



CAROL, LOUISE AND WEST BERKSHIRE MENCAP

Carol Darnell has been taking her daughter Louise Diplock to the Mencap Centre in Enborne Road since she was six months old – almost five years ago. Louise has Downs Syndrome; she is also Diabetic and has Scoliosis (a curved spine).

“Louise loves coming to the Centre,” said Carol. “I was told about West Berks Mencap when Louise was first born. The Family Advisor chatted to me, helping and reassuring me, then telling me about the services which are available.

“The charity has helped me with Louise from a very early age, and the great thing is that they will continue to do so as she grows up. She has been to Bubble Club, Holiday Play Scheme and will definitely be using Saturday Club now it is running again. When she is older, I’m sure she will join in with Funky Thursday youth club and when she leaves school she will also be able to go to Link-up, to experience a real work environment.

“Without West Berks Mencap, my life just wouldn’t be the same. I felt alone when Louise was born, but now I always have someone to talk to. And, I’m never worried about leaving Louise at the Centre, as I know all the staff are thoroughly trained, they even order specialist equipment to ensure I needn’t worry, leaving me to have a little ‘me time’. The respite time Louise spends at Mencap means that I can do simple things such as shopping or having a quiet coffee with friends.

“Meanwhile, whenever Louise visits the Centre she is able to meet and interact with lots of other children, she learns and enjoys a huge range of experiences. Now Louise isn’t clingy, she has fun and a bit of time away from mum too! Although it was hard to let go at first, I’ve found that my stress levels go down, I have lots more friends who understand the issues I face and I know that Louise is in a great place too – West Berks Mencap really is the best you can get.”