

## The Educational Journey

This is the first of two articles which we hope will provide you with information about the milestones which you and your child may experience when starting nursery or school. We will look at some issues which might arise in the transition period from primary to secondary school. Some information will also be included for young adults who may be planning to go on to further education.

### You are the best person to speak

When you are preparing to send your child to nursery or school for the first time, it can be a challenging time for you both. If your child has a disability, the planning required to enable your child to have the best experience can be difficult and stressful.

Every family's experience is unique. Your experience makes you the best person to talk about your child's condition on a day-to-day basis. The school should consider the needs of your child. You should be included in discussions with the school and health and social care professionals when planning your child's educational journey. If you would find it helpful, your local DEBRA EB Community Support Manager will be happy to attend a meeting at school to offer you support. We can also write letters or phone the school on your behalf.

### The law

Current laws provide support and protection for your child at school and rights and support for you as both a parent and carer.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as 'a physical or mental impairment' that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. The Act states that a person with a disability is protected under the law and that reasonable adjustment should be made to enable

the disabled person (child or adult) to have equal opportunities. It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil or prospective pupil by treating them less favourably because of certain characteristics, including disability.

The Care Act 2014 recognises the rights of the carer. Your DEBRA EB Community Support Manager will be able to offer practical help, information and signposting to access support if you have caring responsibilities. We can assist you with getting on to the Carers' Register at your GP surgery or with your local council, which can have a number of benefits. In addition, we can signpost you to your local carers' support group. It can be good to share experiences with other parents or carers.

**Sondra Butterworth and Gyll Curtis-Machin – DEBRA EB Community Support Managers**

### Useful information

DEBRA and the specialist centres for EB have produced a number of leaflets on different types of EB and aspects of life with the condition, which may be useful to share with the school.

These can be downloaded here:

**[www.debra.org.uk/publications](http://www.debra.org.uk/publications)**. For hard copies please call the DEBRA head office on 01344 771961.

### Essential reading

These resources and more are available at **[www.debra.org.uk/othersupport#education](http://www.debra.org.uk/othersupport#education)**

Cerebra has prepared helpful guides for parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities including **Education in England: A Guide for Parents and The Problem-Solving Toolkit**. **[www.cerebra.org.uk](http://www.cerebra.org.uk)**

Irwin Mitchell, in partnership with the Council for Disabled Children, has produced a series of free factsheets and

template letters on Part 3 of The Children and Families Act 2014.

**<http://irwinmitchell.com/personal/protecting-your-rights/social-healthcare-law/the-children-and-families-act-2014/factsheets-and-template-letters>**

Contact your local council for information on services in the local area for parents, children and young people from 0 to 25 years old, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) **[www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council)**