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The socio-economic circumstances of children at risk of disability in Britain

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Abstract

Our aims were to describe the socio-economic circumstances faced by families supporting a child at risk of disability and to investigate the extent to which disability is associated with hardship once family income is held constant. We analysed data on 7070 family units containing 12,916 children aged under 17. Families supporting a child at risk of disability were significantly more disadvantaged across a wide range of indicators of socio-economic position. The hardship experienced by these families was only partly accounted for by between group differences in income, debt and savings. Children who are already at risk of disability as a result of a range of physical and cognitive impairments are more likely than other children to live under conditions that have been repeatedly shown to impede development, increase the risk of poor health and (additional) disability and increase the risk of social exclusion.

Notes

1. The term ‘intellectual disability’ will is used in this paper as a synonym for the terms ‘severe, moderate or profound and multiple learning difficulties’ as used within educational services in the UK and the term ‘learning disabilities’ used in adult health and social care services in the UK.

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