

family
action



Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD

Support Service

May

2024 Newsletter

How many of you reading this newsletter, deal on an almost daily basis with..... **the After School Effect**? Meltdowns, shutdowns, distressed behaviours, exhaustion, emotional dysregulation. Whatever you call this difficult spell at the end of the school day, many of you will know immediately what we mean. Many parents tell us about their child's anger and aggression after school but what looks like anger is so often sadness, frustration, fear, tiredness or anxiety. Every child and young person is an individual and will require an individual approach but in our newsletter this month we are thinking about this difficult time of the day and exploring the reasons for challenging or distressed behaviour after school and offering some strategies for you to think about.

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Some Dates for your Diary**
- **The Effects of Masking**
- **Dealing with Demands**
- **How could school help?**
- **Strategies for Parents**
- **Our Upcoming Courses**
- **Family Action FamilyLine**
- **About our Service - contact details**

Just as every child is unique, every family's situation is different. We in the Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service speak to many families with children of differing needs. Some of the information contained in this newsletter is anecdotal and some from respected websites. We hope you find the following interesting and helpful.

Join us at our Zoom Information Session in May



family action

ENCOURAGING EARLY YEARS COMMUNICATION

Wednesday 22nd May 10am to 11am

No need to book for this friendly and informal session to look at ways to encourage communication and language building for your younger children.

Just use the joining details below.

ID: 425 756 9109
Password: 392919
SEE YOU THERE.

Making Sense of SEND

If you live in the west of the county, you may be interested to know that the next Norfolk County Council, Making Sense of SEND event is taking place on 15th May at the Knights Hill Hotel in King's Lynn from 10am to 12noon. Some of our Family Action team will be there to meet parents and offer advice and support. See the poster below for information about how to book your place.



MAKING SENSE OF SEND

FREE INFORMATION FAIR

For parents/carers of young people with SEND and the professionals who work with them.

Wednesday 15th May 2024 10am-12pm

Knight's Hill Hotel, King's Lynn, PE30 3HQ

Browse information stands

Listen to a talk on Early Years at 10.30am

Enjoy free refreshments

Information stands will include:

- Norfolk SEND Local Offer
- Norfolk SENDIASS
- Family Voice Norfolk
- Vision Norfolk
- Nansa
- Healthwatch
- ASD Helping Hands
- TITAN
- DRAGONS
- Just One Norfolk
- Dyslexia Outreach Service
- West Norfolk Autism Group
- Community and Partnerships team
- Family Action
- Mancroft Learning
- Migliori
- Achieving Aspirations
- Fostering Recruitment
- Family Hubs Norfolk
- Norfolk Library Information Service
- Direct Payment Support Service
- Carers Matter Norfolk
- Newcross Healthcare

Book your place through Eventbrite



Norfolk County Council

Drop-in support groups - Come along and meet other parents/carers and share concerns...and successes.



Our Drop-In Groups are friendly and informal. No need to book. They are a chance to meet our knowledgeable team as well as other parents and carers who are facing similar challenges.

We run these groups in Lowestoft, Gorleston, Swaffham and King's Lynn on a regular basis. We also run one-off drop-ins in the Central area, visiting various towns.

**** PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR EMNETH DROP-IN IS NOT HAPPENING IN MAY DUE TO CLOSURE OF THE VENUE. WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR ANOTHER SUITABLE VENUE. KEEP AN EYE ON THE NEWSLETTER FOR FURTHER NEWS ****

Scroll through the cards below for information about our drop-ins in May. Just click directly on a card to enlarge it.

Meet our team and other parents in...
GORLESTON



We meet at....
GORLESTON LIBRARY, FAMILY ACTION OFFICE,
GORLESTON-ON-SEA, NR31 6SG

Wednesday 1st MAY 2024 from 10:00am to 11:30am

No need to book, friendly and informal, but if you do want more information then please RING 01493 650220 or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.

We would like to meet you in.....
SWAFFHAM

We meet each month, upstairs in Costa Coffee, Market Place, Swaffham, PE37 7AB

Friendly, informal, no need to book.

Ring 01603 972589 or email Swaffham@family-action.org.uk if you want more information.



Join our friendly 'Drop In'

Family Action – Norfolk and Waveney Autism / ADHD Support Service. Supporting Families of children with Neurodevelopmental Differences.

If you have personal experiences with a child with neurodiversity or are waiting for a diagnosis, come along to our 'drop in' session to meet our Family Support Workers, who can offer support and answer any questions.



Monday
13th May 2024
10.00-12.00 noon



Wymondham
Library
Back Lane
Wymondham
NR18 0Q8

For more information, get in touch

📞 01603 972589

✉ swaffham@family-action.org.uk

www.family-action.org.uk

Family Action. Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no: 294713
Registered as a Charity in the Isle of Man no: 1206. Registered Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales no: 01068186.

Why not join us in LOWESTOFT?

We have a regular drop-in support group....

AT THE RIVERSIDE FAMILY HUB, 6 CANNING ROAD, LOWESTOFT, NR33 0TQ

Come along and join us on Thursday 2nd MAY 2024 from 10:00am to 11:30am NO NEED TO BOOK

RING 01493 650220 or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.



Join us in KING'S LYNN

Our drop-in support group meets in.....

DOBBIES, next to TESCO HARDWICK, KING'S LYNN
PE30 4WQ

No need to book just come along on.....
Tuesday 14TH MAY 2024 9.30am - 11.00 am.
FIND US IN THE COMFY, SOFA AREA.

RING 01603 972589 or EMAIL Swaffham@family-action.org.uk for more information.



The Effects of Masking



Appearing to be fine in school and actually being fine in school can as you know be very different things. Our neurodivergent children and young people put a lot of effort into fitting in. Some of what they do will include:

- Making eye contact although it may be uncomfortable for them.
- Laughing at jokes they didn't really 'get'.
- Suppressing urges to stim so that they don't stand out.
- Trying to appear unaffected by sensory input like noise and smells.
- Copying the language of their peer group.
- Working at mirroring the interests, hobbies, fashion sense and music tastes of their peers.
- Appearing to have understood instructions when they have not and then not asking for help.

Although we associate masking mostly with autism, children and young people with ADHD are also likely do some of the above in their efforts to get through the school day. They will also try to fly below the radar, pretending that they were listening to instructions when in fact they were distracted by something they could see through the window, trying to force their brains to concentrate on subjects which do not interest them, working hard at fighting their urge for movement or trying to rein in some of their impulsive traits.

Putting on a front, fighting with your natural instincts and worrying about your differences is exhausting, frustrating and ultimately not good for mental health. No wonder our neurodivergent children and young people show how difficult it has been when they arrive home to you and to the safe space where they can be themselves.



"It's a bit like being an actor all day long, constantly monitoring the way you put your body so it seems natural, the way you try to look at people and reply to them, while memorizing all of it to process it at the end of day, just to try to be sure you did nothing wrong, because people judging you takes a huge toll on your already almost non-existent self-esteem. And it comes with very intense and overbearing weariness as well, because of all the energy you use to act as normal as possible, to restrain yourself from putting your hands over your ears when there is too much noise or to run away when there is a strong smell coming your way." Amber - Blogger with Autism

References and other links:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/autistic-masking>

<https://www.autismparentingmagazine.com/autism-masking/>

<https://www.ne-as.org.uk/Pages/Category/behind-the-mask>

Dealing with Demands



For children and young people with raised levels of demand avoidance, school will by no means be the only part of their lives where they are triggered by real or perceived demands. But the school setting is full of such demands. You are told to dress in a certain way and behave in a certain way, move when a bell rings, sit still when you want to move around and even ask for permission to use the toilet.

Demand Avoidance is increasingly being called Demand Anxiety. Avoidance suggests defiance or laziness when in fact for many neurodivergent people demands trigger very difficult feelings about their lack of control, raising anxiety, producing adrenaline and fight, flight and freeze responses. They may be so sensitive to demands that they hear orders or feel they are being pressured even when that was never the intention.

"Why don't we go to the cinema tonight?" (Oh no, you will expect me to sit still and eat my popcorn quietly and it will be awful!)

"Gold star for your Maths today. Well done." (Does she now expect me to work this hard every day?)

If you know that demands are difficult for your child or young person, then this is likely to be quite a large part of why they arrive home already tightly wound.

Try to make the first hour or so after school as demand free as possible. This is not about giving up or giving in, it is about choosing your battles and worrying about those battles you do want to pursue at a more suitable time. Do they really need to put their shoes on the shoe rack or hang coats on pegs or start homework the minute they walk in the door? And remember that they see demands where you do

not intend them. If their day has been tough, they may not be able to handle your kind enquiries about how the day went or why they seem sad. Allowing time for anxiety to reduce is crucial. If already feeling overwhelmed, more demands are going to be the final drip which makes the bucket overflow. If you really do have to ask your child to do something, think about taking a low demand approach. Keep your voice slow and low to avoid escalation and think about how you formulate a demand. Here are just a few examples of the low demand approach.

"I wonder if you could move your shoes when you are ready..."

"Let's put these toys away together."

"I bet you can't remember how to set the table."

"I have forgotten where these books go, can you help?"

Further Reading:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/diagnosis/pda/parents-and-carers>

<https://autismawarenesscentre.com/what-is-low-demand-parenting-or-a-low-demand-approach/>

<https://neurodivergentinsights.com/blog/low-demand-parenting>

<https://www.autisticrealms.com/post/low-demand-parenting-not-just-for-children>

Talking to Schools



Where a school knows that a child or young person has some barriers to learning, it should be using it's 'best endeavours' to overcome these and thinking about any 'reasonable adjustments' which might support. This is never straightforward however. We have already talked about masking. It is hard to

respond to difficulties which are being hidden from you. Even where the issues are clear and steps are taken, some children and particularly young people will refuse to engage with any adjustments which make them stand out from the crowd. And flexibility is required because strategies which work well this week might not be making any difference next week. Supporting children with neurodivergent traits can be quite difficult for schools. But they still have to try. And you can help by sharing with the school the main areas where your child needs support. A well supported child is less likely to come through the door after school distressed and overwhelmed.

Here are just a few ideas of useful classroom strategies to help you in discussions with school about supporting your child's....

- **Social Interaction** - buddy systems and friendship benches in the playground, a quiet place inside available when the playground is too much, talking to the whole school about difference, inclusion and kindness, peer mentoring, time-out cards, quiet voice teaching, brain breaks.
- **Social Communication** - 12 second rule to allow processing time, emotion cards, visual timetables, agreed classroom hand signals, consistency and fairness of approach, reducing sayings and idioms.
- **Rigid and Repetitive Thinking** - Reduce number of avoidable changes, prepare the child for unavoidable changes, communicate well with parents about changes, allow stimming as much as possible, do what you say you will do, 5 minutes means 5 minutes.
- **Sensory** -sensory diets, sensory circuits, ear defenders, quiet corner, movement breaks, fidget toys, flexibility with the uniform.
- **Inattention** - breaking work down into manageable chunks, worksheets with key instructions already highlighted, instructions for an activity written on an individual whiteboard rather than having to be remembered, homework already printed on labels for the homework diary, allow doodling, fiddle toys or even chewing gum for older children to aid concentration, reduce amount of copying from board, praise for effort and not just achievement.
- **Hyperactivity** - movement breaks, classroom jobs to do, allow doodling, fidgets, wobble cushions, stand up instead of hands up for all, avoid punishments which involve the removal of playtimes, allow more time to settle.
- **Impulsivity** - be aware of how vulnerable and suggestible this may make a young person, apply different sanctions because they do not have the same controls in place, manage transition times (busy, noisy corridors will be difficult), try to involve them in structured activities at playtimes, allow them to walk away from confrontation, catch them making good choices and PRAISE.
- **Anxiety** - schools are also required to look after the social, emotional and mental health of children and young people. They often do this through SEMH learning packages such as ELSA or PATHS. Ask your school what they do. For children who are becoming very anxious about attending school despite a number of adjustments being made, you could approach the school about a *reduced timetable* which you think they could cope with. These reduced hours are initially for six weeks only and have to be reviewed. The aim should always be to gradually

increase hours. For young people with diagnosed and severe anxiety schools can reach out to the's local authority Medical Needs Service for advice. See link below.

Norfolk County Council's Educational Psychology Service supports schools and pupils. See the links below to the great resources they also produce for parents to access.

SEMH (Social, Emotional & Mental Health) - Educational Psychology [SEMHS Parent Resources \(padlet.com\)](#)

Autism Specialist Team - Educational Psychology EPSS Padlet at <https://padlet.com/juliestewart1/rfj56atbsahtmifi3g>

An important document stating what additional support is available in Norfolk schools - [Provision Expected at SEN Support PEaSS \(2019\)](#)

[NCC What we expect from schools](#)

[NCC Medical Needs Service](#)

Suffolk SENDiass advice about [Medical Needs](#)

[Suffolk Local Offer](#) - Support in Mainstream Schools




1 - STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

Have a look at BBC BITESIZE by clicking on the link below. They have pulled together five top tips for parents who are trying to cope with what they call 'After School Restraint Collapse'. This guidance is not specifically about our neurodivergent community, children after all can find school difficult for lots of different reasons, but we still think it offers some great advice and insights for parents and carers.

[Five Tips to Handle the After School 'Meltdown' BBC BITESIZE](#)

PLAN BEE IN MAY





Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

Plan Bee Course

Understanding and Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child or Young Person's Needs.

Free Course for Parents/Carers

Plan Bee is a 3 week course (2 hours per week) written by two Clinical Psychologists working in Norfolk Community Health and Care. We have been commissioned by Norfolk ICB to deliver this course for parents and carers of children who have suspected or diagnosed neurodevelopmental conditions.

All behaviour is a form of communication. Our course supports parents to understand their child's individual needs and how to best support them.

The aim of this course is to help parents and carers to:

- Understand why their child or young person might become overwhelmed.
- Reflect on what might trigger certain distressed behaviours and how to implement pro-active and re-active strategies.
- Develop a support plan which they can share with other family members and schools to ensure a consistent approach.
- Meet with other parents/carers for peer support.

When?

Tuesdays 7th, 14th, 21st May 2024
10.00-12.00 noon

Where?

Owen Barnes Room,
New Costessey,
Norwich,
NR5 0RW

For more information you can contact us Monday to Friday 9- 5pm on:

- 📞 01603 972589
- ✉️ swaffham@family-action.org.uk
- 📍 Norfolk and Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service

www.family-action.org.uk

Family Action: Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no. 264713.

2 - CLICK TO ENLARGE

UPCOMING COURSES AVAILABLE TO BOOK.

Plan Bee – understanding and supporting your child or young person with additional needs

‘Plan Bee’ is a FREE 3 week course (2hrs per week) written by two clinical psychologists working in Norfolk and is aimed at parents or carers of children or young people with additional needs including suspected or diagnosed Autism or ADHD.

JUNE 2024 Blofield Court House, 28 Yarmouth Road, Blofield, Norwich, NR13 4JU

Tuesdays, 4th, 11th and 18th June 10:30am to 12:30pm

ALSO IN JUNE PLAN BEE ONLINE ON ZOOM

Thursdays 13th, 20th, 27th June 2024 10:30am to 12:30pm Joining details provided on booking

Ring **01493 650220** or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.


CONTACT US FOR DETAILS OF COURSES AROUND THE COUNTY LATER THIS YEAR

You can still access the online videos of our Positive Behaviour Strategies course (now Plan Bee) on the NHS for Norfolk website, Just One Norfolk.

Just click here: <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/child-development-additional-needs/behaviour-sleep/norfolk-positive-behaviour-strategies-pbs/>

Puffins Autism Programme - for parents/carers of children or young people with a *diagnosis* of Autism





Puffins Autism Programme

The Puffins Programme is a FREE, four week programme designed by Norfolk Community Health and Care's Neurodevelopmental Service for parents and carers of children and young people with a diagnosis of Autism.

Family Action are working in partnership with NCHC and EPSS to deliver the programme to families in Norfolk.

Week 1 – Introducing Autism and Understanding Behaviour (Family Action)

Week 2 – Communication – (NCHC Speech and Language Therapy Team)

Week 3 – Understanding Sensory Processing (NCHC Occupational Therapy Team)

Week 4 – Autism in Education (NCHC EP & Specialist Support – Autism Support Team)

NB: *Session 1 only in each course is just a little longer, 9.30am to 1.00pm



<p>Programme dates:</p>	<p>May 2024 Thursdays *2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd May 9:30am to 12:30pm Wymondham Robert Kett Primary School, Hewitts Lane, Wymondham NR18 0LS</p>	<p>July 2024 Mondays *1st, 8th, Thursday 11th and Monday 15th July 9:30am to 12:30pm Swaffham The Community Centre, The Campingland, Swaffham, PE37 7RB</p>
	<p>June 2024 Mondays *3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th June. 9:30am to 12:30pm North Walsham North Walsham Infant School, Manor Road, North Walsham, NR28 9HQ</p>	<p>August 2024 Thursdays *8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th Aug 9:30am to 12:30pm Delivered online Joining details available for participants once place is secured.</p>

**Please note: Courses may change to an online version if participant numbers are low.

To find out more or book a place, please contact Family Action on:

☎ 01603 972589

✉ swaffham@family-action.org.uk

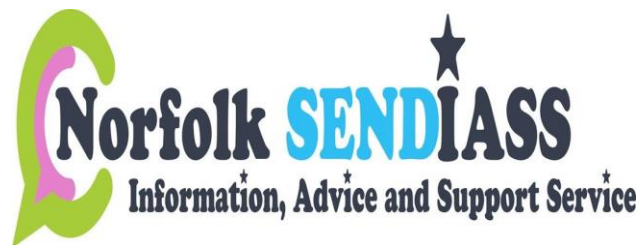



Family Action. Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no: 264713.

3 - CLICK TO ENLARGE

Do you live in East Norfolk or Waveney? CYGNET is the approved post-diagnosis course for families who use the Newberry Clinic for assessment.

Please call 01493 650220 if you would like more information or want to be placed on the waiting list for another course.



SENDIASS upcoming training events May/June 2024

May 2024

16th May

SEN Support online training for parent/carers

This training is being run virtually by Norfolk SENDIASS for parent/carers wishing to learn more about:

- What is SEN support
- What should settings do?
- How can settings support children and young people?
- Examples of SEN Support

[Book Tickets](#)

22nd May

Appealing a final EHCP

Help in understanding how to appeal a final EHCP to the SEND Tribunal including looking at what can be appealed, what forms need to be completed, timescales of the processes, what evidence needs to be submitted and what a hearing is like.

[Book Tickets](#)

Family Action also serves families in West Suffolk





For information about courses, drop-ins and workshops which you can access if you live in West Suffolk just click and enjoy their newsletter below.

Embed://<iframe width="760px" height="500px"
src="https://sway.cloud.microsoft/s/INND0JEWXtCNGsvA/embed" frameborder="0" marginheight="0"
marginwidth="0" max-width="100%" sandbox="allow-forms allow-modals allow-orientation-lock allow-
popups allow-same-origin allow-scripts" scrolling="no" style="border: none; max-width: 100%; max-
height: 100vh" allowfullscreen mozallowfullscreen msallowfullscreen webkitallowfullscreen></iframe>

Family Action FamilyLine - for any parenting concerns or crises. We can listen, support, inform and refer to a relevant service.



FamilyLine

Supporting adult family members
via telephone, text, email and
web chat



About our Service - Contact Details



To contact us for advice and support, or to book a place on one of our courses or information sessions, please use the details below.

For West and Central Norfolk **01603 972589** or email swaffham@family-action.org.uk

For East Norfolk and Waveney **01493 650220** or email gorleston@family-action.org.uk

Unsure which area to contact? Use any of the above – we are all here to help you.

If you wish to join our closed Facebook group, go to Facebook and to the Family Action page and then search for Norfolk and Waveney Autism and ADHD Support Service.

Or use the link below to visit our ND Services Web Pages.

