

Government urged to remove barriers to work for parents of disabled children ^[1]

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Source: Children and Young People Now [UK]

Format: Article

Publication Date: 4 Jul 2011

EXCERPTS

Parents of disabled children will struggle to return to work unless government does more to tackle the high cost of childcare and lack of suitable provision, campaigners have claimed.

Research by campaign group Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) and grant-giving charity the Family Fund found that a shortage of affordable and accessible childcare, a lack of financial support and not enough flexibility in the workplace were preventing parents of disabled children from getting back into employment.

Breaking Down the Barriers: Making Work Pay for Families with Disabled Children ^[2] surveyed a snapshot sample of 50 families of whom only a third were in work, while fewer than a quarter (24 per cent) of respondents accessed childcare.

The majority of those who did (58 per cent) used different childcare for their disabled and non-disabled children, which cost more in 66 per cent of cases.

One parent interviewed said: "In the past when I did have childcare, I found it difficult to find carers. When we approached they would only see my son's problems and not the human being."

Among its recommendations, the report calls on the government to improve the quality and availability of childcare for disabled children and include disability additions within the universal credit to ensure that at least current levels of financial support are maintained.

EDCM board member Christine Lenehan said the government must use the Welfare Reform Bill to enable families with disabled children to lift themselves out of poverty.

"We hope [the government] is able to grasp this opportunity and adapt its proposals to address the specific employment needs of families with disabled children."

Family Fund chief executive Derek Walpole added: "Families with disabled children have less money available for the basic necessities and, having to pay as much as three times or more for childcare, makes working an impossibility for many of our families.

"We hope the messages from Family Fund parents in the report are heard clearly by government."

- reprinted from Children and Young People Now

Related link: [Breaking down barriers: Making work pay for families of disabled children](#) ^[3]

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