

Contact on a Budget:

Both parents matter



support when families part

The costs of travelling to exercise contact can be prohibitive; however there are a number of ways of reducing expenditure on travel, accommodation, meals and other factors.

- **Travel.** Coaches are usually cheaper than trains and further savings can be made by buying tickets in advance.
- **Accommodation.** Youth hostels are cheaper than bed and breakfasts. Campsites are even cheaper and give the chance for a memorable experience with few extra costs. What is more, members of local support groups (such as Families Need Fathers) sometimes offer bed and breakfast to parents and children - contact the branch in the area you will be visiting to find out if anything is available.
- **Meals.** Most youth hostels provide family sections with cooking facilities and cooking around a campfire can be an enjoy experience to share with children. Picnics are a fun and economic way to eat together - even if the weather's bad, have one indoors. When eating out it should be remembered that there are many healthier alternatives to McDonalds.
- **Entertainment.** Trips to beaches, parks and county fairs are ideal summertime activities and most local amateur sports matches can be watched for free. Regarding indoor diversions, many museums and galleries have free entrance while savings can be made at theatres and cinemas by attending matinee performances or taking advantage of schemes such Orange Wednesdays. Many attractions, cinemas, swimming pools, restaurant chains .etc offer family deals or 'children go free' - have a look at their website, call their head office or visit www.moneysavingexpert.com to see what's available.
- **Holidays.** Some charities (such as H.E.L.P. and the Family Holidays Association) provide help and subsidies for family holidays.

Other ways of saving money in respect to contact:

- **Toys, games, books etc.** Second hand shops, libraries, toy libraries and play resource centres provide good saving opportunities and is worth asking friends or relatives with older children, see if they have any clothes, toys or books that your children could 'inherit'. Additionally, separated parents can share toys, which regularly pleases children as well as saving money.

