



Autism Gold Coast Inc

July 2011 Newsletter

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[Please leave a message if phone is unattended.]

Information, Support, Networks, Library

Since our April Newsletter, Autism Gold Coast has been active across the Gold Coast community. The month of May saw a number of our families with younger children gather together at Laguna Park Palm Beach for our annual **Autism Awareness Picnic in the Park** day. This is always a great opportunity to meet the mums and dads who have young children, and for some a very new diagnosis of autism. This year we were joined by some grandparents who are the primary carers for the child on the spectrum. For many families it is once again a chance to enjoy catching up for a chat. Top Hat the Magician again entertained us with his repertoire of tricks and audience involvement. Hope you enjoy some of the photos in the newsletter from this picnic.

The Robina Town Centre **Autism Awareness Display** was well supported by volunteers this year. This is very much appreciated - it is always a pleasure to have your company while we meet and greet various shoppers who stopped by us to buy a raffle ticket, ask questions, collect some information about our group, or even take away a colourful balloon for their children. It is heartening to know that people are becoming aware of autism in the community, and of those that stopped for a chat many knew someone with a child with autism.

Throughout the year Autism Gold Coast has received kind **donations** from generous members of our ASD community, and organisations. Without these caring people, much of our work would not lead to such successful outcomes in providing opportunities for parents/carers and their family members. We continue to fund our own teenage social skills group facilitated by Debra Tew. This group which meets weekly, is full and much valued by the families. It received a funding boost recently when Matt and Chloe Rogers and some of the **4ASDKids** Board Members dropped in on a session to present Debra and the boys with a surprise—a cheque for \$8000. We were successful in our funding submission to **Gold Coast City Council** for \$4000. Our recent Tax Appeal brought in a further \$2785 which is much appreciated and will contribute to funding our building project this year.

The update on the caretaker's residence in **Cascade Gardens** is that we now await the approval of the lease by the State Government, through Gold Coast City Council. As yet no date is in sight for us to commence the renovations that will be required to bring the residence up to DDA Disability Access Building Code. The plans have been drawn up by Richard O'Brien (of Richard O'Brien Design & Drafting). As things move along further we will be keen to seek further community support of our building project at Cascade Gardens. To those of you who made offers of support, we are very thankful and will be in contact as the scope of works is outlined.

Out of last year's Positive Partnerships Workshops grew new networks of parent enthusiasm to help families connect and feel supported. I am aware of a **Gold Coast ASD Families Facebook** page that is going from strength to strength. Also **play dates in local parks** are a regular monthly occurrence, aside from the twice monthly support group meetings, thanks to Debra Tew, Ruth Dick and Marie Bucholz.

Raffle Tickets for the Gold Coast Community Fund's Art Union are available. If there is anyone who would like a book of ten tickets @ \$2, please contact us by phone or email. The major prize of \$20,000 shopping spree has again been donated by Harvey Norman, Bundall; 2nd prize is a Toyota Yaris YR Manual 5 Door Hatch from Grand Motors Toyota, and 3rd prize us \$2,500 shopping spree at Harvey Norman Bundall. **If you're interested in purchasing a ticket or selling a book** through your networks, please contact us: admin@autismgoldcoast.com.au or leave a message on 5559 1747.

Tony Maher, President

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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Partners of People with Aspergers – Gold Coast group

Partners in Aspieland (PIA) meet six weekly in Burleigh Waters. A gold coin is all one needs to bring and share stories. For further information on support meetings for any partners of Aspies on the Gold Coast, contact Tricia Thompson on 55 354191. *Please leave a message if the phone is unattended.*

Asperger Partners' Support Group (APSG) which is Brisbane based, has a website: www.aspiepartners.com/

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 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 (2-4pm)** to share our stories and exchange information. . The support group meetings are held at the **Robina Library meeting room**, beside the Auditorium and Art Gallery of the Robina Community Centre at 196 Robina Town Centre Drive, Robina. **The next meeting is Sunday 10 July.** Please check the website for other details. The group welcomes new members.

A parent initiative! ASD friendly bowling... Come & try it!

Many thanks to all of you who turned out for the 3rd VIP League Bowling on Sunday 3 July. We had 5 new families which was fantastic and more than made up for those of you who are enjoying the school hols elsewhere. It was great to see new parents meet each other and swap stories and have a laugh. Set up time is finally getting fine tuned so slightly less practise time before the games get going.

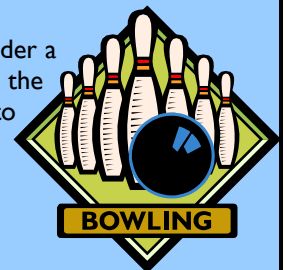
As usual if you want to see the scores, click onto the AMF Bowling website, chose Robina, then league bowling results-request the pop ups and then VIP should be an option. It's fun for the kids to see their names up on the screen and you can always ask for a lane print out once you have finished your game at the venue.

If some of your kids are new to Robina and feel a little uneasy, and don't like the lighting or maybe the videos, they can always be changed so it is brighter/darker/quieter/noisier, and you can always take a picture at the venue of the lanes, people, balls etc as a reminder so when the next month comes around, it refreshes the memory. Also, I have found a fantastic DVD at Robina library called "Ten Pin Bowling" in the children's DVD section which is part of a series explaining to children what to expect from booking a lane, hiring shoes and taking turns. Or, if your kids are like mine, just to watch it for enjoyment! They also have one for "The Circus" and "School" amongst others.

The next VIP League is Sunday 7th August 8:30am at AMF Robina as usual. I will send around a reminder a few days before and please pass on the information to any parents you know who may be interested - the more the merrier and no pressure to attend every one. If anyone has any questions please feel free to email me emmamoorhead@yahoo.co.uk or call my mobile on 0488999125.

Thanks again to all for such a great response and enjoy the rest of the holidays.

Emma and Elliot



Family Picnic
at Laguna Park
15 May 11





PlayConnect Playgroup

Starting 27th July 2011

127 Musgrave Ave **Labrador**



(Turn down Park Drive at Keith Hunt Park)

Wednesdays from 9:30am

Siblings and other family members welcome!

Come and meet other families and enjoy play activities for children with an ASD/ Developmental Delay.

There is no need for a referral or diagnosis.

NOTE:
The Nerang PlayConnect group has relocated.

The PlayConnect Playgroup is provided at no charge to the families under the Australian Government *Helping Children with Autism* package. For more information call Carolyn or Rebecca at Playgroup Queensland 1800 171 882



AUTISM AWARENESS has produced a short documentary film titled 'What are you doing?' aimed at teaching school aged children about acceptance and understanding of their peers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Written by 'Another Country' author Michael Whelan and narrated by television personality Tom Gleisner, the film includes enlightening interviews with the brothers, sisters, cousins and friends of children on the spectrum. Keep an eye out for it.

The film addresses some of the fears children may have about ASD, answers their questions and helps show them how they can be a great friend to a classmate on the autism spectrum. The film includes enlightening interviews with the brothers, sisters, cousins and friends of children on the spectrum. These friends and family members share their thoughts and experiences on what it is like to share their life with someone on the spectrum.

Through beautiful imagery, engaging narrative and quirky animation, 'What are you doing?' sends the message that children with autism should be accepted, supported and encouraged by their peers to be a part of their community.

"What are you doing?" will be distributed to 10,000 schools across Australia later this year and we hope, in the future, throughout the world! To watch the trailer, visit <http://www.whatareyoudoingfilm.com/>

Autism Awareness is an Australian-based not-for-profit organisation, which was founded in February 2007. Since then, we have grown into one of the nation's largest autism education and advocacy organisations, dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in our community. To find out more about who we are and what we do please visit www.autismawareness.com.au



Show your support for the NDIS and people with a disability in Australia

People with a disability need you to join the campaign for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) by going to <http://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/>

The successful establishment of the NDIS will mean every Australian with a disability and their families will benefit in some way.

If you already have done this – great – can you then please sign up someone else? Could I also suggest you email all your friends and colleagues and ask them to do the same.

Get involved. This is too important to leave to someone else.

Despite what the Productivity Commission Draft Report has said about the current system being *underfunded, broken and not serving the interests of people with a disability*, the NDIS will NOT just happen. We will have to fight for the funding so people with a disability will have more choice, greater independence and richer lives.

If by joining the campaign each of us can contribute our voices to this critically urgent outcome, then we may just have done something very important today indeed.

Autistic children could be diagnosed from the age of ONE thanks to new brain scan

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2007265/Autisticchildren-diagnosed-age-ONE-scientists-brains-sync.html#ixzz1Q8FfW2pk>

By Daily Mail UK Reporter , 23rd June 2011

Discovery: The language areas in the right and left sides of the brain are less synchronised in autistic toddlers.

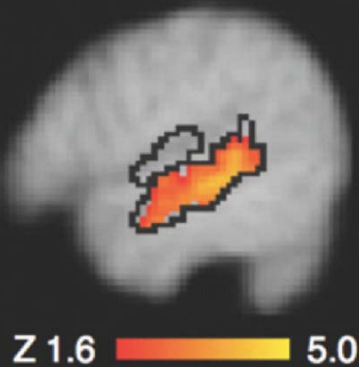
Researchers studying autistic children have discovered their brain activity appears to be out of sync compared to their peers at a very early stage. They found that language areas in the right and left sides of the brain are less synchronised in autistic toddlers. The weaker the synchronisation, the more severe the communication difficulties exhibited by the child. The findings could help doctors to lower the average diagnosis of autistic children in the UK from the age of five to one.

Researchers from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel made the discovery after measuring the neural activity of sleeping toddlers using MRI scans. Lead scientist Dr Ilan Dinstein, said: 'In a normal brain, neurons in separate areas belonging to a system with a particular function, such as vision or language, always stay in sync, even during sleep. 'Our study shows that in most brains of toddlers with autism this 'sync' is significantly weaker in brain areas that are responsible for language and communication abilities. Many things need to be set up right during brain development to enable normal sync between different brain areas. The wiring between the brain areas needs to be right and the neurons within each brain area need to send and receive their messages properly.' The findings, published in the journal *Neuron*, could lead to a method of diagnosing autism in one-year-olds, he said.

Autism encompasses a 'spectrum' of conditions characterised by poor social skills and difficulty communicating with others. Although the exact cause is unknown, many experts believe it arises from the development of abnormal neural networks with irregular connectivity. 'There's a tremendous amount of misdiagnosis in many different forms,' Dinstein said. 'A child that might seem autistic at one and a half years old may turn out at three years old to have language delay or some other developmental disorder. So one of the reasons to look for a biological measure is to clarify the issue of diagnosis very early on.' The study was published in the journal *Neuron*.

Diagnostic Brain Scans: Hope or Hype?

Control > Autism alert



In the past year, several studies have suggested that brain scans could soon help clinicians diagnose autism.

Many experts disagree, saying these scans are far from — and may never be — ready for use as diagnostic tests.

"[Scans] give us insight into underlying mechanisms and heterogeneity, rather than actual diagnosis," says [Joseph Piven](#), professor of psychiatry at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The diagnostic angle "is so naïve and oversold," Piven says. "It kind of misses the point of what this research should be about."

Advocates often claim that brain imaging could offer a more objective way to diagnose autism than behavioral tests, which cost around \$1,000 per child and cannot definitively diagnose the disorder before age 3. A diagnostic scan could conceivably identify signs of the disorder in the first year of life for a comparable price.

The studies in question compare brain activity of children with autism to that of healthy children and pinpoint distinctive patterns, or 'signatures', in the autism groups. The research runs the gamut of technologies, from scanners that trace the [shape of brain structures](#) and [neural connections](#) to scalp electrodes that measure [split-second blips](#) in brain waves.

The latest of these studies appeared 31 May in *Radiology*. [Joy Hirsch](#) of Columbia University and colleagues reported that, when listening to speech, children who have both autism and significant language problems show less activity in a word comprehension area of the brain than do healthy controls.

Findings like these are widely covered and [often exaggerated](#) by the popular press. But everybody, including the researchers themselves, seems fed up with the diagnostic spin.

"I am more than annoyed," says [Nicholas Lange](#), associate professor of psychiatry and biostatistics at Harvard University, who worked on an [imaging study](#) that identified differences in neural connectivity between autism and control groups. "In my unvarnished opinion, many reports appear to serve the scientists and the journalists directly involved, and not those they seek to serve."

Read more at... https://sfari.org/news/-/asset_publisher/6Tog/content/autism-diagnostic-brain-scans-hope-or-hype



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Should children with special needs be taught in a mainstream class?

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/should-children-with-special-needs-be-taught-in-a-mainstream-class-20110701-1gv3a.html#ixzz1R6EJYU19> Sydney Morning Herald, July 2, 2011

THE SENATOR: SUE BOYCE

All students, irrespective of their disability, should be educated in mainstream schools. That's what inclusive education, an alleged aspiration and requirement of state and federal governments for 40 years or so, means.

All governments pay lip service to inclusive education but practice is, at best, patchy and, at times, perverted. A few years ago, the Queensland Education Department even managed to include special schools in its examples of "inclusive education", to howls of protest.

But all governments regularly include special education units in their inclusive education figures, irrespective of whether the units offer genuine educational support or function as separate "special school" islands within the mainstream school grounds.

The WA education academic, Professor Bob Jackson, has said there is no research anywhere in the world that special schooling - segregated education - produces better outcomes for students with disabilities.

On the other hand, there are many studies demonstrating that inclusive education produces better outcomes for all students.

I've come to the view that the only way to make inclusive education a reality is to close down the special schools, and move all their resources into the mainstream system.

If mainstream schools had no option but to accept children with disabilities, they would concentrate on how to make it work, not how to avoid getting involved. If state governments had no option, they would better fund schools, teachers and training bodies to make it work.

I'm not advocating that students currently in special schools be immediately sent off as little human "experiments"

into the mainstream system. I acknowledge that parents who choose special schooling for their child do so because it's the current best option for their child.

I also acknowledge that there are many reasonable objections to sending all children with disabilities into our mainstream schools, but they are all problems with the system, not with the children.

What are we teaching children in mainstream schools about lifelong inclusion as they watch the "special" bus take the "special" children to their "special" school every day? What are we teaching children with disabilities and their families about their worth by telling them they can't "fit"?

Is it any wonder that adults with disabilities struggle to find work in open employment, or have a real social life?

Senator Sue Boyce is an LNP senator for Queensland and parent of an adult daughter with Down syndrome.

THE ADVOCATE BOB BUCKLEY

Inclusion ideology dominates education policy. Inclusion believers claim that properly implemented, inclusive education is the ultimate answer to educating students with a disability.

I support inclusive education, or mainstreaming, but only when appropriate: All students with a disability should get an effective education in the least restrictive setting. Inclusive education practice is far from ideal, and the evidence does not show that even ideal mainstreaming can meet the needs of all students with a disability.

Many students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are mainstreamed in primary schools but they may have more difficulty in high school. Their developmental trajectory differs from "normal teenagers". There is no evidence that these students need to relate to "normal teenagers"; and most "normal teenagers" do not want to relate to them. We need to respect the wishes of students with ASD who do not want to be mainstreamed.

Most teens like to associate with their peers. Mainstream schools segregate students into classes by age, subject interest, sport and sometimes proficiency, ability or gender. But mainstreaming isolates students with a disability from peers, denying them right of freedom of association.

Inclusion zealots think I am mad. They say there is strong statistical evidence that students with a disability can be educated effectively in mainstream settings. But simple statistics are not always clear. Imagine mainstreaming as a lake with average depth 20cm. Many students with ASD flounder in the deeper parts.

The zealots just ignore "complications". Students with ASD are four times more likely to be bullied in mainstream schools; in other words bullying is close to a certainty for students with ASD. Unless a student with ASD is especially resilient, this detriment may outweigh any benefit from mainstreaming.

Many mainstream schools, inadvertently, teach challenging behaviours to students with ASD so the students are often excluded from school. There is no educational safety net for them. The best measure of education effectiveness is whether people get a job and live independently. Today, most people with autism leave school and go onto the Disability Support Pension. On this measure, mainstream and special education are not effective.

Many schools do not have the ability to educate students with ASD. The absence of other essential services is a huge part of the problem. The available evidence does not show mainstreaming is best practice for all students with ASD.

Bob Buckley is convenor of Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia.

THE ACADEMIC: KIRSTY YOUNG

Inclusion, where all children - regardless of ability - are educated together, has been debated for decades but special-needs education has not changed substantially. The debate is fundamentally a human rights issue, grounded in principles of normalisation, that all children should enjoy a non-segregated, unrestricted lifestyle with full access to culturally normative resources.

However, inclusion in our education system is not automatically in the best interest of every child. Consideration must be given to the potential of a child to function as an adult, and the skills and behaviours needed to achieve this. At present, intensive and focused teaching in a segregated classroom is more likely to result in acquisition of functional skills, particularly where learning experiences incorporate real-world exposure. The level of differentiated instruction required to develop some functional skills is not possible in mainstream classrooms.

School and classroom design has not evolved and this has stagnated the inclusion movement. Advocates of a unified schooling system, where all resources and personnel are at one location, are on the right track. The reality is students with special needs are a small percentage of the population and cannot drive a fundamental shift in education. Expansion of the debate beyond special education to a general education and social issue would be useful. From this perspective, the overall design of the school space can be reconceptualised.

Consider a school built around learning centres, where teams of specialist educators work together to support all learners to reach their potential. Incorporating a technology centre, where some students are developing "apps" while others are learning basic internet search techniques; a literacy centre, where some engage in text analysis while others learn sight words; an environmental centre, where some workshop sustainability issues while others learn how to use public transport; and so on. Centres that do not exist solely to educate children from 9am to 3pm but, potentially, are used 24 hours a day and seen as essential community spaces. Centres where students with

special educational needs are truly incorporated, and valued, as part of a learning community that extends into the broader community.

Dr Kirsty Young is senior lecturer in education at the University of Technology, Sydney.

THE PARENT: KAREN PAKULA

To a quirky girl on the autism spectrum, the laws of the schoolyard are a mystery, and my daughter wandered about in a bubble, wondering which way was up. Concerned and at a loss to help, her kindergarten teacher suggested I investigate a special school. The children I saw there were barely verbal and were disconnected from the world.

There was no perfect fit but her father and I decided she'd be best close to home, at the local primary school, with the chance to make friends from the neighbourhood and the security of her big sister in a classroom nearby.

We were unprepared for what lay ahead. In year 1, she was "dis-enrolled" from Reading Recovery for failing to progress and, based on subsequent testing by the school, I was told she may never manage to read.

The Education Department has a zeal for testing. Every few years we were dispatched to psychologists for yet another diagnosis to satisfy the gatekeepers in charge of support funding. And to my great regret, I gave permission for my daughter to sit the basic skills exams after being told it would shore up the school's funding. The results told us nothing new and I discovered months later she had to be prised, in tears, out of hiding in the toilets to attend.

Unfortunately, success at school for a child like mine is at the mercy of number crunchers. But, I was told, we were lucky. The school was allocated funding to support a teacher's aide for 2½ hours a week, which is as good as it gets. But not nearly enough.

Like good middle-class parents, we paid for extra tuition. It was very successful and very expensive. It required back-up at home and my daughter slogged away at an evil number of dull little books for 20 minutes a day, six days a week. It took more than two years but she got there. She became a fluent, independent reader. The tests were wrong after all. She needed time, patience and Simpsons stickers.

The question for me is: how can mainstream schools adapt to best serve children with intellectual disabilities? If the department can't afford to support such intensive lessons, why not offer incentives to attract and retain aides? Think of the uni students who might sign up for a reduction in fees or extra course credits. The Education Department could certainly use some new inspiration.

Karen Pakula is a Sydney writer.

Dealing with sleep difficulties in children with autism spectrum disorder

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/autism_spectrum_disorder_sleep_difficulties.html

Many babies and children have sleep difficulties, especially with settling and night waking. In children with ASD, these problems can be more severe than in other children. You can manage and overcome many sleep difficulties in your child with ASD using common behaviour strategies.

ASD and sleep

Like all children, children with ASD can have trouble getting to sleep and staying asleep. Children with ASD can also have sleep difficulties that we don't see as often in other children. These difficulties include:

- irregular sleeping and waking patterns – for example, lying awake until very late, or early-morning waking
- sleeping much less than expected for their age, or being awake for more than an hour during the night
- getting up and playing, and making noise for one or more hours during the night
- excessive sleepiness during the day.

Sometimes he wakes up too early and is unable to settle. Because he needs reassurance, he wakes the household.

Children with ASD might be poor sleepers for many reasons, including:

- **Communication difficulties:** many young children with ASD have trouble communicating their wants and needs to others. Your child might be kept awake by something he needs but can't ask for it. Children with ASD might also be unable to pick up cues that bedtime is approaching because of their communication difficulties.
- **Love of routine:** children with ASD can be very attached to their routines. Your child might settle well if the regular bedtime routine is followed, but not otherwise.

- **Bedtime habits:** children with ASD can get into the habit of falling asleep in a particular place, and they won't settle anywhere else. Habits like these can be difficult to break for children with ASD.
- **Favourite objects and associations:** children with ASD might have favourite bedtime objects, or favourite pyjamas they must wear, or a pillowcase they must have before settling. Without these objects and associations, they can't settle.
- **Anxiety:** children with ASD can be very anxious. This can make it difficult for them to get to sleep, or get back to sleep after waking.
- **Hyperactivity:** children with ASD can remain very active and alert right into the evening.
- **Medical issues:** like all children, children with ASD can suffer from illnesses – colds or ear infections – that make it hard for them to settle or sleep well. Chronic illnesses such as asthma or epilepsy can also affect children's sleep.

Sometimes sleep problems last for a long time in children with ASD. Other times they improve as children get older.

Managing ASD sleep difficulties

Sleep and settling difficulties in children with ASD are not always part of having ASD. Some sleep problems are behaviour issues that you can manage using strategies that you'd use for any other child.

That said, your child with ASD might have difficulty understanding what you want her to do, and accepting any changes that you make. So dealing with your child's sleep difficulties might need lots of time and patience on your part.

Read more about [promoting good sleep habits in children with ASD](#).

You can also try the following strategies for managing settling and night-waking difficulties.

- Develop a [positive bedtime routine](#) that you can use wherever you and your child happen to be.
- Set a regular, age-appropriate bedtime for your child. It should be when you know your child will be sleepy, but not overtired. Many parents of children with ASD say that regular bedtime and wake times are helpful for dealing with sleep problems.
- Make sure you give your child plenty of warning that bedtime is approaching. If your child doesn't like to change activities with little warning, your child might get upset if you suddenly decide it's 'time for bed'.
- Be consistent in how you warn your child that bedtime is approaching. You could use a cue like a clock or an appropriate picture to show your child it's nearly bedtime. Choose something you can use or do wherever you are, including when you're on holidays or at someone else's house.
- If your child won't fall asleep without a particular object – for example, a toy or special pyjamas or pillows – try to think of ways to vary this. You might need to phase out the item, perhaps by gradually rotating different items at bedtime. This might help your child to stop relying on one.
- Encourage your child to fall asleep in his own bed – not on the couch, in your bed or anywhere else. It's also important for him to learn to fall asleep by himself. You might need cues to help your child understand that he needs to fall asleep in his bed by himself. These could be things like a picture showing him asleep in bed and you sitting watching TV.
- If your child gets upset and gets out of bed, quietly and calmly put her back to bed. You might need to do this many times, especially if you're trying to develop a new bedtime routine. Many parents of children with ASD say that returning their child to bed is helpful for dealing with sleep problems.
- If your child experiences anxiety about going to bed or sleeping alone, you could try wrapping your child in a blanket, using a nightlight in the bedroom, and/or playing music in his room when he's in bed.
- If your child has been ill, she might continue to want the extra attention she got when she was sick. When your child is better, try the settling strategies above again. But consult your child's doctor if you think your child's poor sleep is related to a medical problem – for example, asthma or epilepsy.

If your child wakes during the night, or gets out of bed, try the settling strategies above.

Other ASD sleep issues

Night terrors and nightmares

Sometimes children wake up screaming or crying. This could be caused by night terrors, which are normal in children from around 18 months to six years. Nightmares can also wake children up and make it hard for them to get back to sleep. Consult your child's doctor if you are concerned or your child's behaviour seems severe.

Bedwetting and toileting

Late toilet training and difficulties with toilet training are common in children with ASD. If your child isn't dry at night, he might wake because he's wetting the bed. Or he might wake to go to the toilet and then won't go back to bed.

You might consider getting some help if toilet training and bedwetting are problems for your child. For example, you could start by talking with your child's early intervention workers. If there's a persistent problem, also consult your child's doctor.

Snoring

Like all children, some children with ASD snore. If your child's snoring is persistent and not associated with a cold or similar illness, consult your child's doctor. Snoring can sometimes be a sign of sleep apnoea.

Restless sleep

Children with ASD sometimes have more restless sleep than other children. In particular, they might be prone to [body-rocking, head-rolling and head-banging](#). Although quite common, restless sleep can also be a sign of some less common sleep disorders. It's best to consult your child's doctor if you're concerned, or your child doesn't respond to settling strategies such as those above.

Children with ASD who don't sleep well are more likely to have behaviour problems during the day. As with all children, persistent sleep problems can negatively affect the learning abilities of children with ASD. And research tells us that when children with ASD don't sleep well, their parents are likely to experience poor sleep, high levels of stress, and depression. So there are good reasons for working on your child's sleep habits.

Where to go for help

Sleep problems often start to get better after the first two or three nights of implementing settling tips such as those above. If you don't see any improvement, there might be medical reasons for your child's sleep problems.

You might need the support of a professional to use some of the strategies above, such as those based on gradually changing bedtime and wake time.

You should consult your health professional if the techniques you try don't seem to help after the first few days. You might be referred to a paediatrician, psychologist, or other health professional who is experienced in treating children's sleep.

What about medication?

Although medication is not the best solution to sleep problems, in extreme cases medication can help. For example, some promising research shows that melatonin might help some children with ASD. Melatonin can be prescribed only by a doctor. It should not be given to a child without medical advice and supervision.

Acknowledgements

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THE ADAM SCOTT FOUNDATION

The Adam Scott Foundation Autism Grants Program

This is a national program administered by **Autism Queensland** on behalf of the **Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders** to improve the lives of the recipients. It is anticipated that the foundation will provide for two rounds of these grants annually. **The next round is due to be advertised soon.**

The Adam Scott Foundation Autism Grants Program provides underprivileged and disadvantaged families with the opportunity to secure an iPad, accessories, the autism specialised applications downloaded and 12 months of prepaid internet access (\$30 limit per month per unit).

The Adam Scott Foundation Autism Grants Program has been designed to provide young people living with autism, the access to apple iPads and their innovative autism specialised applications. In these early stages, apple iPads are already proving to be useful tools for children with autism to improve communication skills.

The Adam Scott Foundation Autism Grants Program is available to young people, aged 6-16 with an autism diagnosis across Australia. To be eligible you must be a permanent Australian resident.

When the 2011 funding round opens, the application form will be available on <http://www.autismqld.com.au>.

Cheryl Haack and son Ben embody World Games spirit

Leanne Edmestone Sunday Mail., June 14, 2011 1:48PM

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/sport/world-games-2011/cheryl-haack-and-son-ben-embody-world-games-spirit/story-fn8hfiwe-1226074950088>

Gold Coast News

Cheryl Haack helps kids in the Special Olympics movement, in which her son Ben is also involved.

WHEN son Ben was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome and joined the Special Olympics movement, Cheryl Haack stepped out of her car and into a new family.

Cheryl Haack and son Ben are late bloomers. Ben was not diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome until he was 17, and it was only then the family joined the Special Olympics movement.

But the Gold Coast duo have more than made up for lost time. When Cheryl climbed out of the car 12 years ago at Ben's first soccer training session, little could she imagine that she would one day be the chairperson of the Gold Coast Special Olympics region, a Level One soccer coach, have a unique Blue Brigade at her disposal and regularly travel the world.

Haack detests talking about herself. The former Lifeline counsellor tries to appoint Ben her spokesman for this interview. After all, the Special Olympics is all about the athletes.

"Everything we do is for the athletes, that's why this is so hard for me," Haack, 57, says. "It's just such a privilege watching those guys achieve things. Ask Ben, it's his life. Ben has a family with Special Olympics. His whole life is Special Olympics. He's been to two World Games. He's been to Ireland, to China, to India to play cricket, and he's part of the Athletes Leadership Program," Haack said. "He's been elected into the Asia-Pacific Board as an athlete representative. "He went to South Africa and did a press interview with the president. He's continuing his journey, away from sport, but within the organisation."

The Special Olympics is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation. Without dedicated parents and friends nothing happens. Administration, coaching, family support, endless fundraising ... it's all down to volunteers and Haack is one of their prized members.

A stay-at-home mum and "part-time wife" on husband Geoff's hinterland Limousin cattle stud, Haack says she gets back just as much as she gives. "It's a family. Our whole life is in this family. When we found Special Olympics, Ben fitted in and for me, it was the first time I went to a place where all the mothers were feeling the same. "If I have a problem, usually associated with my son, then there's someone in Special Olympics I can ring. My younger son, when he had a problem with his brother having a disability, I rang and they buddied him up with someone to help him through it."

Part of Haack's arsenal is her Blue Brigade, a unique band of blue-shirt volunteers formed after the National Games on the Gold Coast in 2006. "These people don't have kids with disabilities. They just love the whole tournaments, they love being around the athletes," Haack says. "They're just dedicated. They do a lot of fundraising for us."

Long-time friend and colleague Anna-Louise Kassulke, a Special Olympics board member, says Haack's incredible passion and energy make her a "real inspiration". "Sometimes in this industry and generally in volunteering, people are in it just for their son or daughter, but for Cheryl, every single one of those athletes and families is important to her," Kassulke says. "Often people want something in return, but for Cheryl it's really just seeing people participating in sport and getting enjoyment out of it that I think gives her a lot of pleasure." She says Haack is also driven to provide young families with the support and guidance she wasn't able to access during Ben's early years. "Mentoring and supporting other young families is an area she's quite passionate about. A lot of the younger mums ... she really likes to connect them with each other and encourage them to support each other."

Another long-time friend and Special Olympics Queensland sports manager, Thiery Visscher, is already ribbing Haack about taking the spotlight away from the athletes. "We've already laughed about it. She's a good laugh," he says. "But Cheryl's definitely a woman you need to clone. You need one of her in every region across Queensland at least. "(She brings) great organisational skills, a high level of kindness and appreciation, leadership qualities, great friendship attributes, a great model for athletes."

Haack credits the organisation for helping her find an identity of her own, separate from being Ben's mum and chauffeur. "Special Olympics has given me a me-spot; it's not only about Ben. Ben is a separate identity and for a parent it doesn't get better than that. He can stand alone now without support, and I have my own role and own people."



Kassulke says Haack also continually drives to improve herself in line with the athletes she works with. "She has really stepped out of her comfort zone. Sometimes people are happy being who they are, but Cheryl is constantly looking for ways to do things better and to learn and grow as a person herself. "What she'd be wanting out of this is more families, more athletes, more volunteers to get involved in the programs, I'm sure."

The last word must go to Haack. "I think for any volunteers in Special Olympics, honestly, it is whatever you want it to be. "Look at me, I'm a stay-at-home mum; who would have thought I would be chair of a region? "That's because they encourage you."



For more information on Special Olympics program, contact the Gold Coast Branch Secretary Robin Dredge on 5530 5919 or robaz@bigpond.net.au



Aussies Enjoy A Spectacular End To A Successful World Games! 5 July 2011

7,500 athletes from 185 countries, including 130 Australian athletes, celebrated the end of the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens last night. The spectacular event at the historic Panathenaic Stadium, the home of the modern Olympics, was a massive celebration of achievement as athletes let their hair down after ten days of competition and global friendship. 40,000 people shared the event, soaking up some joy among the political unrest. The Australian team have done us proud and will bring home a swag of medals as well as many personal best performances. Team management praised their spirit and their sportsmanship, with Peter Hedges (Aquatics Head Coach, NSW) sharing his thoughts, 'Being with these guys reinforces why I gave up mainstream coaching.' John Barker from News Limited spoke to the team at the Closing Ceremony and shared the story [Athletes Celebrate As Special Olympics Draws To A Close](#).

View all News Limited World Games news at your state News Hub (links at the bottom of this e-newsletter). Special Olympics Chairman and CEO, Tim Shriver sent this message to the people of Greece, 'You did an amazing job. The athletes had a great time. I can truly say that Greece has outdone itself. From this time on, millions of people worldwide have found out the meaning of Special Olympics. My mother would be very proud if she were here.' Tim's mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics movement that now supports over 3.1 million athletes worldwide. [Results](#) for Team Australia are available <http://specialolympics.com.au/index.php/wg2011/dailyresults>. For more information about the 2011 World Games visit <http://specialolympics.com.au/index.php/wg2011/wgabout>

The Queensland Team arrived home this week from Athens with a strong contingent of athletes from the Gold Coast. Visit <http://specialolympics.com.au/index.php/wg2011>

At Special Olympics we recognise, gold, silver and bronze, plus placeholders 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 and all eight placegetters in Athens are able to stand on the podium to receive their awards and share their talent.

DATE
CLAIMER

Vocational Options Mini Expo: *Employment and non-employment options*
for

Students with Disabilities

Monday 18 July 2011

5.00 - 7.30pm

Broadbeach State School – James Centre, (Old Burleigh Rd Broadbeach)

Target Audience: Students, Parents/Carers, Educators

Service Groups Featured:

Employment Support, Further Education and Training, Non-Paid Employment Options
(Social/recreational, living skills development and voluntary work including representative from Support for School Leavers funding)

For further information, contact Greg Clarke – School Transition Officer, Phone 5559 9333 or 0408 735 576



STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

A one-day session presented by

Dr. Wendy Lawson

Psychologist, Social Worker, Writer, Poet
Adult Educator and Adult on the Autism Spectrum
speaking on

The Passionate Mind: How People with Autism Learn

Supported by –

Zaffy (Lisa) Simone Artist

3 young adults (12, 18 & 19 year olds) **living with ASD** Short Presentations

WHEN: Wednesday, 3rd August 2011

TIME: 9.00 am – 3.00 pm

WHERE: Ballina RSL Club, River Street, Ballina

Morning Tea provided | LUNCH is buy your own

REGISTRATION CLOSING Wednesday, 20th July, 2011

COST: \$30

Payment by *VISA* or *CHEQUE* (Payable to Ballina Early Intervention) or *DIRECT DEPOSIT*
For information contact: Ballina Early Intervention on 02 6686 6889 or bei@commander360.com



Minds & Hearts GROUP PROGRAMMES

Suite 6, Level 1, 88 Boundary Street, West End. Ph: 3844 9466 www.mindsandhearts.net

TEENAGE GIRLS who are 13 – 17 years old and have a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, autism spectrum disorder or PDDNOS.

Psychologists: Danuta Bulhak-Paterson & Emma Faravelli

The program is designed for teenage girls with Asperger's Syndrome. The program explores self-identity and understanding of self as a young woman with a unique profile of abilities. Women with AS have often described that not knowing themselves has led to poor relationship and career choices, and ultimately, in some cases, depression. Understanding and celebrating self in terms of our strengths, difficulties and personality characteristics provides a strong foundation for success in adult life and a powerful antidote to depression and low self-esteem. Girls will also learn about different types of friendships and relationships with boys. The group provides a structured environment within which difference is embraced and celebrated.

W H E N: Seven consecutive weekly sessions - **Tuesday July 12th to Tuesday August 23rd from 5-6.30pm.**

Adolescents must attend all sessions. Parents are encouraged to attend the final 30 minutes of each session to discuss the program with the program conductors

H O W: To register interest, please book an assessment session if you have not already seen a psychologist at Minds & Hearts. The assessment session will take one hour. The aims of the session are to determine suitability for the group. Should the group not be suitable, an alternative plan will be advised.

C O S T S: **Most participants will be eligible for a Medicare Rebate. Please enquire with your GP.** Initial Assessment - \$200.00 + 7 group sessions @ \$90 each (\$830 total, \$150 part payment to be paid with registration). For participants to be eligible to receive a rebate from Medicare the group will require at least 6 participants.

YOUTH: Building Resilience

W H O: For eight teenagers who are 13 – 17 years old and have a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, autism spectrum disorder or PDDNOS and who have been adversely affected by bullying.

Psychologists: Emma Faravelli & Emilita Cornain

P R O G R A M M E: In recent survey studies, results have indicated that cruel bullying and teasing affects twice as many on the autism spectrum as neurotypical children. Despite many efforts by schools to stop the problem, children are still suffering at the hands of bullies. Intervention needs to occur at community, school administration, teaching, peer and individual levels. This group programme has been designed to intervene at the individual level by teaching participants about the psychology of the bully, strategies to stop the bullying, and tools to deal with the adverse affects such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. The primary aim of the group is to build resilience to equip each participant to succeed despite adversity.

W H E N: Eight consecutive weekly sessions, **Tuesday July 12th to Tuesday August 30th from 7-8.30pm**

Adolescents must attend all sessions. Parents are encouraged to attend the final 30 minutes of each session to discuss the program with the program conductors.

H O W: **To register interest**, please book an assessment session if you have not already seen a psychologist at Minds & Hearts. The assessment session will take one hour. The aims of the session are to determine suitability for the group. Should the group not be suitable, an alternative plan will be advised.

C O S T S: **Most participants will be eligible for a Medicare Rebate. Please enquire with your GP.**

Initial Assessment - \$200.00 + 8 group sessions @ \$90 each (\$920 total, \$150 part payment to be paid with registration). For participants to be eligible to receive a rebate from Medicare the group will require at least 6 participants.

Debra Tew Counselling Service

22 Murlong Crescent

Palm Beach Qld 4221

QLD / NSW

Ph: 07 55082376

Fax: 07 55082356

Email: debra.tew@bigpond.com

Debra Tew Counselling Service is a private practice specializing in counselling work with children and their families.

For the past 30 years I have worked extensively in the areas of **families, mental health, and disability**, and have developed **specialized expertise in PDD Nos, autism and aspergers syndrome**.

In addition to this, my years in a voluntary capacity as **Coordinator of Autism Gold Coast**, along with being a **parent of four children, two of whom have an ASD** (aged 22 and 15 years), has put me in a unique position to develop practical and appropriate therapeutic services for individuals and families. These include: **counselling services for individuals, families and couples; behavioural programs/interventions; therapeutic groups (including social skills groups); and consultative services to families, schools, government and non-government organizations.**

As a registered mental health worker I am a provider under **Medicare** and under the “*Helping Children with Autism Package*”.

Services Offered:

- Individual counselling
- Relationship counselling
- Family counselling
- Counselling for depression and anxiety
- Grief and loss counselling
- Communication training
- Social skills development
- Anger management
- Positive parenting programs
- Stress management
- Counselling for disabilities including autism, aspergers and PPD NOS
- One-on-one behavioural consultations
(Development of behaviour programs for children and adolescents, with or without disabilities, with challenging behaviours)
- Family-based interventions under the “*Helping Children with Autism Package 0-6 years*” and under Medicare
- School-based consultations
(To provide assistance in the development of skills building and positive behaviour management programs for students)

Debra is a registered Medicare provider, so if you have been referred by a General Practitioner, Psychiatrist or Paediatrician who has developed a Mental Health Care Plan for you, you are able to receive a rebate.

Debra Tew

B Soc Wk MAASW(Acc) MHSW
Mental Health Counsellor

MEETING VENUE at Nerang



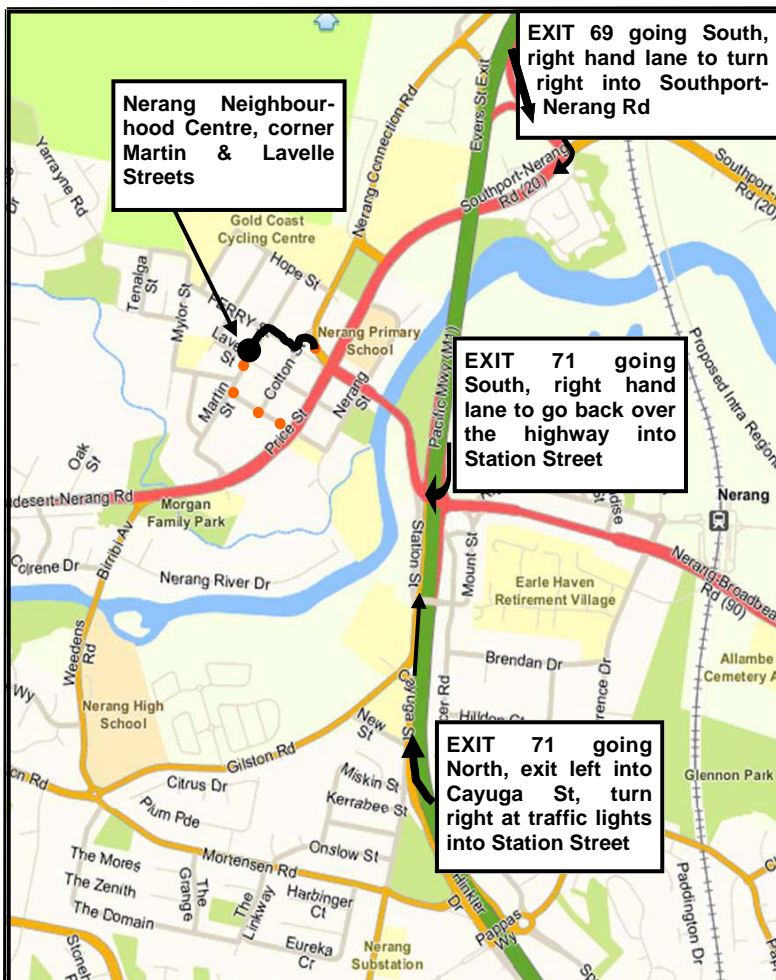
29 Martin St, & corner of Lavelle St
Entry via Lavelle St gate

BUY an ART UNION

★ TICKET ★
and support

Autism Gold Coast

★ Tickets available: ★
admin@autismgoldcoast.com.au
or 55591747



~ ~ 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.

Wednesday 20 July	Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.
Wednesday 3 August	Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting, 10 am - noon
Wednesday 17 August	Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm. Guest Speaker: to be advised
Wednesday 7 September	Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting, 10 am - noon
Wednesday 21 September	NO Evening Support Group Meeting this month.
Wednesday 5 October	Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting, 10 am - noon
Wednesday 19 October	Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm. Guest Speaker: to be advised
Wednesday 2 November	Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting, 10 am - noon
Wednesday 16 November	Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.
Wednesday 7 December	Coffee'n'Chat Support Group meeting, 10 am - noon
Wednesday 21 December	NO 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.