

## Helpful Tips for Families Caring for Children/Young Adults with Reduced Mobility during the Covid-19 Virus Crisis



During this pandemic, family of children with reduced mobility may have additional responsibilities placed on them to support their child or young adult. The needs of the child/young adult have not, after all, gone away. Along with the Top Tips for

Informal Carers, the following tips may be useful for parents/family members to consider when trying to support a child/young adult in the home environment. It is not meant to place additional responsibilities on the care giver, but instead to support and to try to make the manual handling as safe and comfortable for everyone involved.

1. Be aware of your posture - whenever possible try to sit next to your child. Instead of bending forward, to position the hoist sling for instance, or while assisting your child to eat, pull a chair up next to them to avoid a sustained, top heavy posture.

2. Kneel down next to your child if they are on the floor for therapy or play - a gardening kneel cushion may make this more comfortable. Alternatively, you could kneel on one pillow and place another pillow under your bottom to sit back on. This tends to put less strain on the knee joints.

3. Use a wall or outdoor seat with back support- some family members may find themselves engaged in more of their child's play and therapy time undertaken on the floor. Position yourself with your back against a wall with your legs outstretched in front of you. Your child can then sit on the floor between your legs against your torso. This can be a much more comfortable position with your back supported by the wall. Alternatively, the use of an outdoor seat with back support (as pictured below),

can make this sustained long-sit position more comfortable.



4. Holding and carrying a young child - it's often the case that family members are trying to multi-task when caring for a young person. The HippyChick belt (pictured below) is available to purchase online. The belt gives a firm shelf for the young child to sit on while at the same time helping to keep your spine in good alignment and freeing up a hand. Of note, the manufacturer suggests for children between the ages of 6-36 months.



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5. Lifting the child from the floor - while it cannot be advised to lift a child if they are normally hoisted, breaking down the task might make it easier.

This can be done by picking the child up, keeping them close to your body, come up into a kneeling position. You can then hand the child to another capable family member who is sat next to you.

You then stand up without the child in your arms and then take the child back from the other family member. This prevents the hardest part of the move, going from the floor up to standing, with the child's weight in your arms.

6. Postural Support - An announcement from the Divisional Director of Jiraffe, revealed they are offering a new scheme which is designed to support postural plans by offering to pick up any piece of Jiraffe equipment that a child needs and deliver it where ever it needs to go, for a period in which schools are closed, free of charge.

<https://www.jiraffe.org.uk/help-access-vital-equipment/>

7. Emotional and wellbeing support - it is likely that any Respite Service you have been accessing may no longer be able to physically support you during the pandemic. There are various support groups that can offer telephone or online support. **Carers UK forum** is an online community of carers that is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A few words from a fellow carer who understands what

you're going through can be a lifeline. In some cases, it might be a sibling or other young family member who has additional responsibilities placed on them during the crisis. **Childline** is a free and confidential service to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. Other local support groups and charities may be available to offer you support during this challenging time.

EDGE Services understands that the manual handling needs of your child are not the only responsibilities parents and family members will be concerned about. We hope the tips provided will at the very least help to make some of these tasks easier and more comfortable.