



# Family Information Directory



department for  
children, schools and families

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**Frazzled from sleepless nights with a new baby? Don't know how to get your teenager to do their homework? Worried about how divorce will affect your children? Struggling to get your child into the right school?**

**These are just some of the thousands of questions and issues that mums and dads look for answers to each year.**

**Family Information Direct brings together expert advice from key voluntary and private sector partners, to support mums, dads, grandparents or other adults with parental responsibility when and where they want it and in a form that suits them.**

Parents and families can ring a range of telephone helplines or go online for personalised advice; they can join a social network to get support from others in similar circumstances; watch online videos for handy tips; or read articles in newspapers or in magazines.

Family Information Direct takes help to parents and families in innovative new ways, identifying unmet needs and stimulating the development of new services to meet them.

# Family Information Directory



Imagine being able, with a few keystrokes on a computer, to find information useful to parents and families.

Research<sup>1</sup> says that on average, parents looked for advice around four times in a single year. The Family Information Directory makes this possible. For the first time, parents and families can find the information they want on subjects including family activities, parenting questions and childcare with a single search.



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<sup>1</sup> Parents Direct: Proof of Concept, GfK NOP Social Research, August 2006.



As a mum, dad, grandparent or other adult with parental responsibility, decisions are part of everyday life. The Directory aims to be a trusted source of information so parents and families can have confidence when choosing services that include:

- A variety of local and national services and facilities such as playgroups, leisure centres and parental support among other things;
- Comprehensive information on the range of childcare available in their area and elsewhere; and
- Services that support children with disabilities and special educational needs.

But it is not just for those with access to the Internet. Families Information Services, and others who work with parents, can use the Directory to offer an improved service, either over the phone or at their local offices.

## How it works

The Family Information Directory was developed to ensure that information on any national and local childcare and family services that might benefit parents could be easily found.

Supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, it brings together data from 152 local authorities, national bodies such as Ofsted and a dedicated national database of family services, to create a comprehensive bank of information. An online search tool, generating data from that information bank, can then be embedded on different websites, enabling its data to be surfaced and accessed across different online places.



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# Supporting parents and families in different ways

In line with the broader Family Information Direct vision – to support parents and families through the organisations they already use – the Directory will be available on a range of different websites that are naturally visited by parents and families, to ensure it's as easy for them to access as possible.

Already, the Directory can be found on Directgov and parenting websites, such as DadTalk and Parentline Plus. In the coming months it will be found increasingly on a range of library, charity, local authority, children's centre and private sector websites.

In addition, Families Information Services and other front line organisations can use the Directory to offer an improved service to the parents that they work with.

The Directory aims to be available to parents wherever and whenever they want. It is already available on the following web sites:

<http://familyservices.direct.gov.uk/familyservicesfinder/>

[www.dadtalk.co.uk](http://www.dadtalk.co.uk)

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

*The Family Information Directory is already receiving over 850,000 searches a month by people seeking family information.*



## Tale of two parents

Whether it's looking for childcare, things to do or sources of support, the Family Information Directory has something for everyone:



It's half-term in Niah and Zac's house and their dad, Brian, is wondering what he can do to entertain them over the coming week. But there are worries of a different kind at Margaret's house, where her 15-year-old daughter has started skipping school.

Both hear about a new directory intended to help parents find what they need. Brian visits a local family support web service, where he finds the Family Information Directory on its home page, while Margaret finds the Directory on her daughter's school website.

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Brian looks through the “days out” listings for his area, but Margaret is unsure of who can help her, so enters her concern – behaviour issues – in the search box. Both find services that can help, complete with maps and contact details.

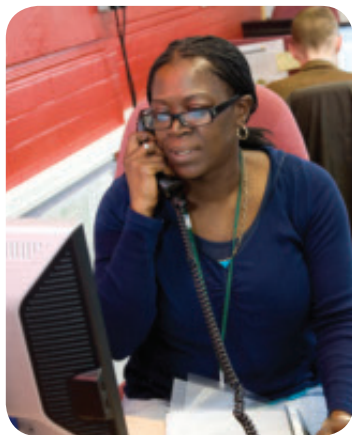
For Brian, Zac and Niah, that half-term sees them visit a city farm, go swimming and try gymnastics classes. Margaret finds the support and advice she is looking for, when she calls a local behavioural specialist to talk through her worries.



## Further information

Family Information Direct is keen to encourage organisations that work with parents and families to offer the Directory to their users and customers. A toolkit has been created to help organisations integrate the Directory into their own websites – and with it a common brand so parents know the information they are searching is from trusted sources.

If you are interested in offering the Family Information Directory online, please contact the FID support team at [familyinformationdirect.directory@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:familyinformationdirect.directory@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)



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### **Further Information**

If you want to know more about Family Information Direct, including the latest about the Family Information Directory, or to download this publication, see our website:  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk/familyinformationdirect](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/familyinformationdirect)

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