



Disability - A Family Burden

We hear stories of families who never get a day off, elderly parents who are still looking after their disabled adult children, and children with less obvious disabilities not receiving any support.



Often families with disabled members feel isolated, alone and are unaware of the help they can receive. This is especially true for those with the least obvious disabilities. Compounding the problem health professionals are often unaware of the range of help available or assume families are linked into the services they require.

The trouble is the system for receiving government-funded supports is across a number of government ministries – Health, Education, and Welfare. These systems are hard to navigate, especially for stressed families and they don't dovetail together easily. Also in the past 30 years government funded disability support services have focused on providing for a small group with the highest needs.

No one would deny this group needs support, however this has left a large group who have been forgotten, many of whom would have benefited greatly from some assistance early in life, making them more independent and improving the quality of family life.



There is help. If your child or young adult has not been in contact with the The Whatu Ora – Health NZ, the best place to start is the Needs Assessment and Coordination service (NASC), Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People funded service. You can refer yourself or a family member without having to go to a doctor. This will give you access to a number of Whaikaha funded and community services.

The Ministry of Social Development has a range of benefits you may be able to access for yourself or your disabled family member. The Ministry of Education Special Education Services can be accessed for those at school.

For your school aged child with special needs, it's important to investigate the Ongoing Resources Scheme (ORS) and High Medical Needs Ministry of Education Funds as early as possible in their schooling. The sooner your child gets help the better.

On the link below there are some handy links to government agencies, which may help relieve the burden of disability. There are many more organisations that can help, most of which are government funded.



All the best navigating through this maze.

http://www.therapyprofessionals.co.nz/uploads/4/9/5/2/49523375/handy_links_for_disability_services_.pdf