

## Direct Childcare Playscape Holiday Club Easter 2015

Direct Childcare will again be running their Playscape Holiday Club in the Easter holidays from 6th April - 17th April in Nairn and in two Inverness locations. The club provides a safe, enjoyable play experience for children with learning and/or communication difficulties or additional needs from ages 4-15 years. The ages will be split for 4-10/11 years and 11/12-15 years dependant on the area. The venue for the Nairn club is still to be confirmed, the Inverness clubs are at The Jannies's House, Raigmore & Kinmylies after school club. To apply for a place for your child, e-mail [wiki.macleod@directchildcare.co.uk](mailto:wiki.macleod@directchildcare.co.uk) or call 01463 703036 / 07935 959 032 **before** 27th February which is the closing date for applications.

### In Brief

**Dietician** Dave Rex is running training on Food, Mood and Behaviour in The Pines on 18th March from 10-12.30. Contact reception at The Pines on 01463 720030 to book a place. **A new** baby and toddler group called Little Storks has started on Fridays in Crown Church, Inverness aimed at **Polish** parents but all families and their children are welcome. Call Kasia on 07857 021 209 or just turn up from 10-11.30am. Run in conjunction with Care & Learning Alliance Family Support. **"Heads Up"** is the Highland Eating Disorder Support Group which offers support to parents/carers/families of those suffering from an eating disorder. Meetings are on the first Thursday of each month at the Smithton Church, Inverness from 7-9pm. Call 07587 742 293 or e-mail [headsuphighland@gmail.com](mailto:headsuphighland@gmail.com).

**An Education Transitions Event** is planned for the 18th March in Dingwall Academy and will be of particular interest to summer leavers without plans, young people with additional support needs or those not engaging with school. It would also interest any who are supporting young people in transition. This drop-in event will cover a number of themes including education, training, finance, housing, health, fun & with a variety of stalls. Contact [marea.foulis@highland.gov.uk](mailto:marea.foulis@highland.gov.uk) for info, keep checking [www.chipplus.org.uk](http://www.chipplus.org.uk) and also [hi-hope.org](http://hi-hope.org). **"Friends of the Birnie"** run a support group for children with additional needs and their families and carers. It runs on Wednesdays from 9.30-11.30am and 12.30-2.30pm in the playroom at the Birnie Centre, Raigmore Hospital. Please feel free to come along to either session. It costs £2 per session. Refreshments/snack provided. Siblings welcome too. Call Anne for more information on 07886 389 202.

FOUR

### Free Sleep Training for Professionals

It is with thanks to funding from the Scottish Government that Sleep Scotland can offer courses in Sleep Counsellor and Sleep Awareness training **free** to professionals who work with children/young adults with ASD such as teachers, social workers, doctors, health visitors, CAMHS workers & specialist nurses.

Both in Edinburgh, the Sleep Awareness training is over 2 days at the end of February & the 6 day Counsellor training is in March. There is a refundable deposit to be paid but the usual cost is £790 per delegate. You will learn how to support families in line with GIRFEC principles to establish & maintain a good night time routine. Due to the nature of the training, delegates attending the 2-day Awareness training must have at least one colleague attending the Counsellor training. This is to ensure that families can access the correct level of support required. This 2-tier approach has been successfully implemented in many areas throughout the UK & Sleep Scotland consider it the best model of practice. For further information call 0131 651 1392 or go to [www.sleepscotland.org](http://www.sleepscotland.org).

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*If you would like to be placed on our mailing list or contribute to the newsletter please contact us*

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Children in the Highlands Information Point

## 2015 First Edition

*the newsletter for families of children with additional needs and the professionals who work with them*

### CHIP+ & Govan Law Outreach Events

Held over two days in December 2014 the **CHIP+**/Govan Law outreach event covered a huge geographical area and a lot of mileage, taking in Wick, Fort William and Inverness. Over 70 parents/carers and professionals came along to hear Ian Nisbet from the Education Law Unit at Govan Law give an enlightening presentation on Equalities legislation and Additional Support for Learning.

Comments on feedback forms were very positive; "very good presentation & detailed information, excellent speaker", "cleared up a lot of issues for me & understand my rights better", "very informative".

People attending also had time to ask questions at the end and browse the many **CHIP+** information stands which covered a wide range of subjects from diet to mental health issues.

This great opportunity would not have been possible for **CHIP+** to organise and put on without the support of Caring and Sharing, whose grant enabled us to bring Ian up from Glasgow to inform parents/carers and professionals on ASL and Equalities. A big thank you to them and to Ian for taking time out of his busy schedule to co-ordinate with **CHIP+** on these events.

### CHIP+ Inductions

**CHIP+** hold regular Induction sessions for professionals to let them know more about our work and how we can help them access information to help the parents/carers they work with. The next few dates are 10th February at 11am, 11th March at 2pm and 21st April at 2pm, all in the Birnie Centre. Each session should last no more than 45 minutes. Contact the **CHIP+** office on 01463 711189 or e-mail [info@chipplus.org.uk](mailto:info@chipplus.org.uk) to book a place.

### Donations Thanks

**CHIP+** are extremely grateful to all staff at Lifescan who chose us as one of the charities they would support with the proceeds of their Christmas raffle, giving us a donation of £1000!

Friends of Autism Highland (FOAH) also very kindly donated £250 to **CHIP+** which was raised at their Easter 2014 event. This will enable **CHIP+** to continue to support families throughout Highland.

### Fundraise for CHIP+ !

**CHIP+** is now a member of Easy Fundraising - which is a fantastic way for you to support us without spending an extra penny! Every time you shop online through a range of big, well-known retailers, **CHIP+** benefits if you log in first through [www.easypfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easypfundraising.org.uk) and find the link to our site (Children in the Highlands Information Point). Keep watching our website for further details and the Easy Fundraising link!

And we now also have a Just Text Giving link which means that making a donation - small or large - to **CHIP+** is even easier. Again, details can be found on our website. Even a small amount of money helps us to keep on supporting families throughout the Highlands. Check our website to find out more about these new ways of supporting us!

ONE

## Counting the Costs Survey - Results

Every two years, Contact a Family (CaF) undertakes research with families across the UK to find out how families with children with additional needs are coping with changes made to the benefits system and rising bills. Over 320 families in Scotland took part in 2014 and the findings make grim reading; over a third are going without heating, almost a third are going without food, over 60 per cent have suffered ill health as a result and 21 percent say their child's health has worsened. Some people have been forced to take out loans to cover basic household costs. CaF is calling for a fairer deal from energy companies and the UK benefits & tax system for families with disabled children. You can send their campaign e-mail to your MP to make your voice heard. Go to [www.cafamily.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/take-action-on/](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/get-involved/campaigning/take-action-on/) to find the e-mail and to read the full Counting the Costs report.

For advice on benefits changes and more, call CaF helpline on 0808 808 3555.

The Highland Council Income Maximization Team can do a check to make sure you're receiving all that you're due in benefits & entitlements, call 0800 090 1004.

Go to [www.autism.org.uk/our-services/advice-and-information-services/welfare-rights-service/contact-the-welfare-rights-service.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/our-services/advice-and-information-services/welfare-rights-service/contact-the-welfare-rights-service.aspx) if your child has autism for benefits advice.

You can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness if your child attends appointments there for advice, by calling 01463 706014.

## Eczema Outreach

A new Peer-Support service for families in Highland who have a child suffering with moderate to severe eczema is being launched by Eczema Outreach Scotland (EOS).

The charity is setting up a Peer-Support group in Inverness & is keen to hear from families with a child under 18 who is struggling with the impact of the condition on their lives. Meetings in 2015 will be on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 9<sup>th</sup> May and 22<sup>nd</sup> August at the Smithton Church in Smithton, Inverness. In addition, the members of the group intend to arrange to meet in between these dates & would be delighted to welcome new families!

Alison Sweeney, Peer-Support Manager of EOS, says "EOS understands that eczema can have a big impact on a family so the Peer-Support group offers families an opportunity to meet parents/carers in a similar situation. We currently have a successful group running in Edinburgh and we are delighted to now offer this to families in Highland." As well as benefiting from support from other parents, the charity offers a family support service which provides help and advice tailored to the individual needs of the family. This can include information on treatments, hints and tips on caring for a child with eczema and advice on healthcare plans for schools, benefits and carers rights.

The charity is free to join for eligible families and all members receive a welcome pack with information, samples and a small gift for the child. Children are also included in the "High 5" children's club which encourages them to self-manage their condition through fun challenges. In 2015 EOS will run a Learn and Share event in the Inverness area which will offer fun activities for children, Peer-Support opportunities, workshops for parents and panel discussions with health professionals.

Families can join EOS online at [www.eczemaoutreachscotland.org.uk](http://www.eczemaoutreachscotland.org.uk) or call 0800 622 6018.

For more information on the peer-support group in Inverness, email [alison@eczemaoutreachscotland.org.uk](mailto:alison@eczemaoutreachscotland.org.uk)

## Carers United / Connecting Carers Training

Carers United is a group of carers who advise the Carers Improvement Group on implementing the Highland Carers Strategy. If you have issues with SDS, respite or any other aspect of your caring life, they want to hear from you. The next meeting is on Thursday, 12th February 2015 at 10am in Glen Orrin House, High St, Dingwall. E-mail [kanderson@hccf.org.uk](mailto:kanderson@hccf.org.uk) to join the mailing list or write to Carers United, c/o Glen Orrin House, High St, Dingwall, IV15 9TF.

The new Connecting Carers training events cover a huge range of subjects e.g. IT skills, stress & sleep, all free to unpaid carers and taking place all over the Highland area. Call 01463 723560, e-mail [carers@hccf.org.uk](mailto:carers@hccf.org.uk) or find more information at [www.connectingcarers.org.uk/training-events](http://www.connectingcarers.org.uk/training-events).

## Highland Children's Forum - Staff Changes

As you are probably aware, Calum Munro retired from the Highland Children's Forum (HCF) on December 18<sup>th</sup> after 10 years of service.

Gillian Newman is taking on Calum's role as Policy Lead and Anne Ross is taking on the role of Consultation Lead. Gillian has worked previously for the Forum as the Consultation lead. Since leaving in 2011, Gillian has been a freelance participation consultant, worked for Inverness College on child and youth development courses and been an Autism Mapping Coordinator. Anne has worked for many years with children and young people and their families across services and sectors in Scotland and England, including managing Through Care and After Care service for Barnardos in Highland during which time she was also a member of the HCF management committee. Anne and Gillian have worked together in the past on a couple of consultation projects.

On top of the ongoing work of the Forum, they will be focussing on the following priorities over the next few months: - review of how they share information via Children's Champion Bulletin and the website, finding the most appropriate media for children, young people and their carers to raise or comment on issues or contribute to consultations, review of the Forum's membership and its purpose, i.e. what do members want from the Forum and developing an effective communication strategy.

Contact Gillian Newman, Policy lead on 07789680812 or Anne Ross, Consultation lead on 07789680811.

## Advocacy Highland Project

Advocacy Highland are working on the development of a children and young peoples advocacy project and have some funding for a steering group made up of young people under 25 years. The intention is to develop Highland wide independent issue based advocacy for children and young people who are facing disadvantage. They would like the group to help inform how the service is shaped, design materials and make some decisions about future development so that it has the best outcomes for children and young people.

If a child or young person would like to get involved they can go to facebook, it is a closed group but you can send a message by going to [www.facebook.com/advocacyhighland](http://www.facebook.com/advocacyhighland). You can also send an e-mail to Frances at [frances@advocacy-highland.org.uk](mailto:frances@advocacy-highland.org.uk) or phone/text on 07741 261 656.

## The Pines Autism Information Sessions 2015

**CHIP+** in partnership with the National Autistic Society (NAS) have developed a new calendar of information sessions for parents/carers of children with Autism, all held in The Pines, Drummond Road, Inverness IV2 4NZ. The sessions will cover a huge range of subjects including Guardianship, Internet Safety, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Teenagers. Although they are changing from fortnightly to monthly, the sessions will however include a number of "twilight sessions" for parents/carers who cannot make a daytime session.

A new series of informal coffee mornings have also been organised for new parents. These would cover parents/carers of a child who has had a diagnosis of ASD in the last 12 months, is going through assessment, has only been coming to the drop-ins within the last 12 months or has not attended for over 12 months. These sessions will also be held at The Pines and again, booking is not required.

For a full calendar of dates and times for either the monthly information sessions or the new parent sessions you can call the **CHIP+** office on 01463 711189, e-mail [info@chipplus.org.uk](mailto:info@chipplus.org.uk). Alternatively call the NAS Scotland Highland office on 01463 720057 or e-mail [Patricia.Norton@nas.org.uk](mailto:Patricia.Norton@nas.org.uk).