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Fledglings is a national charity which supports parents and carers of children with special needs by finding affordable solutions to everyday practical problems. We offer a free of charge bespoke information service which addresses individual needs of each child and family.

Issue 21 April 2010



Dear Friend

At long last Spring seems to have arrived here so last weekend I visited the beautiful accessible gardens of the National Trust property Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire where the Lenten roses and spring bulbs were a delight to the eye and the hyacinth garden smelled divine. Sometimes we forget that the natural world can be used to stimulate development in children, but gardens are full of such opportunities. Leaves or daffodils blowing in the breeze are the best mobiles and perfect for focusing

the eyes. Parents can use flowers and plants to help develop their child's sense of smell or knowledge of colours and shades and the different textures of leaves, catkins, pussy willow buds or twigs are as varied as the contents of any feely bag. As our national gardens and country houses are increasingly becoming accessible to those with a range of disabilities often with free entrance to one carer, I hope that this Spring many of you will be able to find time to visit your nearest Spring garden and to recharge your batteries.

Ruth Lingard Executive Director

This month:

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[Waterproof Covers - Larger Sizes Available for April Showers](#)

In the late 1990's when Fledglings first began, I was asked by a mother whose eight year old son was a wheelchair user if I could find a warm waterproof wheelchair cover for him so that he could watch his brother playing in a local football team each Saturday. She had looked everywhere without success. My own efforts also proved difficult – I could obtain one but at a price -£200 was quoted. There were several manufacturers of adult waterproof covers but the relatively small market share for children's covers was considered an unsustainable venture for most suppliers. However, I eventually found a lovely company willing to give it a go and after a few months a small brochure landed at Fledglings with images of products they had developed – and we have been supplying them ever since. But many of you, unaware of this history, are also



unaware that Fledglings can supply the garments in

sizes which fit older teenagers and young adults. The colours and styles available may vary a little but the prices are just as good and sometimes are even less than the children's items, which can be found on page 11 of our brochure at the following link: [latest brochure](#). See details of the adult outdoor clothing below:

These products are available from Fledglings.

Colours: Burgundy or Navy

Adult Kittiwake Cape (pictured)	£23.00 + P&P One Size
Adult Cuckoo Cover Fleece-Lined	£28.00 + P&P One Size
Adult Cuckoo Cover unlined	£18.50 + P&P One Size
Adult Wagtail Cover with Sleeves	£31.00 + P&P Standard Size upto height 5'6"
Adult Wagtail Cover no Sleeves	£27.50 + P&P Standard Size upto height 5'6"
Adult Woodpecker Warmer	£61.50 + P&P Standard Size upto waist 48"

Book Review - You and Your Disabled Child

You and Your Disabled Child - a practical guide for parents



Margaret Barrett has many years of experience caring for and being inspired by disabled children and their families. She writes from a caring but practical perspective, understanding the needs of parents trying to do the best for their child but without any of her knowledge or training. In some detail she describes how any child may be helped to achieve, giving suggestions e.g. how to stimulate the senses – vision, hearing, taste, touch or smell. She also advocates setting rules and sticking to them to encourage good behaviour and create family harmony. One size rarely fits all and I question whether Margaret's suggestions to encourage mobility are suitable for every child. However, I believe most of her recommendations for promoting other aspects of development can be applied universally. Rather like 'Supernanny' of the popular TV series, Margaret gives good advice which is likely to assist any young family starting on the journey of parenting a child with additional needs. This book would also be a useful tool and reference guide for the training of professional carers.

This product is available from Fledglings.
You and Your Disabled Child £14.95 + P&P

Dry Chin Hand Mitt

We were thrilled to receive this lovely towelling mitten from the Aunt of a girl who has Cerebral Palsy. Although we know of many lovely bibs and neckerchiefs, these don't protect a child's chin from drool, but this absorbent mitten enables her niece to easily wipe dribble from her chin using the back of her hand. We plan to stock these and similar mitts in alternative colours and fastenings if you are interested.



This product is available from Fledglings.
Dry Chin Hand Mitt £5.00 + P&P

Chewing Aids

We have recently heard from one or two families that after repeated chewing in the same place their child's chewing aid has shown signs of cracking, and inevitably this is a cause for concern. We have spoken to our suppliers who point out that all chewing aids should be inspected daily and if there is evidence of damage, that the use of the aid should be discontinued. Also, it is essential that these aids should only be used when the child is under adult supervision. Clearly every child is different and for the majority of children these aids will give months of satisfactory use but for others who have a very strong bite or a need for constant oral stimulation the life of the chewing aid will be shorter. As a parent you will know your child's needs better than anyone else so we will rely on your judgement to ensure correct use of these aids.



If you would like to purchase a chewing aid please visit page 19 of our [brochure](#) or for Chewelry visit our previous [e-News 20](#) then phone or email your order to us.

Another Way



Care for the Family is a national charity helping to support families. Part of that work includes Another Way, a telephone network for families with children with additional needs, headed up by Richard and Maggie Stapleton, who themselves have a child with additional needs. Maggie writes;

"When you care for a child with additional needs it can be a very challenging journey for the whole family. Another Way provides a telephone befriending service which offers understanding, empathy and support. So how can this help you? You have the opportunity to say what you really feel and talk openly on the phone to a trained

befriender, who is in a similar situation to you and can offer insights from their personal experiences. You can also receive encouragement by signing up for our email newsletters. Parents in this challenging and sometimes lonely place need to know that others have been there too and are available to offer understanding and support."

To find out more about their work visit their website at www.careforthefamily.org.uk/anotherway read their latest newsletter at www.careforthefamily.org.uk/anotherway/newsletter or call them on **029 2081 0800**

View our video. As publicity for reaching the Lottery finals for Best Voluntary/Charity Project a film was produced about our work [click here to view](#)

Fledglings relies heavily on donations and grants for the income we need to continue our work. We're extremely grateful for all the help we receive. The money is all put to good use helping children and families.

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