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Factsheet PC4 Holidays and Respite Care for Parent Carers

Families caring for a child with disabilities need a break sometimes. You may be fortunate in having friends or family who can 'step into your shoes' occasionally to allow you some time to yourself or to spend more time with your partner or your other children. Don't feel guilty about accepting if this is on offer.

Paid care to give you respite, and your child with disabilities experience of being cared for by someone other than you, can be accessed through the Children, Schools and Families department of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). Contact them on **0300 123 4043** an assessment.

If your child is eligible for support, this can be provided in various ways; for example overnight in a residential home, shared care (in the home of a registered foster carer), home care (a careworker in your own home), specialist leisure activities and holidays. There is more information about eligibility on the HCC website www.hertsdirect.org.uk. (Enter 'disabled children' in the search box.) **If you cannot access the internet, contact us and we will research this and other references listed on this factsheet for you.** Respite can be expensive to arrange privately. However some ideas are:

- **Home Care Agencies**

Information about the accredited agencies used by HCC can be found on www.hertsdirect.org.uk. In the A-Z listing click 'H' and then 'home care'. Alternatively a full list of registered home care agencies by area can be found on the Care Quality Commission website www.cqc.org.uk. Not all agencies provide care for children, and not all overnight care. Charges, catchment areas and staff availability also vary, so you will need to do some ringing round and discuss your situation with individual agencies. It may also be worth talking to members of local support groups (see below) for their suggestions.

- **Support Groups**

There are a number of groups in the county, sometimes based on a specific condition eg autism or cerebral palsy. Others provide practical and emotional support more generally to children with special needs and their families. They are often a good source of information, from the personal experience of the members, on what is available locally. Some run their own activities for children. If you would like to know about groups in your area, please contact us and we will tell you of those we know of. Your local library will also have information about local groups of all kinds.

- **Voluntary Organisations**

Many voluntary organisations provide services that give parents a break, through leisure activities / playschemes or organised respite services. Browse the Herts County Council website www.hertsdirect.org.uk to find out what is available. Typing 'playschemes' into the search box is a good place to start. Or contact us and we will research this for you.

- **Playschemes**

Although many of these are run by voluntary organisations, some are run by the local district council. Contact the Leisure Services department of your local district council to find out what is available in your area:

Broxbourne	01992 785555	East Herts	01279 655261
North Herts	01462 474000	Stevenage	01438 242242
Welwyn & Hatfield	01707 357000	St Albans	01727 866100
Hertsmere	020 8207 2277	Dacorum	01442 228000
Watford	01923 226400	Three Rivers	01923 776611

- **Holidays**

There are many organisations providing information about holidays for families who have a disabled child. The following list is by no means exhaustive - if they cannot answer your enquiry, contact us and we will try to find someone who can:

Tourism for All UK Tel: 0845 124 9971 www.tourismforall.info

Provides information about all types of holidays for people with special needs. Ring them or order information sheets and booklets online (chargeable unless a member) including 'Holidays for families with a disabled child'.

Enable Tel: 0871 222 4939 www.enableholidays.com

Helps disabled people and their families and friends to find and plan a holiday abroad that suits their requirements.

Vitalise Tel: 0845 330 0149 www.vitalise.org.uk

A national disability charity providing breaks for disabled people, including children and their families.

Livability Tel: 020 7452 2000 www.livability.org.uk

Has a range of self catering and hotel accommodation adapted to the needs of people with physical disabilities.

Contact a Family Tel: 0808 808 3555 www.cafamily.org.uk

This organisation provides information and support to all parent carers. Their factsheet 'Holidays, play and leisure' can be downloaded from the site or ring to request a copy.

Are you registered on HAND?

Registering on the Hertfordshire Additional Needs Database (HAND) will ensure that you receive a copy of the quarterly publication HAND News for families of children aged 0-19 who have a disability. This will enable you to stay informed of new and changing services, play schemes, holiday schemes and welfare benefits.

You can view HAND news and/or complete a HAND membership form on-line on www.hertsdirect.org/hand or contact **01438 737500** for an application form.