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childwise

CHECK OUT CHILDCARE: NEWS AND VIEWS FOR PARENTS FROM DAYCARE TRUST

EVERYONE COUNTS
disabled children and childcare

Childcare is everybody's business
National Childcare Week 2005

Soaring costs of childcare - Daycare Trust annual survey
Money Matters - new help with childcare costs from April 2005

Visit Daycare Trust's website at www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Call our helpline 020 7840 3350



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THE NATIONAL CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN

welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of *Childwise*, Daycare Trust's newsletter for parents.

Childcare is proving to be a leading campaign theme for all political parties in the run-up to the general election. Look carefully at the manifesto commitments to see who will do most for you as a parent.

welcome to Childwise

A huge amount had been achieved over the last few years and much more is promised, but we mustn't be complacent. You need to know from your local

Councillor or MP when you will get a children's centre in your community. If you're a parent of a child with a disability or special educational needs you need to ask them how their party will create equal access to childcare.

This election could be a real turning point and it's essential that we build on the existing achievements to realise our vision of quality, accessible, affordable childcare for all.



Nancy Platts
Acting Director, Daycare Trust

NATIONAL CHILDCARE WEEK 6-12 JUNE

Let's celebrate childcare

Why not join Daycare Trust in celebrating National Childcare Week? This year's theme is "Childcare is everybody's business!" Put yourself forward, or nominate someone you know for the three awards to be given out during the week - "Childcare Champions Awards for Parents", "Parents' Employer of Choice", and for the children's photo competition "My favourite thing about childcare" (see entry forms in the flyer enclosed with this issue of Childwise). The week is part of National Sure Start Month - which has the theme "Your Children, Your Choices" and lasts for the whole of June. For more information, contact Daycare Trust on 020 7840 3350, or info@daycaretrust.org.uk or visit our website: www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Childcare for disabled children

Quality childcare is good for all children and families. But it can be particularly important for disabled children and children with special educational needs. It can reduce the need for special educational needs intervention later on. Often disabled children don't have as many opportunities to play with other children, and can feel very isolated. Like other parents, many parents of disabled children want to go out to work to raise their family income, especially as it can cost three times as much to bring up a disabled child. And sometimes families just need a break from their caring duties to spend time with the rest of their family. Quality childcare can help with all these needs.

EVERYONE COUNTS!

Daycare Trust has been talking to hundred of parents with disabled children about their experiences of accessing childcare for their children as part of our "Everyone Counts" project.

Parents told us that they would like to use childcare services if they could, but often there aren't any suitable services available or they are too expensive. One single dad had called 57 registered carers to find care for his disabled daughter, and none were willing or able to provide appropriate care.

Many families had no access to information about services and had to fight every step of the way to get the right services for their children.

So Daycare Trust is campaigning for:

- More help with childcare costs for families with disabled children
- Appropriate and accessible childcare places available to all families with disabled children
- Training and extra resources for childcare providers
- Better co-ordinated services so that families have one point of contact for information and support

Daycare Trust has produced a publication "Everyone Counts" (cost £5) with the results of our research with parents - phone 020 7840 3350 for a copy.

What the Government's doing

The Early Support programme makes sure that disabled children under three get good quality co-ordinated support services so that families don't have to go to lots of different agencies and professionals to get the help they need.

All childcare settings now have access to a special educational needs co-ordinator to work with families and childcare providers.

The Government has been looking hard at the issues facing families living with disability over the last few months. The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit published an important report in January looking at the needs of all disabled people. By 2010 all three and four year-old disabled children and children with special educational needs should be able to access free part-time early education, and all families with a disabled child under five should be able to access quality childcare by 2015.

And the Children's National Service Framework, published by the Department of Health in September, contains a ten-year plan to improve the standards and co-ordination of care for all children, including children with disabilities and special educational needs. The Government's ten-year plan for childcare in December allocated £125 million, to be used to ensure more childcare provision suitable for disabled children.

THANK YOU! Many thanks to all the families who helped us with our "Everyone Counts" project over the past year. Without your support the project wouldn't have been possible. Your contributions will help us campaign for better early education and care for disabled children, and children with special educational needs.



What you need to know

A person has a disability if he or she has "a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". This might include long-term illnesses such as diabetes, asthma or epilepsy, as well as learning, mobility, sight or hearing difficulties, if the effects are severe enough to affect everyday activities. There are around three quarters of a million disabled children in the UK.

According to law, childcare providers are not allowed to treat a disabled child less favourably than other children. For example, this means that they cannot stop a disabled child coming on an outing or charge more for a disabled child without a good financial reason. They must also make 'reasonable adjustments' to their services and facilities so that disabled children can use the facilities. This might include adapting premises to make them wheelchair accessible, training staff to use special equipment, or setting up special meal arrangements for a child with a severe food allergy.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

CONTACT A FAMILY - provides information, advice and support to families of disabled children 0808 808 3555 (freephone)
www.cafamily.org.uk

'WAVING NOT DROWNING' NETWORK - a network of parents of disabled children who work or want to work 020 7253 7243
www.workingfamilies.org.uk

DISABILITY ALLIANCE - provides information and advice on benefits and other financial support for disabled people 020 7247 8776
www.disabilityalliance.org

FAMILY FUND - provides financial support to families of severely disabled children.
PO Box 50, York YO1 9ZX
info@familyfund.org.uk
www.familyfundtrust.org.uk

MONEY MATTERS - CUT OUT AND KEEP



Childwise's regular feature to keep you updated on financial support for childcare.

April 2005 means new help with childcare costs

More help through Tax Credits

From April 2005, the maximum amount you may receive for the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit will increase from £94.50 to £122.50 for families with one child, and from £140 to £210 for families with two or more children.

For more information on the Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, visit www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk or call the Tax Credit helpline on 0845 300 3900.

New tax exemptions on childcare supported by employers

If your employer gives you help with childcare costs (through Childcare Vouchers, or by directly paying a childcare provider on your behalf) the first £50 they give you will be free from both tax and National Insurance Contributions for you from April 2005.

For more information, visit Daycare Trust's website:
www.daycaretrust.org.uk

New Childcare Approval Scheme means help with nanny costs

From April 2005, your nanny can be approved under the government's new Childcare Approval Scheme. Once a nanny is approved, this form of childcare qualifies for help for the first time through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and the new employer-supported childcare tax exemptions.

Childminders who only look after children over seven can also gain approval in the same way and qualify for the same financial help.

For more information on the Childcare Approval Scheme:
www.surestart.gov.uk/childcareapproval or helpline 0845 7678 111

INFLATION-BUSTING CHILDCARE COSTS FOR 2005

Childcare costs have soared again this year, well above the rate of inflation.

The typical cost of a nursery place for a child under two years has risen by five per cent since 2004, to £141 a week. For a child over two, charges have gone up to £132 - a seven per cent increase.

The biggest increases in nursery costs were in inner London, meaning they remained the highest in the country. Typical costs have gone up to £197 a week - a leap of 17 per cent. Inflation in the same period rose by a mere 1.6 per cent.

The shocking figures come from Daycare Trust's annual survey of childcare costs, which includes figures from Scotland and Wales for the first time.

The survey also includes the costs of out of school clubs.

A massive 65 per cent of Childcare Information Services surveyed said parents were reporting a lack of affordable, quality childcare in their area.

Find out more about the survey on Daycare Trust's website: www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Compare the typical charges in the survey with your childcare costs, and let us know at Daycare Trust if you are paying more (020 7840 3350, or info@daycaretrust.org.uk). You can also write to your local councillor and MP to inform them of higher costs, and ask them to take this issue up. Find out how to contact your councillor through your local council, and your local MP by visiting this website: www.locata.co.uk/commons/

Lifting children out of poverty



3.6 million children live in poverty in Britain. That means children whose families can't afford to buy basic furniture, a winter coat, new shoes or healthy food.

The Government has committed itself to a 20-year mission to eradicate child poverty and some progress has been made. The End Child Poverty Campaign is a broad coalition of organisations and individuals who are going to hold the Government to its promises.

The campaign will inform the public of the devastating impact of poverty on children's lives. It has published a ten-point charter, supported by Daycare Trust and 40 other organisations, mapping out how a million children could be taken out of poverty by 2010.

Policies included in the charter include extending child benefit to pregnant women and ensuring childcare reaches out to all parents facing multiple barriers to work.

For more information, contact Laura Payne
on 020 7843 1917 or info@ecpc.org.uk

dear childwise...

I've heard my children's school is turning into an "extended school" - what does this mean?

The Government is encouraging all schools to become "extended schools". This means they will provide a range of services and activities during the school day, before and after school hours (from 8 am until 6 pm), at weekends and during the school holidays.

The activities and services provided will be different in each school, depending on what people need locally. Schools can provide (directly, or together with other schools and providers) childcare, health and social care, lifelong learning opportunities, family learning, parenting support, study support, sports and arts, and access to Information Technology. Extended schools already exist in some areas.

The government plans to give funding to all local councils from 2005-6 so that all primary and secondary schools in their area can start developing extended services.

Yours, Childwise



GOODBYE TO DAYCARE TRUST'S DIRECTOR

Daycare Trust bids a fond farewell to Stephen Burke, Director of Daycare Trust since October 2000. He has led our campaign for quality, accessible, affordable childcare for all and secured a government commitment to a children's centre in every community. He has helped to make childcare a central issue in the public policy agenda and a core theme in the next general election.

Stephen moves to become Chief Executive of Counsel and Care, working for better care and housing services for older people. Daycare Trust will appoint a new Chief Executive in April.

Safety first for children

"Not every accident is a lucky escape" is the theme of this year's Child Safety Week. Last year 300 children died, and 120,000 were admitted to hospital because of largely preventable accidents. The Child Accident Prevention Trust is asking everyone to help get across important safety messages to parents, carers, and children in the week from 20-26 June. For more information visit: www.capt.org.uk

GET CHILDWISE

For your free subscription to Childwise please fill in the form and post it to Daycare Trust at 21 St George's Road, London SE1 6ES, or fax 020 7840 3355, e-mail info@daycaretrust.org.uk or phone our helpline on 020 7840 3350.

We may occasionally contact you about other publications and services offered by us. If you do not wish to be contacted please tick

Name

Address

Contact number

How did you hear about Daycare Trust?



Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity, campaigning for quality affordable childcare for all and raising the voices of children, parents and carers. We advise parents and carers, providers, employers trade unions and policymakers on childcare issues.

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