

Partnership News

Spring 2002

The newsletter for parents of children with special educational needs



mencap



Norwich
Community
Health
Partnership



Waveney Valley
Dyslexia
Association

Schools



Independent Parental Supporters

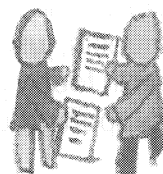
In January we asked the parents who have most recently been put in touch with one of our volunteers about the help they received. Over fifty new families received support last term.

Everybody who completed our questionnaire said that they had found the service helpful and would recommend it to a friend.

Most people heard about us through the newsletter, from school or through a friend - **many thanks to everyone for giving out our number.**

Volunteers helped parents by:

- ◆ talking to them on the telephone;
- ◆ going to meetings with them;
- ◆ explaining information;
- ◆ helping them to get more information; specialist help or advice;
- ◆ helping them to write about their child and
- ◆ helping with proposed statements.



Some of the comments made by parents were:

- ◆ "I found out so much more about special needs, I then felt more in control of what was happening."
- ◆ "Now we know what to ask in meetings and don't feel on our own."
- ◆ "A lot of the time I was unsure of the system, my helper provided excellent information and support".

Many thanks to all our volunteers for all their hard work.

Parents often tell us that they didn't ask for help sooner because they didn't think that their child's needs were great enough.

If you would like some support and think that your child has special needs, please don't worry alone, give us a call on **01603 281044** and we will be pleased to help.

WHERE TO GET US

You can contact Sarah Merrick and Alison Watkin at the Parent Partnership Office for information and advice about support.

**Parent Partnership
Boardman House
Redwell Street
Norwich
NR2 4SL**

We hope that this newsletter keeps you up to date with what we are doing and other relevant ventures.

Your views and ideas are always welcome.

For more information about anything in this newsletter, please contact the Parent Partnership Office



01603 281044

or

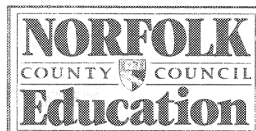
e-mail:

Sarah.merrick.edu@norfolk.gov.uk
alison.watkin.edu@norfolk.gov.uk

The back page of this newsletter has been left blank to help you distribute it more discreetly.

Let us know if you would like large print copies or if translations would be useful.

Norfolk Parent Partnership is a Standards Fund/LEA funded initiative, working with the voluntary sector and other professionals to support parents of children with special educational needs.



Newsletter questionnaire

Many thanks to the people who returned last term's newsletter questionnaire. The comments were positive and here are the answers to some of your questions:

Q Does the newsletter go out to parents of very young children?

A Copies of the newsletter go to the child development unit and are also circulated to all pre schools and nurseries.

Q How do schools get "extra SEN money"?

A Parent Partnership have produced a leaflet for parents about SEN funding. You can get a copy by ringing 01603 281044 or we can explain the system to you.

Here are some of the things that you suggested we include:

♦ **A parents section where you can ask for people in a similar situation to contact you.**

we have done this before, and are always happy to publish contact requests, just send them in! We can also put you in touch with local voluntary organisations or support groups.

♦ **Update on the stages of the Code of Practice**

we are currently updating our range of leaflets for parents which will include one about

"School Action" and "School Action Plus" – these are replacing the old stages 1 - 3. Please telephone us for a leaflet.

♦ **More information about clubs and activities.**

We are always keen to hear your recommendations about clubs and activities. We regularly put this information on our "notice board" section. Here are some other people who collect this sort of information and may be able to help you: Norfolk Disability Information Service has a regularly updated database, contact **NDIS on 01603 763295**

ASK produce a handbook of useful information and contacts, call them on **01603 761333**

The **Childcare Information Service** also has a database of childcare, play schemes etc. Call them on **01603 622292**

♦ **More advice about where to get help**

At Parent Partnership we can put you in touch with Local and National Organisations as well as offering support from our own services. Call us on **01603 281044**

♦ **Some real life case studies**

If you think that your own experiences would be interesting to others, please contact us to discuss it.

Not just parents!

Sue Davies, Education Co-Ordinator for Children Looked After in the Northern area, contacted Parent Partnership recently. She wanted to highlight the need for information and support for carers who look after children accommodated by Social Services. Many of these children have special educational needs.

Carers do a vital job in helping children and young people in public care achieve success in education. They are supported by **Family Placement Social Workers** who can help in a number of ways, for example, by offering practical advice, out of hours telephone help and by running support groups so that carers can meet and share their experiences.

Each school now has a **Designated Teacher for Children in Public Care**. If you are a carer and have any queries about the education of your looked after child or children, then ask to speak to that teacher. Social Workers are also in touch with local Education Co-Ordinators who are based in North Walsham, Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn. If you are having difficulties accessing special services for your looked after child, then speak to your Social Worker who can discuss it further with the local Education Co-ordinator.

**Sue Davies, Education Co-Ordinator,
North Walsham 01692 402894**

Parent Partnership is here to support all parents and carers of children with special educational needs.

West Norfolk Dyspraxia Group



The group has been busy in recent months with some interesting talks and guest speakers, fundraising events and the launch of the toy and book library.

At the Christmas Bazaar, £252.31 was raised which will help with outings, parties, books and toys. The book and toy library now has a great range of toys and books available for members to borrow.

For more information contact Carole McGinn on 01485 544371 Mon to Fri 10 – 2 pm or e-mail c.mcgin@dispraxia25.fsnet.co.uk

Forthcoming events include:

Monday 25th February 7 – 9 pm – Support Group Meeting

Monday 25th March 7 - 9 pm Jenny Gilder: Primary Mental Health Worker

Monday 22nd April 7- 9 pm Diane Bowie, Educational Psychologist

Monday 20th May 7 - 9 pm Alison Watkin, Parent Partnership

Monday 17th June 7 - 9 pm Support Group Meeting

Saturday 6th July 2002 – Conference at UEA (see noticeboard for details)

Asperger Norfolk

The Saturday Social group for parents and children has moved from the **Hewett School to Eaton Park Community Centre**. We have youth leaders who do a variety of activities with the children. Football seems to be 'in' at the moment so we are lucky to have acquired the skills of the sports coach from City College. We also have another talented youth leader who is very creative and has the children making a variety of objects.

The Junior Activity Group - due to the success of our last group, the Junior Activity Group for members will start again on the **20th February** from 4 pm until 5 pm at **Harford Manor school**. These sessions will run for 5 weeks until Easter.

We hope to improve the children's spatial awareness, co-ordination, balance and social skills. We are fortunate to have the expertise of Shaunnagh Bromley, who has been running creative movement groups for Musical Keys for 9 years. She has worked for a number of years at the Autistic School in Johannesburg and is well aware of the difficulties children with Asperger syndrome encounter.



Workshops on the Teacch method are still very popular – the next one will be on March 11th. Please phone the office for more details on **01603 620500**.

Norfolk Link: for all those interested in the education of children with Down syndrome

The Link arose spontaneously as a grass roots self-help organisation. It is open to all and focuses on providing information about the complex educational needs of children with Down syndrome in order to raise standards and promote inclusion as a viable option.

The next meetings are on the subject of transition:

Tuesday 23rd April 6:00 - 9:00 pm at
The Hall School, Old Catton, Norwich.
A tuesday in April (date to be advised)
6:00 - 9:00 pm at

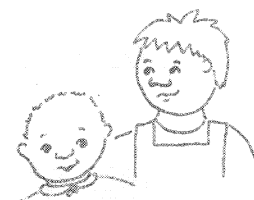
Ethel Tipple School, Kings Lynn.

Speakers will cover transition to Primary and High school and the Disability Discrimination Act.

For information on these meetings or Link membership please contact

Diane Bowie on 01553 669219.

Better Services for Families in Norfolk

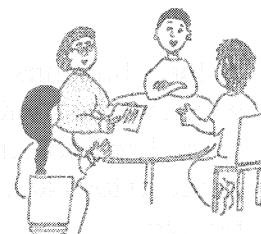


Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Health Authority asked The National Development Team (NDT) to carry out a review of Services for Disabled Children and their Families living in Norfolk.

Here are some of the things that the NDT have said we need to do to improve our services:

A Joined Up Service

Parents' biggest wish is for professionals to work more closely together. Parents often have to repeat their story to many different people. This can be very frustrating. There needs to be a more joined up service, with one eligibility criteria (rules to decide whether you get a service or not) and one single assessment.



A Key Worker

Agencies should work together to provide a key worker to families who receive services. Parents have said they want to have a key worker. One person they can contact who knows their child and can act as a signpost and advocate. The key worker would help parents get the information and the services that they need.



Better Information

We don't know exactly how many disabled children there are in Norfolk. Agencies need to have a joint information system so that we know the number and needs of all disabled children living in Norfolk. This will help us to plan services better and predict what our children will need as they grow up and become adults.



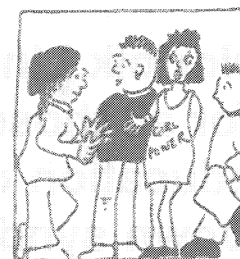
Supporting Parents in Schools

Agencies need to look at ways of supporting parents in schools. Schools play a big part in the lives of Disabled Children. Having support workers based in special schools could provide ongoing support to families.



Moving into Adulthood

All agencies need to make sure that proper plans are made for young people approaching adulthood (known as transition). The new Connexions Services being set up in Norfolk in September 2002 will be a key service for young disabled people aged between 13-19. Special workers should also be responsible for supporting young people as they move into adult life.



One Assessment Only

Parents and Children get fed up of repeating their story to different agencies and professionals. Assessments from the different agencies should be 'joined up' so that children are assessed once and once only.



Short Breaks

Health and Social Services both currently provide Short Breaks (also known as respite care). This doesn't make sense. Short Breaks should be one service with one manager in charge.

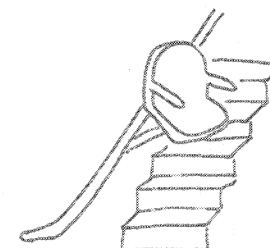
This would make a better service and would provide more money to provide more Short Breaks.



Equipment

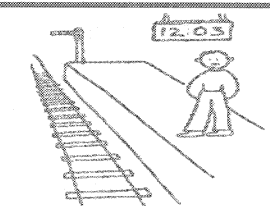
When a Child needs some equipment parents often don't know who they should go to.

The review team thinks that there should be one single joint equipment service. This would make the service easier for parents to get the equipment that they need.



Placing Children Out of Norfolk

Agencies in Norfolk should say that disabled children will live, go to school and be supported locally in Norfolk. We will only place Disabled Children out of Norfolk if this is in the best interest of the child and his/her family.



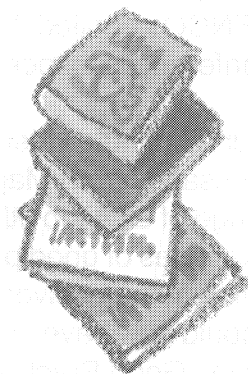
Book Reviews

Books suitable for younger readers.

Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

Bear Snores On

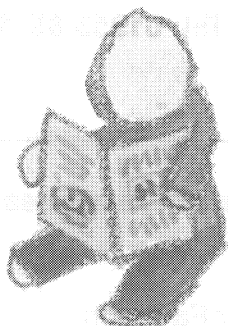
In a cave in his, deep, dark lair, through the long cold winter sleeps a great brown bear and it seems that whatever the other animals do, nothing will wake him up.



Sally Grindley and Richard Beardshaw

Who Is It?

A lively introduction to classic fairy tales.



Jan Pienjowski

Pizza!

When lion comes to tea it's a good idea to fill him up or you just might end up being dessert.

Jonathan Emmett and Vanessa Cabban

Bringing Down the Moon

Mole sees the moon and loves it so much he wants to bring it down to earth, but that really isn't an easy task.

Visit your local library or the exciting new Forum soon!

Dorne Fraser, Senior Librarian, Young People's Services

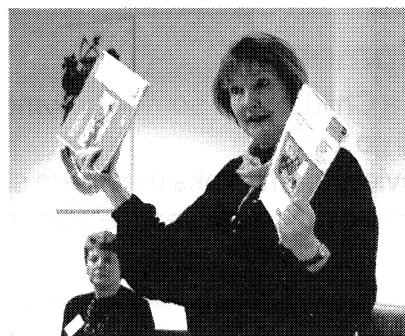
SNLG *Video*

The Role, Support, Management and Training of Learning Support Assistants

The Norfolk Special Needs Liaison Group (SNLG) is a consortium of 22 voluntary organisations and self-help groups for children and adults with disabilities and special needs. In Summer 2000 we published the results of our research into the work of LSAs (now called Teaching Assistants) in Norfolk. Our report, *More Than An Extra Pair of Hands*, showed that whilst LSAs loved their jobs, most of them were on the lowest pay scales, had temporary contracts, very little training and had to attend meetings and planning sessions in their own time.

We felt strongly that things had to change – that the work of the LSAs is far too important to take for granted. We organised a conference to debate the issues and to hear from Dr Maggie Balshaw, a national researcher whose work has influenced the DfEE Good Practice Guide. The conference was for 100 people; over 300 LSAs, teachers and SENCOs applied. We organised two extra conferences to meet the demand.

Our 27 minute video records some of the key messages from Maggie's talk. She examines the range of LSA job titles and roles, describes examples of good practice and tells us what the children themselves have to say. All Norfolk schools should now have copies of the DfES Induction Pack: Good Practice Guide – Working with Teaching Assistants, as well as the Index for Inclusion. The SNLG Video complements and provides a context for both these publications.



Comments about the Conferences and the Video

Very interesting, made me feel valued at last. LSA

Reminded me of management issues relating to LSAs which need including in my SDP. Headteacher

Made me want to go back to school and initiate INSET based on today's session. SENCO

Maggie Balshaw – very informative, human, easily heard and understood. LSA

"Inclusion is about enabling teachers to reach and support the diverse range of pupils in their classrooms. No-one is potentially more influential in this process than high quality teaching assistants."

Copies of the SNLG Video cost £4.95 and are available from MENCAP, 19 Market Place, Hingham, Norfolk NR9 4AF. Tel: 01953 851160.

Norfolk Autistic Society

Norfolk Autistic Society has appointed a **Family Services Worker, Caroline Cable**, to work in Norwich and South Norfolk. She will be helping parents to come to terms with diagnosis, claim benefits and set up support groups.

The Society is hoping to recruit further workers to cover other parts of the county. This is a welcome extension to the services the Society is able to

offer, especially as **2002 is Autism Awareness Year**.

NAS will be holding an **Easter Fayre** on **Saturday March 16th** from **10 am until 12 noon** at **Taverham Village Hall, Sandy Lane, Taverham, Norwich**.

For more information about this event telephone Wendy on 01603 262665.

Notice Board



**For help
& support for families
of children & young
people with
special needs**
has moved to:
The Saffron Room
Charing Cross Centre
17-19 St. John
Maddermarket, Norwich
NR2 1DN
Tel: 01603 761333

The School of Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy
and The Dyspraxia Foundation, West Norfolk present a
one Day Conference

"Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder – from Childhood to Adulthood"

**Keynote speaker will be Dr. Amanda Kirby,
GP and Director of the Discovery Centre, Cardiff.**

Date: Saturday 6th July 2002

Time: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Venue: School of Occupational Therapy & Physiotherapy,
The Queen's Building, University of East Anglia, Norwich

Cost: £35.00 per Parent, £55.00 per Professional
including coffee, light buffet lunch and tea.

Closing Date: 26th April 2002

For an application form, contact Robbie Meehan, School
of Occupational & Physiotherapy, University of East Anglia
Tel: 01603 456161 or
e-mail: r.meehan@uea.ac.uk

Does your child like to swim?

Jackie Hawkins is Principal of Swim School at the Marina Centre in Great Yarmouth.
She is qualified to teach children with disabilities. If you would like to find out
more information, contact **Jackie on 01493 851521**

The Deaf Children's club

for 5 - 7 year olds meets at
**The Hut behind the Deaf
Centre, Vauxhall Street,
Norwich**
from
10am - 12noon
on the
first Saturday of each month.



Waveney Valley Dyslexia Association

holds a drop-in meeting for advice at
Norwich City College

on the

first Saturday of each month

from

9.30a.m. - 12.30p.m.

in

room A3 of the Norwich Building

Contact Karen Crawley on 01953 483057

or e-mail KarenCrawley61@aol.com