

*Family Link carers are paid expenses in the form of an hourly rate. Equipment is provided and carers are insured.*

*If you would like more information please contact us during office hours:*

*Monday—Thursday 9am to 5.00pm  
Friday 9am to 4.30pm*

*Fostering & Adoption Services Team  
Social Services Centre  
Town hall  
Lind Street  
Ryde  
Isle of Wight  
PO33 2NQ*

*Tel: (01983) 566011*



### *What is the Family Link Scheme?*

*The Family Link Scheme provides support to families living on the Isle of Wight, who have a child or young person with a disability or a serious chronic illness.*

*The aim of the scheme is to link these families with other local families or single carers who help to share the care of their child.*

*The scheme is open to children with special needs up to the age of eighteen and, in certain circumstances, beyond.*

*The disabilities may include learning difficulties, epilepsy, physical, visual or hearing disabilities, and specific medical conditions. The scheme aims to be flexible to be able to meet individual family needs. Care will normally take place in the carer's home, although there may be circumstances when the carer may spend time in the child's home. Sometimes a carer will regularly take a child out to do a particular activity.*

### *Why do families need a scheme?*

*Looking after a child with a disability requires a tremendous amount of energy. All parents need a break from their child once in a while, for these families this can be all the more important. The Link Scheme enables them to take a break. This break can be anything from a few hours to an overnight stay or longer period.*

*Families can use the break to:*

- ◇ Have a rest*
- ◇ Do some shopping*
- ◇ Spend time with other children in the family*
- ◇ Have an evening out or a short holiday*
- ◇ Enjoy some leisure time or pursue an interest*

*Most importantly the scheme offers the child the opportunity to make new friends and enjoy new experiences outside the home.*

### *Could you be a carer?*

*We are looking for people, living on the Isle of Wight, who would like to share the care of a child with a disability.*

*We would like to hear from:*

- ◇ Couples with or without children*
- ◇ Single parents*
- ◇ Single people, women & men*
- ◇ Retired or unemployed people*
- ◇ People from all ethnic backgrounds*

### *Do you need special qualities?*

*Although some experience of children is helpful, it is not essential. We are not looking for experts. What is important is that you have a genuine interest in caring for children*

*Carers are individually assessed and references taken up. Training and 24 hour support is provided by the scheme. This may involve specialist training and information sharing if a child has a specific need.*

### *Matching You With a Child*

*Finding the right carer for a particular child and their family needs special consideration. It is important that parents know and trust their child's carers and feel reassured that their child will feel secure and happy when spending time away from their home. Equally carers need to feel confident and happy with their link child.*

*When matching a particular child with a carer a number of factors need to be considered; the child's age, gender, interests and special needs. The lifestyle and personalities of the two families must be compatible.*