

Council want to offer respite play schemes

COUNCIL PLEDGES INCREASED SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Proposals to ensure that children with disabilities are entitled to up to six weeks of access to respite playscheme services during the school holidays are to be considered by councillors.

[A report](#) to the Education, Children & Families Committee recommends that over £350,000 of extra funds are committed by 2014/15 to ensure entitlement to this vital support service is standardised across the city.

This will mean that many children and young people will see their entitlement increase – with some children currently only entitled to one week of the service a year.

The school holiday respite playscheme is a day care service which provides a fun, safe environment for children to socialise with others. It gives children stability and structure similar to the school day.

It also relieves some of the pressures families who can find it difficult during the holiday period as they cannot all access locally based or mainstream services.



Convener of
Education – Paul
Godzik

Councillor Paul Godzik, the city's Education Convener, said: "We want to ensure that every child has the best possible start in life. The Capital Coalition pledged to increase support for vulnerable children, and by ensuring that all children and young people with a disability have the same level of access to this service, we're demonstrating that we realise how important this service is to families."

Currently around 400 children and young people with a disability receive varying levels of service depending on which Special School they attend.

If approved, increases in entitlement provision will be phased in over the next two years, with the redeveloped service in place for 2014/15.

The report also details a number of new developments planned for the service in 2014/15. This may include wrap around childcare to support parents and carers in work, drop in family swim sessions at pools based in Edinburgh's Special Schools and more locally based services to help parents and carers develop informal networks of support.

This follows extensive consultation and engagement with

children, young people, parents and carers and partner organisations to help develop the service. Consultation with these groups will remain ongoing throughout the process.

The report will be considered at the [Education, Children & Families Committee on Tuesday 5 March 2013.](#)