

# **THE ASC** **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

**St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust**  
**Edition No.1**  
**Charity Registration Number 1104306**  
**5th March 2006**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the ASC Best Practice Guide, a new and free monthly resource for individuals with an autistic spectrum condition, professionals, and parents.

### ***Which organization does this Guide come from?***

The Guide is written under the banner of the St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust, a non-denominational North-London based ASC charity.

### ***Who writes and edits the Guide?***

The Guide is written by Christine Haugh, and edited by Chris Mitchell.

*Christine Haugh's* two sons are diagnosed with autistic spectrum conditions. She works at Middlesex University for a DfES-funded organisation called Aimhigher, where her duties include Project Management of Aimhigher London North's activities for learners with special educational needs, including autistic spectrum conditions. For more information on Aimhigher, please refer to the Guide.

*Chris Mitchell* was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome at University, at the age of twenty. For the first twenty years of his life, Chris felt that he was someone who didn't exist, trying to fit into a social environment he couldn't understand. However, once diagnosed, he found a reason for who he was and his self-confidence returned. Since his diagnosis, Chris has completed his MA (Hons) in Information and Library Management at the University of Northumbria. He has also become an advocate for Asperger Syndrome. Most recently, he has published the autobiography *Glass Half-Empty, Glass Half-Full*. Currently, he works as a clerical assistant with Durham County Council's Special Educational Needs Department. He also speaks about his experiences of Asperger Syndrome at various events and conferences throughout the UK, including the 2005 Aimhigher "Transition to University" Summerschool for students with autistic spectrum conditions, where Chris and Christine met, and an annual lecture at the University of Northumbria. He also co-ordinates training workshops for professionals working with individuals who have Asperger Syndrome.

To ensure accuracy and relevance, prior to its publication, the Guide was read and feedback was contributed by a range of individuals including relevant education and health professionals from a number of different Boroughs, individuals with autistic spectrum conditions, and parents. Each issue of the Guide will continue to be "proof-read" in this way.

### ***What is the purpose of the Guide?***

The purpose of this Guide is to provide practical support in the form of a one-stop-shop of information on existing good practice in the field of Autistic Spectrum Conditions, in relation especially to Transitions. "Transitions" is a broad term, encompassing phase transfer to nursery, primary, or secondary schools, as well as to further and higher education and even adult learning opportunities. "Transitions" also covers the area of transition between types of placement, for instance from specialist to mainstream, or from home education to school-based provision. Information provided in this guide will come from a range of reputable, identifiable sources, such

as the DfES. Whenever possible, links to relevant websites will be included alongside the information provided. Always, the intention is to empower the audience by keeping them informed of existing good practice.

#### ***How can you subscribe to the Guide?***

To receive the free monthly Guide, simply email [ahaughc@aol.com](mailto:ahaughc@aol.com) with the words "Subscribe to Guide" as the subject! If you would like the Guide posted rather than sent via email, simply include name and postal address in your email.

#### ***How can you help this Guide?***

Any reader, whether a professional, an individual diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition or a parent, who is aware of any existing best practice relating to autistic spectrum conditions and who would like to share this information with others, is welcomed to contribute an article to this Guide! Please email Christine on [ahaughc@aol.com](mailto:ahaughc@aol.com) if you would like to contribute an article. Also feel free to email if you wish to get involved with the Guide in another way, such as helping to reformat or distribute it! All help is greatly appreciated!

#### **NEWS, February 2006**

##### **GOOD PRACTICE: "SNAAP" CLUB- FINCHLEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL/ST. NICHOLAS ACADEMY FOR AUTISM TRUST (BARNET)**

"SNAAP" is an after-school club for families affected by an autistic spectrum condition. The Club offers members the opportunity to socialise, develop computer and now also art skills, in a friendly environment where the entire family is welcome.

Every Wednesday term-time from 3:30pm-6pm, "SNAAP" meets at Finchley Catholic High School, Woodside Lane, Finchley, N12. There is parking available in the school car park. The Club is free of charge and run by Finchley Catholic High School with the **St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust**, and is open to **ANYONE** in Barnet with an autistic spectrum condition, all abilities and ages welcome.

Parents/siblings/carers and friends are also welcome, and snacks are provided (but anyone with special dietary requirements is invited to bring their own refreshments). The Club has a number of trained, established helpers for its members- students and staff from Finchley Catholic High School, as well as students from St. Michaels RC Grammar School. Members can receive guidance on how to use the computer and the internet; they can also play games, do homework, create Personal Passports and more. **Art Workshops are now also being offered at the Club, at no cost**, in a studio adjacent to the Computer Suites!

For more details or to reserve a place, contact the Club's Project Officer, Christine, on (0798)404-9077.

##### **GOOD PRACTICE: NEW BRANCH OF THE NAS ESTABLISHED (ENFIELD)**

There is now an established Branch of the National Autistic Society running in the London Borough of Enfield. To join the Enfield Branch or obtain further information on Branch activities, contact Enfield Branch Officer Miranda McAllister on (0208)882-9202, or email [enfieldnas@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:enfieldnas@tiscali.co.uk)

##### **GOOD PRACTICE: INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITIONS AGED 5-13 (SUFFOLK)**

The Suffolk Autism Project launched this year in Ipswich. The Project supports individuals with autistic spectrum conditions aged 5-13 years along with their families and professionals. Housed in its own new building, the NAS Autism Suffolk Centre, there are already hundreds of parents and professionals both on the Project database. Funding is secured until 2008 for a range of support including the following: information, advice and guidance; help with parent groups; autism awareness training; a resource bank; a quarterly newsletter; three NAS help! programmes a year; family support workers. The Manager of the Suffolk Autism Project is Lindsey Towns and she can be contacted on (01473)632700 or by emailing [suffolkautismproject@nas.org.uk](mailto:suffolkautismproject@nas.org.uk)

### **GOOD PRACTICE: THE AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDER TRANSITION TOOLKIT (THE GREATER MERSEYSIDE REGION)**

The Autistic Spectrum Disorder Transition Toolkit (the Att) was launched in December 2004, as a model of best practice available to all educational settings in the greater Merseyside Region. The toolkit includes resources to help in its implementation. The aim of the Att is to create a strategic pathway for transition from current to receiving schools, for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. The participants of this project include pupils and families affected by Autism, 6 LEAs, 3 Autism-specific schools, the DfES, the Greater Merseyside SEN Partnership, University, and Autism Initiatives' Outreach Support Service for Mainstream Education (OSSME). For further information on the Att and how it is used, contact Autism Initiatives on (0151)924-5656 or [ossme@autisminitiatives.org](mailto:ossme@autisminitiatives.org)

### **GOOD PRACTICE: INDIVIDUALS WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME AGED 16+ (SURREY)**

ASSIST (Asperger Support Signposting and Information Services Team) is a new service for individuals diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome aged 16 + and resident in Surrey. Based in Godalming, the service is provided by the National Autistic Society. It provides a range of support, including: access to resources; advice and information on local services, benefits, housing and employment; workshops for individuals diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome as well as for their families and professionals; individual support sessions. For further information on this service, email [assist@nas.org.uk](mailto:assist@nas.org.uk)

### **GOOD PRACTICE: STUDENTS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITIONS PROGRESSING TO UNIVERSITY (LONDON)**

Aimhigher is a DfES-funded national initiative set up in order to increase the number of disadvantaged learners who aspire and successfully make the transition to University. One strand of Aimhigher works specifically with learners who have special educational needs, including of course autistic spectrum conditions.

From 21st-23rd March 2006, Aimhigher London North in conjunction with Aimhigher London East Thames Gateway will be running a "Transition to University" Programme specifically designed for students diagnosed with autistic spectrum conditions. The Programme is open to learners diagnosed with autistic spectrum conditions and resident of any of the following London Boroughs: Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest. The Programme is all-expenses paid, including daily return transportation to/from the venue, which is the Trent Park Campus of Middlesex University. For more details contact Project Manager Christine Haugh at Middlesex University on (0208)411-6308 or email [C.Haugh@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:C.Haugh@mdx.ac.uk)

### **GOOD PRACTICE: STUDENTS WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME LEAVING UNIVERSITY (LONDON)**

Prospects is the employment service of the National Autistic Society. Prospects has recently received funding for a Transition Project, open to any individuals with Asperger Syndrome who meet the following criteria:

- \* the individual is either in the final year of University study or has recently graduated University
- \* the individual is living and wants to work within the London area

The Transitions Project Prospects run is a flexible package of pre-employment training, which individuals can access at any point during the year. It includes individual and small group sessions and some short-term work experience. Of course, individuals who do not meet the criteria for the Transitions Project will also continue to receive support from Prospects.

To find out more about Prospects and/or the Transitions Project, contact Justin Penney or Judith Keram at Prospects on (0207)704-7450, or email [TransitionsLondon@nas.org.uk](mailto:TransitionsLondon@nas.org.uk)

### **IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

**Essential School Resource- Social Skills for Primary Pupils**, by Deborah Cohen and Lorrae Jaderberg

is a Key Stage 2 programme designed for use with groups and whole classes to help children

develop social awareness and understanding of their interactions and responsibilities, regarding their own and others' behaviour. It meets the Government requirements that schools intervene early to tackle barriers to learning.

Extensively trialled in schools, *Social Skills for Primary Pupils* consists of 7 interactive sessions, each designed to last for about an hour. Everything you need is included in the pack: script, stickers, evaluations sheets, target sheets and homework tasks. Each session focuses on specific issues presented through a range of activities, including: games, discussions, problem-solving tasks, collaborative reflection, and paired/group work.

*Social Skills for Primary Pupils* consists of a Teachers' Guide, Photocopiable Masters, stickers and a CD-Rom. It is available from Questions Publishing Company on (0121)666-7878 or [www.education-quest.com](http://www.education-quest.com), priced £34.99+VAT.

### **P SCALES**

In 2001, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) launched P Scales, because a significant number of children educated in mainstream schools who have special educational needs (including of course, autistic spectrum conditions) are not yet working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Rather than merely assess these pupils as "W" (still working towards Level 1), P-Scales break down pre-Level 1 attainment. The scales of attainment range from P1-P8 and can be used with pupils aged 5-16. Progress is broken down so that both professionals and parents can easily see what the pupil's next targets should be.

Schools still unconfident about using the P-Scales will be pleased to learn that the QCA has now also launched a DVD entitled *Using the P-Scales*. The DVD explains how assessment is conducted, and already over 15,000 schools have already ordered copies.

The QCA further recommends schemes such as "B-squared" or "Pivats" for schools who wish to break down the P-Scales in even greater detail. For more information on P-Scales, see [pscales@qca.org.uk](mailto:pscales@qca.org.uk) Enquiries can be directed to John Brown, the QCA's Advisor for Inclusion.

### **SNAP**

SNAP, published by Hodder Murray, stands for "Special Needs Assessment Profile". It is a computer-aided diagnostic assessment schools can run to access whether pupils might have special educational needs. Its function is not to diagnose a pupil. However, SNAP does take into account parental views and its purpose is to generate practical strategies which can be implemented by parents and professionals alike. Strategies offered include managing behavioural difficulties or low self-esteem. SNAP is suitable for pupils aged 5-16. For further information, see [www.SNAPassessment.com](http://www.SNAPassessment.com)

### **SPECIALIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The Chairman of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, Sir Cyril Taylor, has announced that specialist secondary schools will be expected to treat special educational needs (SEN) as a priority. The Trust plans to create a diploma programme for specialist secondary school staff working with SEN pupils.

According to Ian Coates, divisional manager for SEN at the DfES, the DfES has plans to encourage successful secondary schools with a high proportion of SEN pupils to become specialists in special needs. Since 2005, successful specialist secondary schools have been allowed to take on a second specialism. Schools with a specialism are given around £600,000 per year and schools with a second specialism are given an extra £60 per pupil per year. This news has relevance to professionals/parents striving for appropriate mainstream secondary provision in their Borough.

### **USEFUL READING!!!**

*Meeting SEN in the Curriculum: Geography* by Diane Swift  
David Fulton Publishers, £25 (paperback and CD-Rom)

This text, written for geography teachers, covers autistic spectrum conditions as well as fragile-x. It provides overviews of different conditions followed by case studies, so that teachers have a

better knowledge of different special educational needs including autistic spectrum disorders when they consider planning/differentiation of the Geography curriculum. Both classroom and fieldwork are covered.

*Realizing the College Dream with Autism or Asperger Syndrome: a parent's guide to student success* by Ann Palmer

Jessica Kingsley Publishers, £13.99

The author, based in North Carolina in the United States, relates her son's experiences in the mainstream education system, and discusses strategies that have proven successful for her. These strategies apply equally to high-functioning College/University students in the UK. The book is useful for parents and professionals alike.

*Survival Strategies for People on the Autism Spectrum* by Marc Fleisher

Jessica Kingsley Publishers, £12.99

Diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, the author is a public speaker on Autism and has a masters degree in maths from Brunel University. His book is a self-help guide for youth and adults with autistic spectrum conditions, focusing on strategies for acquiring independent living skills, making a successful transition to University, leaving home, etc. This text is relevant for individuals with autistic spectrum disorders, their families and professionals.

## **CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

### **ASPERGER SYNDROME FOUNDATION SEMINAR**

In April, the Asperger Syndrome Foundation is running a Seminar conducted by Wendy Lawson on "Keys to Understanding Asperger's Syndrome". It is aimed at parents, carers and professionals- adults only please. Cost £15.

WHEN: Wednesday 26th April, 10am-3:30pm (registration from 9:30am)

WHERE: RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD (between Regents Park and Oxford Circus tube stations)

For booking forms, please call (0207)610-4050 or email [info@aspergerfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@aspergerfoundation.org.uk)

### **CDAP SEMINAR**

In May, The Centre for the Development of Autism Practice (CDAP) will be hosting a one-day seminar in London, run by highly-esteemed Clinical Psychologists Dr. Tony Atwood and Dr. Michelle Garnett

WHEN: 11th May 2006

WHERE: Woburn House, Tavistock Square, London

For more information, contact CDAP Director Bryan Craig on (01246)583826 or email [autism.centre@virgin.net](mailto:autism.centre@virgin.net)

### **AUTSCAPE 2006**

Autescape is a residential conference organized for and managed by individuals who have autistic spectrum conditions. People who attend Autescape can listen to an impressive line-up of speakers, meet other individuals affected by autistic spectrum conditions, or just relax in a welcoming environment.

The first Autescape was held in 2005 and was so successful that planning is currently underway for Autescape 2006! Please note that individuals who do not have autistic spectrum conditions are also welcomed! Children are welcome and childcare is provided, but if children require a support level greater than 1:6 than parents will need to arrange their own support worker.

WHEN: 31 July- 4 August 2006

WHERE: Somerset

COST: @£250-£300 per person, which includes full board accommodation on top of the conference

To join the Autescape mailing list, email [autescape-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:autescape-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Further information on Autescape is available on [www.autescape.org](http://www.autescape.org) and individual queries can be

addressed to [autscape@paradox.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:autscape@paradox.freereserve.co.uk)

**End of First Edition**  
**5th March, 2006**