



IncludEd

THE COMPASS INCLUSION NEWSLETTER

WELCOME

FAMILY EDITION - ISSUE 5 , SPRING 26

Hello and welcome to the Spring Edition of the *IncludEd Family* newsletter!

In this edition, we want to take a moment to reassure any parents who may be feeling uncertain about the ongoing SEND reforms. Please know that we are walking this journey alongside you, and our commitment to supporting every child—and every family—remains at the heart of everything we do.

We're delighted to share a heartfelt article written by one of our wonderful members of the SEND Parent and Carer Forum. They reflect on the incredible grit, determination, and resilience shown by parent caregivers every single day. Their words are a powerful reminder of the strength within our community.

And with the holidays just around the corner, we've included some ideas for outings in your area.

Wishing you and your family a restful, happy holiday

Beth Tanton & Joshua Garrett-Smith



SEND Reforms: Our commitment to you

You may have been following recent announcements about the Schools White Paper, [Every Child Achieving and Thriving](#) and the [consultation on SEND reform](#).

The vision behind the SEND reforms is a future where every child can thrive, supported early, consistently, and responsively. The ambition is to make inclusion not an add-on, but the very foundation of everything schools do. It's a vision that resonates strongly with us at Compass. Inclusion is at the heart of who we are, shaping our practice, our culture, and the way we support every child, every day.

We know that for some parents, suggested reforms to EHCPs will cause concern. Please let your school leaders know. We do not yet know what the outcome of the consultation will be, but we do know that we want every parent to feel supported and reassured and to work together to ensure the best possible support and provision for your children, whatever the outcome.

Beyond the Surface: Understanding the Grit of Parent Caregivers

By Leviza Ayaz, Willow Dene Parent

As both a psychology researcher and a parent caregiver to a child with significant disabilities, I have lived at the intersection of two worlds: the academic study of human resilience and the raw, daily reality of providing complex care. My research into the concept of "grit"—defined as the passion and perseverance to pursue long-term goals—was born from a desire to explain the invisible strength that sustains families like mine. For those who do not share this experience, understanding this journey requires looking past the "brave" exterior to the complex psychological landscape beneath.



**PARENT
VOICE**

The Invisible Marathon: Living in Survival Mode

For most people, a crisis is a temporary event. For parent caregivers, the crisis is often chronic. My study found that many parents live in a state of "survival mode," where every ounce of energy is dedicated to the immediate physical and emotional needs of their child. Because formal support systems—such as health services and social care—are often fragmented or insufficient, parents frequently find themselves sacrificing their own health, careers, and social connections. What might look like "getting on with it" from the outside is actually a high-stakes balancing act maintained under immense pressure.

Grit as "Muscular Hope"

In my research, I describe the grit shown by parents as "muscular hope." It is not a passive wish for things to get better; it is an active, disciplined, and often exhausting effort to create a future for their child. This manifests in:

- Relentless Advocacy: Navigating legal and educational systems to secure basic rights.
- Complex Problem Solving: Managing medical equipment, therapy schedules, and behavioral support with the precision of a professional.
- Routine as a Shield: Using strict discipline to maintain stability in a world that often feels chaotic.

The Finite Nature of Resilience: It's Okay to Run Out

Perhaps the most important finding for those outside this community to understand is that grit is not an infinite resource. There is a common societal narrative that parent caregivers are "superheroes," but this label can be damaging. It implies that our strength is supernatural and bottomless.

My research highlights that it is entirely normal—and often inevitable—for grit and resilience to run low. There are days when the "muscular hope" fails, when the physical exhaustion of caregiving outweighs the psychological drive to persevere. Running out of grit is not a personal failure; it is a human response to an extraordinary burden. It is in these

moments of burnout that the lack of external respite and mental health support becomes most visible and most dangerous.

A Transformation of Self

Caregiving on this scale changes a person's identity. Many parents in my study spoke of "losing" their former selves—the professionals or social beings they were before. However, through the application of grit, a new identity often emerges; that of the expert, the fighter, and the advocate. While this growth is born from adversity, it comes at a high price.

Moving Beyond "Grit"

While grit is a vital psychological asset that allows parent caregivers to endure and find meaning in their lives, it should not be the only thing they have to rely on. To truly support these families, society must move beyond simply admiring their resilience. We must recognize that even the grittiest person needs a safety net. Understanding the depth of this challenge is the first step toward creating a system where parents don't just survive through sheer force of will but are supported enough to truly thrive.



OUT & ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY

GREENWICH


Easter Holidays at Cutty Sark

Set sail on a real historic ship and enjoy Easter-themed trails and workshops designed to be engaging for a wide range of abilities.

 <https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/send/whats-new-our-local-offer>

Queen's House Easter Activities

Drop-in sensory-friendly crafts and musical storytelling sessions in a calm, beautiful setting—great for children who benefit from flexible, creative experiences.

 <https://www.enjoyroyalgreenwich.org.uk/whats-on/easter-activities-at-the-queens-house-p2549111>


This Girl's Ability – Inclusive Football (Ages 10+)

A confidence-building football session for girls and young women with disabilities—gentle, supportive, and fun every Tuesday.

 <https://www.greenwichsendiass.uk/pages/info-and-advice/news-and-events>

Community Adventures Short Breaks (Charlton Athletic Community Trust)

Holiday sessions during Easter offering bowling, interactive football, trampolining, arts and crafts, and even music therapy—perfect for children who thrive on structured but varied activities. (Referral required.)

 <https://www.greenwichcommunitydirectory.org.uk/services/community-adventures-short-breaks>


Astronomers Take Over – National Maritime Museum

A hands-on space-themed experience suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities—great for curious minds!

 <https://www.visitgreenwich.org.uk/whats-on/events-calendar>

Woolwich Works Holiday Creative Sessions

Past programmes include spring-themed craft sessions with a relaxed, inclusive environment perfect for learners with SEND.

 <https://www.honourandglory.co.uk/blog/easter-holiday-activities-kids-greenwich-2026>

Holiday Food & Fun Clubs (SEND-friendly)

Free Easter-holiday activity clubs (arts, dance, sports, crafts) for children eligible for free school meals or with SEND—supportive staff and accessible settings.

 <https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/2026/holiday-food-and-fun-clubs-are-back-easter>