

Our Voice



Our Voice Newsletter

Issue 9 • 2010
Summer/Autumn

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Welcome

Welcome to the summer/autumn issue of the **Our Voice** newsletter, the parent-led organisation seeking to improve services for children with disabilities in Enfield.

Summer's here and many parents will be looking ahead to the long school holidays with a mixture of relief and dread. Disabled children and young people consistently say that leisure and play are the most important elements missing from their lives. But despite parents' best intentions there are often barriers, not least how to find information about what's on and where to go. Our Events section includes details of some activities on offer in Enfield. Please let us know about any events and activities that your children have enjoyed - we'd love to pass on your recommendations.

In this issue Stella Hewson tells us about her family holidays and plans for this year. And if she inspires you to think about going somewhere different this year, we include some useful information about organisations providing holidays or accessible accommodation for people with disabilities.

We also have the usual news from the Joint Service for Disabled Children as well as information about what **Our Voice** has been up to during the last few months.

Whatever your plans, I hope you enjoy the summer.

Carol Mustafa

Our Voice Development Coordinator

What's new

Going on holiday?

Going on holiday with a disabled child can mean a lot of extra planning and research. It can mean accepting restrictions on where you can stay and what you can do once you're there. But it can also be an enriching experience and create lasting memories. We spoke to Stella Hewson about how she views the long summer holidays and her plans for going away.

"I do enjoy the school holidays when I can spend quality time with the children," says Stella who is mum to Francesca 12, Matthew 11, and Sam 8. "I don't wish the weeks away at all in fact before we know it, we seem to be facing the start of term again! Francesca has complex special needs and needs 1:1 care but the trick is to be well organised

and plan ahead, especially care for Francesca. A good relationship with, and the collective support provided by the Joint Service, is vital to ensure each of the children receive a mix of individual and joint time and attention". This upbeat attitude is key to the Hewsons making the most of this summer.

"At six weeks old, Francesca began to have seizures, which were followed at three months by spontaneous fractures. She is now unable to walk, has a gastrostomy tube, a spinal rod and needs round-the-clock care", explains Stella. This means that when they go out, two adults are needed to ensure one can focus on Francesca while the other looks after the boys. When husband Tony is at work, Stella relies on carers from Cheviots, friends and family to help or has to limit activities to those within walking distance - providing Francesca is well

continued on page two

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Please pass this newsletter on to others - parents and service providers - who might find it useful. You can contact us for additional copies by email or phone.

continued from page one

enough to go in her buggy. "We are very lucky to have a lovely park very close to us but when Francesca is unwell, it might as well be miles away", she says.



The family try to plan lots of days out together but Stella admits it can be difficult, "The biggest challenge for us is finding suitable changing facilities for Francesca. This has a huge impact on what we can and can't do.

Stella always looks to find the right balance so the whole family gets something out of an activity, "You have to be pragmatic about what you can and can't do together - I know I'm never going to get a wheelchair to the top of a castle tower but one of us can enjoy the grounds with Francesca while the other climbs up with the boys". On other occasions Cheviots may provide a carer to stay with Francesca whilst Tony and Stella take the boys on a day out. This is essential if Francesca is unwell. On other occasions it may be that Francesca just wouldn't get much out of that particular activity or it might enable Tony and Stella to do things jointly with the boys.

Center Parcs has proved a relatively successful venue for family holidays. "It's lovely because we can park the car close to our accommodation and everything is within walking distance. If Francesca needs to rest, she can stay in the villa with one of us whilst the other takes the boys and we can meet up later. Although Francesca can't participate in the activities, she enjoys the fresh air and walks."

It's not perfect though as there is no hoist into the pools and no suitable changing facility. And the warmer pools, which Francesca would love, are effectively out of bounds for her as they are up flights of stairs. Stella has written to Center Parcs to ask that they consider these issues when they build their new holiday village in Bedfordshire. "They acknowledged my concerns so it will be interesting to see whether anything actually happens".

This summer the family have booked a cottage for a week in Scotland. They are taking the long drive in stages so it will take them an additional three days either side of the holiday to get there and back. But "We like to think of it as a big adventure!" says Stella. To be suitable, a holiday cottage needs to have ramps, a ground floor bedroom and wet room. Most of the time they struggle to find a suitable wet room. Francesca's equipment and medicines will fill the family car, so clothes are relegated to a top box.

The family have not yet ventured on a plane with Francesca, although they would love to do so. But until airlines offer the space for a wheelchair to be clamped down at an affordable price, this is not going to be possible. Paris by Eurostar would also be an interesting experience, as long as suitable changing facilities can be found. She says, "I feel that there are many relatively small adaptations that really wouldn't cost much and would make such a difference for disabled children and adults. Then again society has moved on hugely since Francesca was born 12 years ago - we just need to move it on a bit more".



Information directory: holidays and trips

Here's a small selection of organisations providing specialist holidays, accessible accommodation or facilities for families with disabled children.

Break

Supported holidays and short breaks for children and adults with learning disabilities including self-catering chalets.

Tel: 01263 822 161

Website: www.break-charity.org

Changing Places

The Changing Places Consortium campaigns to improve accessible toilet facilities so that they include a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

You can search for accessible toilets throughout the UK on their website.

Tel: 020 7696 6019

Website: www.changingplaces.org

Holidays for all

A directory of leisure activities and accommodation in the UK and overseas for people with sensory and physical disabilities.

Tel: 08451 249973

Website: www.holidaysforall.org

Livability

Opportunities for disabled people to go on holiday with friends and family at affordable locations throughout UK.

Tel: 0207 452 2000

Website: www.livability.org.uk

National Holiday Fund for Sick and Disabled Children

Provide holidays to Florida for chronically ill and physically disabled children aged 8-18 without their parents.

Do not provide funding for independent holidays.

Tel: 01493 731 235

Website:

www.nhfcharity.co.uk

Radar - the Disability Network

You can purchase a key from the Radar shop for £3.50 which fits all 8000 locked accessible toilets in the UK. A guide to where toilets are situated is also available.

Tel: 020 7250 3222

Website: www.radar.org.uk

Tourism for all UK

Information about accessible accommodation for people with disabilities.

Tel: 0845 124 9971

Website: www.tourismforall.info

Scout Holiday Homes Trust

Inexpensive self catering holidays at camps around UK for families with a disabled member. You do not have to be a scout or guide.

Tel: 0208 433 7290

Website: www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/holhomes

Vitalise

Short breaks for disabled people and carers at accessible centres.

Tel: 0845 345 1970

Website: www.vitalise.org.uk



Getting Disabled People and Community Groups Afloat

"I'm the Senior Officer in charge of blowing the horn," said Michael. His eyes widened with excitement as we came to a bend in the River Stort. "Six second blast please, Michael," said the First Mate. The other children counted "One Mississippi, two Mississippi..." and Michael let fly. Michael was only six years old, but he was on board Stort Daybreak with a group from the Woodcraft Folk ranging in age from Michael up to 14. Youth groups are very much part of the Canal Boat Project's remit, but it covers a wide range of other groups and individuals as well.

The Project is a registered charity, based in Harlow, Essex, offering river experiences to people from day centres, residential homes, community groups and families. The project has four boats and two arms. It offers Day Trips on **Stort Daybreak** and **Dawn Treader**, and Holiday Hire on **Red Watch** and **Stort Challenger**. All four boats are designed to be accessible by wheelchair users and have full facilities for cooking, heating and relaxing below decks as well as disabled toilets. Access on board is arranged via purpose built lifts. Users are encouraged to help steer the boats and to help with working the locks. The looks on their faces at the end of a trip are enough to make the Project worthwhile. Kim, a learning disabled user had not said a word throughout her trip. But as she rode up in the lift in her wheelchair she smiled at the Skipper and said, "I like river". That's what the Project is all about.



So what does it cost? To give you an idea, four hours on **Dawn Treader** for up to 12 people is £90. And a midweek break on **Red Watch** is £160. Prospective users are very welcome to

come and check the boats out to see if the facilities would suit their needs. The day boats are crewed by volunteers who train under the National Community Boats Association and holiday boats are self-steered following familiarisation sessions.

Find out more at <http://canalboat.org.uk> or <http://lockviewholidays.org.uk> or call Margaret on 01279 424444.

It's been another busy few months for **Our Voice**. In March we held two free **training workshops** for parents on assertiveness and developing confidence at public speaking. The sessions were very successful with all places filled. Parents felt empowered and left feeling more confident and able to speak up for themselves. The skills gained will equip them to sit on disability panels as well as benefiting them and their children in their everyday lives. Life Coach Lucy Seifert brought her considerable experience to run the sessions. Feedback from those attending showed that 100% of you considered the training to be 'excellent'. Parents said, "The course content helped with life situations" and "I felt empowered, great course, fantastic group". Many of you requested more sessions like these and would highly recommend it to others so we're planning to run similar training in future - watch this space for dates and times.

We also held a successful **Information day** for parents in March at which we were pleased to welcome some new members to Our Voice. Parents could find out about children's services in Enfield and what they are entitled to. We're planning to hold another information day in the autumn so please help us by encouraging as many people as possible to attend.

Our Voice is involved in helping to plan a key **Parenting Conference** which is held annually. We have been working with the Parenting Co-ordinator Chris Kolade, and other professionals and parents who have formed the planning team for this event. We want to ensure that the event is inclusive to all parents and carers in the Enfield Borough, and to provide advice and support on disability awareness. The day's themes will focus on **disability awareness** and **think fathers**. There will be performers from two special schools, information stalls, parent speakers and lots more. Further information will be sent home from your children's schools.

We're planning to offer some training for young people to become involved in **disability awareness training** for schools. You don't need to be a confident person as the training will cover that. You just need to be willing to talk about your

disability and what it means for you. It's a great opportunity to influence how other young people view disability and to build your own self-esteem and confidence at public speaking. Contact Carol Mustafa if your son or daughter is interested to find out more.

Lastly, we recently enjoyed a very successful trip to the Special Needs Children's Day at **London Zoo** with our children. There was plenty to see and do. Signers were on hand to aid families, there were animal information sessions and shows throughout the day. One of the highlights was the butterfly house - my daughter was delighted to have one land on her sun hat. The new splash area in the farm area provided a big hit - wheelchairs can be pushed through as the springs go off. This was much needed as it was a very hot day. The only grumble I have is that we waited a long time to find a disabled parking space, however London Zoo have said they are looking to run the event over two days next year. We booked through day trippers which meant a disabled child and one carer gained free entry. Visit www.daytrippers.org.uk for more information.

We're now planning our next meeting dates with the Joint Service for the autumn. See the back page for dates. Do come along and find out more about Our Voice. We look forward to welcoming some new as well as familiar faces.

News from the Joint Service

Janet Leach, Head of the Joint Service for Disabled Children in Enfield gives an update on service developments.



Summer has arrived and we are all getting ready for the holidays, but what a busy few months it has been! Under Carol's stewardship the Our Voice parent forum continues to go from strength to strength. Parents and professionals recognise the roles we each have to play in improving the lives of disabled children so it is really encouraging to tell you that Our Voice are now represented on a range of important decision making groups, so parents are

well placed to debate the challenges ahead. Together we will present our progress and developments to the Children's Trust. This is particularly important as we enter the final year of the Government's Aiming High programme for disabled children.

Aiming High and National Indicator 54

As many of you know Aiming High is the Government's transformation programme which aims to provide greater opportunities for disabled children and their families, ensuring they have the same life chances as any other family.

The programme has introduced a new way to measure how well local areas are supporting families of disabled children. This is being done by sending out a questionnaire every year to a sample of families with disabled children and asking parents to feedback on their experience of education, health and social care services. The responses are collated to provide a measure called the 'Disabled Children's Services National Indicator'. This indicator helps local areas identify which education, health and social care services require improvement. It provides data on the following:

- Information - whether parents are receiving all the information they need in a way that they can easily access.
- Transparency - whether parents are being told about how decisions are reached regarding services for their child
- Assessment - how assessments are carried out and whether parents have to repeat the same information to many different professionals
- Participation - whether parents are being listened to and involved when decisions are made about their child
- Feedback - whether families are asked for feedback on how they find the services they receive and if this feedback is acted upon.

In the last edition of the Our Voice newsletter I told you that parents and professionals would be analysing the data and together agreeing an improvement action plan.

Enfield's results generally are in line with the current national and the local London results. The

summary of the national picture which looks at this year's results and last year's shows there is general improvement across the country.

Looking at Enfield's results there are two key themes, which are similar to those elsewhere:

- Parents still feel ill-informed about what services they are entitled to and how to go about getting them.
- Families do not feel they have the opportunity to provide their feedback on the services they have experienced.

Also there is some misunderstanding about social care assessments, with families being unclear about when they are having an assessment and why. Importantly however, when families are clear that they are having a social care assessment the feedback has been very positive.

We have commissioned Parent2Parent (parents of disabled children employed by the Joint Service as consultants) to analyse the data from the indicator from a parent's perspective and work with us on developing an action plan to improve our services.

There are some things we can do immediately:

- We will ensure that social workers are clear with families that an assessment has started.
- We will modify the information we provide to families ensuring they know when their assessment has been completed.
- We will give families more information about the various factors which inform decision making.
- We will be holding information/advice and guidance surgeries at Children's Centres and schools throughout the borough. Parents of disabled children and professionals will be available to meet with other parents and talk about specific services and how they can be accessed etc. **Our first 'surgery' will be held at Cheviots Children's Centre on 10th September between 9.30am and 12pm** Details of further surgeries will be available in September.
- The analysis completed by Parent2Parent and the Joint Service will be presented to a wide range of professionals so they understand the challenges families face and what can be done to help to overcome these.

Young People's Consultation

The Young People's Consultation Panel continue to meet and enjoy themselves with friends every six weeks throughout the term.

They have contributed to assessing the newly built playground provision throughout the borough, having fun testing out the suitability of the new equipment at Florence Hayes Adventure Playground. Their verdict is that it is great and definitely for everybody - so do try it out this summer!

I am delighted to report that the young people are as 'vocal' as ever and provide the Joint Service with regular feedback on how we could improve our services. On the 20th July representatives from the Youth Service, the Police and I have been invited by the young people to meet with them and answer their questions. Any disabled young person, siblings or friends interested in attending this event or finding out more or telling us what they think about the new playgrounds or any of our services should contact Shaun at Shaun.barratt@enfield.gov.uk.

Befriending

We listened to both parents and to disabled teenagers about what they would like to do in their spare time and successfully ran a pilot scheme supporting young people to enjoy their local community facilities with appropriately aged peer support. To ensure the development of this project we have successfully bid for some additional funding from Positive Activities for Young People.

Cheviots Children's Centre

Cheviots Children's Centre has developed a thriving programme of activities for parents and carers with under 5s. Groups include a Toy library, a Home-start session, a group for childminders and a father's group. Some of the groups run by the Early Intervention Support Service are closed access so you need to have a referral. In addition, training has been provided for parents by parents including Early Years Parent Workshop and Family Learning. Sue Roberts held the first Children's Centre Advisory Board meeting in June with parents and representatives from all the organisations that use the Centre. For further information about any of the activities for under 5s at Cheviots and at other Children's Centres in the borough please contact Sam Storey at Samantha.storey@enfield.gov.uk

You said, we did

Janet Leach explains how the Joint Service has used your feedback to improve services.

Enfield Community Services

As you know Enfield Community Services is the 'health part' of our Joint Service. They play a major role in providing support and training to non-medical staff so children with complex medical needs can be supported to enjoy short breaks in their local community.

It is so important to receive information and feedback from parents about all aspects of their child's health care so we can respond and improve services as necessary.

So thanks to the parent who raised a concern relating to the availability of a gastrostomy tube, following the failure of a spare outside normal working hours.

As a result Enfield Community Services did the following:

- The matter was reported through the national system of alerts as an incident affecting a child.
- The remaining box of gastrostomy tubes was removed from the loan store and returned to the manufacturer for testing.
- A letter was sent to the parent informing them that this had happened.
- All children will be issued with two spare tubes from different batch numbers so that if one spare is found to be faulty it is unlikely that the other spare is too.
- Some parents receive direct deliveries of equipment from the manufacturers rather than relying on the loan store at St Michael's. We have set up a meeting to discuss a home delivery service with our other suppliers and will report in the next newsletter if this service can be made available to all parents.

Short breaks

I am delighted to tell you that we have continued to extend our provision of short breaks. More children and young people are now enjoying an increased range of activities at weekends, after school and in the holidays. Between April 2009 and March 2010 we provided short breaks to 770 individual children!

As well as Cheviots and the Play Development Team providing holiday play and leisure activities and out of school activities we have commissioned two local voluntary sector providers - CAPAG and Enfield Children and Young Person's Service to deliver activity programmes.

We are all working together to further extend and improve this range of activities. One of our challenges is the provision of transport which is both costly and time-consuming. The more we spend on transport the less we are able to spend on holiday play-schemes and other leisure activities.

So this summer we are asking all of our providers to encourage parents to either bring or collect their child from their play-scheme or leisure activity. If you have a car perhaps you could help another family and bring their child? We will be working with Our Voice and all our parent groups to identify ways in which we can bring transport costs down and use any money saved to invest in more short breaks.

You may be aware that from April 2011 the Government is planning to establish a duty on Local Authorities to provide short breaks to all families with a disabled child. It is really important as we enter more challenging economic times that we use our funding to ensure that more families enjoy short breaks and we don't penalise any families leaving them waiting for support because we have spent unnecessarily on transport.

DCATCH - Disabled Children's Access to Childcare

As part of the Aiming High programme we have some short term funding up to the 31st March 2011 to develop and improve childcare for disabled children. Good quality childcare should of course be available for all children, so we will be using a significant proportion of the funding to provide an extensive training programme. This will be available to all childcare providers in the borough and will cover all aspects of disability and inclusion

In addition some time-limited funding will be available to supplement the additional costs of disabled children and young people accessing childcare. We are particularly keen to support childminders. If you are a parent interested in finding out more or a provider and would like more information about the training programme please contact Megan.steven@enfield.gov.uk or Rosalind.cox@enfield.gov.uk

Information update

Information from the newly printed Joint Service leaflets is now available on line at www.enfield.gov.uk A big thanks to Suzanne Collison from the Early Intervention Support Service for working on this. Suzanne will be continuing to update the information and will soon be adding photographs to improve the quality of the site.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all of you for providing us with feedback, for telling us what we could do better. We really do want to hear this and will use your comments to improve services - and of course thanks for letting us know when we get things right!

I wish you all a happy and enjoyable summer.



Gold star award

The nomination for the Gold star award this time comes from Rola Chatila who would like to thank Sian Warner, SEN Support Teacher at Galliard Primary School in Enfield.

"I would like to nominate Sian Warner for the Gold star award. She has done so much for all the parents at Galliard Primary school, especially for those with children who have autism. She is always there, always happy to help with a smile and very compassionate yet professional advice. Sian runs the Coffee mornings on a Tuesday every week for parents with children who have autism and arranges for speakers to come and talk to us. She helps parents fill in forms for statements and if she cannot help (which is not very often) she points us in the right direction. She works non-stop, even on her days off, and goes above and beyond the call of duty.

Here's what some of the mums who attend the sessions and who use the coffee mornings for support and a chat have to say about her:

"Sian Warner is very dedicated and has given parents the opportunity to meet in a relaxed atmosphere and share very useful information. She has set up the best resource group for parents of ASD children in the borough"

"I would like to nominate Sian Warner because she made me feel very welcomed, she has given me positive feedback and shown me that nothing is too much trouble for her. Sometimes you feel you are the only one going through it all and she makes you realise you are not alone and she is always there to help in any way she can".

"Sian Warner has been an amazing support and help to all of us at Galliard Coffee mornings and she has become a very good friend to me and my family.

"Sian Warner is dedicated in supporting parents with autistic children at all levels (school, behaviour, at home etc) we cannot thank you enough Sian for everything"

We want to thank Sian from the bottom of our hearts and say that we are so grateful for everything she does for us.

If you would like to nominate an Enfield service, voluntary organisation or individual for a gold star award and special mention in our newsletter, please contact Our Voice.

Know your rights

Chris Barnett of Levenes Solicitors in Wood Green answers general questions about Special Educational Needs Law.

- Q. Do schools have to make special arrangements to ensure that disabled children can take part school trips?
- A. Where a disabled child has a statement of special educational needs, it may be that (at least for some trips) the statement will provide for support to be put in place. If a child has full-time 1:1 support through their statement, then that may well (although it will depend on the precise wording of the statement) require the LEA to arrange support for trips during school hours. However, for trips outside of school hours it is unlikely that the statement will apply, and, of course, not all statements provide for full-time support.

However, whether or not a child has a statement, if they are disabled (within the specific meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) then the school may be required to make reasonable adjustments to allow the child to take part in school trips.

Schools should also be aware that the duty to make adjustments is an 'anticipatory' duty, which means that it should be taken into account when planning trips, and not just once arrangements have been made. The school should therefore seek to ensure in advance that a trip will be accessible to as many disabled children as reasonably possible. If they are aware that a particular disabled child would be eligible for the trip, then it is likely that they should seek to ensure that the trip is accessible to that child.

The obligation to make reasonable adjustments arises where a disabled child would be placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' by the arrangements made by the school. Obviously, if a child cannot

attend the trip because of their disability it is likely that they will be at a substantial disadvantage, but even if they would only be excluded from part of the trip they might well still suffer a disadvantage.

The School is only required to make 'reasonable' adjustments, and so they are not required to do everything possible to ensure that disabled children can take part in trips. In addition, schools are not required to provide what the law refers to as 'auxiliary aids and services' by way of an adjustment. Unfortunately, there is no clear guidance from the legislation or the Courts as to what that term means, and it is not clear what, precisely, schools can avoid doing. It is possible that the school would not be required to provide an additional 1:1 support worker, as that could be seen to be an 'auxiliary service', but much would depend on the particular staffing arrangements at the school and it is not possible to be certain about whether the school is required to do this.

Where a school fails to make reasonable adjustments that are required by the Disability Discrimination Act, parents can bring a claim of discrimination to the First-tier Tribunal (Health, Education and Social Care Chamber). If the Tribunal finds that there has been discrimination, they can make order they see fit except to award compensation. Given that the Disability Discrimination Act is complicated it will often be sensible for parents to seek legal advice before bringing a claim.

Levenes Solicitors can be contacted on 0800 118899/020 8881 7777 or email info@levenes.co.uk



Speak up - your experiences

In this section we share some of your personal experiences of having a disabled child. Please get in touch if you have an experience you'd like to share.

Anna Leech's good intentions of using public transport to take her son to music therapy soon came to an end.

Saving the planet?



Does anyone else feel guilty about the amount of driving you do and the fact that your family hardly ever use public transport? I read something in the news that made me feel like one of those 'School run mums' who everyone blames for helping to ruin the planet and for the increase in childhood obesity!

Then 6 months ago my young son was offered weekly music therapy sessions to help with his disability. The only problem was they were in Gospel Oak near Hampstead Heath. I thought to myself, here's my opportunity to leave the car at home, save the planet, get more exercise and spend some quality time with my son. He loves trains, signals and buffers (from Thomas the Tank Engine of course!) and he needs to improve his social skills, so what could be better than for him to come into contact with people from different cultures and age groups who would be using the four trains that we would have to take to get there and back each week.

The reality was very different! The ticket machines nearly always rejected my coins, or were out of

order. We rarely got a seat, especially on the way home and he would moan loudly over and over again, "Mum, why can't we sit down, I'm tired". Much to my embarrassment he found people speaking in different languages absolutely hilarious and would laugh loudly causing them and other commuters to stare. We also had the occasional delay but despite these problems we always made it just on time and at least we were being part of the real world!

That was until March, when London Transport completely closed one of the train lines we use. This is so they can improve the trains in time for the London Olympics in 2012 and work was expected to last until at least June 2010. We now had to wait (usually in the rain) for a replacement bus service, that took twice as long as the train so we struggled to get there on time. By the time we got home again, we were both exhausted, hungry and stressed out.

Then yesterday I drove for the first time. We were warm, dry and comfortable for the whole journey AND early for his lesson. We even returned home 50 minutes earlier than usual. My son has stopped moaning about going to music every week, and I realised now that it was the journey NOT the teaching that he didn't like. Emily, his therapist says that he has started to really participate in his sessions now and is doing very well. I don't think I'll be returning to the train service in the near future. I gave it a good go, but sometimes saving your sanity is more important than trying to do your bit to save the planet, and I REFUSE to feel guilty about it any more.



The Kelly family would like to thank everyone who has been involved with Our Voice and all the parents like them who have contributed with support and guidance. Their daughter Jessica sadly passed away in February. She was 6 years old. The family benefited immensely from the support of other parents. They would like to share a small memory of their telly-loving daughter.

Telly

We wake every morning and our first thought is to see our telly, but it soon dawns on us we don't have that telly anymore. Our lives are still in a daze believing the telly would always be with us and having to accept the reality she is not.

We had this telly for about six years and we loved her immensely, she was an integral part of our life and home, day and night. Our lives can still be enjoyed in many other ways but we loved life with that telly on, knowing we could enjoy her programmes any time.

She provided a vision of beauty and a joyous sound that was unique and irreplaceable. We loved the Disney films and the nursery and school programmes that were on during the day, but perhaps there were one too many hospital dramas. The fun, family entertainment shows we miss the most and the smiles that she brought to so many friendly faces. We have plenty of photos and reviews from other viewers to remind us of that wonderful telly but it's not the same as seeing her operate in her full high definition.

It's hard to comprehend that in some ways our lives are now simpler, as a telly is not easy to move around or look after like a radio or a book, but we would happily trade in our loss for a perceived harder life. We cannot switch off the pain of missing her but maybe we need to retune ourselves to achieve a clearer picture of what's left.

A wise young girl used to say to us "Oh well!" when she could not get her way and had to move on. Life can still be good; it's just not the same.

Our Voice/Enfield Disability Network meetings

Providing an opportunity for parents to network with professionals

For parents of 0 to 4 year olds

Dates and times will be sent out in September

For parents of 5 to 11 year olds

Monday 20 September 2010 from 10am- 12pm

For parents of 12 to 15 year olds

Monday 27 September 2010 from 10am- 12pm

For parents of 16 and 17 year olds

Monday 4 October 2010 from 10am-12pm

Please contact Carol Mustafa on 07503 161248 or email: carol@ourvoiceenfield.org.uk to let us know if you are planning to join us.

Please note: Meetings will be held at Cheviots Children's Centre, 1 Cheviot Close, Enfield EN1 3UZ. Crèche places can be provided for your child but we need at least one week's notice please. Contact Megan Steven on 0208 363 4047 or at megan.steven@enfield.gov.uk

Calling fathers, mothers and carers

London Borough of Enfield is offering you the opportunity for free parenting training programmes to suit your individual needs!

- form your own parent support group within your community
- reduce the stress that parents and children experience in daily life
- empowering you as parents to set boundaries for your children
- giving you the tools to manage difficult situations.

For more information contact the Community Parent Support Service free from a landline on 0800 684 1066 or from a mobile 020 8372 1500 (normal charges apply) and ask for a member from the parent programme team or email parent.commissioner@enfield.gov.uk

Karate

Your chance to make new friends, increase your confidence, and become fitter and healthier while having tons of fun. For young people aged 8 and over.

Free - Thursday evenings

Beginners: 6-7pm - Advanced: 7-8pm

At: Welcome Point, 141 South Street, Enfield

Contact: Vanessa Theed for more information on
020 8373 2701 or email
Vanessa.theed@enfieldparents.org.uk

Watch over me

A 2 day course in personal safety for young people aged 13-16. Bring your friends and explore issues that matter to you in a safe environment.

Date: Tuesday 27 July and Wednesday 28 July from 11.30am to 5pm (includes lunch)

Venue: Community House, Fore Street, Edmonton

To book contact 020 8373 2703 or email enquiries@enfieldparents.org.uk

Radiomathon Football

For adults aged 18+ with learning disabilities Every Tuesday 5-7pm, £2.50 at the Radiomathon Centre, 188 Turkey St, Enfield, EN1 4NW

Radiomathon Sponsored Walk

25th September 11am

For more information or to order your sponsorship pack please call the Radiomathon Centre on 01992 713297

Summer holiday teenscheme

A free action-packed inclusive programme for young people aged 11-17 run by ECYPS. Activities include roller skating, den building, music making, Quasar and bowling, boat making and more. All abilities welcome.

The activities run for 2 days every Thursday and Friday for four weeks from 29th July. You can attend any or all sessions but places are limited so book ahead.

For more details call Gwen Edwards on 0208 373 2699 or email gwen@ecyps.org.uk

Looking for childcare?

Attend a free information session on Saturday 11 September from 10am to 12pm at the Professional Development Centre, Kimberley Gardens, Enfield. An opportunity to find out about how to choose high quality childcare for your child. To reserve a place call the Informed Families Helpline on 0800 694 1066. Sorry children may not attend.

Workshop for parents: Who decides?

Understanding local and national decision making

Monday 11 October 2010 from 10.30 - 1.30
At Cheviots Children's Centre, 1 Cheviot Close, Enfield EN1 3UZ.

This 3 hour workshop is designed to help parents to understand how decisions are made so that they can influence decisions effectively and navigate through processes that can appear baffling. We uncover who is responsible for what both locally and nationally. We decode some of the language used in local and national government and give parents a chance to unravel structures that can seem inaccessible. The course includes entertaining activities and a 'who decides' exercise.

At the end of this fun and informative half day parents will:

- Have a clearer understanding of decision making processes
- Understand the range of issues impacting on decision making including funding and national v local strategy
- Understand who is responsible for what
- Have the knowledge they need to get involved
- Feel empowered to make a difference.

Lunch will be provided. Please contact Carol Mustafa on 07503 161248 or email carol@ourvoiceenfield.org.uk to book. Limited places available. Crèche places can be provided for your child but we need at least two week's notice please. Contact Megan Steven on 0208 363 4047 or at megan.steven@enfield.gov.uk