



Scottish Guidelines to Support Parents with Learning Disabilities

Easy Read



Foreword

As chair of the national implementation group for *The same as you?* I am delighted to write this Foreword.

People with learning disabilities are full and equal citizens. This means that they have the opportunity to be parents.

Being a parent is also a big responsibility. These Guidelines will help people to support parents to care for their children so that they are safe and secure.

These Guidelines show different kinds of support that can help families in which parents have a learning disability. It has been shown that these kinds of support work well.

This book gives a clear message that parents with learning disabilities can be good parents and, with the right support, offer much to family life and to society.

I welcome these good practice guidelines as a practical way of improving outcomes for children and their families.



Shona Robison
Minister for Public Health and Sport



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This is an Easy Read version of good practice guidelines. These Guidelines say:

People with learning disabilities are full and equal citizens.



That means they have the same rights as everyone else. This includes the right to family life.



These Guidelines were written for three reasons:

- To help keep the children of parents with learning disabilities with their families, and to be safe and well.



- To help services give good support to these families.



- To help keep these families together.



With the right support, more children will:

- Stay safe and well.



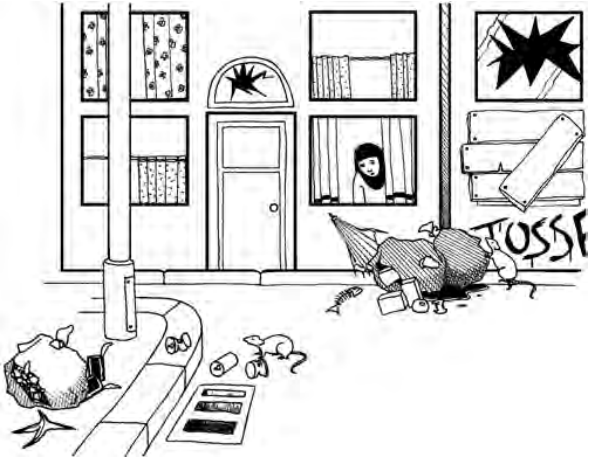
- Be healthy.



- Have fun and enjoy life.



- Do good things in their community.



- Have better houses and enough money to live on.



The Guidelines say that:

The wellbeing of the child is the most important thing.



Supporting parents to look after their children is the best way.



Parents have a right to find out what support they need to be good parents.

They should get the right kind of support they need to keep their children safe and well.



Parents with learning disabilities should get the same access to services as anyone else.



Everyone must work together to make sure parents with learning disabilities are treated equally.

Section 1

Support for Parents with learning disabilities

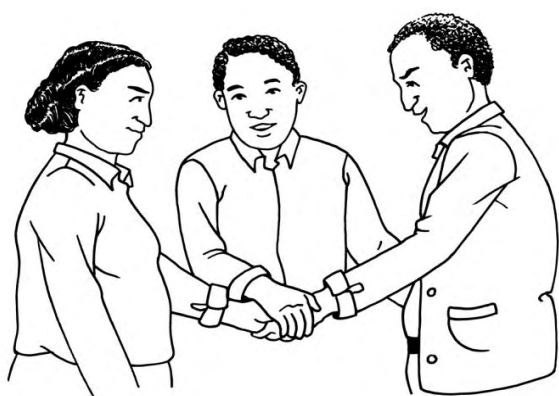




Here are five key points of good practice:



1. Communicating with parents in a way that is clear and easy to understand.



2. Services working well together.



3. Good support based on what people can do and where they need support to do things.



4. Giving long term support to parents.



5. Parents being able to get independent advocacy.

1. Communicating with parents in a way that is clear and easy to understand



Services should make their information accessible by:

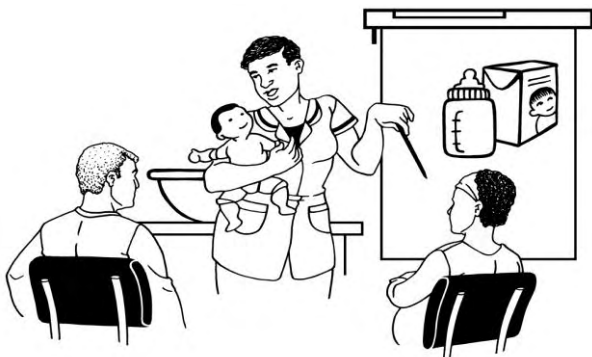
Using easy words and pictures.



Using audio tape, CD or DVD.



Making their websites accessible.



Talking to people about services that are available.

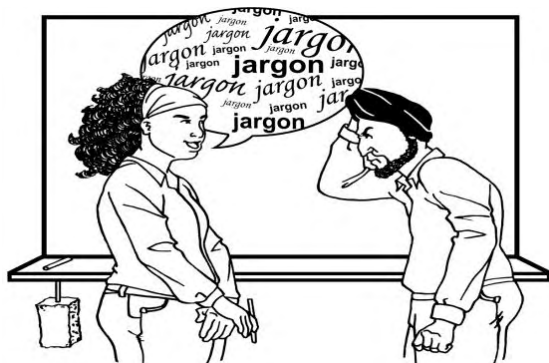
People need information in plenty of time.



Parents should be able to get support from an independent advocate to help them understand information.



Good communication with schools is very important. Parents need to know what their responsibilities are.



Teachers and schools should make their information and communication accessible, so that parents know what they have to do.





All services should let parents and parents-to-be know what support is available. This information should be accessible.

Children and Families Teams and adult services should give parents with learning disabilities accessible information about support that is available to parents. This should include information about the responsibilities that parents have.



People with learning disabilities have the right to an assessment of their needs. Learning disability services should give accessible information to parents about this.

Parents should get accessible information about why an assessment is being done. It should say how it will be done and what will happen afterwards.



Parents should be able to get someone to help them get ready for an assessment, or a meeting about the assessment.



Children have the right to accessible information too.



Parents with learning disabilities have said that good social workers:

- Explain things clearly so that you really understand.



- Don't use jargon.



- Make sure we understand reports.



- Listen.



- Take the time to communicate with us.



- Turn up on time.



- Ask us what we need and want.



- Give us a choice.



- Tell us about independent advocacy.



- Follow things up on time.



- Are honest if they can't do something.



- Treat us as individuals.



- Give us information in the format we need, and in time.

(This list comes from People First (Scotland) Parents' Group)

2. Services working together to give good support



If the right support is given early on, it can stop problems getting worse later.



So services should identify parents with learning disabilities in plenty of time.

If it is needed, they should be assessed in plenty of time i.e. when they know they are pregnant.

Services should start giving the right support in plenty of time.

Services should know what problems might come up in the future. They should be ready to deal with these problems in plenty of time.



Services should be ready to give different support as the children grow older and the family's needs change.



It is important that all services involved with children and parents work together. They must understand what each other does.



When services work together, it is important that they understand:

Young parents and parents-to-be with learning disabilities may be between children's and adult's services.



Parents with learning disabilities may have other things in their life that they need support with, for example:

A physical or sensory impairment.



A long term health condition.

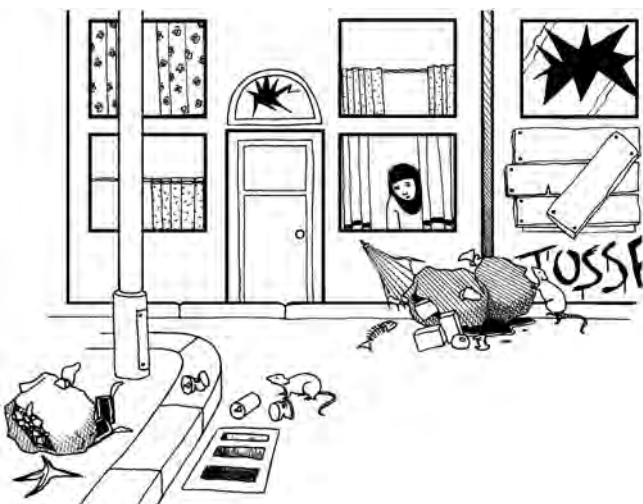
Mental health problems.



Substance abuse problems.



Housing problems, including:



Homelessness.



Harassment from neighbours.

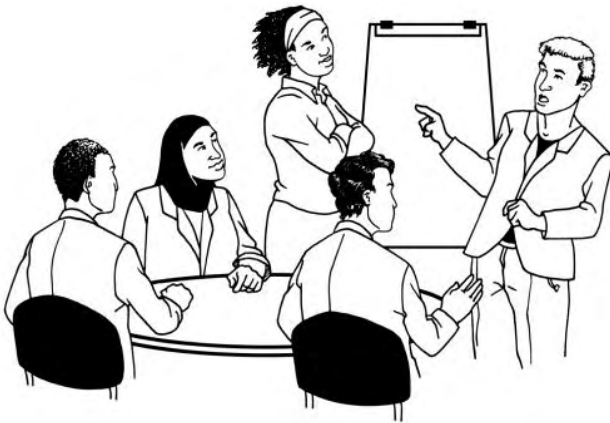


Difficulties with paying the rent and bills.





So all the services involved with the parents should spend a lot of time making sure there is good communication between them.

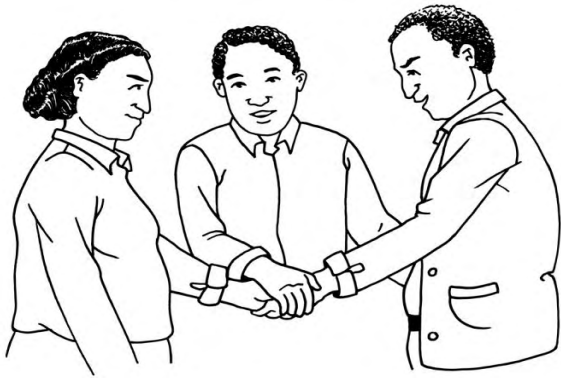


This could involve:
Services doing training together.

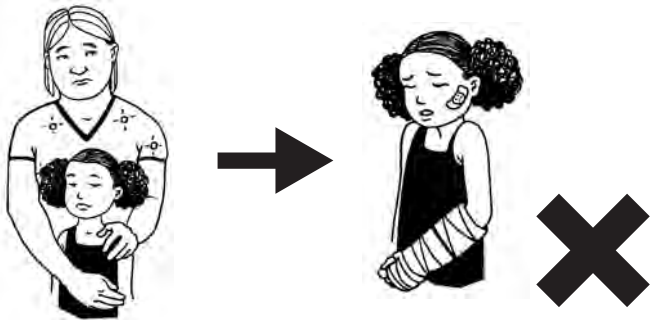


Meetings with all the services together.

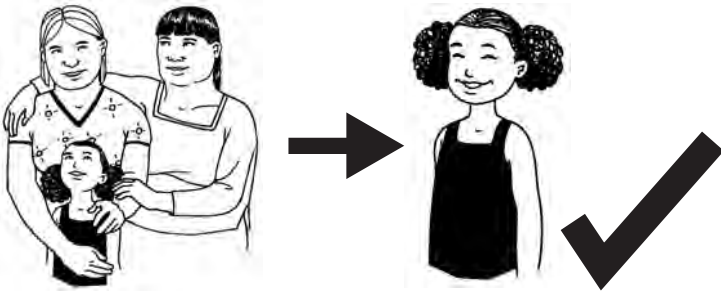
These services should start to act as early as possible.



Different services should agree who will do what. Everyone should be clear about this.



Parents with learning disabilities should be able to get the right support before there is a crisis.



Social work services should decide that parents with learning disabilities should get support if they need it.



Parents should be involved in deciding how services will work together.



Assessments should show what parents can do, not just what they can't do.



Assessments should also show what other supports are there for the family, such as grandparents.



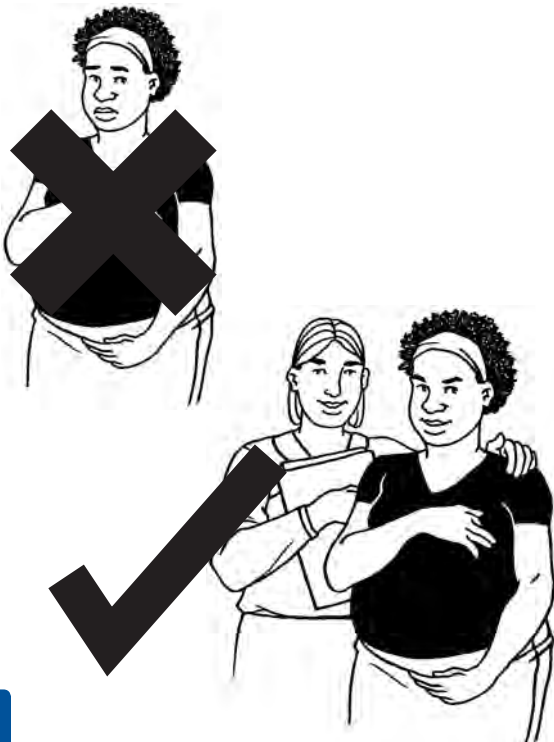
3. Good support based on what people need help with



Support should meet the needs of all family members, both parents and children.



Support should be adapted to meet the needs of parents with learning disabilities. Training courses are an example of this.



Support should be provided as early as possible.

The main things which help parents with learning disabilities learn parenting skills are:



- Good communication, making sure parents understand what they have been told.



- Watching and practising doing things, like sterilising a bottle.

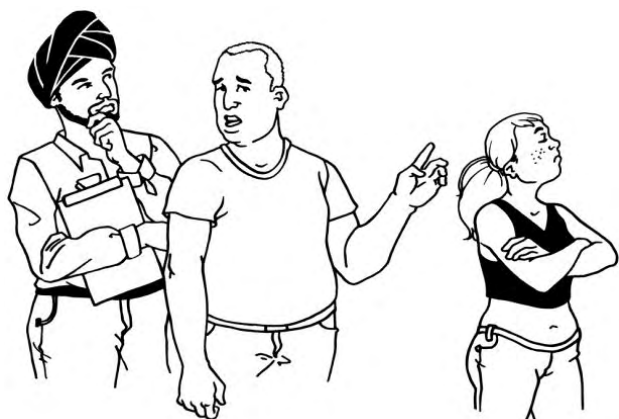




- Pictures showing how to do things like changing a baby's nappy.



- Finding out about practical things which can help, like a container that holds the right amount of milk.



- Getting support for all the family, including fathers.



HEALTH

HOUSING

Services might need to be given by social work, health, housing, education, and other places.



Services might still be needed as children grow older.

The type of support that is needed will change as children grow older.



Children should get their own support if they need it.



Parents might need emotional support. This is important.



Families should be able to get different types of help:

- Parents' groups.

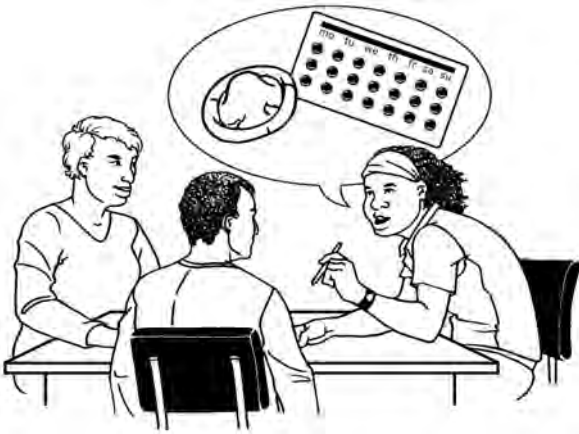


- Courses in parenting skills.



- Practical support in the home.





- Family planning services.

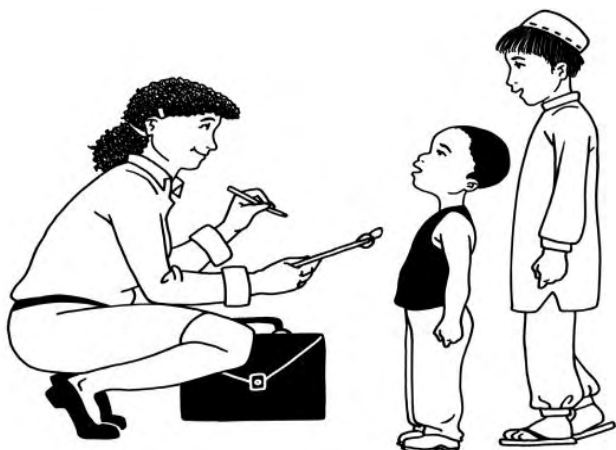


- Information and advice for children.



- Help for children with their homework.

- Support to find out what children need as they grow up.



- Support around fostering and shared care.



- Help with children's behaviour.

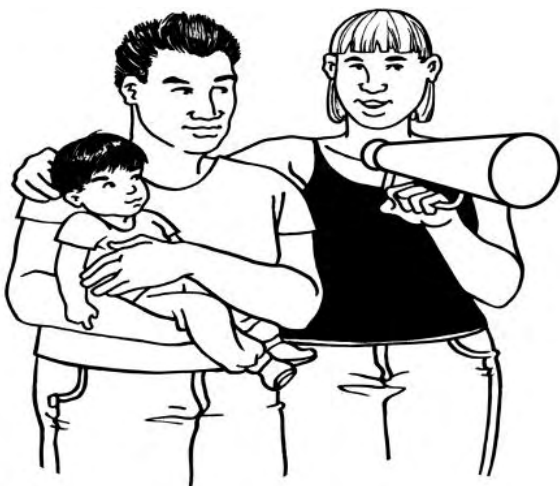




- Groups and courses for fathers.



- Counselling.



- Independent advocacy.

- Help to get self directed support (direct payments).



- Short breaks.



- Support to use services available to all families.





Different agencies will need to work well together if they are supporting the same family.



It is a good idea for one member of staff to be in charge of all the services.

4. Giving long term support to parents



Parents may need long term support to help them bring up their children.



This does not mean that they cannot be good parents.



If parents know that services can give them long term support, the whole family will benefit.

5. Independent advocacy



Parents have the right to independent advocacy.



This should be both individual advocacy and self-advocacy groups.



Parents and children should always have advocacy when there are concerns about a child's safety.

Section 2

Good practice when there are concerns about a child's safety

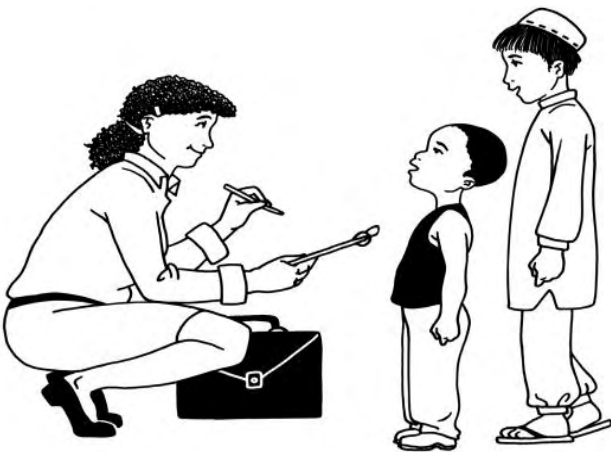




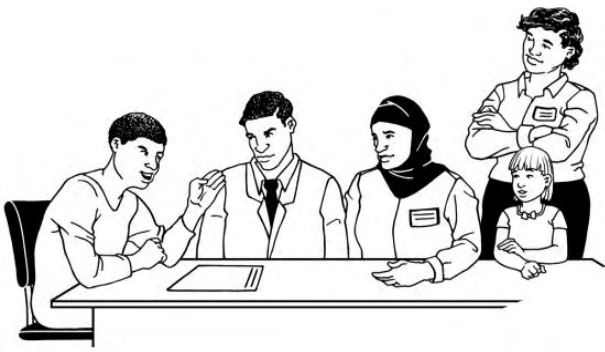
The most important thing is that the children are healthy and safe.



Children should stay living with their parents if possible and get the right support to do this.



Services should ask children what they want when they are doing assessments.



Children should be invited to meetings about their safety, as long as they are old enough to understand what is going on.

They should get help to take part in these meetings.



A child's key worker should understand what it's like for the parents to have a learning disability.



If the professionals agree the child is safe staying with the parents, then the family should get help to keep it that way.



If children do have to live somewhere else, they should get an independent advocate.



If children do have to live somewhere else, they should usually get help to stay in touch with their parents and other family members.



Children's hearings should be fully accessible to parents with learning disabilities.



Parents should have the right to a lawyer to support them with legal matters.



They have a right to independent advocacy.



Advocates need to know all about these types of meetings.



Parents should be given as much information as possible in a format that suits them.



They should get support to understand this information if they need it.



If parents need to do something as part of a child protection plan they must get the support they need to understand this and to do what the plan says.



Services assessing the family should understand learning disability. This might include using learning disability teams.

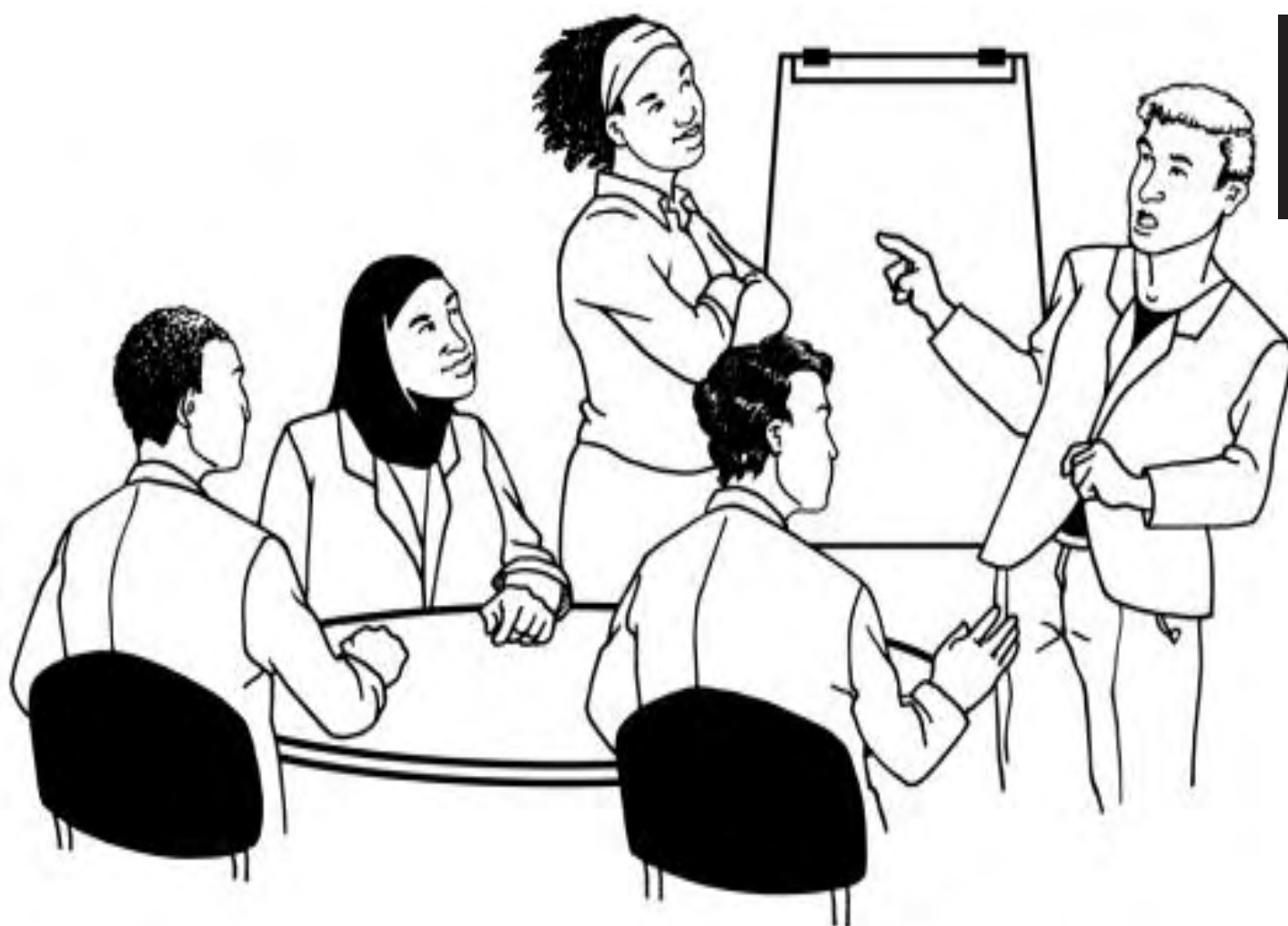


If it is only one parent who is a danger to the child, services should help the other parent to protect the child.



Section 3

Good practice for developing services for families





Children's and adults' services should work together to develop services for families.



Services should involve parents when they are planning services.



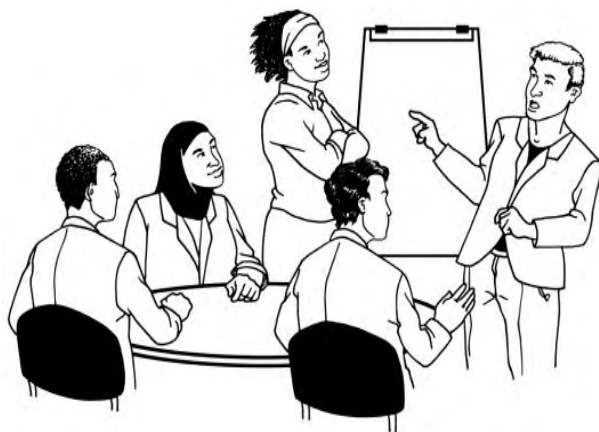
Organisations should ask parents what services are needed.



It is important to think about specialist learning disability services and services that all families use.



Organisations should involve parents when they are finding out how well their services are working.



Staff will need training to provide good services.

Parents with learning disabilities should be involved in training.

Section 4

Resources



scottish
consortium
for learning
disability

Building respect in the
Scottish community

The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) can help organisations make information more accessible. They do it in three ways:

- Training for staff on how to make information accessible
- Producing information in an easy read format
- Turning all sorts of information into an easy read format

Contact:

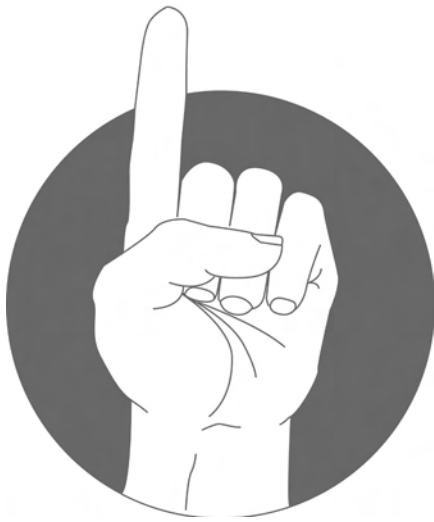
SCLD

Adelphi Centre Room 16
12 Commercial Road
Glasgow G5 0PQ

Tel: 0141 418 5420

Email: admin@sclد.co.uk

Web www.sclد.org.uk



People First (Scotland) supports self-advocacy groups of parents with learning difficulties, and campaigns for better support for parents with learning difficulties.

They also provide training on what makes good support for parents with learning difficulties.

Contact:

People First (Scotland)
77-79 Easter Road
Edinburgh EH7 5PW

Tel: 0131 478 7707

Email:

peoplefirst1@btconnect.com

Web:

www.peoplefirstscotland.org



ENABLE Scotland's Accessible Information Unit can put existing documents into an easy read format, or write new accessible documents.

Training is also available for staff. This training is to help organisations make their information more accessible.

Contact:

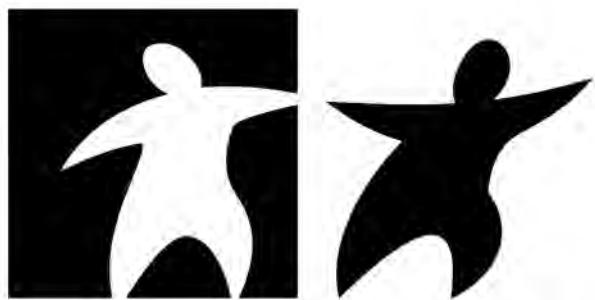
ENABLE Scotland
2nd Floor
146 Argyle Street
Glasgow G2 8BL

Tel: 0141 225 1608

Email:

easyread@enable.org.uk

Web: www.enable.org.uk



CHANGE

CHANGE

The Words to Pictures Team: A team of people with learning disabilities who work with an illustrator to produce information in an easy read format.

Parents for Change: Training on how to support parents with learning disabilities.

CHANGE publications:

Planning a Baby booklet

My Pregnancy, My Choice

You and Your Baby 0 – 1

You and Your Little Child 1 – 5

Contact:

CHANGE

Unit 4

Shine

Harehills Road

Leeds LS8 5HS

Tel: 0113 3880011

Email:

info@changepeople.co.uk

Web www.changepeople.co.uk



BILD publications

“I want to be a good parent”
Illustrated cards to help parents carry out a range of essential child care tasks.

“I want to be a good parent”

5 Illustrated booklets giving practical advice for parents with learning disabilities.

Contact:

BILD Publications
Book Source
32 Finlas Street
Cowlairs Estate,
Glasgow G22 5DU

Tel:08702 402182

Web: [www.bild.org.uk/
publications.html](http://www.bild.org.uk/publications.html)



You can get information about what independent advocacy is and how it might help you by going on to the website of the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) at www.siaa.org.uk

Also, by looking at the 'find an advocate' section of their website, you can find an independent advocacy organisation in your area. Or you can phone the SIAA and they can put you in touch with one.

Contact:

SIAA

Melrose House

69a George Street

Edinburgh EH2 2JG

Tel: 0131 260 5380

Email: enquiry@siaa.org.uk

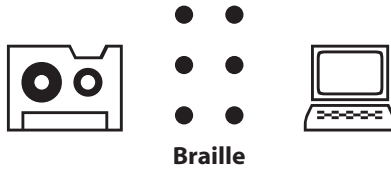


Written by the Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability



You can get this report in different languages and formats

Contact: 0141 418 5420



Braille

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