



Autism Gold Coast Inc

April 2010 Newsletter

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Coordinators:

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Autism Gold Coast: 5559 1747

[Please leave a message if phone is unattended.]

Information, Support, Networks, Library

At Autism Gold Coast's Annual General Meeting on 17 March, I delivered the following report.

As another year passes we continue to operate from non permanent premises, now here at Nerang Neighbourhood Centre (NNC). It has been a very frustrating process for all concerned that we have been ongoingly unable to find ourselves a permanent base. At our AGM last year I was able to announce to members that we were in negotiations with GCCC for permanent premises. I can tonight confirm that the premises we are seeking is the soon to be former caretaker's residence at the Cascade Gardens at Broadbeach. Originally we sought the former library building however this alternate opportunity came up and we are still seeking to resolve a deal on it. It remains a frustratingly slow process and I can only assure members that we continue to work toward a result that will satisfy us all.

In November we put in an application to FaHCSIA to become a service provider for the delivery of Autism Early Intervention services. On 22 February 2010, we were advised that we had been successful and can now work on opening up access to a further eleven new therapy and family-based service providers to families eligible for the Commonwealth government's *Helping Children with Autism* package here on the Gold Coast. This is an exceptional achievement and one which many local families will be able to benefit from.

Our committee members continue to facilitate the support group meetings here at NNC. The value of this service to the community can not be measured and I take this opportunity on behalf of all members of Autism Gold Coast to acknowledge the coordinators for their tireless attention and assistance.

We again in 2009 took advantage of the opportunity to participate in the fund raising "Sausage Sizzle" activity at Harvey Norman Bundall. The day was a success as a fundraiser and an opportunity to raise public awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Gold Coast Community. To those who assisted on the day again my heartfelt thanks. I as much as every member of the community appreciate that the added pressures that all families are experiencing both financially and time management. I believe that whilst it is easy to say "I'll help" it is often difficult to make that commitment to these endeavours and gratefully acknowledge the assistance given by the helpers on these types of day.

The annual Autism Awareness Display was again held in May at Robin Town Centre outside Target. We caught the attention of many passers-by, raised some money, sold some raffle tickets in the Gold Coast Community Benefit Art Union[#], gave away some of our colourful promotional balloons, spoke with interested community members, met several families for the first time, extended knowledge of our network through people who identified as knowing a person with a child on the spectrum, and had chats with some of familiar families!

Autism Awareness Week Family Picnic 2009 was held in May at Palm Beach at Laguna Park. Initially I thought we had made a grave error when I arrived to find the park packed with families enjoying a very pleasant autumn Sunday lunch. The GCCC even had a musician playing for everyone's entertainment. As we are all aware sometimes the behavior of our children can be challenging. I then realized that this is what it was all about. We were able to show to the public that our children are not all that different from their own. The public were then also able to participate in the magic show. It is all about being part of our local community.

[#] If anyone would like to assist us & sell some Raffle Tickets, please contact Autism GC on the above phone numbers in the top right hand corner. *Continued on page 2*

Autism Gold Coast thanks the office of *Jann Stuckey MP for Currumbin* [Suite 1,1045 Gold Coast Highway, Palm Beach, phone 5598 1387] for photocopying our newsletters for distribution throughout the Gold Coast.

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DISCLAIMER: The articles in this newsletter are for information purposes only. Any views or opinions expressed may not necessarily be those of Autism Gold Coast Inc. Autism Gold Coast Inc and the writer disclaim any liability arising directly or indirectly from the information provided in this newsletter.

Community Services Directory of Autism-Friendly people, businesses, and places

Through community support and knowledge shared, it is time to update and expand our **Community Services Directory of Autism-Friendly people, businesses, and places!!**

Perhaps if we start now, and collate under our results under a variety of headings, we could thank these people during **Autism Awareness Month in May!**

So start talking at our support meetings and amongst your friends and networks, and email/send in your "Autism-Friendly people, businesses and places".

Ideas: Parks Hairdressers Optometrists Doctor's surgeries Cafes/Eating Out
Swimming Teachers/businesses Activities/Places to visit (Leisure)
Training organisations Others...

President's Report continued from page 1

The boating day at Tallebudgera in November was its usual success. I cannot comment more than to say the smiles on the faces of the children and families speak volumes to me.

Activities apart from those listed above continue to be undertaken by the committee members and they continue to work in close co-ordination with the community in seeking to promote our needs.

Ladies & Gentleman in closing I wish to again acknowledge the achievements of my fellow committee members, I thank them for their assistance in our activities and commend them to the membership as persons who truly know the meaning of the words "giving of themselves". Please continue to give them your support as we all strive to further the cause to which we are all dedicated.

Tony Maher , President Autism Gold Coast Inc

Election of Office Bearers:

Autism Gold Coast Inc held its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 17 March 2010, with the following office bearers elected unopposed:

President: **Tony Maher** Vice President: **Debra Tew** Secretary: **Helen Steinhardt**

Treasurer: ... **Vacant** ...

As always we welcome offers of assistance on the Management Committee.

In particular, a TREASURER. If any one has time to offer to do the banking and can use Quickbooks, we would love to hear from you. Contact Tony 0411 744 929, Debra 5508 2376 or Helen 0417 700190.



Partners of People with Aspergers – Gold Coast group

For further information on support meetings for any partners of Aspies on the Gold Coast, PIA - Partners in Aspieland, contact Tricia Thompson on 55 354191. *Please leave a message if the phone is unattended.*

Tony Attwood recently sent through a flyer for a Asperger Partners' Support Group (APSG) which is Brisbane based, and has a website: <http://www.aspiepartners.com/>



*Start a conversation in
your community to help
raise awareness*



DATE
CLAIMERS

Volunteers WANTED!

to assist at our **Autism Awareness Display** at Robina Town Centre, **Saturday 22 May**, either 10-12noon or 12-2pm.

RSVP: admin@autismgoldcoast.com.au, or leave a message at 5559 1747.



Family Picnic & Fun Activities

Sunday 16th May 2010, 10am — 2pm, Laguna Park, PALM BEACH

All families welcome whether financial members or not

12noon Sausage Sizzle, 1pm Top Hat the Magician

A great place for the Dads to meet other Dads!

BYO drinks, snacks/special diet, picnic rug and chairs



This park is brilliant, and easily the best kids playground on the Coast! There's a huge array of interactive and fun equipment to suit kids of all ages. The entire playground is fenced, which is great for the little ones. Try out the huge adventure playground, pirate ship, heaps of slides and rockers, a pedal power monorail, funny faces interactive boards and heaps more. An awesome place that is sure to buzz with excitement! (access Laguna Ave & Philippine Pde, Palm Beach)

RSVP appreciated: admin@autismgoldcoast.com.au or leave a message at 5559 1747.

Adults Support Group news...



This is a support group for adults on the Autistic Spectrum including Asperger Syndrome. Whether you have grown up with an ASD diagnosis, have recently been diagnosed, or simply recognise some ASD traits within yourself, if you are say over 17 years old and would like to meet others like you (in some ways at least), please join us!

We meet on the **second Sunday each month (3-5pm)**. Due to growing interest, the support group meetings will be held at a **new venue** as of the April meeting: **at Tugun Village Community Centre, 414 Coolangatta Road, Tugun** to share our stories and exchange information over tea and biscuits. **The cost is \$4. The next meeting is Sunday 11 April.** The Discussion Topic is Asperger anger and anger management strategies.

Future discussion topics include practice with nonverbal communication, when to tell others about having ASD, and control (rituals, obsessions and rules).

The group welcomes new members. **Contact Mikako:** 5559 5391, mikako.naito@bigpond.com or http://mikakonaitopsychologist.com/Support_Group-e3-80-80.html

World Autism Awareness Day 2nd April 2010

[2010 World Autism Awareness Day message from United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.](#)



Click on this link to view his video message.

World Autism Awareness Day shines a bright light on autism as a growing global health crisis. WAAD activities help to increase and develop world knowledge of the autism epidemic and impart information regarding the importance of early diagnosis and early intervention. Additionally, WAAD celebrates the unique talents and skills of persons with autism and is a day when individuals with autism are warmly welcomed and embraced in community events around the globe.

By bringing together autism organizations all around the world, we will give a voice to the millions of individuals worldwide who are undiagnosed, misunderstood and looking for help. Please join us in our effort to inspire compassion, inclusion and hope.

<http://www.worldautismawarenessday.org> <http://www.lightitupblue.org/>

<http://www.autismawareness.com.au/newsview/world-autism-awareness-day--2-april-2010-15>

autismhour April 30 9:00+>>>

During **autismhour** another family will know that their child has been diagnosed with autism. And by the end of the day six other sets of parents will have joined them. This happens every working day.

There are 130 000 Australians with autism. Yet awareness for this devastating, lifelong disability is remarkably low. We need your help to change this.

[Send a message](#) of support to people with autism and their families and take a pledge to spread the word about autism on April 30. Visit autismhour.com.au

Autism Awareness Month is April

Some ways you might like to get involved are:

- ◆ Volunteering your time to help [Autism Gold Coast](#) - on the Management Committee, or at events;
- ◆ Add a link to [Autism Gold Coast's webpage](#) from your website or company's website;
- ◆ Talk to [Autism Gold Coast](#) about sponsoring a project: 0411 744 929, 0417 700 190, 55082376;
- ◆ Offer to do some child-minding for parents so that they can have some quality time together;
- ◆ Send in a nomination for an Autism-friendly business, activity or service, to [Autism Gold Coast](#) and we will send them a Community Award;
- ◆ Do something kind for a family affected by autism. Take them a gift card for groceries, pay for a therapy session, offer to mow a lawn or to babysit, encourage neighbours to lend a helping hand;
- ◆ Talk to friends, family or colleagues about Autism/Aspergers;
- ◆ Hire out a DVD: • Mozart and the Whale • Snow Flake • The Black Balloon • Adam • Max and Mary;
- ◆ Read or give a book: • *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, Mark Haddon • *House Rules*, Jodi Picoult • *Dear John*, Nicholas Sparks • *Look Me in the Eye*, John Elder Robison
- ◆ Support [A4](#) by registering on their website and supporting their activities;
- ◆ Organise a morning tea or fundraising event with your friends and donate the funds to your favourite Autism charity;
- ◆ Buy some Autism Qld fundraising items at our meetings, or online at www.autismqld.com.au: rainbow wristbands, highlighters, pens, keyrings, lapel pins, 1GB USB rainbow wristbands.



A mother shares...

Hi my name is *Billy*. I am 8 years old. I have [Asperger Syndrome/ Autism/ASD]. I struggle with everyday issues, noise, music, people, smells - they can confuse and send me into 'meltdown'. If I'm too loud or excited, this may be my way of coping with everyday life. It may look like I'm just 'naughty' but I'm not; I am a good boy.

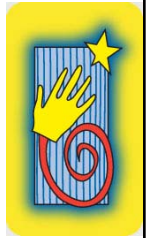
I will have ASD forever so I'm working hard with Mum, Dad, my Doctor and my school to learn to manage myself and my disorder better. Thank you for your understanding.



To register your school or business to participate in **Dress Differently Day** and raise funds for Autism Queensland, please call 3273 0000 or email lauren.vertigan@autismqld.com.au

'The Traffic Jam In My Brain'

Formerly known as 'Getting Kids In Sync'



Surfers Paradise - Saturday 1st May, 2010

<http://sensorytools.net/PDF/GenJereb-TJB-AU-2010-05web.pdf>

A sensory processing approach to challenges associated with Autism,
ADHD, Learning and Behavioural Disorders

Presented by international speaker

Genevieve Jereb OTR

Occupational Therapist / Author and singer of the much loved children's albums
'Say G'day!' , 'Jumpin' Jellybeans' , 'Rhythm and Rhyme' and 'Cool Bananas'

Registration Cost: \$199* (Professional) \$189*(Parent)

****Early bird rate, expires 28th April***

Workshop description:

This presentation is designed for therapists, teachers, parents, caregivers and other professionals who are interested in understanding the fundamentals of sensory processing and its impact on attention, behaviour, social engagement, creative thinking, purpose driven play and learning. Genevieve offers practical and powerful tools to help support children "learn and thrive from the inside out". Participants will be able to add beneficial experiences to the sensory diets of the children they care for. Respiration and its effects on behaviour, learning and attention will be presented along with practical tools to support the breath at home, in the classroom or in the social environment. Participants will be exposed to a multitude of activities involving rhythm and movement to implement immediately when leaving the workshop with the children they care for. A relationship based approach to interacting with your children to support problem solving, motor planning, creative thinking, building bridges between ideas and social connectiveness will also be presented in specific detail. The speaker will address how sensory processing difficulties affect many children, both with and without the diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorders, Aspergers Syndrome, ADHD, ADD, learning challenges and other developmental and neurological challenges. The speaker will describe how, both recognised and undetected, sensory processing difficulties in children can significantly impact social and emotional relationships, behaviour, attention and learning in the classroom, home and clinic.



~ Autism Gold Coast has two free tickets to give away to parents/carers ~

CONDITIONS: You must be a financial member of Autism Gold Coast Inc; you must be able to attend on the conference day; you must leave Your Name, Phone Number, Age of Child/Children on 0437 731 805's MessageBank. Offer closes 6pm Friday 23 April 2010. The final decision will be made by the Management Committee; there will be no correspondence entered into after the decision has been made.

Register online shopau.sensorytools.net/as_course-registration?productID=2706&product_category=229, or for further information, contact **Sensory Tools Australia:** www.sensorytools.net or 02 4578 6123. PO Box 692 Richmond, NSW, 2753.

MEDICARE INFORMATION *Received from the Autism Advisor Program, and updated to reflect changes 1 May 2010*

There are a number of different plans or packages under Medicare which may enable families of children with a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to access services from a private provider and be rebated by Medicare.

Please note: the terms ASD and Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD) are interchangeable in this context.

1. The Helping Children with Autism Package

New Medicare items that have been introduced as part of this Federal government package cover *diagnosis* and *treatment*.

Diagnosis

Medicare items have been introduced for:

Visits to consultant physicians (that is, paediatricians and psychiatrists) for them to diagnose and develop a treatment plan for children with a pervasive developmental disorder (PDD – that is, autistic disorder, Asperger syndrome/disorder, Rett's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder or pervasive developmental disorder – not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS))

- ◆ Child must be under the age of 13
- ◆ Child must have been referred to the paediatrician / psychiatrist by a GP

Up to four visits to eligible allied health professionals (that is, psychologists, speech pathologists (SLP) and occupational therapists (OT)) to collaborate with the psychiatrist / paediatrician in assessing the child as part of the diagnostic process

- ◆ Child must be under the age of 13
- ◆ Child must have been referred to the allied health professional by the psychiatrist / paediatrician who is engaged in the process of diagnosing the child
- ◆ Child must have been referred to the allied health professional for the purpose of assessment to assist in diagnosis of PDD & / or in the preparation of a treatment plan

Children who were already diagnosed before these new Medicare items were introduced can still use them to visit their paediatricians / psychiatrists specifically for the purpose of preparing a treatment plan and the paediatrician / psychiatrist can still refer the child for the 4 allied health professional visits for assessment to assist in the preparation of the treatment plan.

These Medicare items are only able to be claimed once in a child's lifetime.

Treatment

Medicare items have been introduced for:

Up to 20 visits to eligible allied health professionals (psychologist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist) for treatment

- ◆ Child must be under the age of 15
- ◆ Child must be diagnosed with a PDD
- ◆ Child must have a treatment plan which was prepared by a paediatrician / psychiatrist
- ◆ Child must be referred to the allied health professional/s by the paediatrician / psychiatrist who prepared the treatment plan
- ◆ After 10 sessions, the allied health professional/s must provide a report to the referring paediatrician / psychiatrist

These Medicare items are only able to be claimed once in a child's lifetime.

2. The Better Access to Mental Health Professionals Plan

Under this Plan, Medicare items are available for:

- ◆ Up to 12 visits per year to a psychologist or other eligible mental health professional (occupational therapist or social worker with recognised mental health experience and qualifications) for treatment
 - There are no age limits – available for children and adults
 - Patient must have a diagnosed mental disorder – a PDD is not considered a mental disorder, so an additional diagnosis is required; however, many of the associated symptoms of ASD are considered as mental disorders, so medical professionals are able to identify and diagnose an additional mental disorder alongside the ASD. Eligible mental disorders are:

Anxiety disorder	Attention deficit disorder	Bipolar disorder	Alcohol use disorder
Adjustment disorder	Eating disorders	Phobic disorder	Co-occurring anxiety & depression
Depression	Psychotic disorders	Sexual disorders	
Conduct disorders	Obsessive-compulsive disorder	Bereavement disorders	
Sleep problems	Schizophrenia	Post-traumatic stress disorder	

- Diagnosis and referral to the psychologist must be made by a General Practitioner (GP), psychiatrist or paediatrician

These visits are recurring – the person is entitled to 12 visits per year throughout life. However, unused visits from one year cannot be carried over into another year – 12 per year is the maximum.

3. Chronic Disease Management *[previously known as Enhanced Primary Care (EPC)]*

As of 1 May 2010, The Department of Health and Ageing is removing references to EPC, and replaced by the Chronic Disease Management. There are no changes to the eligibility requirements for the CDM items, including the allied health services for people with chronic disease. This is simply a change to terminology to bring it up to date.

Under this initiative, Medicare items are available for:

- ◆ Up to five allied health professional services per year
 - There are no age limits – available for children and adults
 - Patient must have a chronic condition and / or complex care needs. A chronic medical condition is one that has been (or is likely to be) present for six months or longer. Complex care needs are when a patient requires ongoing care from a multidisciplinary team consisting of their GP and at least two other health care providers. People with ASD therefore usually meet these criteria.
 - Patient must be referred to the allied health professional by a GP
 - Patient must have a Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Plan prepared by their GP
 - Allied health professional/s must report back to the referring GP
 - Eligible allied health professionals for CDM are:

Aboriginal health worker	Occupational therapist
Audiologist	Osteopath
Chiropractor	Physiotherapist
Diabetes educator	Podiatrist
Dietician	Psychologist
Exercise physiologist	Speech pathologist
Mental health worker (includes Aboriginal health workers, mental health nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists and some social workers)	
 - Any combination of sessions is acceptable (eg., three with a dietician and two with a speech pathologist, or all with an occupational therapist).

These visits are recurring – the person is entitled to five visits per year throughout life. However, unused visits from one year cannot be carried over into another year – five per year is the maximum.

It is worth reviewing all these options carefully to ensure that you get the best possible access to services.

Also, please note that under all these different initiatives, a treatment plan by the referring medical specialist is required – however, ideally, this treatment plan should be prepared by that medical specialist in consultation or discussion with the parent/s.

Finally, also please note that these items are only reclaimable from *private* providers. Of particular importance is the fact that you will have to see a *private* paediatrician or psychiatrist in order to gain referrals to any of the above allied health professionals – paediatricians / psychiatrists in the public health system are not able to refer, as they do not have a Medicare number.

For further information, see: www.health.gov.au/autism www.health.gov.au/epc www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

The Disabled Surfers Association of Australia offers participants and volunteers an opportunity to get in the ocean together, have fun and socialise. Lasting friendships are made between people from all walks of life. Everyone from asthmatics to people with joint injuries and paraplegics are welcome.

Many members find friendship and support and find their interest in surfing renewed. DSA has about 100 volunteers at each event on the Gold Coast. They run the committee, they help take people surfing, monitor surf conditions, help with the sign-in table, cook the BBQ, set up the equipment, ferry wheelchairs across the sand, organise beach activities and make people feel welcome and at ease.

All people involved with the DSA do it on a voluntary basis. The Disabled Surfers Association of Australia operates in many locations across Australia and New Zealand. For more information, visit www.disabledsurfers.org. *[Printed in the Self-Help Queensland Inc, Newsletter March Quarter Issue 1 2010, page 16]*

Gold Coast contacts: Craig Castles [0412 191 880] and Steve Pickering [0400 027 991]

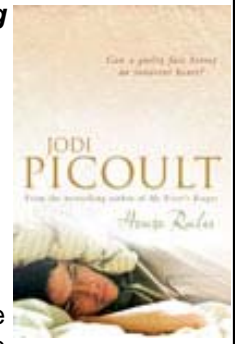


New Book Release - House Rules www.jodipicoult.com.au/houserules

When a teenage boy with Asperger's is arrested for murder, his family face a daunting task to prove his innocence.

Jacob Hunt is a teenage boy with Asperger's Syndrome. He's hopeless at reading social cues or expressing himself to others, and like many children with AS, Jacob has an obsessive focus on one subject - in his case, forensic analysis. He's always showing up at crime scenes, thanks to the police scanner he keeps in his room, and telling the cops what they need to do - and he's usually right. But then one day his tutor is found dead, and the police come to question him. Reluctance to make eye contact, stimulatory tics and twitches, inappropriate gestures - all these can look a lot like guilt - and suddenly, Jacob finds himself accused of murder.

House Rules looks at what it means to be different in our society, and at the extremes of love and loyalty members of a family have to call upon to help each other overcome impossible circumstances.



Asperger Syndrome - Clay Marzo: Just Add Water

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKRIRZEV4B4>

A clip from the film "Clay Marzo: Just Add Water", where Dr. Tony Attwood and Dr. Chitra Bhakta speak about Asperger Syndrome. More from his mother: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlvckjnrY7o&feature=fvw>

Stephen Wiltshire : This man has talent!

This man is known as 'the human camera! Once you see this, you will be blown away. If you have never seen this before, you are in for a treat. Click on the website: <http://video.stumbleupon.com/#p=0k4lsi1dql>

STEPS FOR THE FUTURE computer game has been launched Nationally and is now available to Organisations / Service Providers to copy and distribute FREE.

The NDCO Program in North Qld working in partnership with James Cook University have developed a computer game to help encourage young people through periods of transition from school onto further study and employment. The game was designed by young game development students at JCU and made specifically for young people. The game has a futuristic setting but deals with many issues common to youth today. While the original concept for the game was to focus solely on disability issues, **the game tracks the progress of the main character as he returns to school after an accident, works hard and gets support from friends and services. This group of friends tackle issues of disability along with the pressures of study, relationships, binge drinking, anti-social behaviour and study/work/life balance so the game has elements that most young people can identify with and is not just a game about disability or to just be played by people with a disability.**

A brief trailer of the game is available on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=9r7pSYJrz_g standard www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nITmvMhoWI high def

The game is **FREE** and **COPYRIGHT FREE** and can be copied by service providers and distributed freely to clients, etc. All the game and menu files fit on a standard CD which makes it inexpensive to copy and distribute. The game runs from the CD and requires no installation on the host PC so can be used at school, home or wherever a PC has a CD drive. It can also be run from a USB drive and has various settings to optimise it depending on processing power and graphics capability of the computer, allowing it to be run on older machines as well. The game has variable difficulty settings to maximise the number of people who will be able to play the game and the challenges it will provide to them.

A website has been set up for the game where people can request a copy be sent to them on CD or request a Mac version of the game. The game will be available for download from the site soon but it's a large file (500Mb zipped file) so there will still be the option of getting a free copy on CD sent by mail. **Service Providers can request a copy by completing the form on the website.** On the game website, once people have played the game they can choose to provide feedback and by doing so, go into a draw to win some great prizes.

The site for the game is: www.ndco.stepscs.net.au and click on the **STEPS FOR THE FUTURE** banner on top of the page.

[Autism Gold Coast has ordered a copy for our Resource Library.]



Nautilus LAW GROUP

Phone Us: (07) 5530 6513

Varsity Lakes, Gold Coast

Experts in

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We do it differently.

◆ Disability Law

◆ Elder Law

◆ Estate Planning

For more information:

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Katrina Elizabeth Brown, BA JD ATIA
Practice Director

Our Practitioners acting in New South Wales
& Queensland, bring over 16 years experience
and provide you with the advice you can trust.



Queensland Parents for People with a Disability with

Anti Discrimination Commission of Queensland

Have you ever wondered if you have a case under Anti-Discrimination Legislation?

Do you want to understand more how you can use the Anti-Discrimination Act in defending rights and inclusion for your family member?

The session will provide an introduction to Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, including:

- Grounds of discrimination – what you can and can't take action for
- Understanding the process and cost of filing a complaint
- Understanding the possible outcomes and other avenues to pursue
- An update on recent changes to the law as well as the role of the Commission.

When: Tuesday 4th May 2010

Time: 10am to 2pm (arrival from 9.30am)

Venue: QPPD Office

2/70 Flanders Street, SALISBURY Qld 4107

Parking available on the grounds (near the blue awnings)

RSVP: Contact Sally on - 3875 2101 or email - sally@gppd.org.au by [Friday 30th April](#)

LIMITED PLACES AVAILABLE!

For Parents

Don't underestimate yourself as your child's social skill teacher

By Debbie Brooker, Co-ordinator of Mackay Autism Support Group [Reprinted with kind permission]

You may be searching for the perfect packaged social skill program for your child, saving for it or even attending one, but something that no parent should ever underestimate is the fact they are the best social skill provider their child could ask for, at least initially, and as much as your young adult will allow, into their adult years too along with any peers and workmates. Lots of one on one play together in those earlier years, role playing with teddy or along with a brother or sister. Never underestimate the power of a sibling in helping social skills.

Groups are important part of teaching social skills in real life situations. Don't underestimate and don't overlook that your very own family is a group at your fingertips ready for your child to learn those social skills needed for the outside world. That family group extends with the addition of Grandparents or Aunts, Uncles and cousins, and before you know it you have an understanding social group of people teaching your preferred social skills to your ASD child. Some extended family members may not understand, but don't worry about them, chose the ones that do and see the ones as an example to your child of the challenges and different people they can face in the outside world.

Another social group to practice those skills can be in a group of family friends, again ones that you have found supporting with your ASD child. Meet informally for a share meal once every month or so, so your child can grow and extend socially in another mixture of personalities.

Television is another excellent tool right under your nose. Watch sitcoms such as *"Home and Away"* with your ASD child, ensuring they are understanding those with appropriate social skills and those with not so appropriate. Talk about emotions and non-verbal communication portrayed by the various characters and why and relate these to everyday events in your own lives or lives of your friends. Watch *"The Big Bang Theory"* or *"Frasier"* with your teenagers, both have plenty of fodder for social skilling purposes and your enjoyment as well. You can explain sarcasm, jokes as well as feelings, behavior, self-esteem and so on.

Incidental everyday learning of social skills is ongoing and natural and many times as they indicate become such a natural part of life, you don't realize it is happening sometimes.

Encourage your child's school to consider similar group options to continue this idea in a school setting. Use of special interest lunchtime groups, or social after school groups can work wonderfully especially with the right mix of students and administrator.

So don't underestimate the skills you already have to pass on, the skills you learn from the speech pathologist and occupational therapist that may work with your child to further relate to a your ASD child and the power you have in encouraging the positive behavior that you so desperately seek as a parent. Don't waste a day, its right there in front of you to begin.

Ideas to get you started:

- A pretend pizza restaurant for teddies with yourself and your ASD child and their sibling as both cook, waiter and customer.
- A pretend shop with your child as the shop keeper with a whole range of different characters (use your acting skills and enjoy yourself), and then vice versa with your child as the customer. Use a video camera and it becomes even a bigger learning advantage and a whole lot of fun to watch in the years to come.
- Play lots of board games to teach turn taking, and the fun of playing without focusing on the importance about winning or losing.
- Watch episodes of your favourite sitcom and talk about it naturally after the program or during if appropriate.
- Find some supportive families to meet with regularly (can have other ASD children or neuro typical or a mixture) and have informal meals and games together.
- Extended family groups may create "obligatory" occasions that can be planned ahead of time – like attending a cousin's Birthday, graduation or wedding.
- When unwanted behavior happens, wait for the child to cool down, before working through the process of showing how (what to do stories) making different decisions can bring about a more positive outcome. When the meltdown is happening it is not a learning moment, keep the child and others safe from injury and teach later.

I encourage you to contact Autism Queensland for their free leaflet *"Social Skills Important Factors to Consider"*. These factors include self-esteem, etiquette, humour, paralinguistic skills, relaxing and dealing with feelings and emotions and interpersonal skills to name them briefly

**SEMINAR WITH DRS GERRY AND JUNE GRODEN
THE GRODEN CENTRE, RHODE ISLAND USA**

**INSIGHTS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM
SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

**STRESS AND COPING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

June & Gerry Groden have worked in this area for over 30 years and have developed a range of innovative, evidence based techniques for measuring and coping with stress and anxiety and the resulting behaviours. This session will focus on stress and anxiety in individuals with ASD, assessment of stress, and interventions for stress reduction and effective coping such as relaxation and picture rehearsal.

**POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY— A 'NEW' APPROACH TO NURTURING THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM
SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

The primary focus of this approach is to augment positive personal traits to maximise meaning and engagement in life, as well as positive emotional states. June and Gerry will describe an assessment tool (ASPeCT-DD) to survey positive psychology traits such as humour, self-efficacy, kindness, optimism and resilience. Examples of programs and procedures aimed at fostering these strengths in persons with an ASD will be presented.



Friday 7 May 2010

9am- 4pm

Registration 8:45am

The Glades Golf and Spa

Glades Drive, Robina (Exit 79 Pacific Highway)



**REGISTRATION FEES: Parent Rate \$155.00 Standard Rate \$195.00
Earlybird Rate \$175.00 (received by April 21)**

For further information please visit www.autismqld.com.au
call: 07 3273 0030 or email: learning@autismqld.com.au

**The CAT-kit (The Cognitive Affective
Training Kit) Workshop**

CAT-KIT.COM
Cognitive Affective Training

Lucy Corcoran invites parents, school staff, professional organisations and interested others to come and join her at her workshop for a few hours full of information on the **CAT-kit (Cognitive Affective Training) and other ASD Strategies and Tools** at **The Lakeside Rooms, Suite 9, North Building Robina East Quay, 34-36 Glenferrie Dr, Robina.**

There are 2 dates to choose from: **Tuesday May 11, 2010 or Wednesday June 23, 2010** (9.30am – 12.30pm)

The CAT-kit (The Cognitive Affective Training Kit) is a resource for teaching social skills, emotions, behaviour, coping abilities, perspectives and communication skills and can be utilized by teachers, parents/carers, professionals working with children and teenagers with autism spectrum disorders, Asperger's syndrome, ODC, ADD, ADHD, PDD, behavioural issues, etc.

Cost: \$55.00 (morning tea included) **Payment methods:** Payment can be made prior to workshop or on the day via Cheque or Money Order payable to CAT-kit. Electronic Funds Transfer can also be made to: nab, BSB-084929 Account-750706862. Credit Cards not accepted. All schools will be invoiced and payment due within 21 days.

For further information and registration for the workshop, contact Lucy Corcoran, on 0423 527 963, fax 07-3886 4538 or email: lor8881@bigpond.net.au to reserve your place in either of the workshops.

From Sue Larkey...**Preparing for Success: 11 Key Strategies**www.suelarkey.com

The start of the year is an important time to look at how to create an environment for success. Over the years I have found there are 11 key strategies that are most important to set EVERYONE up for success.

1. **Individual:** Everyone with ASD is different and we need to get to know the individual child.
2. **Routines:** Creating predictable routines gives students confidence, independence and reduces anxiety.
3. **Schedules:** Allow the student to anticipate activities and routines. They are a great tool to develop independence.
4. **Visuals:** Use visuals to enrich the learning environment. There are a huge range of visual tools available to support students learning, this can include photos, black and white line drawings, gesture, written word. Visuals can be used in many ways including; schedules, calendars, worksheets, social stories.
5. **Communicate Clearly:** Do not assume the student understands you. Most people with ASD are visual learners and need time to process speech. Many students find whole class instructions difficult to follow. Communication can be supported by using visuals, sign language, gesture and written word to support verbal language. For example: if you write whole class instructions on the board many students will find them easier to follow.
6. **Limit Choices/Adapt Activities:** By adapting activities and reducing choices you will find students with ASD engage quicker in activities and are more successful. For example if a student is told to choose a book from the shelf to read they may find that overwhelming or keep changing their mind and swapping books. If instead you have 2 books to choose from, they are more likely to engage in reading – which is the goal.
7. **Create Social Opportunities:** Just putting students with ASD around other children will not magically create friendships and social interaction. Most students need support in social situations, creating opportunities will help interaction. For example a club in the playground where the child can interact with a small group of children in a structured activity.
8. **Prepare Environment and for Transitions:** Transition times can be the most confusing and stressful time for students with ASD. It is very important to plan ahead and have strategies in place to ensure smooth transitions. This is where routines and schedules are very effective, these allow the student to anticipate the change and know what is expected. Time Timers (see pg 4) are also wonderful as they pre-warn the student how long before a change.
9. **Prepare for Behaviour:** Knowing the student and having information on what may upset the student or cause a meltdown is very important. However, over the years I have seen many behaviours and had NO idea “what” triggered the reaction. As you can’t anticipate all behaviour and in a busy classroom may miss triggers I actually feel the MOST important part is to have a strategy to calm the child once you notice their behaviour is escalating. Talk to family, carers, past teachers and find out WHAT strategies work once the student’s behaviour is escalating.
10. **Choose your battles. Prioritise:** When you start the year and talk to parents you could end up with an extremely LONG list of goals for the student. I would recommend you decide the top 2 or 3 goals and work on these first. It is very important that everyone at home and school is focused on the same goals as this ensures success. If you were to try EVERY GOAL at once you will find you get inconsistent and burnt out, whereas with a few clear goals you will hopefully quickly achieve these and move onto new goals.
11. **Set up for Success / Reward/ Motivate:** EVERYONE needs to be motivated and rewarded not just the student. EVEN the smallest successes are worth celebrating.

MOTIVATORS

Self motivation is very difficult for someone with ASD especially when they can’t see the “payoff” at the end. Having a special goal to work towards has been the best motivator for our students.

The goal:

- Must be easy to reach.
- Very frequent.
- Have meaning to the ASD individual.
- The most useful motivator that is access to his/her special interest/obsession. It can be used in many ways.

Ideas to try:

Use a motivator as a:

- Reward for work completed.

- Goal for accomplishing work.
- Goal for accomplishing more work than expected.
- Down time/quiet time.
- Include their special interest as part of research assignment.

Examples how to use special interest

- Reading about favourite subject/special interest.
- Talking about favourite subject (this must be time limited).
- Access to computer.
- Access to favourite internet site.

Why to NEVER use their special interest as a punishment for non cooperation:

- Their special interest keeps them calm.
- Their special interest allows them to release emotions.
- Their special interest is relaxing.
- Their special interest allows them to relax enough to face the new challenges.

If you take away their special interest and use it as a punishment it rarely works as a behaviour modification method and could result in escalating behaviours.

Great Websites to download free visuals and lots of ideas:

These show everything from Schedules to Classroom Layouts

www.sparklebox.co.uk

www.card.ufl.edu

www.dotolearn.com

www.icontalk.com

SENSORY TOYS / Fidget toys



Chewy Tubes are wonderful for students who bite their clothes, bodies or seek objects

QLD RESEARCH: ASD study on Developmental Trends in Executive Function of Adolescents with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Chelle Smith-Luck is conducting a study on Developmental Trends in Executive Function of Adolescents with ASD from Kelvin Grove campus of QUT. She is keen to meet with families of teenagers with ASD which will involve some travel to Brisbane.

Q and A's (or should I say just answers from Chelle):

- I usually require families to come to Brisbane (Qut Kelvin Grove Campus) for testing across two visits. However, if appropriate to the child's abilities I can compress the two visits into one (allowing him/her a break in between).
- I am also doing testing on weekends for some parents who have special circumstances and/or live a distance away.
- Initially I do a 2 min phone interview inclusive of a brief screener to check the suitability of each adolescent prior to testing. If the adolescent meets the criteria (which all participants have so far) I then organise testing times and you bring the consent forms, most recent school report and a copy of adolescent's diagnosis with you when you attend. Apologies as this may not have been clear in my letter of invitation.
- Yes parent's do receive a brief report on their adolescent's test results which they can use to assists their children in school, university and/or their work place.
- Having two sons with ASD myself and watching them experience the difficulties they have my research is aimed at providing data to all educators to show that children with ASD think differently and need to be educated in ways that suit their learning styles.

Chelle is interested in hearing from families on the Gold Coast to include in her research. Contact Chelle, by phone on 0423984047 or c.smith-luck@student.qut.edu.au Please include suitable times and phone details so that she can ring you to do the phone interview.

**Minds & Hearts****A Specialist Clinic for Asperger's Syndrome and Autism****2010 Workshops and Seminars**

Autism Spectrum Disorders: Diagnostic Assessment and Treatment – Workshop 1 For Professionals Friday and Saturday 16-17 April 9.00am–4.30pm
Succeeding with Asperger's Syndrome in the Teens For: Parents, families, therapists, teachers, teacher's assistants, teenagers with AS Friday 14 May 9.30am – 4.30pm
Autism Spectrum Disorders: After the Diagnosis – Under 6 For: Parents, families, therapists, teachers, teacher's assistants Saturday 31 July 9.30am – 4.30pm
Autism Spectrum Disorders: Diagnostic Assessment and Treatment – Advanced Workshop For: Professionals Friday and Saturday 27-28 August
Moving to Manhood For: Parents families, therapists, teachers, teacher's assistants, teenage boys with AS Saturday 9 October 9.30am – 4.30pm
Emotion Management for adults with AS PARENT/ADULT INFORMATION NIGHTS Greek Club, 29-31 Edmondstone St, South Brisbane Wednesday 28 April 5.30pm – 7.00pm
Identity and Self-esteem in Adolescents PARENT/ADULT INFORMATION NIGHTS Greek Club, 29-31 Edmondstone St, South Brisbane Wednesday 26 May 5.30pm – 7.00pm
Addressing Challenging Behaviour in ASD PARENT/ADULT INFORMATION NIGHTS Greek Club, 29-31 Edmondstone St, South Brisbane Wednesday 16 June 5.30pm – 7.00pm
After the Diagnosis of Autism in Under 6 yrs PARENT/ADULT INFORMATION NIGHTS Greek Club, 29-31 Edmondstone St, South Brisbane Wednesday 28 July 5.30pm – 7.00pm

2010 Group Programmes

Children with ASD Exploring friendship for 8-12 year olds- DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE Emotion management for 4-6 year olds - DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE
Youth with ASD Moving to Manhood for 14-17 year olds- DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE Being Me for 14-17 year olds-- DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE Building Resilience - DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE
Adults with ASD The Relationship Minefield - DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE The Dating Game - DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE Behind the Mask - DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE
Parents Strength to Support - DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE
Siblings Me Too!!! for 8-12 year olds- DOWNLOAD FLYER HERE

For details and registration for all the above events contact:Phone: (07) 3844 9466 Fax: (07) 3844 9533 www.mindsandhearts.net info@mindsandhearts.net

Clinic Address: Suite 6, 88 Boundry St. West End, (Brisbane)



Early Days Workshops

Early Days is a federally funded program under the *Helping Children with Autism* strategy. Workshops have been developed by the Early Days Collaboration – a group of agencies with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorder - and nationally co-ordinated by the Parenting Research Centre.

Who are the Early Days workshops for?

Mothers, fathers and other family carers of children up to the age of six who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder or who are starting the assessment and diagnosis process.

What do participants learn?

Participants learn about Autism Spectrum Disorder and what it means for their child and family, how the everyday things they do can make a difference to their child's development and how to choose suitable therapies and get the most out of services.

How big are the workshops?

At least four and up to 10 people.

When do they run?

Workshop dates are created on a demand basis, i.e. when four people in a particular location express an interest, a workshop is created and a date is set. People who have expressed an interest are notified of workshop dates in their locality.

How much do they cost?

The workshops are free. Each family who attends the Early Days Introductory Workshop will receive a small contribution towards travel and childcare expenses.

Who runs the workshops?

All workshops are delivered by Early Days Providers, local organisations that provide early childhood intervention services to children with developmental delays or disabilities, including Autism. The workshops are facilitated by early childhood development professionals who are experienced in working with families.

Families can express an interest at www.earlydays.net.au or on freecall 1800 334 155.

If you would like paper copies of the brochure or other promotional material for families, please email earlydays@parentingrc.org.au.



Positive Partnerships Workshops - Gold Coast

Positive Partnerships has an online learning platform with a wide range of resources, fact sheets and information modules which can be completed in your own time and are not compulsory. Although the modules are aimed at parents and carers, the information would also be useful for school staff.

To view these new modules please log in at: www.autismtraining.com.au

The online platform is part of the Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium (AAETC) *Positive Partnerships* initiatives; the online platform provides interactive learning modules and useful learning resources for parent/carers, teachers and other school staff.

DATE CLAIMER: Tuesday & Wednesday, 7 & 8 September 2010

**GOLD COAST Workshop Dates for Positive Partnerships
for Parents/Carers of school-aged children on the spectrum**

Registration for the only **GOLD COAST Workshop** opens in **JUNE 2010**.

BOOK EARLY to avoid disappointment as places are limited. The cost is free.

<http://www.autismtraining.com.au/public/index.cfm?assetCategoryId=696>

FSG Australia: A local service provider

- **FAMILY CENTRALS – COOMERA, LABRADOR AND VARSITY LAKES**

FSGA funded, Family Central provides a meeting point for parents caring for a child with a disability, or carers seeking assistance and/or information. Parents/families/carers are resourced, encouraged and supported toward managing the present, and planning for the future.

Encompass - Coomera Family Central 3 Jowett Street, Coomera **PH: 5519 4129 OR 5502 9797**

Labrador Family Central 45B Olsen Avenue LABRADOR **PH: 5537 5003**

Encompass - FSGA Southern Family Central 20 Mattocks Road Varsity Lakes **PH: 5568 0497**

- **HOLIDAY RESPITE PROJECT**

Funded by Department of Communities Disability Services, this project provides holiday respite.

- **ORANA CHILDREN'S RESPITE CENTRE**

Department of Communities Disability Services funded, Orana provides centre-based care for children with a disability aged 3-18 years. Permanent/regular staff provide a home-like environment. Care is available on a weekly basis or just for the weekend.

- **RESPITE OPTIONS- HOTLINE 1800 640 655**

Department of Communities Disability Services funded, Hotline liaises with other agencies to provide short-term emergency (only) respite care to families with a member with a disability that are experiencing an unpredicted situation. The Hotline provides information and referral for respite care options. This care should not exceed 3 days of respite care – higher levels of care would need to be negotiated with the management committee.

"Children seldom misquote you.

In fact they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said."

Author unknown

- **KAMPS 4 KIDS**

Funded from donations, Kamps 4 Kids is a holiday and activity program for young people with a disability and siblings.

- **JUST 4 KIDS**

Funded by HACC, this project provides activities for children with disabilities aged 7-18 years in an integrated community-access appropriate after-school and vacation care.

- **BARINYA**

FSGA funded, this project was set up for children who, for any reason, have been denied access to traditional schooling. The priority target group is children with a disability, but the service is not limited to this group. FSGA recognises that the families of children who have been denied access to school, short or long term, are under tremendous stress; Barinya is able to support children during these times.

- **OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS AND VACATION CARE PROJECT (CARE PROJECT)**

Funded through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), this project provides extra Support for children with a disability. This program is a new initiative of the Commonwealth Government that supports children with a disability to access appropriate and flexible child care, outside school hours including vacation care.

- **INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT (IFS)**

HACC funded, this position provides an IFS facilitator to work intensively with families, to assist them to move ahead and out of crisis.

- **SIBLING GROUP**

FSGA funded, this project is aimed at siblings of children with a disability who often feel confused and isolated in their role.

During these sessions children are encouraged to discuss how they feel about having a sister or brother with a disability and have an opportunity to meet other children in similar situations

- **GENTLE TOUCH**

This program teaches parents how to massage their baby or young child with special needs.

- **PARENT AND INFANT GROUP**

A play group in which parents of children with special needs are supported by a facilitator in a safe and fun environment and learning how children learn through play while creating positive opportunities for sharing with other parents.

Continued next page

▪ PARENT GROUPS

These groups are all FSGA funded.

Parent Chat Group

Parents often feel isolated in their caring role; meeting other people with whom they share their joys, uncertainties and frustrations often helps people to better make sense of their often daunting tasks and plan for a more positive future.

Parent Connect

Peer support group for parents to plan together how best to manage their respite and care needs; recognising that they are the 'authorities' and have the expertise between them to 'lend each other a hand'.

Carers' Morning Tea

This is an opportunity to 'spoil' those who often don't take time out for themselves. Guest speakers may be invited to better inform carers about 'topical' issues.

Peer Support Group

This is a group of parents who come together to support and assist each other in their caring role.

Brisbane Post School Options EXPO 2010

Providing **students**, families, carers, friends
& educational personnel with the **opportunity**
to *gather information* from a wide variety of service providers
and training organisations, including **TAFE**, Government
and non-government agencies.

\$2 entry

Wednesday 21 April 2010

9.00 am - 3.00pm

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Mezzanine Level Glenelg and Merivale Streets, South Bank

EXPO 2010 will feature:

- Government & non-Government agency displays;
- Information sessions throughout the day;
- An opportunity for fun through entertainment and activities for students.

INFORMATION SESSIONS

10.00am–11.00am Disability Services

11.00am–11.30am TAFE

11.30am–12.00pm Centrelink

12.00pm–12.30pm Office of the Adult Guardian

12.30pm–1.00pm Repeat Disability Services session

ENTERTAINMENT: Here's to Life Dancercise | ROARY – Mascot for Brisbane Roar Football Club | Hip Hop/RAP performance Access Arts

For further information contact:

Alison McFarlane on 0418 740 205 amcfa9@eq.edu.au

Megan Toppenberg on 0428 770 366 mtopp7@eq.edu.au

Mary Shepherd on 0408 736 215 mshep20@eq.edu.au

MEETING VENUE

at Nerang

**Nerang
Neighbourhood
Centre**

29 Martin St, & corner of Lavelle St

Entry via Lavelle St gate

★ **Family Picnic**

Laguna Park

Palm Beach

Sunday 16 May: 10am - 2pm

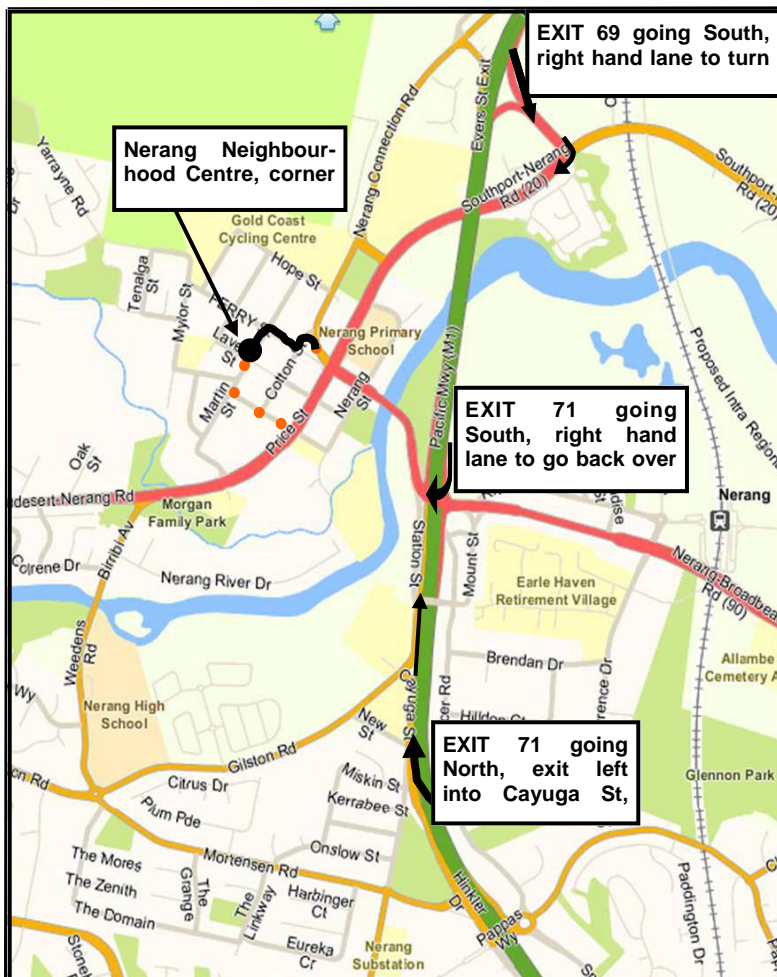
12noon BBQ 1pm Top Hat Magician

★ **Autism Awareness Display**

Robina Town Centre (nr Target) -

Saturday 22 May: 10am - 2pm

Volunteers needed to help ★



~ ~ **MONTHLY MEETINGS - 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month** ~ ~

Nerang River Neighbourhood Centre, 29 Martin St, NERANG (see map above)

A small plate of food to share or a gold coin donation is appreciated.

Children are welcome to attend daytime meetings, as there is a small play area.

NO APRIL Support Group Meetings

Wednesday 5 May

Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon

Guest Speakers: Check the website

Wednesday 19 May

Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.

Guest Speakers: Check the website

Wednesday 2 June

Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon

Wednesday 16 June

Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.

Wednesday 7 July

Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon

Wednesday 21 July

Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.

Wednesday 4 August

Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon

Wednesday 18 August

Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.

Wednesday 1 September

Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon

Wednesday 15 September

Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.

Guest Speakers at these monthly meetings will be advertised on our website and via the ASD Email newsgroup. Please send us an email if you would like to join this newsgroup:

admin@autismgoldcoast.com.au.