for young people with disabilities, autism and/or SEN aged 18-25 at Waddon Youth Centre. Runs during term-time on Thursday evenings. Costs £3 per session.

The 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 SEN. Club is aimed at local families, who should call to discuss their child's needs in advance.

Croydon Youth Phab

07930 202 242

croydonphableader@hotmail.co.uk

www.croydonyouth.phab.org.uk

Inclusive youth club for young people aged 11-25 with and without a disability and their siblings. Runs fortnightly on Saturdays.

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/or SEN.

Fabulous Youth Club

07990 790 183

paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk

After-school club for young people with disabilities, autism and/or SEN aged 8-18 at Waddon Youth Centre. Runs during term-time on Tuesday afternoons. Costs £3 per session.

Goldcrest Youth & Community Centre

07990 790 183

paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk

Youth club for young people with disabilities, autism and/or SEN aged 18-25 at Goldcrest Youth and Community Centre. Runs during term-time on Thursday afternoons. Costs £3 per session.

Mencap Saturday Club

rebecca@croydonmencap.org.uk

www.croydonmencap.org.uk

Fortnightly activities club for young adults with a learning disability. Run by Croydon Mencap and held fortnightly on Saturdays. Spaces are limited so contact for availability.

NAS Saturday Club

07920 711 601

sarah.omari@nas.org.uk

Fortnightly Saturday club for young people with autistic spectrum condition aged 11-19. Based at Waddon Youth Centre.

Peppermint Youth Club

020 8686 3766, option 3

head-office@acorns2oaks.net

Youth club for young people aged 11-19 or up to 25 for young people with SEN. Held on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Peppermint Centre, Valley Park.

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 disabled children or children with SEN aged 5-18.

Rutherford School Saturday Club

020 8688 7560

david.orablear@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.

Special Blend Youth Club

07990 790 183

paul.funnell@croydon.gov.uk

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

Education

Your child may need more support at school. Mainstream 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 SEN. They should cover educational needs but also include health and social care needs. Children who currently have statements will be assessed for an EHCP according to a timetable by 1 April 2018. In Croydon, Parents in Partnership provides information and support to families with a disabled child or child with SEN on education. If you need help with an EHCP or Tribunal in Croydon, SENDIAS (020 8663 5630) and Family Lives (020 3131 3150) can provide information and support.

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

Croydon Council Special Educational Needs Hotline

020 8604 7263 (Hotline)
020 8760 5783 (Hearing Impairment Service)
020 8760 5784 (Visual Impairment Service)
senreform@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 their statement or EHCP.

Family Lives

020 3131 3150
parentsupportherts@familylives.org.uk
(parents and carers)
youthsend@familylives.org.uk
(young people)
Provides information and support to families and carers of children or young people who are being assessed or transferred to an EHCP. Covers Croydon, Lambeth and Southwark.

KIDS - SENDIAS

020 8663 5630
croydon@kids.org.uk
The SENDIAS and Mediation Service provides support to children and young people in Croydon with a disability or SEN. Can support with EHCPs, preparing for adulthood, solving disputes with schools and professionals and support with meetings. Offers drop-in sessions and workshops.

Parents in Partnership (PIP) Parent Forum

020 8663 5626
office@pipcroydon.com
www.pipcroydon.com
PIP run the Croydon Parent Forum, which enables parents and carers to influence services affecting disabled children in Croydon.

Springboard Tuition

020 8686 0393
soniakapoor@springboardcroydon.org.uk
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
Provides independent advice on a wide range of education issues. The advice line is run by volunteers and open Monday to Wednesday, 10am - 1pm during term-time only.

Contact a Family

0808 808 3555
www.cafamily.org.uk
Education Specialist 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.

Independent Parental Special Education Advice (IPSEA)

0800 018 4016
www.ipsea.org.uk
Free legally based advice for families who have children with SEN. All advice is given by trained volunteers. Also runs an SEN Tribunal Helpline (0845 602 9579)

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. Most children aged under 16 in Croydon will not receive travel assistance from the Council due to the free Oyster Card scheme for under 16s in London. However, if your child cannot travel independently on public transport and you cannot accompany them, you may be eligible for travel assistance. Travel assistance may involve: independent travel training, a travel pass, a personal travel budget or transport vehicles. For Croydon Council's full transport policy and to apply online, visit www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs/sen-transport.

There is a separate travel policy for young people aged 16 or over in education or training. If your child has a statement or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you or your child can apply for assistance. If you are assessed as eligible for travel assistance, Croydon will develop a travel plan, which you will need to re-apply for every year. Travel assistance may involve: a travel buddy, travel training, a personal travel budget, Croydon Council-provided transport or, in a small minority of cases, a taxi service for young people with the highest level of need. For more information see the post-16 transport policy: www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/policies/cfl/16-transport.

Useful contacts

SEN Travel Commissioner

020 8760 5454

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

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

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 your child, these professionals can also be good sources of information, advice and support. If your 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 144802

(via pager 8am - 8pm)

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/services/Childrens_Hospital_at_Home

Provides nursing care, palliative care, care co-ordination, 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.

Croydon Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

020 3228 0000

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

Assessment and treatment for children and young people with persistent and severe psychological difficulties or emerging mental health problems. This also includes children and young people with a diagnosis of ADHD, autism and Asperger syndrome.

Croydon Health Services

020 8401 3000

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk

- Children's Medical Services (020 8274 6300). Offers community-based services (including in the home) to children, young people and their families in Croydon, especially for those with developmental and learning difficulties
- Children's Occupational Therapy Service (020 8274 6850/6854). Therapy, advice, equipment and adaptations for disabled children or children who struggle with everyday tasks
- Children's Physiotherapy Service (020 8274 6853). Physiotherapy and equipment for children with developmental delay or a neurological condition to help improve motor skills
- Children's Audiology Service (020 8274 6866). Provides diagnosis and assessment to determine the presence, nature and extent of hearing loss and balance disorders in children
- Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service (020 8714 2594). Therapy for children aged 0-19 who have speech, language, communication and/or eating and drinking difficulties
- Community Dental Service (020 8714 2708). Dental service for disabled children and adults who struggle to access a mainstream dentist

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

Benefits

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 the Carers' Information Service to find out what you may be entitled to by calling 020 8649 9339, option 1, emailing enquiries@carersinfo.org.uk or talking to one of our advice workers at the Carers Support Centre open Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm. 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 a Family

0808 808 3555
info@cafamily.org.uk
www.cafamily.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 621115
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.

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

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 a Family has more information on finding good childcare: www.cafamily.org.uk/know-your-rights/working-and-childcare/finding-childcare.

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). Helpline is open Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm and Saturday 9am - 1pm.

Family Space

child.care@croydon.gov.uk

www.familyspacecroydon.co.uk

Information on childminders and different types of childcare, pre-schools and nurseries, holiday activities, parent and toddler groups, children's centres and extended schools, and leisure services for children.

Working Families

020 7017 0072

janet.mearns@workingfamilies.org.uk

advice@workingfamilies.org.uk

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 (Crystal Centre)

020 8274 6850/54

www.croydonhealthservices.nhs.uk/services/Children_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/services/Wheelchair_service

Provides specialised buggies and wheelchairs to disabled children with mobility problems. A referral is required from a GP or social worker. Waiting times may apply.

MERU

01372 725 203

info@meru.org.uk

www.meru.org.uk

Custom-made equipment for disabled children and young people aged 24 and under who live, or attend school or college, in London or south east England.

National support

Cerebra

0800 328 1159

info@cerebra.org.uk

www.cerebra.org.uk

Help with equipment and therapy grants for children aged 16 and under who have a neurodevelopmental disorder. 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

Just Can't Wait service offers free loans of essential equipment to children with a life-limiting condition. Includes equipment grants and loaned sensory boxes. A professional referral is required.

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

A disabled child or child with SEN should be able to play, socialise and have fun just like any other child. Local authorities in England must provide disabled children with access to leisure facilities and support children who need extra assistance or specialist play equipment.

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 a person's 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 for disabled people. For more information, visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

As well mainstream leisure facilities, there are also specialist activities and clubs available. Croydon Council has a list of leisure facilities for children with SEN: www.croydon.gov.uk/education/special-educational-needs/sen-leisure.

Additional Needs Scout Group

020 8661 7532
catherine_keen2000@yahoo.co.uk
Scout programme for children and young people with additional needs aged 6-25.

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.

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 SEN of all ages. As well as the play space there is a café and accessible changing facilities.

Bizz-E-Kidz

020 3665 4591
contact@bizz-e-kidz.com
Provides an out-of-school care service for disabled children and children with SEN who live or attend school within the London Borough of Croydon.

Croydon Council Leisure Centres

www.fusion-lifestyle.com/contracts/Croydon_Council
All of Croydon's leisure centres are accessible, including accessible swimming pools for wheelchair users. Some run specific activities for disabled children, including swimming lessons.

Croydon Libraries

020 8726 6900
www.croydonlibraries.com
Croydon libraries welcome children with additional needs at their summer activities. Ask at your local library.

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 children with or without a disability aged 2-25.

Free Cakes for Kids

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

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.

InASpectrum

07900 990 292
inaspectrum@hotmail.com
Peer-led social community for adults affected by autism or Asperger's. Runs regular meet-up events in Croydon.

Joe's Cinema Club

07794 217 980
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 Phyzpod sensory spaces.

Mencap Chill and Chat 0-5

020 8684 5890
www.croydonmencap.org.uk/services/chill-and-chat
Chill and Chat session for children aged 0-5 with SEN on Tuesday and Friday mornings (term-time only) at Shirley Children's Centre.

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.

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 a disability.

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 SEN the opportunity to work with and train dogs in a monitored environment.

Whizz-Kidz – South London

07833 914 831

h.smyth@whizz-kidz.org.uk

www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

Whizz-Kidz Ambassador Club South London is based in South Croydon and offers wheelchair users aged 8-25 the chance to take part in fun activities designed to improve independence. Also offers free two-day Wheelchair Skills Holiday Club to improve wheelchair confidence during school holidays. Personal care staff are available where needed.

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 a life-limiting or life-threatening condition 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.

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.

CCHF All About Kids

01273 847 770

www.cCHF-allaboutkids.org.uk

Provides a range of residential activity and respite breaks for disadvantaged children aged 7-11.

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. They will be unable to help if families are eligible for help from the Family Fund.





Happy Days Children's Charity

01582 755 999

enquiries@happydayscharity.org

www.happydayscharity.org

Provides a financial contribution towards family holidays and group activity holidays in the UK for disabled children aged 3-17.

The Harriet Davis Seaside Holiday Trust for Disabled Children

01493 731 235

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 an ill or disabled child (no age limits). Accommodation is rent-free with a £125 booking fee per family.

National Holiday Fund for Sick and Disabled Children

01493 731 235

office@nhfcharity.co.uk

www.nhfcharity.co.uk

Free holidays in Orlando, Florida for children aged 8-18 who are severely ill or disabled, and whose need for medical care prevents them going far from home.

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, music and art room. Day visits also available. Holidays cost £100 and families must meet eligibility criteria, which can be found online.

Trewan Sands Children's Trust

01706 369 503

info@tsctrust.org

www.tsctrust.org

Provides holidays for families on a low-income with a disabled child under 18. Applicants must receive certain benefits and be supported by a referring agent.



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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