



Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service June 2024 Newsletter



As parents we sometimes underestimate how much our children are learning from us all the time. With our behaviours we are modelling for our children every day how to speak to others, how to accept a gift, how to manage our stress, how to keep ourselves clean and look after our teeth and a thousand other things. Your child is learning so many good things from you and neither you nor they are consciously aware of it most of the time. But we are all human, we have good days and bad days. There will be many days for all of us when actually we model behaviours which we don't particularly want our children to copy. We get cross, we raise our voices, we may not be good at sharing our feelings, we might slam a door occasionally or go into a huff. In fact even when we ourselves behave badly, we can turn it into an opportunity to teach our child or young person a useful skill. Taking the time to apologise for your behaviour, explaining why you were upset and talking about what you

could have done better in that situation, can be time well spent. You can help your child to understand that everyone has difficult feelings at times, that communicating about what happened can be useful and that we are capable of managing things differently the next time. This approach, of course, has to be adapted for the age and stage of development of your child. This month we are going to be thinking about beginning to teach your child some practical every day skills for independence, for better social interaction or for emotional regulation.

This month's newsletter includes:

- **Our New Contact Details**
- **Some Dates for your Diary**
- **Skill Building - Making a Start**
- **Emotional Regulation**
- **We have a job opportunity**
- **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.

KEEP A NOTE OF OUR CONTACT DETAILS

Do you want to know more about our courses, workshops or drop-in groups? Do you want a bit of advice or support? We have changed our contact email address to NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk

Our direct telephone number for all enquiries remains **01603 972589**

Our **Gorleston** office can continue to be contacted on **01493 650220** or by email on **Gorleston@family-action.org.uk**

Join us at our Zoom Information Session in June



Anger or Distress?
Supporting Difficult Feelings
A ZOOM Workshop

Tuesday 18th June 10am to 11am

No need to book for this friendly and informal session where we will be thinking about how your child's most challenging behaviours are often their most distressed behaviours.

Just use the joining details below.

Meeting ID: 931 4604 6862
Passcode: 231659

SEE YOU THERE.

The logo for 'family action' is a green speech bubble with the words 'family' and 'action' stacked inside, set against a white circular background. There are also decorative elements: a yellow dashed line, a yellow square, and a yellow circle.

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. This month we are in Thetford.

**** PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR REGULAR GORLESTON DROP IN GROUP IS MEETING A WEEK LATER THAN USUAL IN JUNE - SEE FULL DETAILS BELOW****

Click on the cards below to see all our drop-ins in June. Just click on the arrows bottom right to enlarge.

Meet our team and other parents in... GORLESTON



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

Wednesday 12th June 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.

Come and Meet Us in THETFORD

THURSDAY 13TH JUNE 2024

At The Charles Burrell Centre, Staniforth Rd, Thetford,
IP24 3LH from 10am to 12noon.

No need to book, friendly and informal, just come along for coffee/tea and a chat with our team.

RING 01603 972589 or

EMAIL NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk if you would like more information.





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

Meet us Wednesday 12 JUNE 9:30 – 11:30
Friendly, informal, no need to book.

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



Join us in KING'S LYNN

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

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

No need to book just come along on.....
Tuesday 11th JUNE 2024 9.30am - 11.00 am
FIND US IN THE COMFY, SOFA AREA.

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



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 6th JUNE 2024 from 10:00am to 11:30am NO NEED TO BOOK

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



Skill Building - Making a Start



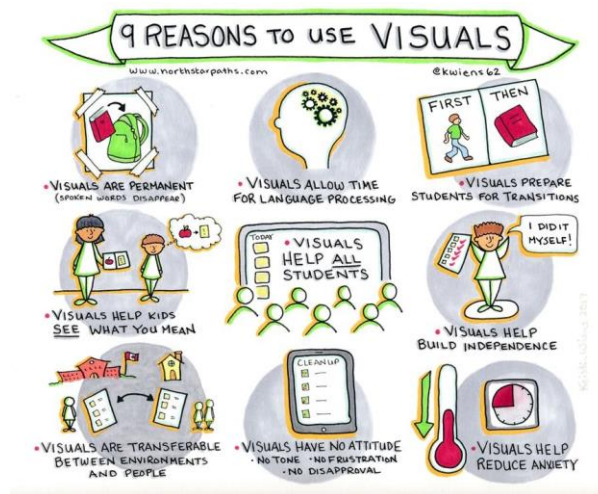
Don't just think about teaching the skills which *you* would find most beneficial. Try to find out what skills your child would like to learn. Maybe all of their friends at school can tie their shoe-laces or their neck ties and they are embarrassed that they can't do these things when getting dressed after PE. Perhaps an older child or young person may want to be more involved in setting their own tasks on your family planner or visual timetable, such as homework tasks, football practice sessions or weekend activities. Children with autism and/or ADHD can struggle with executive functioning; the skills to organise, plan, remember and carry out tasks, so helping them to learn to do this type of planning at a younger age, can help them to build skills for High School or for later life.

It helps to start small and focus on one skill at a time without adding too much pressure. Even if your child tries the skill but isn't successful for some time, they are still learning so always praise their effort rather than results. Failing in tasks is always good learning and some resilience around failure is a very important life skill. Helping your child to be better at failing and being able to keep trying, is a skill in itself and studies show that solid learning happens when we fail first. Of course, it's always important to recognise when the child really isn't ready and it's time to stop for now and maybe have a try again in the future when they may be more ready to learn the skill. For example, if a child has difficulty with their fine motor skills, tying their shoe laces may be physically very difficult for them so working on improving those fine motor skills more generally with toys or games which work on their manual dexterity may need to happen first. Even when they do have to stop learning the skill for

now, you can find lots of ways to let them know how pleased you are that they tried, that they listened well and were able to follow instructions.

Offer praise if your child is comfortable in receiving praise. Not all children are. Do this in a way that your child prefers. This could be a simple 'thumbs up' or a wink for some children, while others may thrive on a bigger celebration or be more motivated by rewards. You know your child best.

Some children will benefit from reinforcement of what you are teaching with visual aids or social stories. Remember...Visuals Stay, Words Fly Away. Have a quick search online and you will find so many examples of visual sequences for supporting the teaching of a new skill and social stories which help to reinforce that skill and help your child to become familiar and comfortable with it. Comic strip conversations are useful for teaching your child some skills for social situations. Have a look at our previous newsletter which focused on [social stories and comic strip conversations](#).



If you feel that your child displays some traits of demand avoidant behaviours, think carefully about your approach. How can you make skill building feel less like a demand? Can you somehow make it a challenge, a competition or fun activity? Think about the language you use. 'I wonder if you could.....?' 'I bet I can do this faster than you.' 'When you are ready, can we try to do this together?' Remember that keeping your voice 'slow, low, low' can help make things sound less like a demand and reduce the chances of emotions escalating. The idea is to slow down your speech, lower your volume but also lower the tone of your voice to help keep things calm. Have another look at our newsletter on [Demand Anxiety](#).

It is important to get your timing right also. Remember the bucket model of behaviour which we return to a lot. When your child's bucket is getting full, they are not in a good place to learn anything. Immediately after school would not be a good time to start teaching a new skill. Think about any sensory input which might be adding to the bucket. Are your other children playing a noisy game, is the TV loud, is the washing machine on its final spin? Take a low arousal approach, use some of your usual techniques to put holes in the bucket and only introduce the idea of learning something new when you can see that the bucket is emptier and things are more calm. Learn more about [the bucket model](#).

Try to think about your own bucket and not put too much pressure on yourself. Remember to choose your battles and learn how to let go a little. Sometimes you have to accept that your child is not ready to learn this thing on this day but that tomorrow is another day. Daily life is busy, you have lots of responsibilities and can't always do everything. So try not to be disheartened if your child is not

yet doing something which their peers or siblings may be doing. Look for the many other strengths they have and remind them of their super powers!

If you have other children, you may want to start with teaching something which they would all benefit from learning. In this way your child with neurodivergence will feel less singled out and see that learning new skills is something that we all have to do. And don't be afraid to reach out for help. Speak to your family and friends, other parents or school staff about what skills they think would really benefit your child and how you could achieve this. Or come along to one of our parent/carer drop-in sessions to chat things through with our team and like-minded parents.

Learning to Manage Emotions

The first thing to say is that your neurodivergent child or young person is not just being difficult or immature or dramatic when they get overwhelmed or sad or angry about something which to us seems insignificant. We do not see the world in the same way as them, we experience sensory input differently, and crucially our executive functioning allows us to be adaptable to changes, think our way out of problems and communicate effectively about what the problems are and what could be done to make things better. It can be useful to remember that your child's response to a difficulty is proportionate to the distress it is causing for *them*.

Good emotional regulation requires us to:

1. Be aware that difficult feelings are escalating.
2. Actively employ some strategies to help us to calm down.






Sounds simple doesn't it? But sensory processing difficulties can muddle up some of the telltale signals that emotions are rising. Lacking the attention span to track your feelings or being hyper-focused on other activities can be factors. Or sometimes things can escalate so quickly that there is just no time. The bucket has already overflowed and panic is setting in.

Spend some time talking to your child about what it feels like when they are calm, when they are beginning to feel agitated and when they are really overwhelmed. Where in their bodies do they feel fear and panic? Do they have butterflies in their tummies or spaghetti in their heads? Do they feel hot or hear blood rushing in their veins? Do they get a red face or sweaty palms? Working out some of the warning signs is really key to putting strategies in place in time.


You might want to teach some language, or show your child some picture cards or hand signals which they can use to convey that the level in the bucket is on the rise.

Have a look at emotional regulation scales, sometimes called anger scales. These can be simple 5 point scales or you can personalise them with characters from a favourite movie or book or computer game. They would have some indication of what the child typically feels like/looks like at each level of the scale and can also suggest the kinds of strategies to be used at each stage. They are really useful for sharing with schools or wider family members or babysitters who may occasionally look after your child. School can work directly with your child on a five point scale for use specifically in the classroom to include feelings for different levels of the scale such as I LIKE THIS LESSON, THIS WORK IS TOO HARD, I HAVE BEEN SITTING STILL FOR TOO LONG, THE CLASSROOM IS TOO NOISY. And it can suggest strategies like ASK FOR HELP, SHOW YOUR TIME OUT CARD TO MRS SMITH, GO TO YOUR QUIET SPACE, PUT ON YOUR EAR DEFENDERS and GET UP AND WALK TWICE ROUND THE CLASSROOM.

5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

5		
4		
3		
2		
1		

The Angry Birds Five Point Scale

		How I feel	What I can do
5		I'm ready to explode! I feel like screaming or hitting and I've lost control.	Find a calm, quiet place. 
4		I'm starting to lose control and I'm upset! I may feel like saying things that are hurtful.	Take slow, deep breaths. 
3		I'm a little out of control, I may feel frustrated or excited and move all over. I'm starting to get overwhelmed.	Do something I like that helps me feel calmer. 
2		Something's bothering me. I might feel worried or be getting frustrated.	Tell an adult how I feel. 
1		I feel good! I'm completely in control of myself.	Now I'm all calmed down! 

My Check In



		Explode —I feel angry, and I am not sure how to calm down. I need an adult to help me.
		Rumbling —I feel like I am starting to lose control. I may need space and some support.
		Bubbly —I am feeling frustrated or something is worrying me. I may need a break to calm myself.
		Ok —I know something is not right but I know what I need to do.
		Happy —I feel good about myself and what is going on around me.

These scales work best when you start to use some of the language generally for the family. 'Dad looks grumpy. Do you think he is a 4? I think he needs a cool shower.' They can help children who struggle to find the language to describe their feelings to use a number instead. 'How are you feeling after your day at school today?' may sound like a demand or just too much to express. 'Where are you on your scale after school today?' might be more acceptable but still gives you an indication of what approach you should be taking or help you to see patterns. Are they always a 4/5 when they have a particular teacher?

Even if not using the emotion scales, you can be modelling your own use of regulation strategies. For example, when we are feeling stressed in a family situation, telling your child 'Mum needs to take a few quiet moments on her own to regain her thoughts' or 'Dad is taking the dog for a walk to calm down' can give our children some ideas of what they can do to help themselves become regulated and is again reinforcing that we all have to deal with difficult feelings and we can at least try to manage how we deal with them.

Examples of strategies for emotional regulation include:



Take 5 slow breaths



Count to 20



Ask for help



Talk to a friend



Agree a plan



Walk away



Let it go



Think about a happy place



1 - Go to your safe space

Ask for a tight hug, use a weighted blanket, bounce on a trampoline, watch a favourite movie or cartoon, look at photographs of a holiday or happy time, open your sensory box, do some exercise, have a drink or snack, stick to the routines you like, ask to go for a short ride in the family car.

You know what works best for your child. Try to encourage your child to practise some of these techniques on good days. The hope will be that if you practise enough then they may be able to use them when they are having a bad day. Good luck.

Useful Links:

How to Improve Emotional Self-Regulation Among Children with Autism and Attention Disorders - [Pepperdine University](#)

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

Autism Specialist Team - Educational Psychology EPSS Padlet at <https://padlet.com/juliestewart1/rfj56atbsahtmfifi3g>

Autism Parenting Magazine = [Help your child with emotional regulation](#)

Job Opportunity



Are you a skilled practitioner with excellent communication skills? Are you solution-focused and passionate about making a difference? If so, Family Action has an exciting opportunity and would love to hear from you.

The Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service is delighted to be hiring a Family Support Worker in the Central locality to join our supportive and successful team and welcomes applicants with professional and personal experience.

Job Title: Family Support Worker (Central Region).

Service: Family Action's Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service.

Location: This is a home-based contract however please note that extensive travel is a compulsory requirement of the position to localities across Central Norfolk, such as Norwich, Thetford, Wymondham and Attleborough

Hours: 22.5 hours per week (part-time) Days and times to be agreed.

Salary: Grade 2 (lower) Point 11-15: £21,196 - £23,966 FTE (£12,889.46 - £14,573.92 pro rata, per annum)

Contract type: Permanent contract until March 2025

Interested applicants will need to go to the Family Action website for full advert, job description and person specification. Please go to [Family Action's Current Vacancies](#) and find the vacancy with the ID no. 1222 Family Support Worker (Central Region) Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service.

Please do not contact The Norfolk & Waveney Autism/ADHD Support Service about this vacancy. Applications must be made on the Family Action website. CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS - TUESDAY 18TH JUNE 2024 9AM.

PLAN BEE COURSES



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.

PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE DEMAND FOR OUR PLAN BEE COURSES, OUR TWO PLANNED COURSES IN JUNE ARE ALREADY FULLY BOOKED.

BLOFIELD, NORWICH Tuesdays, 4th, 11th and 18th June 2024 FULL

ONLINE ON ZOOM Thursdays 13th, 20th, 27th June 2024 FULL

You can still book onto the following upcoming courses.

THETFORD Thursdays 3, 11 and 18 JULY The Charles Burrell Centre, Staniforth Road, Thetford IP24 3LH 10am to 12noon To book call 01603 972589 or email NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk

LOWESTOFT Mondays 1, 8 and 15 JULY Riverside Family Hub, Canning Road, Lowestoft 10am to 12noon To book ring 01493 650220 or email Gorleston@family-action.org.uk

ONLINE ON ZOOM Thursdays 13, 20 and 27 AUGUST 10am to 12noon. Joining details on booking. To book call 01603 972589 or email NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk


****KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE NEWSLETTER FOR MORE COURSES IN NORWICH AND KING'S LYNN IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER****

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






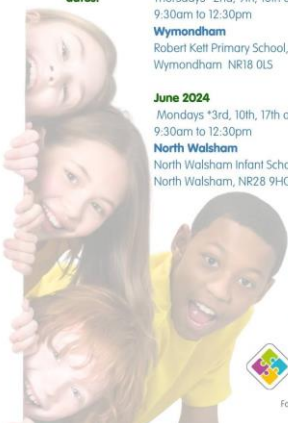
Puffins Autism Programme

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 (INCC EP & Specialist Support – Autism Support Team)
 NB: *Session 1 only in each course is just a little longer, 9:30am to 1:00pm

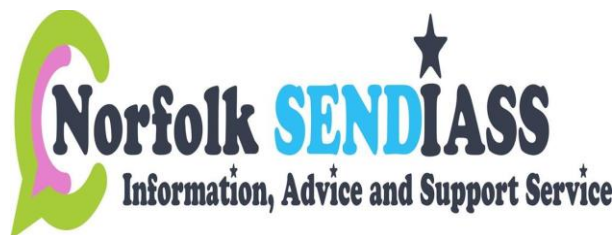
<p>Programme dates:</p> <p>May 2024 Thursdays *2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd May 9:30am to 12:30pm Wymondham Robert Kelt Primary School, Hewitts Lane, Wymondham NR18 0LS</p> <p>June 2024 Mondays *3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th June. 9:30am to 12:30pm North Walsham North Walsham Infant School, Manor Road, North Walsham, NR28 9HQ</p>	<p>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>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>	<p>**Please note: Courses may change to an online version if participant numbers are low.</p> <p>To find out more or book a place, please contact Family Action on:</p> <p>☎ 01603 972589 ✉ NorfolkAndWaveney@family-action.org.uk</p> <p> Educational Psychology & Specialist Support</p> <p> NHS Norfolk, Community Health and Care</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Family Action. Registered as a Charity in England & Wales no. 264713.</p>
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2 - CLICK TO EXPAND

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.



3 - OTHER SERVICES

HERE IS SOME INFORMATION FROM SENDIASS' LATEST NEWSLETTER 'SENDIASS SPOTLIGHT'

PARENT/CARER SENDIASS TRAINING

We offer a variety of free SEND training for parent/carers. You can book your place via our website. More training and dates will become available throughout the year.

Upcoming Events

6th June 2024 - 11:00 - 12:30

Who are Norfolk SENDIASS

Find out more about Norfolk SENDIASS and how we can help.

14th June 2024 - 10:30 - 13:00

EHCP Annual Review

This training is for parent/carers to help in understanding the processes and legal framework of Education, Health and Care Plan Annual Reviews.

Go to the [SENDIASS Website Training Page](#) to book your place.

Have a look at NSFT's Psychology in Schools team page. They have lots of free upcoming workshops for parents to access. Click on the link to book your place. <https://www.nsft.nhs.uk/parent-workshops/>

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.

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src="https://sway.cloud.microsoft/s/e0giCnuDOnN6oBWR/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



FamilyLine

Phone: 0808 802 6666
Text: 07537 404 282
Email: familyline@family-action.org.uk
Out of Hours: Text FAMILYACTION to 85258
Hours: M-F, 9am-9pm

family action Building stronger families

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.

