



# SUPPORTIVE PARENTS

## Newsletter: Spring 2009

Parents offering information and support to other parents of children with any kind special educational needs. Our Information and Support Line 0117 9897725 is available 10am - 2pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday term time only. Answer machine all other times or visit [www.supportiveparents.org.uk](http://www.supportiveparents.org.uk)

### THE "OH, NOTHING MUCH" REPORT by Dr Tanya Byron.

Launched by BECTA (the government agency for technology in learning) this new report exposes the after-school communication challenge parents face. Becta calls for uptake of simple technologies to aid three-way dialogue between school, parents and children. Becta's Next Generation Learning campaign is urging parents to talk to their child's school to find out how technology is already being used and also discuss ways it can help improve day-to-day communications between them and the school in the future. To view the full report [www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/Global/The%20Oh%20Nothing%20Much%20report%20-%202023.03.09.pdf](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/Global/The%20Oh%20Nothing%20Much%20report%20-%202023.03.09.pdf)

### Together for Disabled Children (TDC) - Maggie Potter

Parents and carers of children with complex and additional needs are to be offered a new and exciting chance to have their say about the future development and delivery of the services they depend on. A national government initiative called "Together for Disabled Children" offers new money to support the development of parent advisory groups that will enable families who have a disabled child to have a voice in how future services for disabled children are shaped and delivered locally. Under phase 1 of this programme, key stakeholder groups in participating Local Authorities have been able to apply for £3300 until the end of March '09, to support parents and carers of children with complex additional needs to be a key part of this development process.

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held here at Royal Oak House Wednesday 1st July at 7.30pm - 8.30pm. Please let us know if you are coming so we can make sure that there are adequate seating arrangements. As always we are keen to attract new members and Trustees. If you are interested in offering your experience/information and support to our team please don't hesitate to contact us.



See our SEN manual, useful contacts for parents lists, latest Voluntary Representatives notes and more all available on our website

### Useful Acronyms

- CPM**-Consultation Planning Meeting
- CYPS**- Children and Young People's Services
- DCSF**-Department for Children Schools and Families
- NAS**-National Autistic Society
- EP**-Educational Psychologist
- SEN**-Special Educational Needs
- SENCO**-Special Educational Needs Coordinator
- Vol Reps**-Voluntary Representatives group

## **Parent Training Courses - Elaine Stransom**

You will have an opportunity to meet other parents, share your experiences and gain an overview of SEN Educational Policy/Procedures. As reported in our last Newsletter, Phase 1 was followed immediately by Phase 2, due to interest shown. This went ahead as planned with 10 participants, Elaine and Davina and former Education Psychologist, Anne Bush, leading the sessions. Due to demand we are running yet another Phase 1, starting in May. At the time of publication we still have two places available, to be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. Visit our website for further details about this and any other training courses we are organising.

## **North Somerset News - Jackie Oxley**

It's been a very busy term with work centered around participating in the new locality launches, the opening of additional Children's Centres, the Aiming High (TDC) meetings, and the Regional Inclusion Conference. I recently attended the Children's Centre Conference, which really demonstrated how children's services are working together, and how parents are participating much more to the delivery of services. Parents met recently with Phillipa Stobbs, SEN Professional Advisor, to the DCSF who requested feedback regarding parental confidence around SEN in North Somerset. She was very grateful to parents for all their comments and will be using this information to report back directly to the current government enquiry into SEN, The Lamb Enquiry. We have met with most of the Senco Clusters in order to deliver and promote our SEN Manual, (available on our website.) We hope schools will find this a useful tool and make it accessible to parents. We met in January to form the agenda for this months Vol Reps meeting with CYPs, we shall be discussing the rise in requests for Statutory Assessment and the continuing concern experienced by parents (and expressed by schools to parents) that access to EP services is only available to children prioritised via CPM and has become very difficult to access. Notes of CYPs Vol Reps meetings are posted on our website.

## **North Somerset Development Work - Maggie Potter**

Supportive Parents facilitated a free planning day on 24<sup>th</sup> February, bringing parents and professionals together to plan for the future effective involvement of parents in the strategic planning and commissioning of services. We hope that the success of this initial effort to action plan for the future will enable the key stakeholder group to achieve successful application for phase 2 funding of £10,000 during 2009-10, so that a sustainable advisory forum to the Children's Trust Board can be established.

## **Bristol News - Davina Evans**

The big news in Bristol is that the scheme for delegating most of the statement funding to schools has been approved and will take effect from April. The scheme only applies to children attending mainstream schools so Early Years settings, Special Schools, Specialist Units and 3 Academies (Colstons, Cathedral and City) will be unaffected, Children with a primary need of Physical, Hearing or Visual Impairment as well as those who have defined complex needs will continue to receive direct funding from the Local Authority. Supportive Parents took part in all levels of the consultations and attended workshops and stakeholder groups as well as Senco briefings, Members of the Local Authority Project Group will be delivering training for all of our staff in early April so that we can help parents who may have queries about how the system will work. The important things to remember are that Statements will not disappear, provisions in part 3 of statements will still be met and parents will still have the right to request a statement. The link between statements and funding has been "broken" so that having a statement will not mean extra resources for individual children. Schools will be able to respond much more quickly in order to meet a child's Special Educational Needs. Written information for parents will be available soon but in the meantime if you have any queries please call our helpline.

## **South Gloucestershire News - Anne Jerrom**

In February Nikki Owen Inclusive Play Advisor at Children's Playlink came to Support Group to talk about how settings can be supported to include children with S.E.N and disabilities. On 21st April, Mike Connolly and Helen Pocock will be explaining about Aiming High, what this means, and how services will develop eg Short Breaks. We are always keen to welcome new parents to our support group, so do come along to this meeting if you want to know more. We visited the NAS group this term, a well attended session which raised concerns about bullying and what parents can do. The importance of parents being prepared to raise concerns with the Headteacher and to use the school complaints system if the bullying continues, was stressed. We have arranged a new Senco training session and an Information stall at the SENCO Conference. The main speaker gave a challenging talk- SEN Excuse or Opportunity, about the need to improve the assessment, planning, progress, specialist support and attendance of pupils with SEN. Work continues to make sure that our SEN Manual accurately describes services and provision in South Gloucestershire. Thanks to SEN staff and parents for their input with this. The section on Information and Policies has already been posted on our website so have a look and see what you can find! Yellow Book revisions are nearly complete. April sees developments with 1BigData Base at <http://www.1bigdatabase.org.uk/> with improvements to the search facility. All parent groups currently registered will receive an email with new log in procedures and be given the opportunity to upload logos.

## Information and Support Line - Maggie Wilmore

Once again our Information and Support Line, has been very busy . A parent commented in our Service User Service Satisfaction Survey 2008 " *The Helpline is always busy so it is difficult to get through, however, leaving a message asking to be rung worked well (as suggested)*"

We sometimes have calls from parents around the time of Annual Reviews of Statements and can help them prepare for these. This can involve drawing out their concerns, which can then be recorded as 'Parent Views' for the Review meeting. We can help them clarify what they would like to change, and if they believe that a new Statement should be drawn up, and then which new provisions they would like. This is especially important at two major reviews. One is the Transition Review in Year 9. The other is during Year 5, when secondary options should be discussed and formalised. This is a year before non-statemented children's parents will be making their secondary school choice, so is quite difficult for some people.

If, for instance, parents would like a mainstream secondary school which is not their local one, transport will not usually be provided, so they will have to consider well in advance how to get their child to school. Schools which have their own admissions criteria e.g. Faith schools and Academies will still apply these, so again there could be difficulties in accessing a place. Children like those on the autistic spectrum, who've managed in local primary schools, may find secondary regimes complex and daunting so parents, anticipating this, may seek extra provisions and plans to enable a successful transfer to occur. Some parents say they would rather have more specialist provision at this time.

A new Statement should always be drawn up after the Year 5 Review, so all the relevant professionals should have been asked to contribute and advise. It is helpful if all reports, including the 'Parent Views' have been circulated well before the actual Review meeting. If this hasn't happened parents could ask for time at the beginning of the meeting to read any reports which they haven't seen. Our Helpline staff can support with all the preparation and follow-up connected with this important Review. We can also support parents in their understanding of the Amended Statement which should follow.

## Contact Us :

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