



Autumn 2015 Information for Parents in the North East

Linking parents and professionals – sharing knowledge and information on autism

Here are some local events that you and your family may find interesting



Do you live in South Tyneside and have a child with ASD? Would you like some advice, support or just a chat? You will be warmly welcomed if you decide to come along to the Autism Parent Support Group at Boldon Community Centre. The Group meets **once a fortnight from Monday, 14th September** – 5.15 pm – 6.45 pm. Running alongside this will be a junior activity club to enable you to bring your child along while you attend the meeting. For more information please contact Gillian Harte (SENDIASS officer) on 0191 424 6345 or e-mail: gillian.harte@southtyneside.gov.uk

NAS Resource Centre: Parent & Carer Group Sessions—held at Thomas Bewick School, Linhope Road, West Denton, Newcastle, NE5 2LW - 9.30—11.30 - The Group meet every other Thursday as follows:-

1st October, 15th October, 5th November, 19th November, 3rd December, 17th December *
*Please ring beforehand as we go out for a meal after the group at the end of term.

If you would like further information please contact Deborah Garland on 07884 117741 or e-mail: Deborah.garland@nas.org.uk

Autism Parenting Programmes in Gateshead

The Special Educational Needs Improvement Team (SENIT) are delivering a rolling programme of parenting courses for school age children (4yrs to 11yrs) on the autism spectrum in Gateshead. The programme beginning in late September is already full but parents can express interest in places for programmes running in the spring term 2016.

Please contact Joanna Haslam for an application form. Joanna is on 0191 433 8725 or email: joannahaslam@gateshead.gov.uk

Daslⁿe Conference 2015 – Autism in Education

The fourth Daslⁿe conference is taking place from 10 am – 2.30 pm, on **Wednesday 7th October 2015** at Newcastle University.

Guest Speaker: Dean Beadle will present 'Aspergers, Education and Me'.

There are three parallel workshop sessions in the afternoon:

- 1) Classroom strategies for young children
- 2) Helping teachers support children better
- 3) Managing sleep problems

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Moving House?

Please send an e-mail with your new address to daslne@ncl.ac.uk:
Or you can contact Daslⁿe on 0191 282 1400

Costa Coffee Autism Social Evenings - Fore Street, Hexham

The Costa Coffee Autism Social Group has been meeting in Hexham since February 2014. It has been very successful and everyone who goes enjoys the relaxing atmosphere provided by Manager Annette Cuthbertson and her generous staff.

The staff are aware of the needs of people on the autism spectrum and are friendly, calm and encouraging to their clients. Annette Cuthbertson explained "I've got a coffee shop and the freedom to open when I want, so I think it's important to use that to help people in the community."



The autism social is open to anyone on or suspected of being on the autistic spectrum. A diagnosis is not needed. Friends, family and carers are welcome too as often these are the people who need the chance to get out and connect with others. The numbers vary between 10 and 25.

The teenagers often bring along their portable consoles and connect up and play games against each other or use the free Wi-Fi provided. Some children just like to sit quietly and read a book. The whole point of the Costa evenings is to enable people on the spectrum to do something normal in a low pressured environment.

Hot drinks are provided free by Costa on arrival. Annette Cuthbertson commented "Some people wouldn't look me in the eye when they first came and now are comfortable ordering and paying for their own drinks. The evening has allowed them to build confidence. Some young people also now come in to Costa in the day to order drinks."

The Hexham Costa Social is open on the **first Thursday of every month** from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm. Organisers are Karen Slee, Catherine Bird and Louise Simpson who all have children on the autism spectrum.

Alnwick Costa Coffee are also planning a similar evening.

Woodcarving and sculpture workshops and apprenticeship



Artistic creativity and autism can go together. Robert, aged 20, has a part-time apprenticeship with sculptor Mark Crowley in North Shields.

Robert's own skill is in painting stones and giving them individuality with 'googly' eyes. Through working with Mark on building a market stall out of recycled wood, he has gradually branched out and learned many skills. These were put to use in a summer project this year to apply cladding of driftwood shingles to a surf shack on Longsands beach (see picture). Other skills Robert has acquired along the way include running a workshop for others on stone painting. The next project is to make wooden toys to sell for Christmas. Robert describes the work as "making awesome stuff pirate style".

Robert's apprenticeship is funded yearly through his personal education budget, alongside attending college. Mark Crowley used to work in a school for children on the autism spectrum as a creative technician, and now runs educational workshops as well as his own woodworking business. You can follow Mark on twitter @MarkCrowley_ and the work with Robert @stonesandstick.