

Keeping in Touch

Children with Multiple Needs



Play for all at the new Emberton Park play area (see page 3)

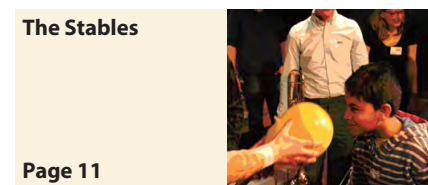
Here comes summer

Welcome to the sixth edition of the newsletter. We hope that Keeping in Touch is a useful way for you to find out what is happening, where you can find support and get information in Milton Keynes. If you do not receive this through your letterbox or your inbox, please contact us and we can add you to the mailing list.

This edition aims to update you about short breaks in Milton Keynes. There is also an update from the Families Information Service (FIS). This includes a look at how the DCATCH (Disabled children's access to childcare) has helped shape some of the things we do so that childcare staff and FIS staff better understand the needs of children with disabilities and additional needs.

With the summer holidays just around the corner, we have some brilliant ideas to keep the family entertained. There are some great reviews of events that have happened across Milton Keynes for children and young people with disabilities plus our regular updates from organisations such as Carers MK and Parents and Carers Alliance (PACA).

Finally, if you get a free sunny day over the summer why not pack a picnic and head over to Emberton Country Park and try out the new inclusive play area? In this edition we bring you the story on how it all came about and also details of the play equipment which has been installed for you to use. Whatever you are doing this summer, we hope you have lots of fun.



Try something new!

Want to know what exciting activities are happening during the summer holidays? Maybe you are looking for a holiday scheme or childcare for the children?

Milton Keynes Council's Families Information Service (FIS) has put together details of a wide variety of local activities and family events for children of all ages, including registered holiday play schemes.

There are lots of activities to keep children and young people of all ages entertained, including arts and crafts, martial arts, trampolining, ice skating, street dance, cheerleading and gymnastics. The list goes on!

For further details contact the Families Information Service:
T: 0800 035 0335
E: childcare@milton-keynes.gov.uk
W: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/childcare

Jargon buster

What is the Families Information Service?

The Families Information Service provides free, up to date and impartial information for parents and carers of children and young people in Milton Keynes. They can help by providing information about Ofsted registered childcare, leisure activities, parent support and financial support. The service has a dedicated disabilities officer who ensures access to the most up to date information about support, childcare and activities available for parents and carers of children with disabilities. She can also tailor make an approach to meet your requirements. Find out more by contacting the Families Information Service on **0800 035 0335**.

What is a short break?

Short breaks are an opportunity for children and young people with disabilities to spend time away from their parents and carers. It allows children and young people to experience new environments and develop relationships with other people.

A short break can be anything from an after school activity or a trip at the weekend, it could also include an overnight stay. This can take place in the family home, at an approved carer's home or in a residential or community setting.

Short breaks duty in Milton Keynes

By October 2011 local authorities must publish information about the short breaks that are available in their area for children with disabilities and additional needs. This information should let families know:

- what is available
- who is able to benefit from the activities
- services on offer
- how they access them

In Milton Keynes we intend to publish short breaks information on our website, www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/aiming-high, and also through circulating leaflets to schools, service providers, the Parents and Carers Alliance (PACA) and directly to families.

Information on short breaks in Milton Keynes 2010 – 2011

From April 2010 through to March 2011, providers have submitted detailed information about their short breaks provision. We are able to give you an idea about the number of children and young people who have enjoyed a short break in Milton Keynes.

Number of children who had an overnight break	256
Number of children who received family based or individual day care	224
Number of children who received group based specialist services: such as after school club and school holiday scheme at special schools	657
Number of children who received group based non specialist services: such as after school club and school holiday schemes in the community	108
A total of 1245 short breaks have been experienced by 940 children and young people.	

Emberton bike hire

A range of specialist bicycles, street bicycles and scooters are available to hire from Emberton Country Park along with safety helmets. Bike hire is available from 10.00am to 4.00pm throughout the school summer holidays and at weekends from June to October. Reservation is essential, for more information or to discuss your requirements, please call **07786 684455**.

Play for all at new Emberton Country Park play area

The former Mayor of Milton Keynes, Councillor Debbie Brock, officially opened an exciting new inclusive play area at Emberton Country Park on Saturday 14 May in front of a packed audience of local children and their families.

The play area includes traditional and imaginative play equipment that can be used by children and young people of all abilities. Features include a wheelchair accessible sunken galleon, roundabout, seesaw, basket swing and ground level trampoline. Visitors can also walk through the trees along a magical woodland path, and pass through a folly castle entrance to a canyon where a friendly dragon awaits. A maze and sensory garden provide further opportunities to explore and all ability specialist bikes will also be available to hire during the summer.

The play area has been created by Milton Keynes Council thanks to a government short breaks grant which provides funding for projects to give families with disabled children the support they need to enjoy inclusive activities and support. The council has been supported by Parents and Carers Alliance MK (PACA) and another parent who contributed ideas from their own families' experiences.



PACA representative, Sheryl Carty said: "I am really proud of my involvement with this project - this is what PACA are all about - shaping services for children with disabilities in MK and representing parents and carers voices.

We worked very hard advising MK Council about the types of play equipment our children would like which were accessible to as many children with disabilities as possible, so there is something here for everyone. What's fantastic is that siblings can come along too - this project represents a family day out. I am particularly proud of the specialist bikes as they are a really worthwhile part of the inclusive project. These bikes are expensive to buy and many people can't afford them - now our children have access to them. It's great!"

Gail Tolley, Milton Keynes Council's Director of Children and Young People's Services said: "This is a really exciting project that has been possible thanks to a joint effort by the council's Children and Young People's Services and Environment directorates. This inclusive play area means that every child and young person in the borough can enjoy the freedom and creativity of play."

Emberton Park is on Olney Road, Emberton, MK46 5FJ, just off the A509 between Sherington and Olney. It is open from dawn until dusk.

Why was Emberton Country Park chosen?

The park is 200 acres of mature unspoilt parkland with facilities such as a visitor centre and toilets. It's a destination which enables families to enjoy a full day out: making your way along the 5km of paths and trails, five lakes, watching wildlife and using play and picnic areas.



Emberton Country Park was chosen as there was already a range of established play facilities that could be updated and designed to become an inclusive play area. In addition, there is a bus route to the area from Central Milton Keynes and it is close to the historic market town of Olney.

continued overleaf.....

Keeping
in
Touch

How was the play equipment chosen?

Consultation took place with parents individually as well as with the Parent and Carers Alliance (PACA) about the kinds of equipment that could be accessed and enjoyed by children with a wide range of disabilities. Consultation with PACA continued throughout the project which also included discussions on the choice of specialist bikes to be made available to hire. The national charity Kids UK were consulted, providing advice on accessibility as well as imaginative and challenging play.



Value for money was also a consideration when choices had to be made. Research was carried out with other play parks to let us know what were popular and not so popular pieces of play equipment.

Specialist bike hire has been included at Emberton Country Park as consultation with parents showed that cycling is a preferred activity as it can be enjoyed by the whole family. Specialist bikes are designed to enable children and young people with additional needs to experience the sensation and motion of cycling. A selection of specialist bicycles, street bicycles and scooters has been put in place for hire. Together with safety helmets these are available for hire 10.00am to 4.00pm at weekends June to October and throughout the school summer holidays.

How can I get involved with things like this in the future?

Join the Parent and Carers Alliance in Milton Keynes. More details can be found on their website www.pacamk.org

For more information about Emberton Country Park please contact:

T: 01234 711575

E: embertonpark@milton-keynes.gov.uk

**Parents and
Carers
Alliance:**



Shaping services for children with special needs

Join PACA today to ensure your voice is included in shaping services.

We are interested in hearing from anyone who has a child or young person with additional needs and accesses services in either health, education or social care in Milton Keynes.

To join send your name, address, phone number and email address to:

PACA MK
Office 2 at Farm Garages
Lovat Court
Caldecote Street
Newport Pagnell
Bucks
MK16 0YZ

Or email pacamk@gmail.com

Receive Keeping in Touch via email!



Thank you to everyone who gave us their email addresses so we could send this newsletter to you electronically. We had a good response

following our request for details but we would like to send it to more of you in this way.

Not only will this help save money, it will reduce the amount of paper and packaging we use as well as reducing postage time. It will also enable us to send out more regular updates to you.

If you are happy to provide your email details, please send them to childcare@milton-keynes.gov.uk with your name and address putting 'Keeping in Touch newsletter' in the subject line.

Thank you for your help.

Make a Difference wins Prime Minister's Big Society Award

The Big Society Award is a national award created to recognise individuals, groups or organisations that are demonstrating the Big Society in their work or activities. Make a Difference is proud to announce that they were given this award by Prime minister, David Cameron, in February.

On the award win, David Cameron said:

"Congratulations to everyone at Make a Difference for the work you

do to change people's lives. It is projects like yours that inspire me and make me more determined than ever to deliver the Big Society. I passionately believe that we need a stronger society where people volunteer more, give more and take more control of their lives - taking the lead to improve local services. Make a Difference is a great example of the creativity and innovation we have in this country that can deliver a better Britain."



Denise Davis-Boreham, CEO of Make a Difference said:

"We are absolutely delighted to have won this Award. It's an honour not only for the organisation and staff but for all our young volunteers and the young people who benefit from our services"

For more information contact Make a Difference:
T: 01908 231312
E: info@mad-uk.org
W: www.mad-uk.org

What's on and what's gone!



Transitions Youth Group: For young people aged 13 -19 years

Brought to you by Natasha Davidson, Inclusion Co-ordinator

It has been a great few months for the Transitions Youth Group crew.



On our last visit to Stowe Landscape Gardens we voted on what we wanted to do next time, a session of owl handling took first place. This was our fourth visit to Stowe and we got to meet, touch and hold five different types of owl. We also found out more about how owls live, where they live and what they like to eat. We also enjoyed playing hide and seek and parachute games.

As part of our activities in the wider community during half term we went sailing and power boating at the

Caldecotte Xperience and bowling in Central Milton Keynes. At youth group sessions, we have been watching films; cooking cakes, cookies and pizzas; making badges, dancing and playing games to name a few.



The Transitions Youth Group is a youth led project where young people get to choose and plan activities to enjoy and take part in. The group are looking forward to planning activities for the summer holidays.

Make a Difference also run a variety of inclusive summer holiday activities; please see our website for more details. For more information about the Transitions Youth Group or to talk about getting your child involved please contact Natasha:

T: 01908 231312
E: Natasha.davidson@mad-uk.org
W: www.mad-uk.org

Oasis keeps aiming higher and higher!

Brought to you by Vicke Taylor - Deputy Play Care Co-ordinator



Oasis is a unique facility in Milton Keynes for children, offering high quality care and play opportunities to children aged four – 16 years, many of whom have additional needs. The team at Oasis work throughout the school holidays and also run Saturday Schemes throughout the year. The schemes are run by experienced and qualified staff; with places needing to be booked in advance.

This year Oasis Playschemes is celebrating 25 years since it started. They held another highly successful play scheme during the Easter holidays, with around 30 children attending per day. Fun was certainly not in short supply. The fantastic weather meant that the children were able to play outside with activities such as an Easter egg hunt, den building, bouncy castle, trampoline and trikes and bikes.

The fun did not stop for the children shying from the sunshine with Easter themed crafts, cookery and a fantastic crime scene activity using chalk, initiated by the children and involving all members off staff.



Crime scene chalk fun



Too many cooks? Not with Oasis!

Oasis are already well into planning for the summer with activities such as outdoor cooking, National Play day activities, lots of crafts and many outdoor games and fun.

Oasis Playschemes run throughout all the holidays with exception of Christmas for children ranging from four - 16 years. They have highly trained staff to cater for a wide range of needs.

2011 Playscheme dates:

Summer: Monday 1 August 2011 to Friday 26 August 2011

October half term: Monday 24 October to Friday 28 October 2011

2011-12 Saturday Scheme dates:

Saturday 16 July 2011
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 13 August 2011
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 20 August 2011
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 24 September 2011
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 15 October 2011
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 19 November 2011
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 10 December 2011,
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 14 January 2012
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 11 February 2012
9.00am – 1.00pm

Saturday 10 March 2012
9.00am – 1.00pm

For further information or to book places contact Roni Castle:
T: 07968 344453
E: oasisplayscheme@tiscali.co.uk

Many summer holiday activities can be found on the Families Information Service website www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/childcare. This site is regularly updated so keep checking to see the latest information. Alternatively, please call the Families Information Service on 0800 035 0335

lets dance with reactivate!



FUNKY DANCE

For 8-16's with a disability, come and learn the routines or do your own thing with our instructor Lisa. All finished off with some fun games!

Saturdays 10.15am –11am
At Monkston Park Community Centre

Only £3 per person!
(Parent/Carers go Free)

To find out more call Sarah on 01908 364275 or come down on a Saturday to meet Lisa and have a free trial!



In partnership with Reactivate Bucks
Give it a go... www.reactivatebucks.org

The Walnuts School Easter scheme

Brought to you by Jerry Aldous, Director of Specialism

Once again, The Walnuts School provided out of hours support for its pupils during the Easter holiday, thanks to short breaks funding. In response to pupil evaluations, the school now runs the Play Scheme for its younger pupils and Holiday Club for the older ones and activities are split between the school's two sites.

Age appropriate activities at Easter included trips to Salcey Forest, bowling, swimming and use of the school's art and soft play facilities. The lovely weather allowed for lots of time outside too, the children found a bouncy castle in one of the local parks and enjoyed a brilliant party on the last day.

At the time of writing, the activities are for those pupils who attend The Walnuts and Slated Row Schools, plus their siblings.

For more information contact Jerry Aldous:

T: 01908 646119

W: www.walnuts.milton-keynes.sch.uk

Are you planning on attending any events or activities over the summer? If you have a personal story or review you would like to share in the next newsletter we would love to hear from you. Please email [Sian Contell at \[childcare@milton-keynes.gov.uk\]\(mailto:Sian.Contell@milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](mailto:Sian.Contell@milton-keynes.gov.uk) or post it to Sian at the Families Information Service. The full address is on the back of the newsletter.

Inter-Action MK

Brought to you by Sharon Paulger, Director of Inter-Action MK

LOL (Laugh out Loud) was an art, dance, film and music project for disabled young people funded by a short break grant. Between January and May 2011 Inter-Action MK ran 20 creative workshops for the LOL project.



Courtesy of Wendy Grant Photography

The programme kicked off with drama workshops where the young people got to show off their performance skills.

Then there was opportunity to paint t-shirts and create giant self portraits in the art and design workshops. In the film and animation workshops the young people were introduced to stop motion animation techniques and made their own short film.

For those young people who love music there was the chance to work with a songwriter to create a song and for those who love to dance there was a series of street dance workshops.

In the three months over 50 young people took part, coming together on 6 April to celebrate their achievements at



Courtesy of Wendy Grant Photography

a special party night at the V Lounge in central Milton Keynes. The brilliant work that had been created in the workshops was displayed and the young people sang and danced.



Courtesy of Wendy Grant Photography

Inter-Action MK hope to run more LOL workshops later in the year but will definitely be running inclusive arts workshops over the summer holidays.

For further information contact Inter-Action MK:

T: 01908 678514

E: info@interactionmk.org.uk

W: www.interactionmk.org.uk

Sports Development summer holiday activities

The council's Sports Development Team will be running a varied programme of sports activities throughout the summer. All activities are fully inclusive and the team will aim to make arrangements to cater for all.

All courses run throughout the summer from Monday 25 July to Friday 2 September at Oakgrove Leisure Centre, for ages four and up and will cost £4.00 a session. You can book onto the following courses:

Trampolining with SNUGS: A very popular course, which allows young people to try out or get even higher on the trampoline. Depending on confidence, young people will progress to tucks, rolls and even flips. Beginners are welcome.



Gymnastics with SNUGS: The course allows young people to use all the gym equipment and learn things such as cartwheels, headstands and maybe even the splits. All levels are welcome, no previous experience is needed.

Cheerleading with MK Elite: Young people will learn fun cheers, dance moves, basic stunt work and will have the chance to learn a full cheerleading routine.

Badminton with Herman Fung: Young people will be taught the game of badminton through fun games and play with specifically designed equipment young people will have no trouble hitting the shuttle. Older children can enjoy a more relaxed session with the option to play with friends whilst receiving excellent coaching tips.

Street Dance with MK Elite: Join us for vibrant street dance sessions. No experience is necessary. No jeans or skirts, loose stretchy clothing and trainers please.

Table Tennis with Herman Fung:

Come play table tennis, make friends or bring some along and get some expert tips from our coach.

Athletics/FUNDamentals with

Marshall MK athletics: Young athletes will learn the fundamentals of movement through play and fun events. Older athletes will take part in real events, running, jumping, throwing and compete against themselves and each other.

Martial

Arts: Taster course in mixed martial arts for beginners and improvers.



For further information and to book contact the Sports Development Team:

T: 01908 253154

E: sportsdevelopment@milton-keynes.gov.uk

W: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sportsdev

Caldecotte Xperience

The Caldecotte Xperience offers a variety of exciting adventure activities and learning experiences for young people and adults. They have a number of activities for children with additional needs over the summer:

Sailing	Friday 29 July	10.00am – 12.00pm	Climbing	Saturday 17 September	10.00pm – 12.00pm
Canoeing	Friday 12 August	10.00pm – 12.00pm	Archery	Saturday 15 October	10.00pm – 12.00pm
Rowing	Friday 26 August	10.00pm – 12.00pm	Fencing	Monday 24 October	10.00pm – 12.00pm
Sailing	Friday 2 September	10.00pm – 12.00pm			

The sessions are £10 per person. The emphasis will be on the participants taking part for fun and developing new skills, communicating with others and spending time doing new and exciting activities.

Places are limited. Apply early to avoid disappointment.

For further information or to make bookings, please contact:

T: 01908 232042

E: caldecotte@milton-keynes.gov.uk

W: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/outdoor-education

Milton Keynes Children's Play Centres provide affordable play and childcare for children aged four and half to 14 years in a safe environment. They offer fun and exciting indoor and outdoor activities after school and during school holidays.

Coldharbour Children's Play Centre, West Bletchley 01908 647838

Netherfield Children's Play Centre, Netherfield 01908 678144

The Warren Children's Play Centre, Lakes Estate 01908 645860

Or visit www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/playcentres for more information.

Stony Stratford Children's Play Centre

Out of School play and care for children aged 4 ½ to 14 year olds



London Road, Stony Stratford, MK11 1JQ

Tel 01908 562485

After School Club

Pick up offered from local schools, children meet up with friends have fun and play at the centre until collected by 6.00.

Holiday Playscheme

Open 8.00 – 6.00 each day during school holidays, offering a varied programme of fun social and creative activities.

Junior Workers

For aspiring young volunteers aged 13 + to gain work experience, share their skills and knowledge.

MyPLAYce Youth Club

Every Wednesday throughout the year, for 8 – 13 year olds.

£1 entrance fee

M10821



Creative:Space at The Stables

Brought to you by Graeme Surtees,
Head of Education and Community Engagement

"What a great way to spend Sunday afternoon – great people, music and great fun."



On Sunday 27 March 2011, Milton Keynes' renowned music venue The Stables hosted two special

interactive concerts for disabled children and their families.

With support from a short breaks grant, The Stables invited London based arts organisation Create to put on the Creative:Space event. This provided a rare opportunity for disabled children and their families to attend a high quality music event together. The concerts were designed to be informal events that provided music and creative activities for disabled children and their families.

"Wonderful to have the chance to play instruments with real musicians."

Professional musicians Metropolitan Brass Ensemble and pianist Derek Paravicini (who is blind and has severe learning difficulties) performed an enjoyable musical programme with extra activities led by workshop leader Jonathan Stokes.

The activities helped families interact closely with the music and musicians. They had the chance to conduct members of the band, dance and play percussion instruments, and make glove puppets. Some quieter listening pieces were included to allow children to be calm and enjoy the sound of the piano and the band.

"I felt relaxed, knowing that it wouldn't matter if my child was a bit noisy."

The informal layout of chairs and tables with craft activities helped to make an environment where families could enjoy a social event together. It also removed some of the restrictive formalities that often prevent families with disabled children from attending live concerts.

"So easy to join in and just be ourselves."

The children had the chance to get up close to and even try a trumpet, trombone and tubas. A big hit was the 'hosepipe trumpet' which helped the children understand how brass instruments make a sound and generate vibrations. The children were able to feel these vibrations, especially when the funnel was worn as a hat.

"The band was very good, getting all the kids and mums and dads to have a good time"

Graeme Surtees, Head of Education and Community Engagement at The Stables said "It's amazing how much everyone enjoys these concerts, not just the children and families but everyone involved including musicians, volunteers and staff. Many parents have commented on the few opportunities afforded to them and their children to attend any such events together, so we hope to put on other creative:space events in the future."

"We really enjoyed it and would definitely come again. Thank you."

For more information contact The Stables Education Department:

T: 01908 280818

E: education@stables.org

W: www.createarts.org.uk



360 Play

Brought to you by Anne Basketfield, Business Development Manager

For today's busy families it's great to know there is a one stop family centre where you can help children get the good start you want for them. A stimulating environment where climbing and cooking, dressing up, driving dodgems and playing in a purpose-built pizza parlour all take place under one roof.



At 360 Play in Milton Keynes children and adults enjoy a unique experience in educational play that combines active fun with imaginary games and opportunities for tackling challenges together.

Carers MK Drumming Party

**Tuesday 23 August
12.30pm – 2.30pm**

At the Moulsoe Millenium Hall

Siblings and family, helpers and close friends are welcome to come along to this free event and have fun with drumming and experiencing rhythms.

Please bring a picnic.



Please let me know if you are coming. Contact Anne Matthews on 01908 231703 or email anne.matthews@carersmiltonkeynes.org



Ever conscious of improving their facilities, 360 Play is undergoing some exciting changes over the next month. Supported by a Milton Keynes Council short breaks grant, the specialist play elements will include new interactive sensory equipment to enhance the play experience and cater for the special needs of some of our customers.

360 Operations Manager Adam Skinner said:

"It's great to be supported by Milton Keynes Council through short breaks allowing us to continue the development of our facilities. 360 Play is coming into its third year and it's great to see all these new play elements coming in to expand and improve our growing centre.

"The new equipment has been incorporated into the existing play facilities to achieve an inclusive environment suitable for all.

"We are using lights, colours, sounds and activities in the form of bubble tubes, fibre optics, sensor pads and audio buttons. We have used them in an innovative and unique new way to create a brand new attraction in 360 Street.

"The play frame is also receiving an exciting makeover with some fantastic new play elements.

"The battle zone is having a complete refit: out come the cannons to be replaced with Ball Mania, an interactive ball experience. The junior ball pool is also having a refit to incorporate interactive lights and clear balls. We are also improving access to this area by creating a new path off the upper floor entrance to allow easier movement through the play frame.

"We are very excited about the improvements to 360 Play and look forward to unveiling them to our customers. All the improvements should be finished in time for the school holidays."

360 Play hosts special needs evenings on the first Friday of every month from 6.30pm - 8.30pm. These evenings offer a quieter inclusive time for special needs children and their siblings, family and friends to come together, share experiences and make new friends.

For more information contact 360 Play:

T: 01908 308360

W: www.360play.uk.com

Other updates



PACA Update

Brought to you by Jane Youell, Chair

Woohoo! The Emberton Inclusive Play Project is finally open! The Parents and Carers Alliance is so pleased with this project. Our parent representative, Sheryl Carty did a grand job advising on all sorts of play equipment. Thanks to Sheryl's input from her own experiences, Emberton now has a selection of specialist bikes for hire, a wheelchair accessible roundabout, a sensory play area, a folly for playing princes and princesses in, a fabulous pirate ship – Arr Jim Lad - and all sorts of other really cool inclusive play equipment. This was a great example of parents and carers working in partnership with MK Council to produce something fun.

Another two projects which are ongoing are the Transport DVD and the My Story booklet. The Parents and Carers Alliance is funding, filming and distributing 350 copies of a short DVD which will set out examples of good practice to all drivers and escorts working on the home to school runs in MK. We have already filmed parents, carers and young people talking about home to school transport services. Not everyone wanted to 'star' in our DVD but we will be including as many written comments as we can to inform drivers and escorts about good practice and how important transport services are to our children and young people. Thank you so much to all the parents and carers who have supported this project.

The My Story booklet was another nifty parent proposal. The idea came from our work with Hannah Pugliese from MK PCT who was tasked with finding ways for health and social care teams to work better together. One of our parents felt it would be useful to have a small booklet which would record any useful information to help workers better understand our children and young people. For example, my son likes juggling so if you are a nurse or a social worker that is really useful information to have when trying to work with him. The booklets are completed by the family and so contain as little or as much information as you are willing to share. The Alliance is in the process of funding 1300 copies of this useful booklet to all children and young people who have SEN Statements across Milton Keynes.

At the time of print we are also organising an event to discuss the SEN Green Paper. Parent and Carer Alliance member, Darran Youell will give a presentation on the key points of the Paper, followed by a chance for parents and carers to ask any questions and offer feedback. I know Green Papers don't make for exciting reading, but this Bill, if passed, will see the biggest changes in SEN education for decades. Whilst the green paper is now closed for comments if you are interested in hearing the results of the discussion at the PACA event please contact us.

Wishing you all a warm and wonderful summer.

For further information, contact:

T: 07852 526057

E: pacamk@gmail.com

W: www.pacamk.org

PACA member Darran Youell is looking for local parents to help him with a study he is carrying out on the experiences of inclusive education from a child's perspective. Darran studies part time at the Tizard Centre, University of Kent, and is also the parent of a young person with an autistic spectrum condition himself.

If you would be willing to talk to Darran along with your child and help him with his study, he would love to hear from you. For your child to be included in the research they must meet just three criteria: They must be aged between seven and 14 (inclusive); they must have a diagnosed learning disability or autistic spectrum condition; and they must have been educated in both mainstream and special schools.

If you would like your child to participate, or would just like some more information, you can contact Darran by email at dy7@kent.ac.uk or by post at

Darran Youell
c/o PACA MK
Office 2 at Farm Garages
Lovat Court
Caldecote Street
Newport Pagnell
MK16 0YZ

Barnardo's young people – Milton Keynes

Brought to you by Tina Douglas, Children's Services Manager

Short Breaks Consultation Group:

We have recently moved to Derwent Drive in Bletchley and everyone has settled in very well. We are now able to hold the group every four weeks, with young people attending regularly.



The activities we plan each session retain the same format and we just change the theme so young people have the opportunity to consolidate experiences from previous sessions and become accustomed to the consultation activities. We now have seven young people attending regularly, taking part in cooking, crafts, music and other activities such as Easter nest cakes and starting to transform the garden.



Our new venue gives us the scope to gradually increase the size of the group. If you would like to talk to someone about joining the group and you have complex support needs please contact Sue Egerton, participation worker on 01908 241020.

Ask Team

The Ask Team are young people who have additional support needs and have an interest in promoting children's rights and disability awareness.

The team continue to meet fortnightly and decided they wanted to deliver a children's rights workshop at Stony Stratford Children's Centre where previously they had supported a Junior Workers session. After a productive planning session the Ask Team had a full program of activities and games for the children who attend the centre to do.

On the day about 15 children in total took part in the workshop and were fabulously supported by three members of the Ask Team to take part in games, designing a poster and other activities.

The group also organised a trip to Willen Lake on the public buses but had trouble accessing the buses. The group did not think this was acceptable so have decided to take this further. They will be feeding their findings and thoughts into the Youth Cabinet transport campaign to raise the profile of wheelchair users and other issues around public transport.

It hasn't been all hard work though as the group enjoyed an evening of live music at a fundraising event organised by Barnardo's Regional Director.

We currently have space for one or two new members on the Ask Team.



If you would like to talk to someone about joining the group please ring Dawn Riddy or Sue Egerton:

T: 01908 241020

E: dawn.riddy@barnardos.org.uk

W: www.barnardos.org.uk



HOP SKIP & JUMP

Hop, Skip and Jump

*Brought to you by
Sandra Bald and
Cheryl Thornley, parent
representatives in Milton
Keynes*

As parents of children with disabilities in Milton Keynes, we both know it is a great place to live and certainly offers plenty of "mainstream" play opportunities. However, we believe development is still needed to create more play opportunities for children with disabilities, particularly those

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children with moderate to severe disabilities. We also know that being a parent of a child with additional needs can be very demanding and short breaks are important for the child, the carer and the whole family.

With this in mind, we have forged links with the Hop, Skip & Jump Foundation. The Hop Skip & Jump Foundation provides flexible, immediate and sustained day care to children with life limiting or threatening illnesses or any special need, with support for their families. Hop Skip and Jump has the cost effective answer for increasing play opportunities and short breaks facilities for children with additional needs.

Their first centre was established in 1982 at Cheltenham; in 2003 a second centre was opened at Kingswood, Bristol and a third centre in Swindon will be open on 15 July this year. Hop Skip and Jump would like to open a centre in Milton Keynes to begin providing a much needed place for families in Milton Keynes and boost play opportunities for children with special needs.

Hop Skip and Jump is looking for either a piece of land to build on or a disused community centre which can be refurbished at minimum cost in Milton Keynes. The centres are open 6 days a week and are funded almost entirely by donations, grants and local fundraising.

We are currently liaising with Milton Keynes Council and The Parks Trust to identify a suitable site in Milton Keynes and are pleased to have the support of local people and groups.

For more information please contact the Hop Skip & Jump Foundation:

T: 01453 836390

E: office@hopskipandjump.org.uk

W:

www.hopskipandjumpfoundation.org

Carers Milton Keynes

*Brought to you by Anne Matthews,
Carer support worker*



It's really helpful for parents to be able to meet together, share experiences, find out information from each other and from our specialist speakers. As ever Carers Milton Keynes provide you with a choice of two groups that enable you to do this.

Our coffee morning at Greenleys Family Centre, meets on the first Friday of every month from 10.30am – 12.30pm. Now that the better weather is here your children can play safely both inside and out giving parents an opportunity to enjoy each other's company. Please do not feel you have to come for the whole session – we would be delighted to see you for whatever time you can manage. I always feel parents gain a lot from being able to share with each other at mornings like these.

The carer support meetings are on the third Monday of each month from 11.00am – 1.00pm. These are held at our offices at the David Baxter Centre in Central Milton Keynes and a sandwich lunch is provided at these sessions.

We have all found out useful information from speakers over recent months and thank them for their time. Our next programme of speakers is as follows.

Monday 18 July

Many of you will have heard or perhaps been involved in the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) process. Tammie Redman from the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board is attending this session to enable us to find out more.

Monday 19 September

The Macintyre organisation are our representatives at this group and they will talk about future options for children with additional needs.

Being on the Carers Milton Keynes database means you will receive our newsletter which comes out three times a year and be able to access a wide range of training courses, social events, yoga, counselling, men's group and 1:1 support.

I would be very pleased to hear from you if you would like further advice, information or just an informal chat about your situation. Please contact:

Anne Matthews, Carers Milton Keynes

T: 01908 231703

E: anne.matthews@carersmiltonkeynes.org

W: www.carersmiltonkeynes.org

Many summer holiday activities can be found on the Families Information Service website www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/childcare. This site is regularly updated so keep checking to see the latest information. Alternatively, please call the Families Information Service on 0800 035 0335

Families Information Service update

This time of year is always busy for the Families Information service (FIS) as we try and gather information about as many summer holiday activities as possible onto for our website. Whether you are looking for a one day activity, an activity course, a family event or something for free, we should have a variety of activities advertised to suit you – please have a look at our website:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/childcare

In previous newsletters, we told you about the Disabled Children's Access to Childcare project (DCATCH); a one year initiative to improve access to childcare for families with disabled children and reduce barriers preventing access. We have used the year to research and start putting in place ways and means to improve access to childcare both now and in the long term. We are now continuing to ensure that families of children with disabilities have access to childcare and the information they need. The Families Information Service has been at the forefront of this work and we have started putting in place a number of things to help improve our service to parents and carers of children with disabilities.

FIS asked The Daycare Trust to run a survey in order to establish what experience Ofsted registered childminders, day nurseries, pre-schools, and out of school clubs had in dealing with children with disabilities. 71% of these childcare providers were keen to let us know of their experiences, giving us a clearer picture as to where experience lies and also identifying gaps which we can help overcome.

The FIS team also attended a two day training programme, focussed on improving knowledge and understanding in promoting inclusion for disabled children. Topics included the Equalities Act and other relevant legislation, along with discussions around overcoming barriers to access. The course was well



received by the team, enabling a better understanding of the difficulties families face and how we can assist families overcome these.

DCATCH has also allowed the council to review its training for childcare providers. We have been able to set up training to increase knowledge, understanding and confidence of childcare providers across Milton Keynes in looking after children with disabilities. Training was well received and we are delighted to announce that these courses will continue to run for another year.

Overall DCATCH has improved knowledge and data within FIS, as well as improving understanding, knowledge and confidence of childcare providers. We are excited that there are now improved systems in place, which provide a strong base for us to help and support families of children with disabilities in Milton Keynes.

For more information regarding this project or for assistance with locating appropriate childcare, please contact FIS:

T: 0800 035 0335

W: www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/childcare

E: childcare@miltonkeynes.gov.uk

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/aiming-high OR www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/childcare



Milton Keynes Council

Families Information Service
Galley Hill Education Centre
Galley Hill
Milton Keynes, MK11 1PA

T 0800 035 0335

E childcare@milton-keynes.gov.uk