



Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service 2024 Newsletter

April

Volunteers Required



Family Action have had the same website for more than 10 years (<https://www.family-action.org.uk/>) and we are launching a brand new website in Summer 2024.

If you have a few minutes to spare to help us test the new website over the coming months, please get in touch at: swaffham@family-action.org.uk

With your help, we can make sure people can find what they need quickly and easily when the website launches, which means we can help more families.

Going to School Social Skills Story

Color and B&W versions included

Going to School

I am going to start school.

I will learn math, letters, reading, writing, science, art and more at school.

My school may also have library, music and PE time.

Going on an Airplane Social Skills Story

Color and B&W versions included

When we get check in with

At the airport we will find Security helps keep everyone safe. At security we will put our bags on an X-ray machine and through.

When it is time to get on the airplane we find our seats and buckle up our seatbelts.

While I am sitting, I can draw, I can read, I can play toys, I can look out the window.

Going on an Airplane



Welcome to our April Newsletter in what is Norfolk Autism Acceptance Week.

Our Facebook page will have more information about this. If you wish to join our service Facebook group, go to Facebook and search for [Family Action Norfolk and Waveney ASD/ADHD Support Service](#).

Norfolk AUTISM Acceptance Week

This month our focus is on tools to support your children and young people to face new, unfamiliar or difficult situations or after these events to help them to understand what they could do differently the next time to make these better.

Many children and young people who are living with neurodivergence will find changes and transition, social situations and any kind of *new* situation, quite difficult to deal with. This might be because they are already dealing with high levels of anxiety and are just not therefore able to cope with one more difficult thing. Or they may not have been given all the information which **they** need in order to feel safe about whatever is happening. They may have particularly rigid thinking which makes it problematic for them to process the change or assess the risks of a new situation quickly enough to be able to access it. For whatever reason, being asked to cope with a range of new or changed situations or even, at times, routine expectations and sequences, will fill your child or young person's bucket very quickly, causing

anxiety to arise. And as we know, when anxiety escalates, it can become almost impossible to communicate effectively about what the problem is or what could be done to make it better.

As parents and carers, you will always at times have to deal with situations which occur without warning . You will have your own strategies for dealing with these. You have probably all had to, on occasion, abandon activities and return home knowing that your child is not going to be able to do this thing on this particular day. Choosing your battles and letting things go is a really key skill for parents and carers and will reduce the levels of stress in your own, as well as the child's bucket.

Sometimes though, we do know that something problematic is on the horizon. A school trip, a doctor's appointment, a party, the first day at a new school or a family holiday. Tools like social stories and comic strip conversations are useful for many families we speak to.

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Some Dates for your Diary**
- **Social Stories**
- **Comic Strip Conversations**
- **Our Upcoming Courses**
- **SENDiass Update**
- **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.

ZOOM Information Session in April



A GUIDE TO ADHD - INATTENTIVE TYPE

THURSDAY 18TH APRIL - 11AM TO 12PM

No need to book for this friendly and informal hour long zoom session. Come along for a short presentation by our team and some time for your questions. To get involved just use the following Zoom joining details:

Meeting ID: 919 9594 2982

Passcode: 252203

See you there!

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



APRIL DROP-IN SUPPORT SESSION IN NEW COSTESSEY, NORWICH



Join our friendly 'Drop In'

At Family Action Central Norfolk & 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.



**Wednesday
24th April 2024
10.00-12.00 noon**



**Costessey Library
Breckland Road
Costessey
Norwich
NR5 0RW**

For more information, get in touch

01603 972589

swaffham@family-action.org.uk

www.family-action.org.uk

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Our Drop-In Groups are friendly and informal. No need to book. Just come along for a tea/coffee, meet other parents and chat to members of our team. We would like to welcome you to one of our drop-in support sessions soon.

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

*** PLEASE NOTE: ONLY THE NEW COSTESSEY DROP-IN ADVERTISED ABOVE IS RUNNING IN APRIL, DUE TO CLASHES WITH THE EASTER SCHOOL HOLIDAY***

Have a look through the cards below for information about our drop-ins in May.

KING'S LYNN Drop-In Group

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

Come along and join us on Tuesday 14TH MAY 2024 - 9.30 am - 11.00 am, FIND US IN THE COMFY, SOFA AREA.

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

WYMONDHAM DROP-IN

MONDAY 13TH MAY 2024

at Wymondham Library. Contact us for more information.

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

If you have a child with a diagnosed or suspected neurodivergence why not join us?

PLEASE COME ALONG FOR A CUPPA AND A CHAT IN...

SWEET THINGS SAVOURY

33 GAULTREE SQUARE EMNETH PE14 8DA on Wednesday 8th MAY 2024

DROP IN ANYTIME BETWEEN 9:30 AND 11AM. NO NEED TO BOOK. WE WILL BE THERE TO WELCOME YOU.

COME AND MEET OTHER PARENTS LIVING WITH THEIR CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON'S AUTISM/ADHD AND SO REALLY 'GET IT'. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A MEMBER OF OUR TEAM TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OR GIVE ADVICE, SUPPORT, INFORMATION, RESOURCES OR SIGNPOSTING TO OTHER SERVICES.

For more information ring Family Action on 01603 972589

Or email Swaffham@family-action.org.uk

Hoping to see you there!

GORLESTON Drop-In Group

GORLESTON LIBRARY, FAMILY ACTION OFFICE, GORLESTON-ON-SEA, NR31 6SG

Come along and meet our team and other parents on **Wednesday 1st MAY 2024** from 10:00am to 11:30am RING **01493 650220** or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.

SWAFFHAM Drop-In Group

UPSTAIRS IN COSTA COFFEE, MARKET PLACE, SWAFFHAM, PE37 7AB

Come along and join us in the quiet, upstairs room in Costa Coffee on **Wednesday 15th MAY 2024** 9:30am - 11:00am.

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

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

SOCIAL STORIES

My Family Is Moving



By Heather Androssoff

Social stories™ were created by Carol Gray in 1991. They are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why.

The terms 'social story' and 'social stories' are trademarks originated and owned by [Carol Gray](#).

There are ready made social stories available to buy or to download for almost every situation. The benefit of adapting these or creating your own is that you know your child or young person best, so you can individualise the story for them.

When creating a social story you will need to picture the goal, think about the barriers and tailor the text accordingly. Visuals help the story to be processed and stored

As well as helping to prepare your autistic child or young person for a new or changed or difficult situation, they can also help to:

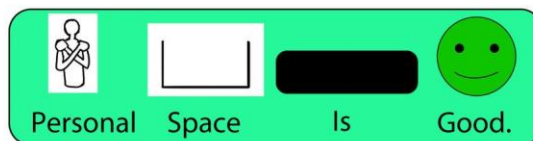
- Teach a child about staying safe, for example, around roads and meeting strangers.
- Teach routines and sequences such as how to get dressed in the morning or getting ready for bed.
- Teach coping routines such as breathing exercises or positive affirmation.
- Reinforce manners or social norms such as covering your mouth when you cough, personal space or when to say thank you.
- Confirm strengths in order to build self-esteem.

Although most commonly used to support those with autism, social stories can also be useful to help with some of the traits of ADHD. Areas such as interrupting other people or saying hurtful things instead of keeping your thoughts in your head can be addressed in social stories.

Click through the examples below.

ABLE2LEARN

Personal Space Is Good



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I Can Go To The Park

Able2LEARN



I Can Go To The Park

I Can Take Care Of My Body

Able2LEARN



I Can Take Care Of My Body

Touching

Able2LEARN



Touching

Able2LEARN

When I am working, sometimes I need help.



When I am working, sometimes I need help.

I Can Ask For Help

Able2LEARN



I



Can



Ask



For



Help

I Can Get A Gift



I



Can



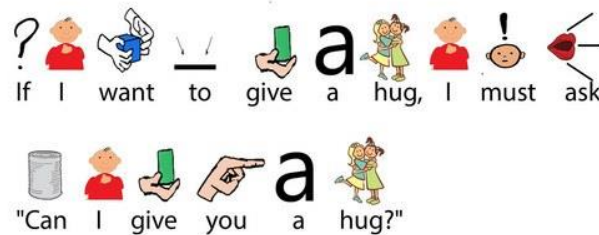
Get

a



Gift

If I want to give a hug , I must ask "Can I give you a hug?"



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If the goal is to teach a sequence or to reinforce a desired behaviour then it may be that some of the generic stories available will work well. However, when creating your own social story about a new, different or changed situation, you will need to:

- Write it mainly in the first person..... I am going to the zoo. It is okay to use the third person when necessary. 'The teacher will let me talk to mum/dad on the phone at lunchtime.'
- Write positively about what will happen rather than what will not happen. Not, 'I won't run near the road' but 'I will walk whenever I am near a road.' And try to be upbeat generally about what a positive experience it will be.
- Take into account the age and level of understanding of the child and use words and visuals appropriately. Visuals can be your own drawings, symbols, cartoons or your own photographs of **your** child. Language could be kept as simple and unambiguous as possible.
- Remember that you are thinking about the information the child or young person will need to reassure them about the situation you are addressing. This may be very different from the type or amount of information that a neurotypical person would need.
- Use your understanding of them to think about any barriers which may arise and then address each one.
- For some, It may be useful to include some 'what ifs'. "If it rains, we will go to the car and listen to music until it passes."

- If this is about a change which is happening, remember to stress all the things which will stay the same. "My bed and all my toys and books will be in my new room."
- Mention the key things which you know make your child feel safe. "When the bus arrives back at school at 3 o'clock, mum/dad will be waiting for me in the usual spot." "I will have a lunch box with my favourite foods." Or end the story with a photo of your child in their own bed with their favourite toy to show that whatever happens they will get back to their safe space.
- Remember you can find pictures of venues or information about activities online for use in your story. If the story is about a school trip, ask the school for a copy of the trip risk assessment to help you get the details right. More often now, schools are producing their own social stories about school trips which you can ask for and then individualise for your child's needs.
- Think about when is the right time to share the social story. When anxiety is high they may struggle to access information about another situation which could be stressful for them. Find quiet, calm times and look at the story with them or allow them to access it themselves as often as they need in order to feel safe about what is going to happen.
- You could include some coaching sentences. "If I am worried, I will put up my hand and tell Mrs Hunter." "I can ask for my colouring book if I need it to feel calmer."
- Keep any stories you create in a binder for using as needed or adapting for new situations.
- Be willing to try something new. But remember also that there will be days when your child or young person **cannot** rather than **will not** access an activity no matter what preparation has gone in beforehand.

Happy Story Writing.

Here is a our simple script for a story about going to a birthday party. Visuals still to be added. What barriers do you think we are trying to address for our imaginary child?

I am Archie and I am 7.

My best friend is Finley and he will be 7 on his birthday next Saturday. Finlay is having a birthday party. When I go to the party I will say "Happy Birthday" to Finley.

I am Finley's most special friend but he is inviting lots of children he knows. Finley will try to play with everyone who comes to the party because he is kind. I know we are still best friends and can do lots of things just the two of us on other days.

I am giving Finley his birthday present the day before the party when he will have time to open it and play with it.

There will be games at the party. I can join in if I want to or watch the others. Parties can be a bit noisy but Finley's mum says I can go upstairs to his room if I want some quiet time. If I play the games, I won't always win and that's okay

There will be party food. Finley's mum knows what I like and says my favourite things will be there.

There will be a cake with 7 candles. Only Finley can blow out the candles because it his birthday.

Everyone will sing Happy Birthday to Finley. If it is loud, I can put my hood up or put my ear buds in.

I can ask Finley's mum to ring my mum if I want to come home.

When I leave I will say "Thank you for having me" to Finlay and to his mum.

When I get home I will look at my new dinosaur book and have some quiet time. Later I can tell mum and dad all about the fun I had at the party.



- More Reading:

National Autistic Society - [Guide to Social Stories/Comic Strip Conversations](#)

[Twinkl](#)

Autism Parenting Magazine - [Social Stories for Autistic Children](#)

University of Bath - [Guide for Writing and Delivering Social Stories](#)

[Pinterest UK](#)

- Video Social Stories (for those more likely to engage with a video than a story) Search *carefully* online for many more.

You Tube - [No Hitting](#)

[Frustration](#)

[Anger](#)

[Sharing](#)

- There are also online apps to help you to create social stories. Some are free, some are free to download but then ask you to pay for purchases and others you have to pay upfront for the app. We are unable to recommend specific apps but here are a few examples which parents have told us about.

University of Bath (free app) Stories On Line for Autism - SOFA

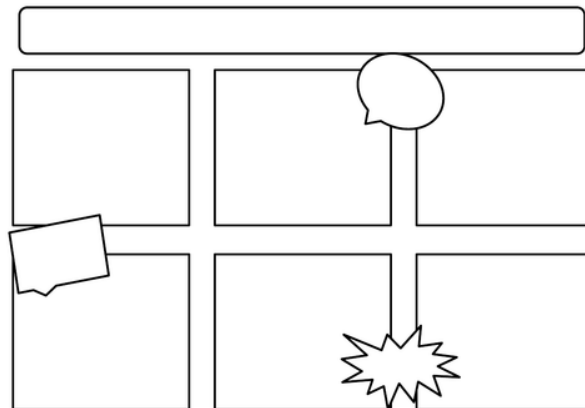
Touch Autism (pay for purchases) Social Story Creator and Library

Touch Autism (£29:99 initial fee for app) Social Story Creator Educators.

Comic Strip Conversations



Comic strip conversations are again the brainchild of Carol Gray and can be a really helpful way to prepare young people for social situations or to review what they could have done differently after a situation did not go the way they wanted it to. Free templates are available from some of the sources already mentioned such as Twinkl or Pinterest.



You don't have to be good at drawing, stick figures will do and leave room to add speech and thought bubbles. Thought bubbles are important for young people who may not be good at knowing what is in another person's head. This activity can focus on thoughts and intentions as well as what to say or do. And from this you can introduce discussion about perspective and viewpoints. "You thought your friend bumped into you deliberately. Did he look angry? Did he say sorry? Did he keep walking with you? Was it very busy? Could someone have pushed him into you?" Help them to understand that misunderstandings can happen.

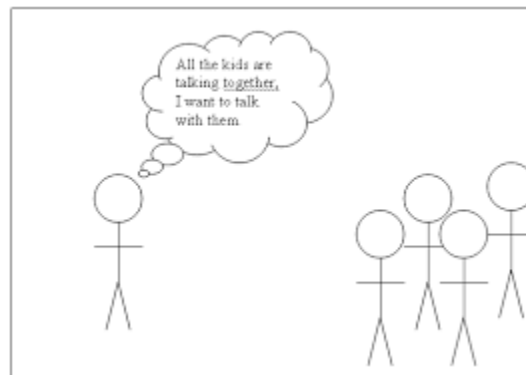
Comic strip conversations are also good for teaching general rules for social situations. When your friend tells you they played football at the weekend, you should ask something else about this (even though

you do not like football) like 'Did you win?' or "What was the score?" If they won say "Well done." If they lost say "Bad luck." Now you can bring up something you like to do. 'I had a good view of Mars through my telescope at the weekend.' And so on.

They can also be used to suggest opening lines for children or young people meeting new people in different situations. First day at High School might be less stressful if you have a series of practiced opening gambits such as "Which Primary did you go to?" or "What teacher do you have for Maths?" or "What after-school clubs are you going to join?"

Remember, that after writing some comic strip conversations, you can act these out with your young person to develop the new skills.

Keep the conversations for future use or for adapting to new situations. Some young people like to keep them with them in their school bag or take photos of them to refer to. During your discussions, remember to allow for some 'what if's.' Social situations are quite liable to take unexpected turns. Suggest some exit strategies for when things get stressful.



South Lee ASD Services - [Comic Strip Conversations Guide](#)

NHS Wales - [Comic Strip Conversations](#)

Sheffield Children's NHS - [Comic Strip Conversations](#)

You Tube - [Video Guide to CSCs](#)

PLAN BEE



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.

During the three week course, we will explore:

- Behaviour as communication.
- Understanding the full range of needs your child may have.
- Developing a plan to support behaviour in difficult situations which can then be shared with grandparents, schools and others.
- Strategies for creating an environment in which your child or young person can thrive.
- Sharing experiences, challenges and successes with other parents experiencing similar issues and learning from these.

APRIL 2024 St Faith's Community Hub, Next to Gaywood Church Rooms, KING'S LYNN, PE30 4DW
Tuesdays 23rd, 30th April and Tuesday 7th May 10am to 12noon. To book your place please ring 01603 972589 or email swaffham@family-action.org.uk

APRIL/MAY 2024 Gorleston Library, GORLESTON-ON-SEA, NR31 6SG
Wednesdays 24th April, 1st May and 8th May 10am to 12noon RING **01493 650220** or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.

MAY 2024 Owen Barnes Room, Breckland Road, New Costessey, NORWICH, NR5 0DW
Tuesdays 7th, 14th and 21st May 10am to 12noon To book your place please ring 01603 972589 or email swaffham@family-action.org.uk

JUNE 2024 East Norwich - Venue to be confirmed.
Tuesdays, 4th, 11th and 18th June 10:30am to 12:30 RING **01493 650220** or EMAIL gorleston@family-action.org.uk for more information.

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



Family Action is working with Norfolk Community Health and Care to run the Puffins ASD Programme for Parents/Carers of children or young people **with a diagnosis of autism**. This is a free, comprehensive, four week course with sessions led by Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy professionals from within the Neurodevelopmental Service and by the Autism Specialist Educational Team.

- Please note that the first session only is slightly longer, finishing at 1pm. All other sessions ending 12:30pm.

April 2024 – St Faiths Community Hub, Nxt Gaywood Church Rooms, KING'S LYNN, PE30 4DZ (Parking at Gaywood Church Rooms) Thurs 18th Mon 22nd Thurs 25th & Mon 29th Apr 9:30am – 12.30*

**May 2024 - Robert Kett Primary School, Hewitts Lane, Wymondham, NR18 0LS
Thursdays 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd May 9:30am - 12:30***

RING 01603 972589 or **EMAIL** swaffham@family-action.org.uk for more information or to book your place.

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 April/May/June 2024

April 2024

18th April

Overview of an EHCP training for parent/carers

This training is for parent/carers to give an overview and understanding of the processes related to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

[Book Tickets](#)

22nd April

FACE TO FACE - How to appeal a final EHCP for parent/carers

This face to face training is for those wanting to know more on the process of appealing a final Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), it focuses specifically on appealing needs (section B), provision (section F) and placement (section I).

We will not be able to discuss personal circumstances during the training.

Harford Community Centre, Norwich

Limited places available

[Book Tickets](#)

30th Apr

Suspension and Exclusion training for parent/carers

An understanding of the legal tests and processes around fixed term suspensions, illegal suspensions, permanent exclusions and managed moves.

[Book Tickets](#)

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 which this month is focusing on low demand.

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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.

