

EXCITING NEW SCHOOL GROUP PROJECT

Reading Families' Forum is very pleased to have received funding from the Council for Disabled Children to set up support groups for parent carers and to undertake a video project with young people to capture their views and experiences.

Research shows that families with a disabled child, or any child with additional needs, can feel isolated and finding the right support for their child can be a very confusing and exhausting experience. Young people with additional needs can also feel very isolated and have little or no say in the services they receive.

Some parent carers have already set up support groups at their child's school and this has been very successful. Reading Families' Forum are assisting parent carers to set up similar groups in all Reading schools. These groups will be open to anyone with a child at a Reading school who has a disability, a statement of Special Educational Needs or who has support under School Action/School Action Plus.

The forum is delighted to have appointed a very experienced group facilitator, Jacqueline Daly, to help parents establish the support groups. Jacqueline says: "These groups are opportunities for parents to create support networks and friendships. Often the best advice comes from another parent! These groups are for parent carers and will be run by them. My job is to help them get up and running". RFF will offer training for parents, arrange speakers and keep groups informed of any consultations on local services.

"The Children and Families Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 13th March this year and is set to come into force this September," explains Ramona Bridgman, Chair of Reading Families' Forum "This Act means Local

Authorities have to involve parents/carers and the child/young person themselves in developing services. This is a great time for families to get involved and have their say in services they receive in Reading. Our forum will assist groups to support each other and work with service providers to plan family friendly services.

The forum's video project is for any Reading child/ young person from 10 upwards who has a disability and/or special educational needs, whether they attend a Reading school or not. We have an experienced video company to help young people have their say. This will take place during a fun day out for young people and their families. A chance to be creative and have a say in services young people receive.

Would you like to form a support group with other parents at your child's school? Would you like your child/young person to have the opportunity to take part in this unique video project or just find out more? Contact Jacqueline on 077754 67602 or email her at jacquelinedaly_rff@outlook.com.

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