

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

**St. Nicholas Academy for Autism Trust**  
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## **WELCOME TO THE ASC GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**

Welcome to the second 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 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 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 at 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!

## **NEWLY DIAGNOSED CHILDREN/YOUTH**

### **GOOD PRACTICE: DfES EARLY SUPPORT BOOKLET: "INFORMATION FOR PARENTS: AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS AND RELATED CONDITIONS"**

This A4 guide, over 50 pages long, is for parents with children who have recently been diagnosed on the autistic spectrum, or who are in the process of receiving a diagnosis. The contents include the following: introduction; coming to terms with a diagnosis; what is ASC; getting exact information about your child's diagnosis; getting help; early intervention; early intervention programmes and approaches; dietary and bio-medical interventions; helping your child at home-behaviour; statutory support; benefits and financial help; further sources of information; useful

organisations.

Copies of this booklet can be obtained from: DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DJ

Tel: (0845)602-2260 Email: [dfes@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dfes@prolog.uk.com) Please quote reference: ESPP12

### GOOD PRACTICE: AUTISM EXEMPLAR, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DH)

In 2004, the Department of Health published "Autism Exemplar, National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services". Its target audience includes: Primary Care Trusts, Local Education Authorities, and other Government Departments. The document will also be of interest to parents and the voluntary sector. The document's purpose is to provide best practice guidance in delivering flexible, holistic, child-centred care for children diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition, which is sensitive to the child's changing needs and is integrated between agencies over time. The exemplar is the ideal if what should be happening re- the pathway to support, and can be used for many purposes, including:

\*to help multi-agency partners to re-evaluate the way they commission and deliver children's services

\*to provide a multi-agency training tool for staff working with autistic children

\*to assist examination and improvements upon local clinical and non-clinical governance

\*to provide a non-threatening mechanism to open discussion with focus groups on any perceived shortfalls of the current service

The Publication can be obtained by calling the Department of Health on (08701)555455 or contacting: [dh@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dh@prolog.uk.com), quoting "40490/Autism-National Service Framework for Children, Young People, and Maternity Services." For more information about the National Service Framework, please visit:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/ChildrenServices/fs/en>

### NEWLY-FORMED AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITION ORGANISATIONS

#### 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)

### CLUBS/REGULAR SOCIAL SESSIONS

#### 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: FOOTBALL CLUB FOR 7-11 YEAR OLDS DIAGNOSED WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME/HIGH-FUNCTIONING AUTISM/DYSPRAXIA (HARINGEY)**

The Haringey Branch of the National Autistic Society, Haringey Mencap and Tottenham Hotspur are running a football coaching club, Wednesdays from 4:45-5:45, on an enclosed outdoor pitch based at New River Sports Centre, White Hart Lane, London N22. Places must be booked. The club is directed at children in mainstream education who are unable to easily access organised sports opportunities. For further details, contact Richard Taylor at Haringey Mencap on (0208)365-0251 or Christina Heidensohn at the Haringey Branch of the National Autistic Society on (0797)630-5684. Thanks to Christina for providing this information.

### **AUTISTIC MEDITATION GROUP FOR ASC 16-21 YEAR-OLDS**

WHEN: Every Friday Evening, 7:45pm-around 9pm

WHERE: North London Buddhist Centre, 72 Holloway Road, London N7 (Nearest tube station: Highbury and Islington; Buses: 43, 393, and 271).

COST: First session free, £3 each session thereafter

WHO CAN JOIN: Membership is restricted to youth/adults with an autistic spectrum condition

WHO RUNS THE GROUP: Paul Wady (himself diagnosed with High-Functioning Autism at the age of 41)

HOW TO JOIN: Contact Paul on [Hoxtonpaul@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Hoxtonpaul@yahoo.co.uk)

WHAT HAPPENS? A meditation period (@25 minutes), followed by silent session, followed by free discussion. Thanks to Paul Wady for providing this information.

### **LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND ASC**

#### **GOOD PRACTICE: "BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO LEARNING- PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM AND ASPERGER SYNDROME" (SURREY CHILDREN'S SERVICE, SURREY CC)**

As the result of a partnership project funded by the DfES, the above booklet was produced in 2004. The organisations involved were: the NAS, Surrey County Council's Children's Service, Partnership with Parents, and the South East Region SEN Partnership. The purpose of the project was to address the academic and social difficulties that students with autistic spectrum conditions encounter when undergoing transition from primary to secondary mainstream education.

This booklet covers issues such as planning for transition, behaviour strategies, guidelines for reporting incidents at school, and resources.

Copies of the booklet can be downloaded from the Surrey Children's Service website:

[www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

### **GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND ASC**

#### **GOOD PRACTICE: ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON AUTISM (APPGA)**

In 2000, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA) was established. Its purpose is to campaign for changes in government policy and to increase Parliamentary awareness of autistic spectrum conditions. Representatives from all the major political parties- both MPs and Peers- are members.

APPGA's goals are set out in a published Manifesto, which complements existing initiatives such as Autism Europe's *Charter of Rights for Persons with Autism* (1993). The Manifesto states that:

"...The APPGA believes that agencies have a responsibility *to work together to make a reality of social inclusion and person-centred planning for people with autistic spectrum disorders. Central government must give firm guidance to local authorities and provide them with sufficient support to ensure consistency of service provision.*"

For further information on the Manifesto, contact: [appga@nas.org.uk](mailto:appga@nas.org.uk)

If you support the Manifesto the APPGA asks that you ask your own MP to sign up- the more signatures the Manifesto receives, the more effective as a lobbying tool to influence government policies it will become.

To see details of the APPGA Manifesto, find the name of your MP, and download an on-line version of a letter to send to MPs asking them to sign up to the Manifesto, please see:

<http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=159&a=2644>

### **NEWS: 07/03/06 ADJOURNMENT DEBATE, HOUSE OF COMMONS- "CHILDREN WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME"**

Many thanks to Dinah Murray, ASC (Adults) Regional Tutor at the University of Birmingham, for this contribution.

On 7th March the House of Commons had an adjournment debate on "Children with Asperger Syndrome". The Debate was presented by Helen Jones (Labour, Warrington). Contents of the debate can be accessed on Hansard (7 March 2006: column 794):

<http://www.publications.parliament.u/pa/cm200506/cmhansard/cm060307/debate/60307-27.htm>

OR on: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2006-03-07a.794.0&s=Asperger+Syndrome>

### **CONFERENCES, LECTURES, SEMINARS AND SESSIONS**

#### **ANNUAL "I CAN" CONFERENCE**

I CAN is a national speech, language and communication charity. The theme of this year's conference is "Communication and behaviour: exploring the link."

WHEN: Friday 21st April

WHERE: Institute of Education, London WC1

COST: £99

To reserve a place or obtain further details, please contact I CAN on (0845)225-4071 or

[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)

#### **LECTURE ON GLUTEN/CASEIN INTOLERANCE**

Paul Shattock, Director of the Autism Research Unit, University of Sunderland, will be giving a talk on the role of gluten/casein intolerance in autistic spectrum conditions.

WHEN: Tuesday 25th April

WHERE: Centre 404, 404 Camden Road, London N7 0SJ

For booking forms, contact Caroline or Abena on (0208)445-8005.

#### **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)

Thanks to the Asperger Syndrome Foundation for providing this information.

#### **LECTURE BY RITA JORDAN: "CHANGING THE CHILD? ISSUES ABOUT INCLUSION FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM"**

Rita Jordan is Professor of Autism Studies at the University of Birmingham. Her lecture follows on from her research interest into

the fundamental nature of learning and teaching in autism.

WHEN: Thursday 27 April, 6pm-7:30pm

WHERE: University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield

COST: £7.50 only!

For booking forms, please contact Lisa Garner, University of Hertfordshire, on [l.a.garner@herts.ac.uk](mailto:l.a.garner@herts.ac.uk), or (01707)285695,x5695. Thanks to Lisa for providing this information.

### ASPERGER SYNDROME FOUNDATION SEMINAR: TONY ATTWOOD/MICHELLE GARNETT, "MAKING FRIENDS AND MANAGING FEELINGS"

Dr. Tony Atwood and Dr. Michelle Garnett are highly-acclaimed Clinical Psychologists and experts in the field of ASC.

WHEN: 12th May 2006, 10am-3:30pm, registration from 9:30am

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

For more information, please call (0207)610-4050 or contact: [info@aspergerfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@aspergerfoundation.org.uk)

Thanks to the Asperger Syndrome Foundation for providing this information.

### CENTRE 404 FAMILY SUPPORT- FOR ISLINGTON RESIDENTS

Centre 404 Family Support offers **free** sessions for Islington-resident parents of children with a special need. Please note that parents resident outside of Islington, professionals and others are also welcome to contact Centre 404 regarding these sessions! To book a place, contact (0207)445-8005 or (0207)697-1325. Sessions available this Spring include:

1. *Speech and Language*, led by Elizabeth Osbourne, Advisory Teacher for Language and Communication.

Wednesdays 17th and 24th May, 10:30am-2pm

These sessions cover how children learn to talk, what speech and language therapy is, what therapists do, what schools do, and how parents can help their child to talk better.

2. *Brain Gym*, led by Kay McCarroll.

Fridays 9th and 16th June, 10:30am-2pm

Used in numerous schools, Brain Gym consists of basic movements which can help improve the memory, learning, and behaviour of children, whatever their age or ability. These sessions teach Brain Gym movements.

### 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 [autescape@paradox.freemove.co.uk](mailto:autescape@paradox.freemove.co.uk)

Thanks to Autescape for providing this information

### USEFUL READING AND RESOURCES

#### ASC AND BEREAVEMENT

Many thanks to Lynn Bhanja, Senior Lecturer, School of Education, University of Hertfordshire, for the following contribution:

"As a lecturer in the School of Education at Hertfordshire University I regularly visit students who are on placement in schools. A recent student had an 8 year old boy in her class with ASC whose mother had recently died. The boy was having bereavement counselling which was felt to be inappropriate both by his carer and the school because the counsellor had no insight into the nature of the needs of someone with ASC. I was asked if I could offer any advice and my research found the [NAS Code of Practice Procedures, Document 3, entitled The management of bereavement in services for people with autism](#). The school and the carer found it incredibly helpful, as did the counsellor, who has changed her practice as a result. The boy is doing as well as can be expected given the circumstances and is receiving more appropriate help now."

. The information on bereavement can be accessed at:  
<http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=364&a=2180>

**An Asperger Dictionary of Everyday Expressions, by Ian Stuart-Hamilton  
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, ISBN: 1843101521, £13.95**

Many thanks to Deborah Cohen, Parent Partnership Officer, London Borough of Barnet, for recommending this publication.

The 03/02/06 edition of Community Care review of the Asperger Dictionary gives it a 5/5 rating. The purpose of the Dictionary is to explain a wide variety of phrases which, whilst commonly used, can be confusing to individuals who have an autistic spectrum disorder. The Dictionary also includes politeness ratings to explain different levels of offence caused by using particular phrases. The Dictionary is NOT recommended for young children as it does contain some abusive words.

**LDA- "Pull Your Socks Up!" Game**

LDA have produced a card game designed to help children with ASC to make sense of common phrases such as "pull your socks up." The game is designed as a useful resource for schools, speech therapists, and parents. For further information on the game, please visit:  
[www.ldalearning.com](http://www.ldalearning.com)

**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.

**FINALLY- INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH PROGRAMME INTO ASCs?**

*The ASC Good Practice Guide* thanks Esther Strom for her invitation for readers to participate in her research programme in ASC :

"My name is Esther Strom and I have been involved in research into autism since 1991.

My first study was a dissertation in part fulfillment of my Masters in Psychology of Education, at the Institute of Education.

My research paper, *Elicitation of First Order Theory of Mind*, was presented by Professor Dermot Bowler at an autism conference in New Orleans and in 1999 was published in the journal *Autism*.

This study was one of the first to determine that children with ASCs can be taught to mind read.

I have since continued with research in the field of autism at City University, working under Professor Bowler. I am now researching memory acquisition in autism.

Following a study last year into "meaningfulness in memory" in autism, this year I am researching the acquisition in autism of autobiographical memory.

**This research study requires mother-child conversations of specific past events, as well as the child carrying out a small number of simple Theory of Mind tasks. In addition, the child is asked to retell a story from a wordless picture book.**

**Anyone who would like more information or who might be interested in participating in the project is welcome to contact either Professor Dermot Bowler or myself, at"**

**End of Second Edition**

**April, 2006**