

Expectations

In order for your child to be successfully included in services and activities in the same way as other non-disabled children you will have certain expectations of the services your child uses and similarly, the services will have expectations of you. To ensure your child has the very best care and for inclusion to work – there will need to be a positive relationship between parents and staff – so that you can both make ‘things happen’ for your child.

What are some of the expectations?

The whole story

Your child has the same right to use services and activities as other children. The law says that your child should not be discriminated against or treated less favourably by services because they need ‘too much care and support’ or are ‘too badly behaved’. In order to include your child safely and securely and to make sure they have an enjoyable experience, services will expect you to provide them with information about your child’s care and support needs.

The service will expect you to identify possible challenges, share information on the triggers that might upset your child and what solutions might work, so that the partnership gets off to a good start. For example, if your child bites or kicks out if frightened or feels under pressure, then you should forewarn staff and give them ways of coping or avoiding such events. As parents you should share your knowledge and experience and should expect services to listen to what you have to say.

As well as information from you, services may require you to give your consent for them to gather information from others who know your child well, such as GP, community nurse, occupational therapist or relevant staff at school. For example, the dosages of medication given to your child need to be verified by a medical professional, usually the GP or paediatrician. The service should always respect your child’s dignity and only share the information with staff in the service or activity on a need to know basis. The service should regularly review and update the information they hold.

Reasonableness

There are a number of health and safety requirements that services need to meet. There are many things you can do as a parent but staff working in services cannot do. For example, staff cannot lift your child from their wheelchair without the appropriate training from a qualified professional.

The service will carry out a risk assessment of any tasks that may pose a risk either to your child or to a member of staff with the intention of minimising the risk as much as possible. You should expect that services will draw up a written plan detailing how your child’s additional needs will be met, including the training staff will need. Although risk should not be used as an excuse to exclude your child, there may be some activities which services will state they are unable to do with your child. For example, a service may limit the type of physical activities a child with ‘brittle bones’ may be able to take part in.

Sharing the cake fairly Providing additional care and support to enable your child to be included in some services or activities may require extra financial resources from your local authority or PCT. The local authority needs to ensure that as many families as possible can use services in a way that is fair and provides appropriate levels of support according to local eligibility criteria.

The Short breaks duty (Section 25, Children and Young Persons Act 2008) requires local authorities to write a statement which outlines the range of short break services that are provided and makes it clear how families and children can access these services. The statement will be placed on the local authority's website as well as in various community settings.

This leaflet pack can be obtained by emailing NCB@robertguy.co.uk or telephoning 020 7232 3049. The leaflets can also be downloaded from **www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/rightsresponsibility** where you will also find web-based information covering the inclusion of children with specific needs.

