



Supporting Parents with Children with Disabilities

All relationships go through periods of change and challenge. Parents caring for a disabled child must adjust to new roles and may have different expectations about their child. They also must cope with significant emotional, social, physical, and financial pressures. Many parents find these experiences bring them closer together and make their relationship stronger.

You, as their practitioner, can signpost them in the right direction for support.

Support with finances

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/benefits/>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/money/>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/gas-electricity-and-water/>

Support for mental health needs

Parents with children with disabilities may be vulnerable to mental health needs.

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/mental-health/manage-mental-health/>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/friends-and-social-life/friends-and-social-life/>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/sex-and-relationships/sex-and-relationships/>

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/families-with-disabled-children/>

Support following diagnosis

For many couples, the initial period when their child has just been diagnosed with a disability is the most trying time of all. To reduce the uncertainty and fear of the unknown, parents should try and find out as much information as possible about their child's condition and share what they learn with each other. They should get as much support as they can from all the sources mentioned above, and from the

healthcare team looking after their child. Sometimes just getting a firm diagnosis can take a long time, but that shouldn't let that stop them seeking help in the meantime.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/health-and-social-care/social-care/send-children-social-care/what-support-is-available>

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/about-the-local-offer/norfolk-register-of-disabled-children-and-young-people>

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/advice-and-support/things-to-do>

Support for isolation

Parents of disabled children say that at one time or another they have experienced feelings of isolation. Some parents find it helpful to chat to other parents who have gone through similar experiences. Many medical conditions that affect children (including some very rare ones) have a national support group, usually run by parents of a child with the condition. They are an invaluable source of support and advice, especially when it feels as if nobody else understands what you're going through.

<https://communitydirectory.norfolk.gov.uk/Information/sendfamilysupport>

Sometimes there won't be a support group for your child's specific condition, but there will often be a local support group for parents of children with any kind of disability. You'll meet other parents who have experienced the same feelings of isolation that you have and who understand the strains that having a disabled child can put on relationships

Support for parents in conflict

Listed above are charities and organisations which can support couples in lifting some of the pressures they may have in life, which could reduce the conflict they are having within their relationship. If they are still finding themselves in conflict, they should speak to you as their practitioner so you can offer tools which support in how they can communicate with one another in a more helpful way.