

THE ASC GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust
Charity Registration Number 1104306
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WELCOME TO THE ASC GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

Welcome to the Summer Edition 2007 of *The ASC Good Practice Guide*, a free monthly resource for individuals with an autistic spectrum condition, professionals, and parents.

Which organisation 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 and special needs 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 as Disability Development Officer for Aimhigher London North Partnership, a DfES-funded organisation. Her duties include Project Management of the Partnership's activities for learners with special educational needs, including autistic spectrum conditions. To enquire if Christine is available to become involved as a trainer (autism awareness/autism and computing/autism and supporting parents) or speaker at your event, please contact her on ahaughc@aol.com.

She is very honoured to have this year been formally appointed a Trustee of the Asperger Syndrome Foundation

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 at an annual lecture at the University of Northumbria. Additionally, Chris coordinates training workshops for professionals who work with ASC.

To enquire if Chris is available to become involved as a trainer or a speaker at your event, please visit his new website, at www.chrismitchell.org.uk, or contact him at ChrisMitchell@mitchell17.wanadoo.co.uk

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.

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.

How can you subscribe to the Guide? To receive the free monthly Guide, simply email 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 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!

USEFUL RESOURCES

"ROSIE'S STORY"

"Rosie's Story" is a DVD that explains autism in child-friendly terms. The DVD is a story about about Rosie, a girl with autism, as told through the eyes of her brother.

It is a useful resource for parents/carers considering trying to explain autism to their child/the child's siblings/friends. It is aimed for children with a developmental age ranging from 5-11 years of age.

The DVD can be ordered at: www.autism.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=434&a=12063. (Code NAS 694) ISBN 1 905722 20 6

Cost: £15.99 including VAT, +P&P

NEWS

DURHAM AD DARLINGTON AUTISM SERVICE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Tracy Joisce, Countywide Commissioning Manager, Learning Disability Services (County Durham), for contributing the following article:

Background

On first coming into post as the Countywide Commissioning Manager for the Learning Disability Services for County Durham 2 ½ years ago I soon became aware that as a County Council we were not working as well as we could have been with adults who are on the Autism Spectrum and require services. From work undertaken by the Transition Sub-Group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board and work from the Special Interest Group on Autism it was clear that a number of adults on the Spectrum were falling between services and in some cases the services commissioned for these individuals were not appropriate.

Due to this poor response by services I began to take a closer interest in this area of service provision and developed an adult service steering group, to look at the type of services we wanted to provide to this group of individuals but also to consider developing a specialist post within County Durham, as it had been recognised that this type of post would be beneficial in assessing the needs of those individuals with this condition and acting as an educator to practitioners within adult services.

Shortly after this group was set up the North East Autism Consortium was developed and is now led by Elaine Hill, to look at the needs of those with Autism throughout the North East Region. This Strategic Steering Group will consider how we commission services and the type of provision we require for the future in line with the Government agenda. There will be a number of cluster groups that feed into this North Eastern Group, one of which is to be Durham and Darlington.

Where Are We Now

As a result of the above development of a Consortium it was agreed that County Durham would reshape the Autism Steering Group and Special Interest Group to become the Durham and Darlington Autism Development Group. This group has a wide membership including the Learning Skills Council, Children's Service, Learning Disability Services (Durham and Darlington), Health and Adult and Community Services, Mental Health Services, the Primary Care Trusts within Durham and Darlington, service users and carers and many other specialists within this service area.

Learning Disability Services and Mental Health Services have agreed to jointly fund a new Autism Specialist post and this is hoped to be advertised in coming months. This should improve the assessment process and stop individuals falling between the various adult services and be a good resource for practitioners to pull upon when needing advice and support on this area of work.

What we want to achieve

Ultimately what we want to achieve is improved access into services and more tailored services for individuals. We want practitioners to commission more creatively and appropriately for those with this condition and gain better outcomes within their lives, including good quality housing, education and employment opportunities.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ANGELS SUPPORT GROUP (HITCHIN AND STEVENAGE)

Based in Hitchin and Stevenage, Hertfordshire, Angels (registered charity number 1117059) is a support group run by parents for parents and carers of children with a diagnosis of ADHD or an autistic spectrum disorder, or who are being assessed for the above.

The group offers support and advice to bring parents and carers together to share experiences and reduce isolation. We have a qualified group facilitator and professional guest speakers are also invited to help with new strategies for coping.

Meeting venues and times:

* Community Learning Room, Oughtonhead School, Hitchin on Tuesdays from 10.00am to 12.00noon. There is a lending library where there is an extensive range of books that can be taken out by members.

* Bedwell Children's Centre, Stevenage on Thursday from 12.30pm to 2.30pm.

A 50p creche is available for pre-school children of people attending the Angels meetings.

For further information on Angels, please contact:

Diana Foley
Oughton Children's Centre
Oughtonhead School
Mattocke Road
Hitchin SG5 2NZ
Tel: 07786 391 456 (office hours only)
Web: www.angelssupportgroup.org.uk
Email: info@angelssupportgroup.org.uk

HOP, SKIP AND A JUMP (KENTISH TOWN, NORTH LONDON)

This is a dance class for autistic children aged 5-14 years.

Location: Expressions Studio, Linton House, 39-51 Highgate Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 1RS.

For more information, please ring: (0796)877-8757.

SAFE (SUPPORTING ASPERGERS FAMILIES IN ESSEX)

Formed in 1987, SAFE is a parent support group based in Essex with the aims of raising awareness of Asperger Syndrome, providing support for individuals and families living with Asperger Syndrome, sharing information with and developing services for individuals and families affected by Asperger Syndrome.

SAFE projects have included:

SAFE Chat: The project developed social skills and team work within a safe environment: a group of young people with AS produced, directed and participated in a TV chat show.

Social Skills Courses: 6 week courses, run by qualified and CRB checked course leaders, for young persons aged 13 and above.

SAFE Helpline: call 01621 842734 (24 hour answering service)

SAFE Support Groups: based in Colchester and in Southend-on-sea, Essex

For more information, please contact SAFE directly by writing to their Registered Office:

SAFE
155 Lodge Road
Writtle
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 3JB

SNAAP COMPUTER/MEDIA/ARTS CLUB (BARNET, NORTH LONDON)

Running since 2004, SNAAP is a partnership between autism charity St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust (registered charity number 1104306) and Finchley Catholic High School. SNAAP is a computer/media/arts club welcoming ALL children aged 3-18 affected by autistic spectrum conditions and their siblings and parents/carers, resident in the London Borough of Barnet. SNAAP is free of charge to members.

SNAAP runs after school, from 3:30pm-6pm every Wednesday term-time. In addition, SNAAP was fortunate enough to receive funding from the London Borough of Barnet to run a Summer Holiday Scheme. SNAAP ran every Monday (except Bank Holidays) and Friday over the summer holidays.

At SNAAP, families are welcome to drop in and stay as long as they like, with the children receiving support from a team of specially trained SNAAP Summer Support Workers.

In addition to offering members the opportunity to engage in computer games/computer programming/art projects, SNAAP worked on various projects over the summer, with all members welcome to join in whichever activities they wished. These activities included:

- Designing the SNAAP website
- Sessions on Digital Photography
- Drama Therapy sessions (Fridays only, run by a qualified and autism-experienced dramatherapist- please note, places on Drama Therapy must be reserved in advance)
- Creating a documentary about SNAAP, to be shown at a local cinema (Phoenix Cinema, London N2) on 20th January 2008

For further information or to join SNAAP, please visit the club's newly-created website on www.snaaponline.co.uk or send an email to SNAAP Coordinators Christine or Matt on christine@snaaponline.co.uk or matt@snaaponline.co.uk

ADULTS' SERVICES

SAFE (SUPPORTING ASPERGERS FAMILIES IN ESSEX)

Formed in 1987, SAFE is a parent support group based in Essex with the aims of raising awareness of Asperger Syndrome, providing support for individuals and families living with Asperger Syndrome, sharing information with and developing services for individuals and families affected by Asperger Syndrome.

In response for members' requests for a group to be set up focusing on issues relating specifically to adults with Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism, SAFE established A.S.A.P. (Asperger Syndrome- Adults and Parents)

A.S.A.P. focuses on issues including supported employment and training, independent living, and mental health issues. Specialist speakers are invited to monthly meetings, which take place in Colchester, Chelmsford or Southend. SAFE members aged 17 or above are welcome to attend, with or without their families. For more information, please contact SAFE directly by writing to their Registered Office:

SAFE
155 Lodge Road

**Writtle
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 3JB**

TOUCAN EMPLOYMENT (SOUTHWARK, LONDON)

Based in Southwark, London, Toucan Employment supports young people and adults with learning difficulties (including adults with autism) in supported employment. Employers have included the Royal Festival Hall, London Transport, ASDA, Kings College, Urban Outfitters, the Houses of Parliament, and the Ministry of Defence. Toucan welcomes service users whether or not they have had the opportunity for previous work experience, and Toucan has an excellent track record of finding service users paid employment, and supporting them to retain the employment. Its person-centred approach individually job-matches service users with jobs, focusing on the abilities and the interests of the service users.

With the support of the Local Authority other funders, Toucan runs a number of successful employment projects, one of which is the Van Gogh Café, based on the North end of the Brixton Road. Opened in April 2004, the Café is commercially viable, providing real jobs to service users within an inclusive environment.

To find out more about Toucan Employment, please contact the organisation directly:

**Toucan Employment
Ground Floor
100 Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7XA
Tel: 020 7620-2320
Fax: 020 7593-0199
Email: info@toucanemployment.co.uk**

CONFERENCES, LECTURES, SEMINARS AND SESSIONS

ACTION FOR ASD- THREE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Action for ASD is running three separate conferences this autumn, as follows:

28th September: INTRODUCTION TO AUTISM

Led by Geoff Evans and Pat Smith

4th October: MANAGING BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH AN ASD

Led by Val Cumine and Gill Stevenson

7th November: SENSORY ISSUES

Led by Geoff Evans and Pat Smith

All conferences are taking place in Lancashire. Costs vary according to whether delegate is a parent/professional. For further information or to reserve places, please contact Action for ASD directly:

**Action for ASD
Suite 7 Kingsmill
Queen Street
Harle Syke, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 2HX
Tel/Fax: (01282)714218
Web: www.actionasd.org.uk
Email: info@actionasd.org.uk**

**THE ASPERGER SYNDROME FOUNDATION SEMINAR SERIES PRESENTS
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR DIFFICULT MOMENTS: "RELATIONSHIPS AND
ASPERGER SYNDROME"**

Presented by Sarah Hendrickx and Keith Newton

Sarah Hendrickx and Keith Newton are co-authors of Aspergers Syndrome: A Love Story (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, June 2007). Keith has Asperger's Syndrome (self-diagnosed). Sarah is his partner and also a Training Consultant in AS (www.asperger-training.com)

AIMED AT: Individuals and couples involved in a relationship where either partner has AS and professionals working in adult support and counselling.

DATE: Monday 29th October 2007, 10am-3:30pm, registration from 9:30am

VENUE: RIBA LONDON, 66 Portland Place, London W1B 1AD

COST: £25 professionals, £15 parent/carers, free for individuals with Asperger Syndrome (please make cheques payable to the "Asperger Syndrome Foundation") Sandwich lunches and refreshments are included in the cost.

Please email seminars@aspergerfoundation.org.uk OR download a booking form from the Asperger Syndrome Foundation website www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk. This form needs to be returned to the Asperger Syndrome Foundation along with cheque payment, to reserve a place at the Seminar. The Foundation's address is:

Asperger Syndrome Foundation
The Kensington Charity Centre
4th Floor, Charles House
375 Kensington High Street
London W14 8QH

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Asperger Syndrome Foundation's Founder, Beatrice Buisseret, for contributing this information.

CHRIS MITCHELL PRESENTS: LIVING ON THE ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Chris Mitchell is giving a talk on improving the quality of life for people with High-Functioning Autism/AS, including strategies for improving the young person's experiences in mainstream education.

DATE: Monday 24th September 2007

TIME: 4:30-6pm (refreshments from 4pm)

VENUE: Templewood Primary School, Pentley Park, WGC, Herts

PURPOSE OF TALK: for attendees to gain an understanding of AS, including how it may feel to have the condition, and how it affects individuals with the condition in different situations (classroom/workplace/home) as well as how the condition may be perceived by others around them.

COST: £5 per person (Cheques payable to Templewood School Association or TSA)

Please send direct to:

***Lesley Zorlakki c/o Chris Mitchell Talk, Templewood Primary School, Pentley Park,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8***

For information, please call: 0771 448 3485 or email zorlakki@onetel.net

PACT CONFERENCE

Parents Autistic Children Together (PACT proudly announce a special Conference.

DATE: Wednesday 7th November 2007

TIME: 9:30am-3pm

VENUE: Aventis, M&B Business Centre, Rainham Road, South Dagenham, Essex RM12 7XS

SPEAKERS: Chris Mitchell and Dr. Rita Jordan

COST: PACT Members- £15 Professionals- £40

Cheques made payable to "PACT" and please sent to PACT, 482 Gale Street, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 4NU. For further information, please call PACT on (0208)220-0090.

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks PACT for contributing this information.

UNDERSTANDING DYSPRAXIA: HELPING THOSE AFFECTED TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL- The ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE LEARNING ALLIANCE

Time 9:00 – 16.30

Date Thursday 27th September 2007

Venue The New Armouries, The Banqueting Suite
H.M. Tower of London, London, EC3N 4AB

Event is for: Health Professionals, education professionals, parents

Charitable organisation, The Learning Alliance (www.learning-alliance.org) will be holding its annual conference to raise funds for the Dyspraxia Foundation during Dyspraxia Awareness Week (Monday 24th September – Sunday 30th September 2007).

A feast of high-profile, special guests will provide anyone working or living with children with dyspraxia with a practical, enlightening and thought-provoking workshop based in the prestigious Banqueting Suite of the inspirational Tower of London.

A wonderful dyspraxia/family themed raffle will be drawn with fabulous goodies worth over £1000 on offer for just 150 guests to win.

Dyspraxia books, helpful gadgets and gizmos will also be on sale in addition to relevant information stands to present valuable networking opportunities for all.

Attendance to this one-day conference is by reservation only and a donation of £35 per person for parents and £45 for professionals will be required. Dyspraxia Foundation members are entitled to a 10% discount. Lunch & refreshments will be provided. Raffle tickets available on the day for £1 each.

For further information including guest-speaker profiles or to download a reservation form or map please visit www.learning-alliance.org or contact Kate Evans at Equazen (Event Sponsor): Tel: 0207 243 7110 or email: kate.evans@equazen.com

All ticket and raffle sales will be donated to the Dyspraxia Foundation

WENDY LAWSON- UK BOOKINGS IN 2007

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Wendy Lawson for sharing her 2007 tour dates with our readers. Wendy's range of presentations and audiences- from a talk with parents to training for County Council staff- is amazing! The list below does not include Wendy's Singapore, Australian, or other international tour dates, although details are available upon request.

Autumn

- October 15th (Cornwall) Contact: Judy Shoten jshorten@cornwall.gov.uk

- October 19th (Middlesbrough) Anna Wood themainproject@hotmail.co.uk

RESEARCH REQUESTS

AUTISM RESEARCH CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE: STUDY ON ADULTS WITH AUTISM/ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Liliana Ruta, a researcher at the Autism Research Centre, University of Cambridge, along with Erin Ingudomnukul (the coordinator of the project) are currently recruiting adults (18-30 years of age) with Asperger Syndrome or High-Functioning Autism for a major study. For further information on the study/copies of flyers promoting the study, please contact:

Liliana Ruta
University of Cambridge
Douglas House
18b Trumpington Road
Cambridge
CB2 8AH

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks Resources for Autism for passing this information on.

DIPEX LIVING WITH AUTISM PROJECT- UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

The DIPEX Living with Autism project is funded by The Wellcome Trust and is based at DIPEX, a research unit within the Department of Primary Health Care, University of Oxford.

www.dipex.org is a website that presents people's experiences of health and illness in a text, audio and video form. The aim is for the website to be a resource for people experiencing particular health issues, health and education professionals who may work with them, and a teaching resource for health/education professionals.

The Living with Autism project will involve interviews with:

people with autism or Asperger syndrome over the age of 16 parents or carers of people (including children under the age of 16) with autism or Asperger syndrome.

Clips from the interviews will be presented on the website to provide a comprehensive picture of people's experiences of living with autism or Asperger syndrome.

If you would like further details of the project, please contact Sara Ryan on 01865 289374, email sara.ryan@dphpc.ox.ac.uk

INFANT SIBLINGS STUDY, THE BABYLAB AT BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

The Babylab at Birkbeck, University of London, has launched the first study in the UK looking at infant siblings of children with autism. Using newly developed techniques for studying brain and behaviour in infants, the team is investigating whether there are any differences in development between infants who have brothers or sisters with autism and those who do not. It is hoped that this will help identify the early signs of the disorder, allowing for earlier and more effective intervention aimed at improving the quality of life of children with autism.

If you have a baby aged 0-12 months who has an older sibling diagnosed with autism and wish to take part in the "Baby Sibs Project", please contact us for more information.

Dr. Mayada Elsabbagh or Ms. Holly Garwood

The Babylab, Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development
FREEPOST RRGX-ARGH-SESR
Henry Wellcome Building, Birkbeck College
Malet Street
London WC1E 7HX
Tel: 020 7079 0754

Email: asd@bbk.ac.uk or visit: www.cbcd.bbk.ac.uk

The ASC Good Practice Guide warmly thanks The Babylab for contributing this information.

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