



Autism Gold Coast Inc

ABN: 43 196 196 468

# Autism Gold Coast Inc April 2008 Newsletter

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 Information, Support,  
 Networks, Library  
 [Please leave a message if phone is  
 unattended.]



Let's have a coffee!

MAY is Autism Awareness Month

*Sit down, Relax...*

The May Coffee 'n' Chat Meeting

on Wednesday 7 May

will be held at the Coffee Club

Q SuperCentre,

cnr Markeri St & Bermuda Sts

From 10am... Special rate for our parents and carers!

RSVP to Diana 5572 0448 or 55591747.



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## Fundraiser for Autism GC: Great Ocean Road Race



Judy SeeHoe is a local athlete and personal trainer based here on the Gold Coast. Judy will be taking part in the **Victorian "Great Ocean Road Run" on Sunday, May 18th**. The Great Ocean Road Run is a 23 km run in which participants seek sponsorship which is donated to nominated charities. Judy has a long and close association with children who have Autism, and has chosen to donate her sponsorship to **Autism Gold Coast**. **If you would like to sponsor Judy, or know of others in the business/corporate world, contact her on 0401 738 272.**

By sponsoring Judy in this run you will be helping to raise much needed funds to assist in the activities of **Autism Gold Coast**. All sponsorship payments will be forwarded to Autism Gold Coast, and tax deductible receipts issued upon request.

## Volunteers needed for Autism Awareness Displays ... Robina Town Centre

Saturday 10 & 24 May (10am - 12noon - 2pm)

Raise funds... Community info... Balloons

>> 4 << **Volunteers wanted for 2hrs!**

RSVP Helen: 5559 1747 or by email

Our thanks to the office of Jann Stuckey, Member for Currumbin for photocopying this newsletter.

Printed at Suite 1, Samuel Plaza, 1045 Gold Coast Highway, PALMBEACH 4221

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## Autism Queensland Outreach Team

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) may have difficulties in their school setting.

Autism Queensland (AQ) consultants are able to provide visits to a child's educational setting.

For children attending school on the Gold Coast areas, visits can be scheduled throughout the year. A Referral can be initiated by the school or the parent.

Autism Queensland's Outreach Services team works with the child's school support team to identify strategies to improve educational outcomes.

The Outreach Services team is a multidisciplinary team consisting of teachers, speech pathologists and occupational therapists. They will address current educational and developmental needs and concerns related to communication, sensory processing, fine and gross motor skills, accessing the curriculum and general behaviour. They will also provide information, advice, support and individualised strategies to parents, staff and other involved personnel.

Contact Frances Scodellaro & Cathy McNeill - Autism Qld on 3273 0000. Further information is located on their website: [www.autismqld.com.au](http://www.autismqld.com.au)

## 10 Reasons that make a Good Team Good!



### People who are:

1. Knowledgeable about autism
2. Effective communicators and effective listeners
3. Positive personalities who love working with students who are outside the mainstream
4. Flexible in their thinking and can evaluate the "pros and cons" of a situation and can think "outside the box"
5. Reliable and dependable, who meet deadlines and schedules
6. Respectful and supportive and can maintain a professional attitude in all situations
7. Committed to the team and especially the child
8. Freely share ideas and information between families and professionals
9. Can problem solve and openly discuss problems and offer action oriented ideas
10. Know when to step in with practical advice and when to take a step back.



## Year 3-5-7-9 Testing

[https://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/assessment/3579\\_handbook\\_prep\\_08.pdf](https://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/assessment/3579_handbook_prep_08.pdf)

The 2008 National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests will be conducted on **13-15 May 2008** for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia. These national tests will provide information on how Australian students are performing in the content strands of numeracy, reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar and form a key part of the National Assessment Program endorsed by state Education Ministers.

Schools may be in contact with parents/carers of students with a disability to discuss "special consideration" or "exemption" for their child. A form is required to be filled out and signed. Accommodations to test conditions may be made to ensure appropriate participation by other students. Special consideration should only be given when students receive this level of support in the classroom during their school day as part of their EAP or IEP.

### Special considerations can include:

access to large-print; Braille; white copy for use with coloured overlays; low-vision aids; masking to cover distracting material; assistive technology; oral sign support; separate supervision; extra time including rest breaks which may necessitate them being seated in a separate area to other students to avoid disruption; test instructions in writing, signing, symbols; alternative communication devices; a trained scribe for writing; specialised equipment or realia (e.g. coins).

Tuesday 13 May - Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 *Language conventions test, Writing test.*

Wednesday 14 May - Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 *Reading test.*

Thursday 15 May - Years 3 and 5 *Numeracy tests.*



## 2007 Annual General Meeting

On Wednesday 19 March 2008, the third Annual General Meeting of Autism Gold Coast Inc was held at Currumbin Community Special School.

The Management Committee for 2008, as elected, is:

President - Tony Maher

Vice President - Debra Tew

Secretary - Helen Steinhardt

Treasurer - Heather Hoare

Volunteer committee members - Jan Aylward, Sarah Brown, Louise Sherrington. *If you have any free time or ideas, you are very welcome to join the team!*

Following the meeting, **Dr Richard Stuckey** spoke to those of us present on the biomedical treatment of individuals with autism, and presented feedback on case studies which he has done. It was an interesting and informative presentation to which many questions were asked from the floor.

## May is Autism Awareness Month

### Family Picnic, Sunday 18th May



“Park Lake” Park

Cnr Binstead Way & Greenway Bvd  
Pacific Pines, 10am-2pm

BYO drinks & snacks, chairs.

Sausage Sizzle provided.

**Activities:** Top Hat the Magician at 1.30pm,  
Children’s playground, Oval, BBQ, Toilets  
A great place for the Dads to meet other Dads!

**RSVP appreciated:** 55591747 or by email



### Autism Awareness Displays

Robina Town Centre

Saturday 10 & 24 May

(10am - 12noon - 2pm)

Raise funds... Community info... Balloons

> 4 < *Volunteers wanted for 2hrs!*

**RSVP Helen:** 5559 1747 or by email

Mark this on your calendar!

*2008 Mothers' Weekend Away*

*12 - 14 September 2008*

*Tamborine Lodge*

Come relax with us!



Application Forms in June Newsletter

WHAT'S  
ON...

Coffee 'n' Chat Morning Meeting

May 7th - Coffee Club

Q SuperCentre

10am - 12 noon

RSVP Diana 5572 0448



World Autism Day...

World Autism Day will be held each year on April 2nd!

On World Autism Day, like every day for many Australian families with a family member with an Autism Spectrum Disorder it will start like every other day. Well that is what the person with ASD will be hoping.

One of the things that people with ASD like is routine, structure and order, so if their day doesn't start in a familiar way, their stress can begin to build immediately.

We all know that there is therapy and strategies to be taught, programs to be developed and implemented, and that individuals with ASD do struggle at times to fit into a world in which they feel like the misfitting jigsaw piece, but it is also important to see them as the whole person they are and focus on the positive and things about them that make them truly unique and memorable. Their black and white processing of information while at times causing frustration, is also thought provoking when we look at a situation from their point of view. It is sometimes good to sit down and write down all the positives about having an ASD child in the family, instead of continually focussing on the bits that make every day a new challenge at times. My list would include honest, reliable, consistent, tidy, willing to give things a go, always know where they are and what they are doing, remembers special dates and times, not a shopaholic, so good at saving, not overly concerned with clothing brands etc., their pleasures can be simple little things, like a coffee with Dad & Mum after work, or a night alone watching the football.

So enjoy the positives of ASD, and share an autism awareness with others in the community, so they too can understand the challenges ASD people face daily, as well as see the positives of having ASD people a real part of the community.

*"Remember people with ASD need support and understanding, but have unlimited potential. However it is only when the community acknowledges, understands, and appropriately addresses this condition that effective assistance and supports will be maintained and each individual's full potential realised".*

Written by : Debbie Brooker, Coordinator Mackay Autism Support Group

## Teach students in the classroom how to be a friend to someone with ASD

*Anna Tullemans Newsletter Vol. 3 No.1*

ASD students often find it difficult to see and understand those who are making friendship advances. Many of our students do not notice when others are reaching out to them with offers of friendship. Sometimes they mistake these advances as intrusions on their privacy. They disinvite people by not understanding body language and facial expressions. And yet there are times when they would cherish these very same advances and offers of friendship as they would like to play and be with these students.

Following are some ideas that you can teach the ASD students classmates to use. Explain to classmates how to:

- ◆ Accept their differences
- ◆ Protect their friend from situations that may cause them confusion
- ◆ Sit near their friend and notice when he needs help
- ◆ Play games that are interesting to the ASD person
- ◆ Play the games the way the ASD person likes to play them using his rules
  - Show the ASD person that sometimes there are different ways to play, but that today we'll play his way
- ◆ Invite their new friend to play, but to also understand that:
  - Sometimes he will not want to play
  - And to ask again later
  - Sometimes he will play for a short time and then may get tired and walk away without saying a word
  - He then may return without a word and begin playing again.



## GET ACTIVE for ASD

~ Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia ~

VISIT their website: <http://www.a4.org.au>

*Bob Buckley, Convenor*

**1000 hours Campaign** is a collaborative effort between organisers Dr James Morton (AEIOU), Nicole Rogerson (Autism Awareness) and Bob Buckley (A4), all parents of children with ASD. Their sons Andy, Jack and Keiran are their daily reminder of the importance of early intervention. Parents, grandparents and friends from across the country have been emailing in their support to our office. They have been overwhelmed by the warm response. In addition, many organisations have signed on to show their support of this important call to action.

The 1000 hours campaign kicked off this month and from all of the responses we received, it has clearly struck a cord with families across Australia. So far over 17 000 people have registered their support on the web site and the numbers continue to grow. The government is currently finalising the details of how much support each child will receive. As such, it is of utmost importance that the ASD community stands together as a united voice to appeal for improved services and funding for our children's future.

[1000hrs.com.au](http://1000hrs.com.au) calls for funding of quality, intensive early intervention services that meet best practice guidelines. We want all Australian children with Autism to receive the 1000 hours a year of early intervention the Australian government itself recommends.

*Please go to the [www.1000hours.com.au](http://www.1000hours.com.au) website. If you agree that each young child who is diagnosed with autism should be able to access early intervention like that in the advice the government published itself, then please register your name with this campaign. And please get your friends to register their names. The Commonwealth Government's Best Practice Guidelines state that "A program needs to be of at least 20 hours per week over an extended period of at least two years". This equates to 1000 hours per year for 2 years.*

# Community News

## **CONNECTING CARERS – Mobile HUB EVENT**

These events continue with several planned for this year. Already Autism Gold Coast has provided support and information to the first Connecting Carers Hub Event held at Mudgeeraba Special School during Term 1. The next Hub Event will be held later this term on **Wednesday 28 May at Currumbin Community Special School, 10am–12 noon**. Local service providers will be in attendance to represent their service and participate on the day. This would be in the form of providing information and being there on the day to speak face to face with families etc about their service. Guest speakers are also being organised.

For further information, contact **Wendy Chandler**, Coordinator, Connecting Carers Hub Event, email: [wendyp2p@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wendyp2p@bigpond.net.au) or phone 0417 787 646

## ***Solutions for Life: Social Skills Groups in Term 2, at Oxenford***

There are three Social Skills Groups generally starting the second week back and run for 8 weeks.

For more information, contact **Kerry Marsh** - Solutions for Life: Psychological, Educational and Assessment Services Suite 3B Cottonwood Plaza, 5-7 Cottonwood Place, Oxenford. Ph 5580 4999 [www.solutionsforlife.net.au](http://www.solutionsforlife.net.au)



## ***FABIC: Workshops and Training Programmes at Worongary***

For information about existing programmes and other workshops and training, contact **Tan Curtis**, Clinical Behaviour Management and Counsellor, Suit 34 Medical Centre, Worongary Shopping Centre, 1 Mudgeeraba Rd (Exit 77 off the Pacific Highway), Worongary. Phone 55 305 099 or 0412 615 798. [www.fabic.com.au](http://www.fabic.com.au)



## ***Autism Queensland: Family Support Workers***

Gold Coast families can seek support and information from AQ's Family Support Workers who provide a range of services. **Shannon O'Brien** [shannono@autismqld.com.au](mailto:shannono@autismqld.com.au) and **Jenni Vranesic** [jenniv@autismqld.com.au](mailto:jenniv@autismqld.com.au) can be contacted by telephone on 3273 0000 or 1800 657 077.

## ***Minds and Hearts: New GOLD COAST Clinic***

**Minds and Hearts** are delighted to announce that they have opened a new Minds and Hearts Clinic at Bundall. Families living within the Gold Coast and Northern New South Wales areas will be able to access specialised ASD services far more easily now that we have opened the new clinic. All the staff at the new clinic are highly trained in ASD and are an integral part of the Minds and Hearts team. Contact the team at **Minds and Hearts**, Kingfisher Rooms, Level 1 Suite 16, 13 Karp Court, Bundall. Ph 5570 2899 [www.mindsandhearts.net](http://www.mindsandhearts.net)

## ***Fundraiser for Autism GC: Great Ocean Road Race***

**Judy SeeHoe** is a local athlete and personal trainer based here on the Gold Coast. Judy will be taking part in the **Victorian "Great Ocean Road Run" on Sunday, May 18th**. The Great Ocean Road Run is a 23 km run in which participants seek sponsorship which is donated to nominated charities. Judy has a long and close association with children who have Autism, and has chosen to donate her sponsorship to **Autism Gold Coast**. If you would like to sponsor Judy, contact her on 04017 38 272.

## State Government Media Releases...

**Minister for Communities, Disability Services,  
ATSIP, Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth  
The Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr  
07/04/2008**

### **Families get 'peace of mind' with free child care info service**

Communities Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr said the Queensland Child Care Information Service gives parents important peace of mind.

"It is a free statewide info service helping families choose the right early childhood education and care which best meets their individual needs," she said.

"The hotline will be very handy right helping parents find vacation care as well as services which meet their specific needs.

"It's also geared to help Queenslanders across the State get easy access to information about the types of child care services available, the locations, hours of operation, contact details and consumer rights."

Of the 550 calls received in January this year, 270 were from parents. Among the most frequently sought after information was the location of local providers and the types and flexibility of care available.

The Child Care Information Service is operated by the Department of Communities.

It is open between 8.30am and 5pm Mondays to Fridays.

Call toll free 1800 637 711 or email

[ccis@communities.qld.gov.au](mailto:ccis@communities.qld.gov.au)

Ms Nelson-Carr said the Child Care Information Service can also provide a range of information about what to look for in a quality service, information for developers on establishing early childhood services, as well as information for early childhood students.

"The Child Care Information Service also produces a range of handy tip sheets on a wide variety of topics including Living with toddlers, Living with teens, and Peer pressure," said the Minister.

For more information, please visit:

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

Media Contact: Minister Nelson-Carr's office 3235 4280

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**Minister for Communities, Disability Services,  
ATSIP, Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth  
The Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr  
15/04/2008**

### **New Disability Bill safeguards rights of people with a disability**

The much anticipated Disability Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2008 was introduced into State Parliament today.

Disability Services Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr said the Bill was the cornerstone of the Queensland Government's \$113 million response over four years to the report by the Honourable WJ Carter QC into enhancing safeguards for adults with an intellectual or cognitive disability who exhibit

challenging behaviour.

"This new legislative framework is about getting it right in government provided and funded disability services - that's the priority," Ms Nelson-Carr said.

"The Bill will make a real difference in the lives of Queenslanders with a disability by protecting some of our most vulnerable citizens and giving their families and support workers peace of mind because they have the support of a legal framework they helped create."

Ms Nelson-Carr said under the Bill, Disability Services Queensland and DSQ-funded service providers would only be authorised to use restrictive practices when they followed rigorous requirements.

"This includes conducting an assessment, developing a positive behaviour support plan and having regular reviews of any use of the restrictive practice," she said.

"This Bill represents a significant milestone in delivering the-whole-of-government response to Mr Carter's Report. It will both control the use of restrictive practices for the first time and mandate a system of positive support for clients."

The new legislation safeguards the human rights of clients and provides certainty to service providers and their staff.

"The safeguards include the Guardianship and Administration Tribunal approving containment and seclusion, and reviewing decisions made by tribunal-appointed guardians who consent to the use of physical, mechanical or chemical restraint," said the Minister Ms Nelson-Carr said any use of these practices would have to be shown to be the least restrictive way of ensuring the safety of the adult client and others.

"The Bill balances the need to respect the rights of the individual while protecting the rights of others to live and work in an environment which is free of violence and other potentially damaging behaviour," she said.

"This legislation will also enshrine the role of families and guardians in the decision-making process which is a loud and clear message which came out during the consultation process."

In the past seven months, the Bligh Government has delivered the major Carter Report recommendations which set the new benchmark for Disability Services Queensland and DSQ-funded service providers.

These include establishing the Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Support, specialist response services and bringing in the new legislation.

The new centre is the first of its kind in Australia. It is located at the University of Queensland's Ipswich campus and recruitment is underway to find an internationally-recognised expert to head the facility. Among its priorities will be developing best practice support models and training frontline staff supporting people with a disability. For more information on how Disability Services Queensland is making a difference for people with a disability, visit: [www.disability.qld.gov.au](http://www.disability.qld.gov.au)

Media contact: Minister Nelson-Carr's office 3235 4280

## Crossing Divides Currumbin Community initiative

An exciting project for the Gold Coast community!!

The **Crossing Divides** project has come about from a partnership developed between **Access Arts, Currumbin Community Special School P&C Association** and **the Gold Coast community**.

The project aims to prepare young people 16-25 yrs particularly those experiencing disabilities and disadvantage to develop skills through a series of arts workshops. It is hoped that these skills will prepare these young people for entry into wider social, educational and economic opportunities.

The project has been funded by the Westpac Foundation for a period of two years so provides an ongoing opportunity for young people to realise their potential and abilities as workshops will be run continuously at least to the end of 2009. Young people are encouraged to make contact with the program at any time if they are interested in attending.

**Commencing APRIL 14th – July 12<sup>th</sup>:**

**Visual Arts – 2D & 3D ... Theatre ... Digital Storytelling... Sound Circles™... Hip Hop...**

Contact **Cheryl Gardner** for a detailed program of events: [cheryl.gardner@bigpond.com](mailto:cheryl.gardner@bigpond.com) 0401 587 448

**Please Note:** For all workshops to go ahead, we require a minimum of eight participants to be enrolled. Workshops will not run on public holidays. Fee concessions are negotiable – Please contact Jessica.

### Creative Community Activities

Start Date	Finish Date	Duration	Start Date	Finish Date	Duration
Week 1 Mon 30th June	Fri 4th July	10:00 - 2:00	Week 2 Mon 7th July	Fri 11th July	10:00 - 2:00

*The Creative Community activities and venue will be confirmed based on response from artists, participants, and community members. Artists and community members are invited to create proposals for community art activities. Activities will be decided through a focus group. Please contact Jessica at Access Arts [jessica@accessarts.org.au](mailto:jessica@accessarts.org.au) to register your interest.*

### Community Celebration and Workshop Showcase

**Venue:** Currumbin Community Farm, 1226 Currumbin Creek Road, Currumbin Valley (opposite the rock pools & Currumbin Valley State School)

**Date:** Sat 12th July **Duration:** 1:00 – 4:00

*Bring your family and friends along to celebrate the creative experience and achievements of Crossing Divides. Enjoy an artistic afternoon of community celebration and creativity as we delight in great local produce and live entertainment. This is a fantastic opportunity for our young artists to showcase their talents to the wider community..... Come along and ENJOY. The day will be an exciting and interactive community day for everyone so please put this one in your diary and let as many people know as possible about this.*

If you are interested in having your young person come along or know of someone who would love to come please email me (Cheryl [cheryl.gardner@bigpond.com](mailto:cheryl.gardner@bigpond.com)) and I will send you out a program that outlines the project and gives details of the workshops available over the coming weeks along with membership forms and enrolment forms. It would be appreciated if you could circulate this information to as many young people you know as possible.

If you need more programs or would just like more information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Gardner

### Crossing Divides project team:

**Cheryl Gardner**, Workshop Supervisor, Crossing Divides Project, Ph: 0401 587 448 [cheryl.gardner@bigpond.com](mailto:cheryl.gardner@bigpond.com)

**Jessica Townsend**, Project Co-ordinator, Crossing Divides Project, Ph: 3358 6200, [jessica@accessarts.org.au](mailto:jessica@accessarts.org.au)

**Vanessa White**, Community Consultant, Crossing Divides Project, Ph: 0421 346 020, [bradandnes@bigpond.com](mailto:bradandnes@bigpond.com)

Sydney Morning Herald, 19/3/2008

## A hand in care and trust

*Special trusts are designed to help parents support their disabled children, writes Lesley Parker.*

A new type of trust aimed at helping the parents of disabled children provide for their care and accommodation hasn't proved as useful as hoped and families are exploring other avenues, including early access to the superannuation system.

The special disability trust structure introduced by the Federal Government in September 2006 quarantines money set aside for care and accommodation from rules affecting age and disability support pension entitlements.

Assets held in such trusts are exempt from the social security assets test, up to a limit of \$516,500 (adjusted annually for inflation) on top of the usual assets test thresholds. In addition, family members eligible to contribute to such a trust are exempt from gifting rules that affect pension entitlements.

Generally speaking, pensioners can't give away more than \$10,000 a year without affecting their entitlements.

Immediate family who receive a pension can safely contribute up to \$500,000 to a special disability trust (as long as other trust rules are met).

People working in this area, however, say take-up of the trusts has been cramped by the limitations on their use and the costs involved. Advocacy group Carers Australia says that of December 31, only 22 trusts had been established.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs confirmed this figure, adding that the total value of contributions at that date was \$5.7 million (which is an average of \$259,000 a trust).

Carers Australia chief executive Joan Hughes says the trusts "are just out of the reach of so many families".

"The policy's right but not the amount," she says. The trusts just aren't practical help for families relying on Centrelink payments to survive.

"[Financial] advisers were fairly excited about the potential of these trusts but they don't seem to have had a good take-up rate because of the limitations," says Robert Simon, senior technical adviser with financial advice firm Ipac.

Terry Matthews, a consultant with TressCox Lawyers says the trusts are limited to the "severely disabled", as defined under the rules governing the trusts. Once established, there are also strict rules about the accommodation and care costs the trusts can meet, he says.

For example, they can't pay a parent for providing care - only someone specifically employed as a carer. They can't pay for food other than special food required because of the disability, they can't meet medical needs not directly related to the disability and they can't pay for the ordinary upkeep of the disabled person's residence.

Matthews says that, as a result, families may have to set up more than one trust - using the special disability trust to meet costs such as paid care and a parallel family or "protective" trust for other needs.

Administration is the other issue. Special disability trusts are very expensive to run, Simon says. The trustee must report annually to Centrelink, the trust has to file a tax return and an independent audit can be required at any time.

Matthews says the cost and complexity of establishing a trust means it may not be a viable step for families with less than \$500,000 to place in a trust - the sort of families who would be receiving the pensions the Government aims to protect. Families with substantial finances who could afford to set up a trust are unlikely to have concerns about protecting pension entitlements.

Queensland lawyer Katrina Brown, who has a special interest in this area, says even higher-income families may wish to protect disability pension rights for their children, because being a pensioner can be a condition of access to some programs for disabled people.

Brown regards special disability trusts as

more of a succession planning tool for older parents, where they are established via a will to provide for a disabled child once the parents pass away.

Previously, parents were leaving money to other relatives to provide for a child - so their disability pension wasn't affected - but this left the door open for relatives to mismanage the money, she says.

Brown says some of the initial excitement around the trusts was to do with getting away from the penalty tax rates that apply to investment income earned by minors (aged under 18). Tax law has long had a special provision for disabled children, however, who pay tax at normal adult rates rather than at rates as high as 66 per cent.

Ipac's head of technical services, Colin Lewis, says another way to provide financially for disabled children is through the super system, which has become easier since rule changes last year.

A change to the definition of what constitutes total and permanent disability means they could gain early access to super benefits on the grounds of disability. Previously, the definition of such disability meant a person had to have ceased work, which meant you had to have been gainfully employed in the first place - this, Lewis says, cut many out.

However, the definition now refers to being unlikely to ever work. This opens the door for many more disabled people to contribute to super and draw a lowly taxed allocated pension, as long as two doctors certify it's unlikely they'll ever work. "[Suddenly] a lot of people were brought into the net who could never have used super," Lewis says. This includes children - depending on the particular fund's rules - because minors can now contribute to super.

*[Ed note: Katrina Brown works at Attwood-Marshall Lawyers, Coolangatta.]*

## Strategies for Helping Kids Get Organized

Linda Hodgdon

<http://lindahodgdon.com/newsletters.html>

As adults, we use strategies to organize our lives. We put papers in color-coded folders, use shoe racks, and schedule appointments with PDA's, calendars, and lists to organize our environments. Providing children with similar strategies helps them organize their environments and promotes independence. Although we try and help kids organize by reminding them to put their things away, many children often need examples and support to succeed at organizing their lives.

Below are a few tips for helping kids take their organization to the next level.

### Toys

Use pictures or drawings of items to remind children where things belong. Cut pictures from the newspaper or use a picture from the toy's box. Tape images on shelves and in toy boxes so children clearly know where toys belong.

Pictures and labels also can be used outside totes and bins to indicate where animals, art supplies, or other small toys belong.



Pictures

Organized Materials

### Shoes

Provide a mat, box, or shelf for shoes. If kids remove their shoes in the entranceway, be sure to place the box or mat immediately inside or outside the door. If people wear shoes in the home, be sure to have the box, shelf, or mat located in the child's room in an easy to access location.

### Bathroom

Use toothbrush, soap, cup, and toothpaste holders to provide a natural reminder where things belong. Towels should be housed on a towel rod or ring so children know where to return them when they finish drying their hands and face.

All areas should be accessible when the child is standing on the floor or on a step stool so they can be responsible for putting their own items away.

### Desk

Create a jig or outline of the location where each object belongs. Place outlines on the top of the desk and in the desk drawers to let children know where to find and return their notebooks, pencils, crayons, and other school materials.

Clearly defining areas is important for kids to independently locate and return writing and working materials.

### Book Bag

Give children the resources they need to organize their papers, pencils, and other school supplies. Folders are a way to keep papers sorted by subject. Be sure to use folders with pockets that are secure and provide enough space for necessary pages.

Label notebooks and use different color books for different subjects. For pencils, erasers, and pens select a bag with pockets for these items or purchase a pencil holder.

Make a weekly routine, possibly Sunday evening, of removing any unnecessary papers and materials from the book bag so children can stay organized and find their important materials.

### Clothes

Drawers should be easy to open and closets should have hangers and shelving children can reach easily.

As with toys, children can benefit from a picture, drawing, or words indicating where clothes belong. Provide enough hangers and shelving so clothes fit neatly in the closet or drawers. Dirty clothing should be put in a convenient place. Be sure hampers are easy to access and near areas where the children remove their clothes. If children change in the bedroom and in the bathroom, place hampers in both locations.

## Speaking up for autism

James Madden and John Stapleton *The Australian*, March 01, 2008

**LYNNE Miller knows the difficulties of raising an autistic child. But she is also well-acquainted with the daily frustrations of dealing with the wider community's ignorance of the condition.**

Lynne Miller with her autistic daughter Tyne, who has a cameo role in *The Black Balloon*. Picture: Vanessa Hunter

"Not only do a lot of people not understand autism, but they also don't recognise that it affects the whole family," Ms Miller said.

Tyne, 19, is the youngest of Ms Miller's three daughters.

Like many people with autism, Tyne has no obvious physical disability apart from speech impediment, and as a result her behaviour is often misinterpreted by others who are unaware of her condition.

Autism spectrum disorders are often characterised by poor social interaction and communication skills, restricted interests and obsessive behaviours. Autistic people can also become extremely upset by something as simple as a strange smell or noise, a fact not known by many.

It is hoped that a new Australian film, *The Black Balloon* - which has received rave reviews overseas and will open in Australia on Thursday - will heighten public awareness of autism, and of the experience of living with an autistic family member.

The film depicts a teenage boy (Rhys Wakefield) falling for a girl (model-turned-actor Gemma Ward) while struggling to deal with his severely autistic brother (Luke Ford). Toni Collette plays the boys' pregnant mother.

Senior staff of the country's largest autism organisation, Autism Spectrum Australia, are already convinced of the film's educational worth - having seen an advanced screening of the movie earlier this year - and plan to include it as part of the company's induction program for new staff.

ASA spokesman Anthony Perl said that given the "broad spectrum" of the condition, it was impossible to portray a one-size-fits-all example of the life of an autistic person. "But the film's great strength is that it demonstrates how autism affects the lives of others."

The 1988 film *Rainman* brought autism to public attention but dealt with a character - portrayed by Dustin Hoffman - who was an autistic savant, an extremely rare condition.

Autism experts believe that the portrayal of an autistic character in *The Black Balloon* is a far more authentic representation of the wider autistic experience.

Ms Miller, who teaches autistic children at South East Sydney School for Children with Autism, said because Tyne "looked normal", people were quick to judge her behaviour and did not understand that the entire family was under strain.

Ms Miller, who will attend the Sydney Premiere of *The Black Balloon* on Thursday, said the film was an important step in educating people. And for her daughter Tyne, who recently started her first job as a shelf stacker at Rockdale City Library, the film holds more significance, as she features as a lioness in a dance scene depicting Noah's Ark.

"It was pretty interesting being in the movie, when we played together as animals," Tyne said. "Autism means someone always likes to be alone, sometimes you like being with people and sometimes you don't. My talking, my sounds, it's difficult just a bit. It worries me a bit.

"I work at the library, I started last year. It's going well. I don't have any problems. I want to keep going working in the library. That's it. I put the books away and the DVDs away. It's OK work. A happy person? Yeah, I am."



## The Black Balloon

**Cast:** Rhys Wakefield, Gemma Ward, Luke Ford, Erik Thomson, Toni Collett

*It's not easy being Thoman Mollison (Wakefield). He's turning 16, and his autistic brother Charlie embarrasses him. So do his wacky parents. When his pregnant mother (Colette) is confined to bed rest, he is put in charge of Charlie (Ford) and with the help of his new girlfriend Jackie (Ward), Thomas faces his biggest challenge yet.*

*The Black Balloon is a funny and ultimately heart-warming story about fitting in, discovering love and accepting your family.*

## Assistance Dogs

<http://www.dogsforthedisabled.org/partnerships/AutismAssistanceDogs/> (UK)

In 2008, Dogs for the Disabled will introduce a very special project, extending its services to help children with autism and their families. The new service, aims to help families with an autistic child to lead a more fulfilled life through the provision of a specially trained assistance dog.

For a child with autism life can be terrifying, the world becomes a confusing puzzle, a mass of pictures and noise that never makes sense. There is no known cure for autism, and every individual is affected differently, but one thing remains the same, with a child trapped in their own world by a devastating condition, normal life stops for the whole family.



An autism assistance dog is highly trained and socialised to help with the needs of the child and their families. Their role will be to act as a guide, anchor and continuous focus for the child and in so doing will offer the whole family the chance to open their doors to the outside world again.

While the effects on the autistic child are not fully understood, the results can be dramatic; a child with autism can become calmer within just a few weeks of commencing their training, tantrums and bolting behaviour is reduced and the child shows a greater focus that has the potential to offer improvements in learning and communication – sometimes for the first time.

With the presence of a highly trained assistance dog, the family can hope to visit the shopping mall, go to the park and even attempt a holiday, simple things that all too often can become a distant memory for the family with an autistic child.

For more information on Assistance Dogs in Queensland, check out <http://www.asdogsnq.org/index.html>

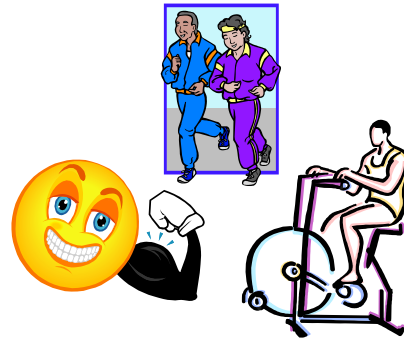
*The Association of Australian Assistance Dogs (N.Q.) Inc.* is a non-profit organisation run by volunteers who provide specially trained dogs to assist people with disabilities to achieve a measure of independence and to greatly improve the person's quality of life.

## Expression of Interest for Programs

### SPECIAL FITNESS OPPORTUNITY

#### Expressions of Interest

are sought from ASD young people (15 + age group) to join group fitness training session/s.



**Venue:** PCYC, Broadbeach Waters

**The trainer:** Skell Terone (Qualified fitness trainer with 12 years experience, working with special needs and tailoring personal fitness programmes for each individual).

**For further details, contact Skell at 5538 5201.**



## Sexuality Education

~ Positions in group to be filled ~

Series of workshops designed specifically for young people with Asperger's Syndrome/High functioning Autism, with **Judy Graham** from Family Planning Qld, Gold Coast office.

**12 - 14 year olds; and 15 - 17 year olds**

- Feel positive about themselves and their bodies
- Develop decision making skills and assertive behaviour
- Develop an understanding sexual health issues
- Feel capable of communicating about sexual matters
- Understand appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Practise identifying emotions and communicating with peers

**WHEN:** during Term 2 2008, after school, once a week for 6 weeks

**WHERE:** to be advised

**Contact Judy Graham at FPQ on 5531 2636 or email [jgraham@fpq.com.au](mailto:jgraham@fpq.com.au)**



## DISABILITY SECTOR TRAINING FUND

*South Coast Region Training Coalition*

# Provide Behaviour Support CHCDIS15B

**Disability Sector Training Fund (South Coast)** presents a 2 day course based on the cutting edge of Behaviour Assessment and Support strategies. The content has been developed to bring it in line with and exceed competencies set down by the National Training Framework.

### The Presenter:

Geoff Potter is currently the Clinical Director of The Centre for Applied Behaviour Analysis. He works hands on with clients and staff implementing programmes. He has published in a number of journals and presented at a number of international conferences including The World Conference on Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies.

### Target Audience:

This workshop is aimed at direct support workers, managers, parents, other family members and unpaid carers who directly support a person with a disability.

Cost: \$25 for target group service providers, [FREE for parents and carers](#), \$50 for non target group, \$100 for government services

When: 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008, 9am-4pm

Where: Eagle Heights Mountain Resort, 1683 Tamborine Oxenford Rd, Mount Tamborine

To enroll, complete and fax 3234 0474 the application form attached. Bookings are essential!!!

Applications will close on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008

To obtain a registration form and more info about the course, contact the Workforce Council Team on 3234 0190.



## Have you heard about the DSQ One Application for Support Form?

**Registering with Disability Services Queensland** requires completion of only a limited number of questions in the Application for Support, as instructed in the form.

**Applying for specialist disability services and funding programs** requires completion of the full Application for Support.

**Autism Gold Coast** has a number of copies of the Application Forms and the Guides to help assist you in filling them out. If you need help to complete these forms, speak to Diana, Debra or Helen who will put you in contact with people to assist you in making an application.

***Even if you do not need a service now, or would like to access support and services now, but cannot find what you want... this is one way to have your needs made known so that future government planning and services for the ASD community are more appropriate to individual family needs.***

For further information, and to obtain copies of the Application Forms and Guidelines for completing the forms, contact the Disability Information Service on 1800 177 120, visit the DSQ [website](http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/support-services/application-for-support/forms-and-guides.html) <http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/support-services/application-for-support/forms-and-guides.html> or contact **Gold Coast Regional Office**, Disability Services Queensland, PO Box 1158, BEENLEIGH QLD 4207. Phone: (07) 3884 7001 Fax: (07) 3884 7044.

### Interesting Websites

**Jason McElway: JMac the awesome basketballer**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek1iIOTsiRo>

**Beautiful Minds: Stephen Wiltshire an autistic savant with artistic abilities**

<http://video.stumbleupon.com/#p=0k4lsi1dql>

**ASPERGER**  
SERVICES AUSTRALIA  
(Asperger's Syndrome Support Network (Old) Inc)



"Talking with us"



## **GOLD COAST SEMINAR**

with

**Professor Tony Attwood**

and **Dr Michelle Garnett**

on

***New Development***

***"Making Friends & Managing Feelings"***

Session 1 – Social understanding

Session 2 – Strategies to improve friendship skills

Session 3 – Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Emotion Management

Includes Question time

**Wednesday 14 May 2008**

**9.00 am to 3.00 pm**

at

**Parklands Showgrounds: Collin Meagher Pavillion  
Cnr Parklands Dr & Smith St, SOUTHPORT**

FREE PARKING available

### **Target Audience:**

Parents, Educational Personnel (Primary & High School), Transition Officers, Training Facilities, Guidance Officers, TAFE, University staff, Employment Agencies, Centrelink, Disability Services Queensland, and any other interested parties.

**Autism Gold Coast** has negotiated with **Asperger Services Australia** a one-off reduced registration fee for **Autism Gold Coast 2008 financial members** to attend this excellent upcoming seminar presentation. (If you have not yet received your unique personalised Membership Code to quote on your Registration Form, please contact Helen on 5559 1747 or by email asap.)

**Cost:** (prices include Morning Tea & Lunch)

ASA Members/Autism GC Members: \$115.00

Students/Concession/Pensioners: \$ 90.00 (photocopy of ID required, must accompany payment)

Non Members: \$160.00

### **Disability Services Queensland:**

The *Building Supportive Communities Grants 2008* has made it possible to web stream part of the day's program to our rural friends throughout Queensland. You require access to the Internet to participate. For web stream registration details please contact Stefanie on 07 3865 2911, or email: [stef@asperger.asn.au](mailto:stef@asperger.asn.au)

**For Registration Forms or more information** please contact Stefanie at **Asperger Services Australia** on: 07 3865 2911 or visit [www.asperger.asn.au](http://www.asperger.asn.au) or email: [stef@asperger.asn.au](mailto:stef@asperger.asn.au)

## **Autism Behavioural Intervention Queensland (ABIQ)**



**The ARMS Global Autism Conference on 29th and 30th August**, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre. International keynote speakers confirmed to date include Professor Tony Attwood, Brenda Smith Myles, Dr Bobby Newman, Dr Jeff Bradstreet. Topic areas include:

Behavioural Approaches	Communication
Approaches to Learning	Growth and Changes
Socialization	Therapies
Diagnosis	Life Skills
Transitions	Parenting
Biomedical Treatments	Diet
Alternative Therapies	Other Autism related topics

**Email:** [enquiries@abiq.org](mailto:enquiries@abiq.org) **Ph** 1300 224 753 **Fax:** 3881 1868

**Postal Address:** PO Box 7053, Brendale Q 4500

## **Autism Queensland Training Services**



**Workshop Venue:** Sunnybank Therapy & Education Centre, 437 Hellowell Rd Sunnybank Hills

**NB: Ask if there is a parent discount on these workshops.**

<u>Understanding ASD</u>	14.5.08
<u>Promoting Successful Communication for Children with Autism &amp; Intellectual Impairment</u>	21/05/2008
<u>Ditching the parents - Getting out on your own</u> (6 week course)	22/05/2008
<u>Reluctant writers</u>	23/05/2008
<u>Dealing with Challenging Behaviour - Intellectual Impairment</u>	28/05/2008
<u>Stress, Anxiety &amp; Emotional Regulation on the Spectrum</u>	03/06/2008
<u>Strategies for Young Children - Play Communication &amp; Exploration</u>	04/06/2008
<u>My life with Aspergers - How my journey can help</u>	04/06/2008
<u>Make and take visual supports for ALL children with ASD</u>	13/06/2008
<u>Friendship &amp; Social Skill1</u>	16/06/2008
<u>Homework and Study Skills</u>	18/06/2008
<u>Strategies for Young Children - Play Communication &amp; Exploration</u>	24/06/2008
<u>Teacher Aide - Communicating effectively with a student with ASD</u>	08/07/2008
<u>Understanding ASD</u>	21/07/2008
<u>C.A.N. - Coping &amp; Negotiating course for parents with school age children</u> (5 week course)	23/07/2008
<u>Teacher Aide - Understanding ASD and general strategies</u>	24/07/2008
<u>School Success - Learning Academics and Homework</u>	28/07/2008
<u>Teacher Aide - Understanding ASD and general strategies</u>	29/07/2008

**PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST to Pauline Aitchison at AQ** by email: [paulinea@autismqld.com.au](mailto:paulinea@autismqld.com.au) or Phone: 3273 0000 / Parents: 1800 657 077, and check on AQ's website [www.autismqld.com.au](http://www.autismqld.com.au) for further information.



**Meeting Venue:**  
 For ***BOTH monthly meetings*** of Autism Gold Coast  
**CURRUMBIN COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL**  
**5 Hammersford Drive, CURRUMBIN WATERS**  
*Off Villiers Drive, off Currumbin Creek Road*

**DATE CLAIMERS for 2008** ▶

**Wednesday 7 May - CHANGE of VENUE**

Morning Meeting - meet at the Coffee Club at  
 ➡ Q SuperCentre, 10am

**Saturday 10 May - ASD Awareness Display** at  
Volunteers needed Robina Town Centre, 10-2pm

**Sunday 18 May - Family Picnic**

“Park Lake” Park, Cnr Binstead Way & Greenway Blvd, Pacific Pines, 10am-2pm  
 Sausage Sizzle provided, Top Hat the Magician at 1.30pm, Children’s playground and Oval

**Wednesday 21 May - Centrelink Payments** for Evening Meeting: Carers & Family members (Speaker yet to confirm)

**Saturday 24 May - ASD Awareness Display** at Volunteers needed Robina Town Centre, 10-2pm

**Wednesday 4 June - Guest Speaker - Linda Walk**  
**Commonwealth Carelink**

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

**Coffee’n’Chat Support Group Meeting** 10 am - noon. Young children welcome

**Evening Support Group Meeting,** 7.00 - 9.00pm

A small plate of food to share and a gold coin donation are appreciated.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Wednesday 7 May</b>      | Coffee’n’Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon |
| <b>Wednesday 21 May</b>     | Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.              |
| <b>Wednesday 4 June</b>     | Coffee’n’Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon |
| <b>Wednesday 18 June</b>    | Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.              |
| <b>Wednesday 2 July</b>     | <b>NO MEETING during School Holidays</b>           |
| <b>Wednesday 16 July</b>    | Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.              |
| <b>Wednesday 6 August</b>   | Coffee’n’Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon |
| <b>Wednesday 20 August</b>  | Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.              |
| <b>Wednesday 3 Sept</b>     | <b>NO MEETING during School Holidays</b>           |
| <b>Wednesday 17 Sept</b>    | Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.              |
| <b>Wednesday 1 October</b>  | Coffee’n’Chat Support Group meeting , 10 am - noon |
| <b>Wednesday 15 October</b> | Evening Support Group Meeting, 7-9pm.              |

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***During the year, the Management Committee will organise Guest Speakers to attend some of these meetings. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome.***

***Please pass them on to either Diana, Debra or Helen.***