

Specialist equipment and safety adaptations

This sheet contains information about specialist equipment for children and adults with severe learning disabilities who are described as having challenging behaviour, and lists some of the considerations which can help to improve safety and protect the living environment. Suppliers' contact details are listed at the end. Inclusion in this list does not constitute an endorsement from the CBF. Readers are encouraged to evaluate the benefits and risks of each product before purchase.

Bathroom

If shower or towel rails are pulled down, magnetic versions (which pull apart from the brackets under pressure and can be re-attached) are available from Primera.

Beds & Bedding

Virtually indestructible mattresses are available from Endura, Link Design and Solk Furniture (but are expensive!). One parent contacted the local hospital to purchase a plastic covered mattress after her daughter constantly ripped mattress covers and waterproof sheeting, and this was also easier to clean. Bedding should be made from cotton, to withstand high temperature washes. Tough Furniture and Endura produce beds which can be fixed to the floor if required.

Curtains

If curtain rails are pulled down curtains with a Velcro tab top are available from Colourways. Magnetic curtain rails which pull apart under pressure and can be re-attached are available from Primera. Lockable wooden shutters are another alternative, or using a plastic stick-on covering (available from most DIY stores) to give privacy whilst still letting in the light.

Doors

Doors and doorframes may suffer damage. Internal doors can be replaced by sturdier fireproof doors, and can be fixed to the frames with heavy duty hinges. More hinges than the conventional two can help, but such strengthening may result in problems with the door frames coming away from the walls. Consult a carpenter about the best course of action to take for your individual needs. The use of window locks for the top of doors can prevent access to 'out of bounds' rooms. A spyhole in the bedroom door enables you to check on your child without disturbing him/her. These are available at most DIY stores. (Check that the spyhole has 180° viewing range).

Electrical equipment

Electrical sockets should, if possible, be located outside the bedroom (or inside locked cupboards) enabling the use of tape recorders, televisions, etc (placed in a cupboard with a polycarbonate window). Light switches can be located outside the room, and lights should be dome type, not pendant. Stainless steel electrical sockets with lockable fronts (screw down flap) are available from most good electrical suppliers.

Flooring

Vinyl flooring is easiest to keep clean and odour free. It should be securely fixed to the floor. Bolt safe flooring (2.5mm) is available from any carpet stockist. Durable washable carpet is a more expensive alternative (Gradus Carpets).

Furniture

A range of companies (Colourways, Endura, Link Design and Solk Furniture) supply waterproof chairs with removable covers. Endura also supply durable, heavy (but expensive) tables and chairs for use in challenging environments. Tough Furniture supply wardrobes, cupboards, etc, which can be fixed to walls. They have lockable drawers (to prevent them being removed to provide a climbing frame or for the destruction of their contents). Television cabinets with a polycarbonate screen and polycarbonate mirrors are available from Colourways, Solk Furniture and Tough Furniture.

Information Technology

There are a number of companies specialising in both software and hardware which can provide useful teaching tools and aids to language development. AVP provide literacy and numeracy software. Incentive Plus provide positive behaviour management and emotional literacy development products of all types. Inclusive Technology provide software learning tools with associated hardware. Keytools provide adapted keyboards, mice and screens for all sorts of special needs. Widgit Software provide picture and symbol software for literacy development.

Radiators

Radiators can be boxed in to eliminate the danger of burns and also to limit the amount of noise which can be generated by hitting them.

Toys and Sensory Equipment

SensoryPlus (Endura), TFH Catalogue, SpaceKraft and The Novelty Warehouse provide various toys and other equipment relating to sensory environments.

Travel

To keep individuals safe when travelling by car, a large bucket type seat with a 5 point harness is available from In Car Safety or from Crelling Harnesses for the Disabled. Windmill Special Needs Co. Ltd are suppliers of magnetic harnesses and seat belt guards, (“Buckle Guard” and “Angel Guard”) designed to fit over different seat belt mechanisms, making it difficult for the individual to undo the seat belt. A major buggy can be obtained from your local health authority. If necessary, you can ask for a 5 point harness to be fitted, and for those who drag their feet, a foot rest can be fitted. Simplantex Healthcare provides outdoor wheelchair accessories and TomCat Special Needs Products produce specially adapted trikes.

Wallcoverings

Painted walls are easy to clean, and eliminate the potential for unplanned wallpaper stripping and/or shredding and eating. Washable paints are preferable and a number of special effect paints are widely available with a protective washable finish. Posters, pictures and photos can be covered by a protective sheet of polycarbonate which will not crack or shatter. Padded wall cladding is available from Endura.

Windows

Ordinary glass can be replaced with strengthened safety glass or makrolon (polycarbonate). Made to measure makrolon sheets are available from Eagle Boat Windows. Lockable windows are advisable for potential escapees (window locks can be easily fitted to most windows and are available at most DIY centres).

Wooden surfaces

Some children gnaw and bite wooden surfaces such as window sills and furniture. A 90° strong plastic edging strip (available from most DIY stores) can be fitted to wooden edges. Heavy duty surface protectors are available from Intrad.

Need an aid or piece of equipment which is not available commercially?

If so contact REMAP (England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or REMAP Scotland. REMAP is a charity which makes aids for individuals with a disability that are not available to buy commercially. MERU (Medical Engineering Resource Unit) is also a charity which can provide a special “one-off” piece of equipment for your child.

Still can't find what you need?

Fledglings is a charity which aims to help parents find the equipment they need for their disabled child.

Suppliers

AVP

School Hill Centre, Chepstow
Monmouthshire, NP16 5PH
Tel: 01291 625439
Email: info@avp.co.uk
Website: www.avp.co.uk

Crelling Harnesses for Disabled Ltd

12 Crescent East, Thornton Cleveleys
Lancashire, FY5 3LJ
Tel: 01253 852298
Email: info@crelling.com
Website: www.crelling.com

Endura

The Kirton Healthcare Group Ltd
23 Rookwood Way, Haverhill, Suffolk
CB9 8PB Tel: 0800 212709
Email: enquiries@endura-furniture.co.uk
Website: www.endura-furniture.co.uk

Gradus Carpets Ltd.

Park Green, Macclesfield, Cheshire,
SK11 7LZ
Tel: 01625 428922
Website: www.gradusworld.com
E-mail: imail@gradusworld.com

Inclusive Technology Ltd

Riverside Court, Huddersfield Road,
Delph, Oldham, OL3 5FZ
Tel: 01457 819790
Email: inclusive@inclusive.co.uk
Website: www.inclusive.co.uk

Colourways

Tel: 01489 580978
Email: sales@colourwaysltd.com
Website: www.colourwaysltd.com

Eagle Boat Windows

Unit 9, Kenyon Court, Kenyon Road,
Lomeshaye Ind Est, Nelson
Lancashire, BB9 5TF
Tel: 01282 697700
Email: sales@eagleboatwindows.co.uk
Website: www.eagleboatwindows.co.uk

Fledglings

Wenden Court, Station Approach, Wenden
Ambo, Saffron Walden, CB11 4LB. Tel:
0845 458 1124 (part-time)
Email: enquiries@fledglings.org.uk
Website: www.fledglings.org.uk

In Car Safety (Mail Order and showrooms)

Unit 5, Erica Road, Stacey Bushes Trading
Ctr, Stacey Bushes, Milton Keynes, MK12
6HS
Tel: 01908 220909
Email: info@incarsafetycentre.co.uk
Website: www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk

Incentive Plus

Unit 6 Fernfield Farm, Whaddon Road,
Little Horwood, Milton Keynes,
MK17 0PS Tel: 01908 526120
Email: info@incentiveplus.co.uk
Website: www.incentiveplus.co.uk

Intrad

PJP PLC, St Albans Road West, Hatfield,
Hertfordshire, AL10 0TF
Tel: 0800 0643 545
Email: sales@intrad.com
Website: www.intrad-direct.com

Keytools

Abacus House, 1 Spring Crescent,
Southampton, SO17 2FZ
Tel: 023 8029 4500
Website: www.keytools.co.uk

MERU

Unit 2, Eclipse Estate, 30 West Hill,
Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8DJ
Tel: 01372 725 203
Email: info@meru.org.uk
Website: www.meru.org.uk

Remap

(Head Office)
D9, Chaucer Business Park, Kemsing,
Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 6YU
Tel: 0845 130 0456
Website: www.remap.org.uk

Simplantex Healthcare

FREEPOST NAT3328, Eastbourne,
BN21 3ZW
Tel: 0800 9800 150
Email: orders@simplantex.co.uk
Website: www.simplantex.co.uk

SpaceKraft Ltd

Titus House, 29 Solitaire Road, Shipley
West Yorkshire BD18 3HH
Tel: 01274 581007
Email: enquiries@spacekraft.co.uk
Website: www.spacekraft.co.uk

TomCat Special Needs Products

13/9 The Gloucester Business Park,
Hucclecote, Gloucestershire, GL3 4AA
Tel: 01452 616900
Email: info@tomcatuk.org
Website: www.tomcatspecialneeds.co.uk

Widgit Software Ltd

26 Queen Street, Cubbington, Leamington
Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 7NA
Tel: 01926 333680
Email: info@widgit.com
Website: www.widgit.com

Primera Ltd

Unit 8, Bankfield House, Bristol Avenue,
Blackpool, Lancashire, FY2 0JF
Tel: 0870 300 1810
Email: sales@pimeralife.co.uk
Website: www.pimeralife.co.uk

Link design

Bridge Cottage, Middleton, Ludlow
Shropshire, SY8 2DY
Tel: 01584 877167
Email: info@linkdesign.co.uk

The Novelty Warehouse

2c Zig Zag Road, Wallasey,
Merseyside
CH45 7NZ
Email: info@thenoveltywarehouse.com
Website: www.thenoveltywarehouse.com

Remap Scotland

Located at 14 sites across Scotland.
Website: www.remap-scotland.org
Email: remap-scotland@btconnect.com

Solk Furniture

Brandon Steet, Armley Road, Leeds
LS12 2ED
Tel: 0113 243 4073
Email: enquiries@solk-furniture.co.uk
Website: www.solk-furniture.co.uk

TFH Catalogue

5 – 7 Severnside Business Park
Severn Road, Stourport on Severn
Worcestershire DY13 9HT
Tel: 01299 827820
Website: www.specialneedstoys.com

Tough Furniture Ltd

Stokewood Road, Craven Arms Business
Park, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 8NR
Tel: 01588 674340
Email: sales@toughfurniture.com
Website: www.toughfurniture.com

Windmill Special Needs Co. Ltd

21 Lune Street, Oldham, OL8 1BP
Tel: 0161 345 5361
Email: mick@windmillspecialneeds.co.uk
Website: www.windmillspecialneeds.co.uk

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