

# What services need to know

This leaflet is for service providers. It explains what needs to be in place to ensure that a disabled child or young person is safely and effectively included. More information and advice can be found on the website: [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility)

**In order to safely and effectively include disabled children with additional support needs in your service or activity you need to consider the following:**

Your **publicity** should make it clear that disabled children are welcomed by your service. This will need to be supported by your staff working in a way that shows 'a can do' attitude to overcoming barriers in a creative and flexible way.

Your service should start by asking what the service can do to include any child. Part of doing this is by **gathering information** on the child in order to undertake any risk assessment, additional staff training and provide appropriate support. Parents are the key source of this information – and your service needs to have an established ethos of openness and honesty so that parents know if they share information on their child you will not respond by telling them that their child is 'too disabled' to be included. The information you need should include relevant details about the child's disability and their support requirements. You need to ask the parent to share with you any existing care plans covering, for example personal care, moving and handling or behaviour management as this will provide

consistency for the child across different services. Information about the child must always include information on the way in which the child communicates – particularly if they communicate non-verbally. You need to use the same methods of communication as the child uses in other settings – for example if a child uses a particular symbol system in their picture exchange cards – you need to use the same system.

Some information may need to be verified by a professional – for example if you need to administer medication whilst a child is with you, dosages need to be verified by a medical practitioner. Or there are some interventions that parents will need to consent to – for example 'physical interventions' to deal with challenging behaviour.

As a service you need to share information about the child with your staff in a way that respects the child's privacy yet ensures that the child is safe. The decision on how much to share and with whom needs to be made on an individual basis.

Your service will need to undertake additional **risk assessments** in order to minimise risk. Risk cannot be eliminated but it can be managed. Risk should not be used as an excuse to exclude disabled children until all avenues of support have been explored in a flexible and creative way. You may need to bring in additional expertise in order to carry out some of the risk assessments, for example moving and handling risk assessments for children who use wheelchairs. To assist your staff you need to ensure that risk

assessments are written in a way that is easy for them to understand – in plain English – rather than using ‘health and safety jargon’.

A child with additional support needs may require a **written plan**. Your service should find out from the parent what ‘plans’ other settings have in place as you could borrow from those plans rather than ‘reinvent the wheel’ when writing your own plan. This is not just about saving time, but also about ensuring consistency of approach across settings which is important in minimising anxiety and ensuring that children feel safe and secure and able to get the most from your setting. Plans are usually needed for disabled children who require invasive clinical procedures or moving and handling support or for managing behaviour. Plans should also cover what you would need to do in ‘an emergency’ situation. As with risk assessments, all plans should be written in plain English and should be easy to follow, particularly when explaining what to do in an emergency.

Your staff may need **additional training and support** – and this may need to be done on an individual basis – for example training on tube feeding will need to be undertaken for an individual child – it cannot be ‘cascaded’ by one member of staff to all your staff group. Whilst parents can offer you very helpful techniques and tips based on their experience, training of staff does need to be given by an appropriately qualified professional. There should be agreements in all areas as to who is responsible for providing this training and how your service accesses it.

You may need additional information and support – particularly when including disabled children and young people with high support requirements – there are many sources of information you could consult both nationally and locally. A good place to start would be the My Rights, Your Responsibility pages of the Council for Disabled Children website **[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility)** which contains more detailed information on the inclusion of children with specific needs.

This leaflet pack can be obtained by emailing [NCB@robertguy.co.uk](mailto:NCB@robertguy.co.uk) or telephoning 020 7232 3049. The leaflets can also be downloaded from **[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility)**

