

Working together

Newsletter of the Warwickshire Parent Partnership Service based at ContinYou (formerly CEDC).

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The newsletter of the Warwickshire Parent Partnership Service

Special Educational Needs Regional Partnerships

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is encouraging the development of partnerships to meet special educational needs. It wants the government, local authorities, other local agencies and parents to work more closely together to support the education of pupils with SEN.

With this in mind, the DfES has provided funding for eleven Regional Partnerships covering all local education authorities in England. Each Partnership brings together representatives from LEAs, health services, social services, Parent Partnership Services and the private and voluntary sectors.

The overall aim of the partnerships is to work with all agencies to help even out the variations across the country in how we provide for pupils' needs. In the first phase, the Partnerships concentrated on provision for children with low incidence disabilities.

The West Midlands SEN Partnership

The West Midlands Partnership is developing inter-agency working, both locally and regionally. More recently, it has focused on **Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)**, looking at policy and practice across the region. It has carried out a widespread survey of parents' views which have been taken into account in the final report. The Partnership will work towards putting in place the recommendations of the report, and towards improving the effectiveness of services across the West Midlands.



The work of the West Midlands Partnership has now developed to include a focus on **Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties (ESBD)**. The aim is to improve services to this group of children and their families. Arrangements have already been made to consult with a group of Warwickshire parents and the Partnership is keen to talk with as many parents as possible to hear their views.

If you would like to be involved or would just like to know more about the project, you can contact us here at the Parent Partnership Service or get in touch directly with the Regional Facilitators:

Annette English, PO Box 9868, Birmingham B48 7WE
Tel: 0121 445 0108 E-mail: aenglish@discover.co.uk

Bridget Jones, PO Box 131, Herefordshire HR1 3ZU
Tel: 01432 820159 E-mail: bjones@discover.co.uk.

Let's Work Together!

A conference for parents and carers of children with special educational needs

Saturday, 16 March 2002

9.30am to 4pm

Manor Hall, Leamington Spa

Speakers: Professor Sheila Wolfendale,
University of East London

Pippa Murray, Parents with Attitude

Workshop topics include: Dyslexia, Autism, Speech and language difficulties, Negotiating skills, Behavioural difficulties, Looking after yourself and Computer skills.

An exhibition of SEN resources will be available.

Conference fee:

£5 – parents/carers

£45 – professionals/paid workers

To book a place, please contact the Parent Partnership Service (details on the back page).

Please note that you do need to book and that places are limited – **don't miss out!**

- **Raising awareness** – we regularly send out information to all Warwickshire schools as well as to support services, social services, health providers, local voluntary organisations and so on. Like you, we're aware that at times the information doesn't filter through, or people aren't always sure about what we can actually offer.
- **Working with schools** – we are currently working on a leaflet which describes the support we can provide for schools. We hope this will help to develop stronger links so that we can work more closely together to support parents.

Thank you for all the constructive comments you sent in, which were much appreciated and will be acted upon to the best of our ability.

And finally, thank you very much for all the kind and appreciative feedback which has given us genuine pleasure (everyone needs a pat on the back occasionally!).

New support group

A new support group has been launched for the parents of disabled children from Nuneaton and Bedworth's minority ethnic communities.

The aim of the group is to enable parents to meet other parents, share experiences, make friends and find out more about the help available to them as carers.

At the launch night, guest speakers addressed the group, there was an opportunity to learn about relaxation and stress-management techniques, and information about services was available. This first meeting was held at Nuneaton's Freeway Centre in Park Avenue, Attleborough.

If you would like to know more and are interested in joining the group, please ring Shirley Foster, Nuneaton District Children's Services Team on 01926 414910.



Joining the V.I.P.S. (Voluntary Independent Parental Supporters)

Having a 16 year old son with special needs, I know only too well how frustrating and bewildering it is to try and find your way around the SEN system. On hearing about V.I.P.S. at a Parent Partnership meeting, I decided I would become involved. I thought that any help I could give, even in a small way, could be beneficial to another parent.

I applied to join the V.I.P.S. training course with a little apprehension. I need not have worried, though, as everyone was very friendly (the Coventry and Warwickshire Parent Partnership Services joined together for these meetings). There were seven weekly sessions, covering a wide range of topics, from developing listening skills to gaining an in-depth knowledge about statements and annual review meetings. Ground rules and confidential matters were agreed. Participants were given a number of useful handouts.

It was interesting and informative, yet friendly and informal. If you have some spare time, why not become one of our V.I.P.S.? You will not regret it! I certainly haven't.

Gill Day

Working together – Warwickshire Parent Partnership Service