

Plain facts

The right support for parents with learning difficulties

People with learning difficulties can be good parents, with the right support.

A group of people came together, to do some work with disabled parents, including people with learning difficulties. They were called a Taskforce. They found out about the support that disabled parents need, and the help that they get.



Sometimes other people tell parents with learning difficulties that they cannot cope. That is not good.



People said that they wanted support to be good parents. Support can come from lots of places.



Parents with learning difficulties want to be listened to. There are some good ways for this to happen.

Worries about getting the right support

A lot of parents with learning difficulties are afraid to ask for support. One person said that her care manager sent her to the social services children's team. But she could only get support from them if she said she was not coping. She did not like that. She was afraid that her children could be taken away from her.



Another person said:

"My social worker didn't do much to help me. I think she had already decided I couldn't cope."

Getting good support to be a parent



All new parents have to learn about looking after their baby. They do that by going to classes. They also get information from books and leaflets. It is important that classes and information are easy to understand, so that everyone can join in.

Jackie had a paid worker who came to help her learn to be a parent. She said that her worker helped her a lot:

"Any problems, I tell her, and she tries to help me."

Talking and sharing

It is really good to meet other disabled parents, or parents with learning difficulties. People listen to each other. Sometimes there are support groups where you can talk and share.






One couple found it very useful to have a circle of friends. They said: "It was nice to have someone listen to us. We have more friends and less professionals in our lives."



What should happen now

- Adult social services teams need to get better at working with parents with learning difficulties. It should not be left to the children's teams.
- More parents with learning difficulties should get direct payments. That is money from social services, so that you can employ people to support you.
- There should be more advocates. An advocate can help you with important meetings. They will help you ask for what you need.
- Information and classes about being a parent should be easy to understand

Things to do

- This Plain Facts follows on from **Plain Facts 11**, which is called **Being a Parent**. You can get a copy by phoning:
 **0 1 1 7 9 2 3 8 1 3 7**
- If you are thinking of having children, or you are already a parent, you can get some more information. There are five booklets and tapes in the **BILD** parenting series, called **I want to be a good parent**. You can buy the set for £45.00, or £10.00 for each booklet. For more information phone:
 **0 8 7 0 2 4 0 2 1 8 2**
- There will soon be a new parenting pack, made by **CHANGE**. You can phone **CHANGE** on  **0 1 1 3 2 4 3 0 2 0 2** or email: changepeople@btconnect.com
- If you want support from other disabled parents, you can phone the **Disabled Parents Network** on  **0 8 7 0 2 4 1 0 4 5 0**. They also have a website www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk
- You can get more information about everything to do with being a disabled parent by phoning the **National Centre for Disabled Parents** on  **0 8 0 0 0 1 8 4 7 3 0**

About the project

The Taskforce that did this work about parents was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The people in the Taskforce came from many different places. Some people worked for the government, some were researchers and some were disabled parents. The full report is called **The right support: report of the Taskforce on supporting disabled adults in their parenting role**. You can buy or download a copy from www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop



Plain Facts is also on tape

www.plain-facts.org

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