

Lancaster House, 140 Mildmay Road,
Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0EB

Helpline: 01245 353575

Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm &
Mondays (term time) 5pm to 7.30pm

Email:

helpline@familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

Website:

www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

FAMILIES INFOCUS NEWS

Autumn 2014

*Supporting families of children with disabilities
& special needs across Essex*



Independent Support for
Essex families of
children and young

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people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Important Changes taking place You may be aware that changes to systems and processes around Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) will start to be put in place from 1st September 2014. These changes are being made locally and nationally as part of the Children and Families Act 2014. One of the changes is to replace SEN statements with a new birth to 25 Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plans) – ensuring joint assessment, planning and commissioning of services and support. Learning Disability Assessments for young people in Further Education will also be replaced by EHC Plans.

iS Essex is here to help

A new partnership between local voluntary organisations Families InFocus (Essex), InterAct, ecdp and parent/carer forum FACE.

We will provide **Independent Supporters** to work with parents of children (up to 25) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and directly with young people, as they go through the new assessment process for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). See page 4 for more details on the role of Independent Supporters.

Please get in touch if you require information and support.

Contact us: Tel: 01245 608300 Text: 07506 566856

email: info@isessex.org

Website: www.isessex.org (in course of construction)

IT DEVELOPMENTS

CHECK OUT OUR NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE!

We have recently completed a revamp of our Website. Please take a look by following the Link :

www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

We will be making further improvements and welcome any feedback/suggestions via Email:

helpline@familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

To all Facebook users - please follow the Link below and 'Like' us in order to receive our regular Posts and other useful information. Thank you

[https://www.facebook.com/pages/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Families-Infocus-Essex)

[Families-Infocus-Essex](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Families-Infocus-Essex)

Find out more about Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans as we welcome our

Guest Speaker Elaine White,

Principal Educational Psychologist,
to our AGM on

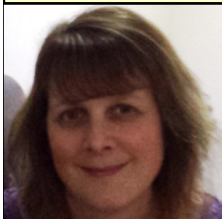
Wednesday 15th October 2014

Refreshments from 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start

At Park View Suite, Great Baddow Millennium Community Centre, Recreation Ground, Baddow Road, Great Baddow CM2 9RL

Also your chance to hear our plans and get involved in shaping the future of Families InFocus (Essex). Our Family Support Advisers will be on hand during the evening to offer information, advice and support. To reserve your free place contact us on 01245 353575 email

jo@familiesinfocusessex.org.uk or return slip on page 8



*Jo Sapstead,
Kidzspace organiser*

Hi Kids

I hope you all had a great summer and enjoyed our outings as much as I did. I think you will agree that we had lots of fun, especially at the Rainbow Rural Centre, feeding sandwiches to the chickens and running around with the sheep, so by popular demand we will be making a return visit for fun winter activities.

We also have some other great events to tempt you, so if you are interested in coming along please book early. **Jo**

<p>Saturday 11th October 10.30am to 12.30pm £6.00</p>	<p>A Mixture of Sports Dovedale Sports Centre, Chelmsford</p>
<p>Wednesday 29th October 10.00am to 4.00pm £7.50</p>	<p>Winter Activities and Fun on the Farm Rainbow Rural Centre, Great Dunmow (minibus included)</p>
<p>Saturday 22nd November 11.30am to 1.30pm £6.50</p>	<p>Bowling & Meal at Izumi Madison Heights, Maldon</p>
<p>Saturday 20th December Performance start 2.00pm £7.00</p>	<p>Snow White Ice Show Riverside Ice & Leisure Centre, Chelmsford</p>

You are advised to book early as we only have a limited number of places on most events. To confirm your booking, we require an updated consent form, completion of reply slip returned with payment (postal orders acceptable if no bank account held). Cancellations are non refundable. If you do not have a consent form or details need updating, please contact the office on 01245 353575. We do not wish children to be excluded due to financial difficulty. Please contact us in confidence as there may be a means of providing help.



**FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX)
ACTIVITY CLUB**
at Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre
Salerno Way, Chelmsford, CM1 2EH

**Join us for FUN every Saturday
Evening 3.30 to 5.30pm (*unless advertised)**


Play activities for children with a disability or special needs and siblings, accompanied by their parents/carers

- *Qualified trampoline coach available (every Saturday)*
- *Free play, games and equipment (every Saturday)*
- *Gymnastics circuit and coach (11th Oct, 15th Nov, 13th Dec - Xmas party)*
- *Table Cricket coach (4th & 18th Oct, 8th & 22nd Nov)*
- *Set in nice airy, secure and friendly environment for the children and somewhere parents, friends, family and carers can come to relax, talk to other parents or rush about with the children*
 - *Suggested donation £1 per child*

***PLEASE NOTE:** Our Family Christmas Party will be held at the centre on 13th December from 3.30pm to 6pm
There will not be a club on 27th December.

**For further details please phone us on 01245 353575
Email: jo@familiesinfocussessex.org.uk or come and visit**

**Chelmsford Grand Award
THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOTES
WE WON!**




Receiving £750 towards our activity club costs.

**Member, Nathan Lee, proudly holding the banner.
Mum, Lindsay says "We all love coming to Saturday Club, it's a stress free place to play".**

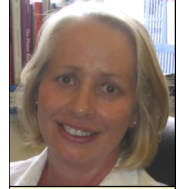


mace playce
Tel: 01245 464316

Mace Playce soft play centre at Unit 3, Cuton Hall Lane, Chelmsford are holding dedicated special needs sessions, when they will be closed to the general public and only open to children with additional needs and their families on the following dates:
Tuesday 7th October (4.30-6.30pm); Tuesday 4th November (4.30-6.30pm); and Tuesday 2nd December (4.30-6.30pm).
For further information, visit their website <http://www.mace-playce.co.uk/>



Julie Neilson, adviser for Chelmsford



Hilary Popiolek adviser for Colchester (part) & Tendring



Linsey Hyde, adviser for Brentwood, Epping, Harlow, & Uttlesford



Pat Kent, adviser for Braintree & Colchester (part)



Amanda Whitehead, adviser for Basildon, Castlepoint, Rochford & Maldon

We can offer information, advice and support on any issues of concern about your child including benefits and educational matters.

Our support is free and we are able to offer help via **telephone**, face to face, outreach basis through **home visits**, accompanying to **meetings** and at our regular **drop-ins**.

Help with **educational issues** including:

- Information, advice and support with new SEND reforms including, Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment (*replaces statutory assessment*) and EHC plan (*replaces statement of special educational needs*) and One Plan project
- Information, advice and support with all other SEN support (*replaces early years/school action and early years/school action plus*).
- Talking through the issues, helping complete forms/letters

- Offering advice on the processes involved
- Being available to accompany you to meetings, reviews etc (subject to us receiving enough notice)

Help with **disability related benefits** for the child/young person and family support including:

- Disability Living Allowance (child/young person)
- Personal Independence Payment (young person 16+)
- Family Fund and Carer's Allowance
- Other financial support including tax credits and Employment Support Allowance

Preparing for and attending **appeals** and **tribunals** (both education and benefits related)

Please contact us in confidence on 01245 353575 or email:

helpline@familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

Come along to our drop ins, have a pamper, a coffee, tea and a chat. Pre-school children welcome

Lancaster House, 140 Mildmay Road, Chelmsford CM2 0EB

Every **FIRST THURSDAY** of the month in term time 10am to 12 noon
Therapist available offering reflexology & massage.

Baptist Church, Coggeshall Road, Braintree CM7 3DA

Every **FIRST THURSDAY** of the month 10am to 12 noon.
Therapist available offering reflexology & massage.

'Early Support App' is now available

The app is an easy way for parents/carers of a disabled child to store, share and organise information about their child and the support and services they receive.

It places families at the centre, enabling them to choose what information to upload, and who they want to share information with; doctors, nurses, teachers or social workers.

It provides a single plan format that can form the basis for the new Education, Health and Care Plan. Currently the app can only be used online and on Android tablets (not on iPads or iPhones).

For free registration, click link/visit:

<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/networks-campaigning/early-support/early-support-app>

A user guide for the Early Support app can be found:

<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/media/554152/esappguide-upload.pdf>

Apex Parent Support Group & Thriftwood School
"Parent Information Day"
Thursday 16th October 10am to 2pm
The Apex Room, Thriftwood School, Slades Lane, Galleywood.
Also meet Julie & Linsey from Families InFocus

Latest guide from Contact a Family:
[Understanding your child's behaviour](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/understanding-your-childs-behaviour)
This guide has suggestions about some of the ways your child can be helped, along with information about the professionals and organisations that can provide further guidance and support.
www.cafamily.org.uk/

Unified Rainbow Support Coffee Morning
Monthly Support Group for Parents, Carers and families who have children with Additional Needs
in Dovercourt and Harwich at
The Park Pavillion, Barrack Lane, Harwich
Find them on facebook

Essex County Council will be sending letters to **parents of children and young people with SEN** (directly or via schools to distribute) to inform them of **changes and transfer arrangements** under the **Transition Plan**, which will also form part of **The Local Offer**. Visit www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk 'Local Offer' parents evenings and events are also being held to inform parents//carers. **See page 5.**

Contact a Family have produced a very useful fact **fact sheet** the main contents of which we summarise below; outlining how the changes might affect you and your child. Visit www.cafamily.org.uk call 0808 808 3555.

If your child has no statement of special educational needs

If your child was getting extra support through **Early Years/School Action or Early Years/School Action Plus**, the provider must continue to support them just as before. This level of support is now called **SEN support**. This has replaced Early Years/School Action and School Action Plus. However, your child's provider may continue to use the old system for a few more months until they have put the changes in place.

From September 1 you can no longer ask for a statutory assessment of your child's special educational needs under the old law. You can ask for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment instead (see Education, Health and Care needs assessments).

If a request for a statutory assessment has been made, or if your child is going through one

If a statutory assessment has been requested before 1 September, the local authority (LA) will consider the request under the old law. However, with your agreement, the local authority can treat it as a request for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment under the new law.

If your child is currently going through a statutory assessment, this process will continue under the old law. The LA can treat it as an EHC needs assessment, but only with your agreement.

If your child currently has a statement, or if they have a Learning Difficulty Assessment

This will carry on until the LA has done a 'transfer review'. This is when they look at transferring your child's statement to an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. It should be done at a time that causes least disruption to your child's learning.

The transfer review may result in an EHC plan. The legal test for EHC plans remains the same as for a statement of special educational needs under the Education Act 1996. This means that no child or young person should lose their statement and not have it replaced with an EHC plan simply because the system is changing.

The LA will contact you to let you know when they are going to do the transfer review for your child.

If your child is in further education with a Learning Difficulty Assessment, this will continue. You or your child can request an EHC needs assessment from 1 September, which is the first step to getting an EHC plan.

If you are going through an Appeal

If a tribunal appeal is in progress, or if you appeal about a statement after 1 September it will continue under the old law. However, in some types of appeal the outcome of an appeal might be an EHC needs assessment.

When will my child be transferred to an EHC plan?

The general rule is that young people moving to further education college and children moving on to the next stage of their education should be transferred first.

With thanks to Contact A Family www.cafamily.org.uk



The Role of Independent Supporters across Essex



Independent Support to parents/carers and young people will be time limited, task orientated, based on individual need, and primary purpose of supporting the parent/carer or young person during the EHC assessment and planning process, with the intention of:

- Focusing on the main task of helping to transfer a statement into an EHCP.
- Helping the parent/carer or young person understand the local offer.
- Acting as a named contact for the parent/carer or young person throughout the assessment and planning process.
- Liaising across a range of agencies with the parent/

carer or young person to help gather the information required for an EHCP.

- Providing information to parents/carers and young people on personal budgets.
- Supporting the parent/carer or young person in contributing to an EHCP that is then ready to be signed off by a designated professional, agreed as part of a local referral protocol process.
- Signposting parents/carers and young people, when the issue is outside the remit of an Independent Supporter, to organisations providing impartial information advice and support (IAS) services, e.g. Families InFocus (Essex) and Essex Parent Partnership Services.

The Essex Local Offer Launch Events



The purpose of the Local Offer is to enable parents and young people to see more clearly what services are available for children with special educational needs and disability in their area and how to access them. The Local Offer will include provision from birth to 25 across education, health and social care.

The Essex Local Offer has been co-produced with as many key stakeholders as possible. Essex County Council is set to launch their Local Offer and is inviting you to join them.

The website is launched on 1st September.
Please visit www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk



We have organised 4 free events held across Essex:

- 24th September 2014 – Colchester Western Homes, CO4 5UP 9:30 – 12:30pm
- 26th September 2014 – Latton Bush Centre, Harlow, CM18 7BL 9:30 – 12:30pm
- 22nd October 2014 – Chelmsford Football Club, CM1 2EH 10:00 – 1:00pm
- 24th October 2014 – Basildon Holiday Inn, SS14 3DG 9:30 – 12:30pm

Refreshments on arrival and throughout the session

The audience will include parents, young people, and representatives from education, social care, health, providers and the wider community.

We look forward to seeing you there!

To book a place, please email

Vanessa.hockley@essex.gov.uk stating your name, organisation, preferred venue and any access arrangements we need to be aware of.

Please note that places will be allocated on a first come/first served basis.

“Don’t forget
Find out more about
Education, Health and
Care (EHC) Plans with
Guest Speaker
Elaine White on
Wednesday 15th
October 2014 details on
front page”.

Families InFocus Christmas Party



Saturday 13th
December
3.30 pm to
6.00 pm at

Chelmsford Sport &
Athletics Centre,
Salerno Way,
Chelmsford, CM1 2EH
All family members
welcome

Booking essential

‘The Swashbuckling Family Pantomime’



Limited
tickets for
Saturday
27th

December 2014 at 2pm
Civic Theatre, Chelmsford.
Tickets £8.50 each for
family members only.
Be sure to reserve your
tickets early

South Parent Partnership Practical Parenting Workshop

Essex Parent Partnership Information, Advice and Support Service has organised a FREE Parent Workshop Event on Tuesday 2nd December 2014 at the Wat Tyler Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park, Basildon for parents/carers of children with special educational needs. The workshops offer support and practical knowledge that parents can then adapt at home and the opportunity to meet other parents with similar experiences.

A free buffet lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Register your interest now by completing the reply slip on page 8

Thank you to all our supporters

A SPECIAL THANK YOU & CONGRATULAIONS TO:

Kevin Tonkinson who undertook a sponsored bicycle ride from Chelmsford to Doncaster and raised £775

E2V Charities Committee matched sponsorship for

Oisin West's half marathon challenge

King Edward VI Grammar School students, teachers and parents who raised £1,700 during charities week



Cheryl all set!

Cheryl Sandercock who successfully completed the Moonlight Colourthon half marathon raising funds for Families InFocus (Essex). Well done Cheryl

Ann Sims and Essex County Women's

Bowling Association for all their wonderful fundraising efforts during our 'charity of the year'

The Rotary Club of Chelmsford who kindly donated £250 to enable us to reduce the cost of family pantomime tickets

Asda, Chelmer Village staff and customers who took part in the token drop which raised £50

Donations were received from

John Black, Edmund Carr Chartered Accountants, Robert

Jones, Jill Lloyd, Margaret Smith, and

Mr & Mrs Vucevic

Donated items or vouchers were received from:-

Baddow Tandoori, Chelmsford Equestrian Centre,

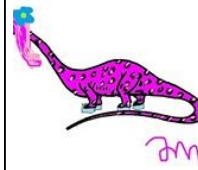
Debenhams, The Entertainer Toy Shop,

Lush, Marks & Spencer, Next plc,

pH2O Photography, Stephen Alexander Hair Salon,

Wilkinson Store and Helping Hands Fund

A Dinoautism Fundraising Idea!



We are absolutely thrilled to have been chosen as recipients of Jessica Meakin's wonderful Dinoautism fundraising idea; whilst at the same time she is helping to raise awareness of Autism.

Please support Jessica by visiting her Page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dinosautism/731708990217177> and help her fundraising efforts Visit <http://www.justgiving.com/Dinosautism> Donations can also be made by texting TEDC66 £5 (or your desired amount) to 70070.

Good luck Jess and THANK YOU

Please opt to receive future newsletters by email and help save us money! Simply send an email to jo@familiesinfocusessex.org.uk or Phone Jo Sapstead on 01245 353575 Thank you.

* We welcome Cecile Martin who has *
* recently joined us as an office *
* Volunteer. We are delighted to have *
* you on board. *
* Thanks also to Jackie Deigan, Hilda *
* Ellis & Catherine Jameson for *
* carrying out repairs to the dressing *
* up clothes at Saturday Activity Club. *

Spotlight on a Volunteer



In this edition we are including a new feature in which we tell you a little about one of our fantastic volunteers. Families InFocus (Essex) simply couldn't manage without our volunteer workforce. If you or someone you

know is interested in making a difference by offering practical help, look for volunteering opportunities on our website, or contact janet@familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

What is your name and what do you do for Families InFocus (Essex)?

Harriet Whiteside – I volunteer at the Saturday Activity Club

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I enjoy meeting families from a wide range of

backgrounds and the feeling of accomplishment that I get after helping out at the Activity Club. It is really nice to be able to volunteer with children and be part of a charity which gives children and families opportunity and support.

When you are not volunteering with Families InFocus (Essex) what do you do?

I work in family and child law at a law firm, whilst completing my law degree through distance learning with The Open University.

Tell us something about yourself that other people may not know.

I have climbed the Worlds' Biggest Indoor Ice Climbing Wall (in Scotland)!

We checked this out and it is indeed 50 feet of vertical ice – so well done Harriet – plucky girl!

DIARY DATES - October to December 2014

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE	TIME
KIDZSPACE EVENTS (See Page 2)			
Saturday 11th October	Mixture of Sports	Dovedale Sports Centre, Chelmsford	10.30am to 12.30pm
Wednesday 29th October	Fun at the Farm	Rainbow Rural Centre, Great Dunmow	10.00am to 4.00pm
Saturday 22nd November	Bowling & Izumi	Madison Heights, Maldon	11.30am to 1.30pm
Saturday 20th December	Snow White Ice Show	Riverside Ice & Leisure Centre, Chelmsford	Start 2.00pm
OTHER EVENTS (See Page 3)			
Every first Thursday of the month in term time Therapist available	Drop-in sessions. Coffee, tea and a chat	Lancaster House, 140 Mildmay Road Chelmsford, CM2 0EB	10am to 12 noon
Every first Thursday of the month Therapist available	Drop-in sessions. Coffee, tea and a chat	Baptist Church, Coggeshall Road, Braintree, CM7 3DA	10am to 12 noon

PLEASE INDICATE WHICH EVENTS YOU ARE INTERESTED IN: (PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF FOR OTHER EVENTS)

KIDZSPACE (SIBLINGS) EVENTS

- I will be coming to **Mixture of Sports** on **Saturday 11th October** and I enclose (£6.00 per child)
- I will be coming to **Fun at the Farm** on **Wednesday 29th October** and I enclose (£7.50 per child)
- I will be coming to **Bowling & Meal** on **Saturday 22nd November** and I enclose £..... (£6.50 per child)
- I will be coming to **Snow White Ice Show** on **Saturday 20th December** and I enclose £..... (£7.00 per child)

TOTAL PAYMENT FOR KIDZSPACE EVENTS £.....(include in total overleaf)

Name (s) of child(ren)..... Age(s).....

.....

Please send consent form to

Tel No.....

DIARY DATES - September to December 2014

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE	TIME
<u>FAMILY EVENTS</u>			
Every Saturday (unless advertised)	Saturday Activity Club	Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre, Salerno Way, Chelmsford	3.30pm to 5.30 pm
Saturday 13th December (see page 5)	Christmas Party	Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre, Salerno Way, Chelmsford	3.30 to 6pm
Saturday 27th December	Panto - Peter Pan	Civic Theatre, Chelmsford	2pm start
<u>PARENTS/CARERS</u>			
Wednesday 15th October (see front page)	Guest Speaker Elaine White on 'Education, Health and Care Plans and Families InFocus AGM	Park View Suite, Gt. Baddow Millennium Community Centre, Baddow Road, Great Baddow	6.30pm for 7pm start
Tuesday 2nd December (see page 5)	Practical Parent Workshops	Wat Tyler Country Park, Basildon	TBC

PLEASE INDICATE WHICH EVENTS YOU ARE INTERESTED IN

Name (s)..... Email:..... Tel No.....

FAMILY EVENTS

- Christmas Party on Saturday 13th December. No of Adults..... No of Children.....
- Panto on Saturday 27th December. I would like tickets at £8.50 each. £..... enclosed

TALK/AGM/WORKSHOPS

- Update 'EHC Plans' on Wednesday 15th October. I wish to secure place(s)
- 'Practical Parent Workshops' on Tuesday 2nd December. Please email further information when available

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED(KIDZSPACE/FAMILY/PARENT EVENTS/OTHER) £.....