



Thomley Notice Board

This is the 2nd edition of our "notice board" which aims to pass on information which we think might be useful. Please note that we cannot verify the quality of the services offered and recommend you find out further information directly from the organisers.

Activity days

Soundabout Festival with songwriting & recording - Saturday 24th November (10.30am-12.30pm or 2pm-4pm). £7.50 per family, booking is essential. Soundabout uses music to unlock the potential of young people with severe disabilities. For more information call Soundabout on 01844 338898 or visit www.soundabout.org.uk Soundabout is based on the same farm as Thomley Activity Centre. You are welcome to visit us on the same day!

Child support groups

'SPECTRUM GIRLS' - Girls Aspie Social Group has recently been set up for girls with high-functioning autism or Aspergers who are interested to find new friends with the same interests. Girls interested in joining the group can meet with new friends via organised social events, email / MSN or as Pen-pals. NB. Most social events will be held in London as the group covers London & Home Counties. The next event is at 11.30am on Sunday 14th October meeting at the bandstand at Hyde Park, London (nearest tube Hyde Park Corner) for a picnic and games (please bring any balls, slipping ropes, rounders etc) or, if the weather is bad, at 12pm in the picnic area on 1st floor in the Science Museum. Those interested in attending events or linking with pen-pals or email friends should contact Spectrum Girls through Lesley Zorlakki on 0771 448 3485 or zorlakki@onetel.net

Parent and grandparent support groups

Face 2 Face is an expanding network that provides emotional support for parents of children newly recognised as having a disability. These schemes recruit and train volunteer parents, who themselves have children with special needs who act as 'befrienders'. These befrienders are able to share and empathise with new parents through their own experience and ability to provide support. Face 2 Face is currently being launched in Oxfordshire. You can find out more about the service at: www.face2facenetwork.org.uk or contact them on face2facenetwork@scope.org.uk or Tel: 0844 800 9189.

Contact a Family - Oxfordshire Family Support Worker. For individual family support and help with any issue affecting a disabled child, contact Valerie Reed on valerie.reed@cafamily.org.uk. Contact a Family also publishes a regular bulletin of useful parent support information. To subscribe, see <http://lists.cafamily.org.uk/lists>

Autism speaks has recently set up a Grandparents' network which recognizes that being the grandparent of a child or adult with autism presents particular challenges: i.e. being involved - *but not directly*; needing information - *but not as a parent*; needing support - *but recognising the greater pressure on parents*. Autism Speaks has therefore set up a growing UK-wide network which offers grandparents information and support, opportunity to make contact with others and to do something for their families. For more information call Liz Roberts on 01235 834295 or see www.autismspeaks.org.uk/grandparents_network.htm

Autism Speaks is also hoping to set up a Local Group Network in Thame, bringing together individuals who want to help discover the causes of autism. If you are interested in getting involved, contact Philippa Stannard on 0118 9016 876 or email her on philippa.stannard@autismspeaks.org.uk

Autism Bucks is a support group for parents of children and adults with autistic spectrum disorders. They meet at Aylesbury Vale Methodist Church, Buckingham Street, Aylesbury on the 1st Thursday of every month 7.30pm-9pm. Meetings will include opportunity to meet others, access to an extensive library, and regular speakers. For more information contact Ann on Tel 01494 711391 or just pop in.

Parent discussion groups

Songs, Stories and Signs - workshop led by Alex Stanyer - cost £5

Singing, using signs and telling simple stories are all ways to help your child develop listening, imitation and language skills. This workshop encourages you to share some of the methods you use at home with your child and to find out more ideas to aid you child's development. For more details contact Alex Stanyer on alexstanyer@puzzlepreschool.co.uk (P.T.O)

Oxfordshire Carers' Forum - Discussion Network Breaks. An opportunity to meet with other Carers living in Oxfordshire with whom you will be able to share friendship, ideas and your concerns for the future. The next meeting is on Thursday 8th November, 11.00am - 1.30pm at The Windrush, Burford Road, Witney, Oxon. There will be a talk from a Senior Representative of Social and Community Services, followed by a discussion. Also, a representative from the Oxfordshire Falls Service will be available for help and advice. Contact Oxfordshire Carers' Forum on 01993 706543 for more information. Bookings must be made at least 10 days before the lunch.

Government campaigns

Making Every Disabled Child Matter - Thanks to the efforts of supporters, Every Disabled Child Matters has successfully campaigned for government to invest an additional £340 million in disabled children's services. Local authorities across England are also signing up to the campaign charter after campaigning by local parents.

If you want to find out more about what is happening, join the next parents meeting on 6th November (10.30am-3pm) at Bloxham Mill Business Centre, Barford Road, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4FF (Cost £5). This will include information about: what's happening in the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign; what this might mean for you; how you can help the campaign locally; what other parents have been doing and how they have been successful; an opportunity to meet other parents. The campaign team and other speakers will update you on the campaign and provide you with useful information for you to use to campaign for the services you need in your area. A light lunch will be provided. For more information and booking form, see www.cafamily.org.uk/EDCMOxfordshire.pdf or contact: Liz Ranger, Contact a Family on Tel. 020 7608 8784.

Research

Childcare Sufficiency Market Assessment - Are you a parent that could benefit from childcare?

From September 2007 Oxfordshire County Council will undertake a detailed countywide assessment of the supply of and demand for childcare. The assessments will provide the local authority with more information about parental needs - in particular the needs of those who do not already access childcare. This will enable the targeting of resources to those areas that need it most. Questionnaires are available at www.oxoncis.org.uk or email childcare.survey@oxfordshire.gov.uk for more information.

The Early Learning and Childcare Service are particularly looking for parents with disabled children to take part in a focus group so that they can understand the more detailed problems with securing sufficient childcare. They need a maximum of 8 parents. The focus group will be facilitated by 2 trained members of the Childcare Development team. The focus group will last 1½ hours maximum and each parent will be given a £10 high street voucher for their time. For more information contact: Early Learning & Childcare Service on 01865 815 630.

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities - "Recognising Fathers"

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities wants to find out more about the experiences of fathers of children with a learning disability because fathers are often ignored by workers in services. They are currently carrying out a national survey of fathers with a child aged 19 or under and the information is being used to find out how policy and practice can be changed to improve support to fathers and families. For more information see www.learningdisabilities.org.uk or if you are interested in completing a questionnaire, contact Christine Towers at ctowers@fpld.org.uk or Tel: 0207 803 1158.

Other useful information

New guide to "claiming DLA for children" - Contact a Family have a series of free booklets/ guides/ factsheets available for all families caring for a disabled child www.cafamily.org.uk/factsheets.html. Amongst these is a new guide to "claiming DLA for children".

Autism Alert cards

A number of parents of children with autism have recently described their experiences of passers-by showing a lack of understanding about autism, thus exacerbating already difficult situations. These parents have found it useful to know about the Autism Alert card which has been developed in consultation with adults with autism and parents. This credit card sized card is designed to tell people about the condition, asking them to show respect and tolerance. It can also be carried by a person with autism or Aspergers enabling them to identify their needs in situations where they may find communication difficult (e.g. in a supermarket, a railway station, or with a policeman). These cards cost £2.50 for 50 cards. For more information, see www.autism.org.uk/card