

Devon Online Information Service

DISC Devon's family information service

1. Paying for childcare - promotion of help available

1.1 The help available falls into 3 categories:

1. Help for working and non-working parents:
 - a. Early Years Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds
 - b. 2gether entitlement for 2 year olds in lower income families
2. Help for working parents:
 - a. Tax Credits
 - b. Employer Childcare Vouchers.
3. Help for parents undertaking training and learning:
 - a. A variety of schemes dependent on age and the level of training and learning being undertaken.

1.2 These are promoted to parents through:

1. the service webpages at www.devon.gov.uk/disc
 - There is a page on help with paying for childcare www.devon.gov.uk/disc-payingforchildcare On average this page receives about 25 hits per month
 - There are specific pages on the Early Years Entitlement www.devon.gov.uk/disc-earlyyearsentitlement and 2gether www.devon.gov.uk/disc-2gether
2. the service factsheets:
 - DISC Factsheet 1 - Paying for childcare
www.devon.gov.uk/cypsfactsheets-discl-payingforchildcare.pdf
 - DISC Factsheet 2 - Tax credits
www.devon.gov.uk/cypsfactsheets-disc2-taxcredits.pdf
 - DISC Factsheet 3 - Employer Childcare Vouchers
www.devon.gov.uk/cypsfactsheets-disc3-employerchildcarevouchers.pdf

These are available on the webpage to be downloaded. They can be printed and given to people making enquiries and distributed at events.

3. service leaflet for 2gether which is given to parents making enquiries, and distributed to parents at events and through childrens centres and childcare providers.

The webpage and the factsheets signpost parents looking for more detailed information

to:

1. The Family and Childcare Trust's website at www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/pages/category/help-with-childcare-costs
2. The Tax Credits website www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/taxcredits or the Tax Credits Helpline 0345 300 3900

1.3 Working with partners

DISC works with partners to promote the service and the help available to pay for childcare by supplying them with materials and, in some cases training them to advise parents.

This includes:

- My Devon customer service centre
- childrens centres
- libraries
- a DISC card is put in Bookstart packs
- schools are encouraged to link to DISC information on their websites.

1.4 Promotional events

DISC takes the opportunity to attend a number of events to set up displays to promote the service and the help available to pay for childcare, such as:

- Devon County Show
- conferences
- Library Service events
- working with district council colleagues at Connect West Devon and Connect, South Hams.

2 Childcare information service

Information on registered childcarers is received from Ofsted. The childcarers are then contacted and invited to enhance this with further information such as opening times, cost, vacancies inclusion and accessibility, and staff qualifications. The information is then made available to parents.

2.1 On the web

Parents are able to search for childcare in their chosen area and view this data by going to:

- The DISC website www.devon.gov.uk/disc and linking to the service directory at www.devonfsd.info

or

- the Devon Community Directory at www.directory.devon.gov.uk

On average there are about 1200 hits per month on the DISC site, 1800 hits per month

on the service directory and 10300 hits per month to the Community Directory.

2.2 By telephone

Alternatively parents not using the website can phone the My Devon customer service centre on 0345 155 1013. There they can receive childcare information over the phone, by email or by post.

2.3 Childcare Brokerage

Parents who cannot find the childcare they need or who have further questions are invited to contact the DISC team direct by phone or email to discuss the issue. This will include, if necessary, working through any issues they have about paying for childcare. The team are able to provide information and advice, including about childminders who have chosen not to make their information public through the directories.

Parents can be referred for brokerage by a variety of practitioners including Jobcentre Plus. In the 12 months ending March 2015, 76 parents took advantage of this service.

Dennis Platt
Manager, Devon Online Information Service
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Contact DISC:

www.devon.gov.uk

discinfo@devon.gov.uk

01392 385522