



AUTISM
ASPERGER ACT

Autism Awareness

April 2010

Newsletter of Autism Asperger ACT Inc.

Helping people with ASD, their families and their carers

www.autismaspergeract.com.au

From the President....

Term I has been a very busy one for the committee and our office staff. We are delighted with our move to the Chifley Hub, old Melrose Primary School the space is lovely and once the rest of the building has been completed, it is currently a building site, we will be having meetings etc at Chifley. Like all moves there have been the inevitable hitches - telephones and computers in particular causing Polly and the Autism Advisors lots of headaches! We have a new phone number following the move so please make a note of it **6176 0514**.

We have recently employed an administrative assistant to help Polly as the work load seems to grow and grow. Welcome Vicki, I trust that you will be very happy working with our team.

A welcome is also in order for David Weeden, a grandparent who has joined the committee. David has already showed his commitment by assisting with the recent Autism Awards Evening.

The workshop with Drs June and Gerry **Groden** is rapidly approaching, places are still available so make your booking with Polly or Vicki now. Details of the workshop can be found later in this newsletter as can be information on the play **Rain Man** which is on at the Canberra Theatre in July. We have tickets available for July 14th - please come along with your friends and make this fund-raising venture a success.

Our recent Awards Night to mark Autism Month 2010 was a great success. David Kilby formerly of Radio Triple 6 was a wonderful MC who kept the evening flowing well. Awards were given on our behalf by Joy Burch, Minister for Disabilities, to a range of worthy recipients from carers to teachers to people in the community (an article on the award winners is included later in this newsletter). I would like to express my personal thanks to all those who joined us for this event and especial thanks to the individuals and companies whose generous donations to the raffle and the night in general made this a memorable evening. Organisations who helped include MAC1, Community CPS Gunghalin, Mount Majura Wines, and Black Fig Foods.

You will also be interested to know that I have put in a submission to the Legislative Assembly in response to the Respite Care Inquiry.

Gay von Ess

president@autismaspergeract.com.au

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Regular Meetings

Monthly meeting	1 st Wed
AS Support Group	2 nd Thur
AS Games	3 rd Sun
Siblings	3 rd Fri
Girls and Women with ASD and their Carers	13 th May
Grandparents' Group	30th April

Please check the website
for latest information

www.autismaspergeract.com.au

Our business manager Polly McIntyre can be contacted on 6176 0514. Polly works part-time so leave a message if she is not in, and she will get back to you.

bm@autismaspergeract.com.au

FOR THE FRIDGE DOOR.

WANTED: information on Fast ForWord program....one of our members is interested in this program and wants to talk to other families using the program. Your help would be much appreciated. Please contact David on 0438 581 805.

Web sites

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa5/as/asteachersites.html>

Useful linking site to great autism resources

<http://www.practicalautismresources.com/printables>

<http://www.widgit.com/resources/index.htm>

New Library books –some of our new books at AACT include:-

Linda Woodcock and Andrea Page. *Managing Family Meltdown the Low Arousal Approach and Autism.*

Jessica Kingsley 2010

Simone Griffin & Dianne Sandler *Motivate to Communicate!* - 300 Games and Activities for Your Child with Autism

Brooke Ingersoll and Anna Dvortcsak *Teaching Social Communication to children with autism.*

Guilford Press. 2010

These books have been donated by Footprint Books and are available at www.footprint.com.au or any good bookseller.

Support Group for ASD girls and women and their carers to coincide with the monthly Asperger Support Group

Every 2nd Thursday of each month.

Small Meeting Room

SHOUT

Time: 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Next meeting 13th May

Everyone welcome, for more information please contact:

Trish O'Neil on 62731155 (H) or email to: trishoneil@netspeed.com.au

Autism Asperger ACT Grandparents' Group for 2010

Next meeting is 30 April

Venue: SHOUT

Time: 10 - 12

CASPAR, Canberra Autism Spectrum Parents And Relatives, is a facebook group that Fiona Brammall established after attending the Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium's Positive Partnerships in June this year. This group already has a number of members exchanging information and providing support for one another.

To join the group you need to register for facebook if they haven't already, and then search for "CASPAR Canberra" (there are heaps of other CASPARs worldwide) and request to join.

Fiona will then be able to approve your request. Ideally you should send Fiona a message as well, which you can do through facebook by searching for Fiona Brammall and then clicking on "send a message". Message should include why you want to join (have a son/daughter/relative with an ASD and who live in the Canberra region). If you do this Fiona will know that you are legit.

WORKSHOP Stress, Anxiety & ASD

3rd May 2010

Autism Asperger ACT are proud to introduce Drs June and Gerry Groden to Canberra. They bring with them years of practical experience gained from their educational facility in Providence, Rhode Island, USA which serves children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities. Between them they have published widely and contributed to research in the field of autism and child behavior disorders.

This presentation will discuss the constructs of stress and anxiety, leading to an understanding of the behavior of persons with autism and developmental disabilities. It will describe innovative research and in particular ask:

What are the implications of stress and anxiety for individuals with an ASD?

How do we assess stress?

What are effective coping strategies?

How do we expand individual potential?



Dr June Groden holds a Ph.D. and M.A. degree in psychology, a M.Ed. in education, and a B.S. in business administration. Since 1976, Dr. Groden has been Director of the Groden Center. Gerald Groden received his BA and MA from the University of Vermont, and his Ph.D. from Purdue University in Clinical Child Psychology. Since 1976, Dr. Groden has served as Co-Executive Director for The Groden Center in Providence, RI.

Download flyer and booking form

<http://autismaspergeract.com.au/sites/default/files/Grodens%20flyer.pdf>

Great Workshop Coming Later this Year.....

17th August

Carol Gray, www.thegraycenter.org

Details of Carol's workshop will be available soon, but please email Polly McIntyre bm@autismaspergeract.com.au to express your interest in a receiving registration form as soon as they are available. This will enable you to take advantage of early bird discount and be sure of your spot!

WANTED!

Autism Asperger ACT would love the help of members to assist with

- Raising publicity and awareness
- Fundraising (especially with regard to obtaining auction items for the Gala Dinner)
- Development of advertising literature for the Association

Please call Polly if you can help. 6176 0514 or bm@autismaspergeract.com.au



Does your child have Autism?

Early Days is a national program of free workshops for mothers, fathers and other family carers of children six years and under who are on the autism spectrum or are in the process of assessment and diagnosis.

- Learn about autism spectrum disorder
- Learn how you can support your child's development at home
- Share experiences and ideas with other parents

Funded by the Australian Government as part of the Helping Children with Autism package.

Developed by the Early Days Collaboration & nationally coordinated by the Parenting Research Centre.

REGISTER NOW Freecall 1800 334 155 or www.earlydays.net.au

In addition to the introductory workshop free workshops are also available on the following topics:

- First steps for learning: Connecting with your child
- Helping your child with play
- "What do you need?" Helping your child communicate.

To register and discuss whether these workshops are at the right level for your child please ring the number above.

Positive Partnerships The Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC) Parent /Carer Seminars in Canberra

These workshops are designed for parents of school aged children. They are provided free as part of the federal government's Helping Children with Autism Package

30 April & 1st May 2010

6 & 7 August 2010

Please note registration for these free workshops open 6 weeks before the date of the workshop. To register please visit the website: www.autismtraining.com.au

What the Positive Partnerships workshops are about

- Two day workshops and information sessions for parents / carers with school-aged children that have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Held nationally over a four year period (2008-2011)
- Interactive and focus on giving participants knowledge and tools to work in partnerships with their schools and teachers to ensure their child receives the best education possible
- Adapted to the different ages, educational settings and specific needs of students with ASD through elective specific information sessions
- Facilitated by professionals with extensive knowledge and experience working with children and young people with autism and their families
- An efficient and supportive way to break isolation for some parents through networking support up to 3 months after each workshop
- An Australian Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) funded component of the Australian Government's "Helping Children with Autism" package.
- Run nationally by the Australian Autism Education & Training Consortium (AAETC). Members of the AAETC include Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect), the lead agency, the

What has been achieved so far?

- As of January 2010, a total of 81 workshops and information sessions for parents/carers have been conducted nationally, in metropolitan and regional remote locations
- A total of 2697 parents/carers have participated in the workshops over 2008-2009
- At least 240 parents/carers unable to attend the workshop have completed the online course from the parent/carer workshops and information sessions
- Participant evaluation data from the Parent/Carer workshops and information sessions indicates a statistically significant increase in three key learning areas, including knowledge of educational environments, knowledge of parenting and partnerships
- Participants also evaluated the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of the 2 day workshop and information sessions very highly

A few examples of parents and carers feedback

- *"I am a parent of a 12-year-old daughter with Aspergers. I just wanted to write to you and explain why the survey has not been completed, but to also thank you and your amazing team for coordinating such an amazing program. Although I was unable to attend the workshop, I am very thankful for the Positive Partnership learning modules that I am receiving via email. They have become my 'bible' and they give me a great deal of support, many strategies and a clearer understanding of Aspergers... I look forward to having the opportunity to attend a Positive Partnership Workshop in the near future. Once again, thank you for your time and knowledge."*
- *"I accidentally found information on this program while surfing the net looking for ASD info. I had no idea what ASD meant for our family or what I need to do for my son. The course informed me, gave me great written resources and has allowed me to develop a relationship with our school. Now we work together to resolve issues and proactively manage my son's environment. It also opened my eyes to the support available. Honestly, this was the start of my life as an advocate for my son. Thank you."*

What about 2010-2011?

- At least 76 workshops and information sessions for parents/carers will be conducted nationally in metropolitan and regional/rural locations
- A list of workshops dates and locations, online registration and more information is available on the *Positive Partnerships* website: www.autismtraining.com.au

For telephone information, please leave a message on the Positive Partnerships Info Line: 1300 881 971

Play Connect Playgroups

The following playgroups will be running this year:

Holder: Therapy ACT: Corner of Weingarh Street and Blackwood Terrace, **Tuesdays 10-11:30pm**
Tuggeranong: Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre: 159 Anketell St, Greenway, **Friday 11-1pm**
Giralang: Giralang Autism Intervention Unit (next to Giralang pre-school): Atalumba Cl, **Wednesdays 10-12pm**
Giralang,

For more information please contact Playgroups ACT on 1800 171 882.

www.autismunited.ning.com

Autism United is an Australian based online community created by a Sydney mother whose 6 yr old boy has autism. It is for parents, professionals and individuals on the spectrum. It is both active and easy to navigate. A safe place to come for advice, support and inspiration. www.autismunited.ning.com

Don't Forget.....
CHILD'S IKEA EGG CHAIRS FOR LOAN FROM AUTISM ASPERGER ACT



We have these chairs available for loan, donated by the Canberra based South Africa/Australia Friendship Group. These chairs swivel and have a canopy that the child can pull down to have a secret time out space. The chairs, which are suitable for children under 6 years of age, will be lent for two to three months so that families can ensure that they are not just a ten days wonder if they choose to invest in one themselves.

Please contact Polly McIntyre on (02) 6140 1761 to arrange to borrow one.

Sibs Club

(non-members, contact Bobbi Cook on 6253 3116 for further details)

Friday April 16 *Boy Girl Night*. The children will split into 2 groups and do traditional Boy /Girl activities

Friday May 21 *Rock Climbing* at Hume indoor rock climbing. Parent helpers for belaying appreciated tonight

Friday June 18 *Cooking night* at BCC

Friday July 16 *Xmas in July* at BCC. HO HO HO WE DONT CELEBRATE Christmas in December but we do it in style in July instead

Friday August 20 *Trip to Kids City* in Mitchell

Friday September 17 *Biggies/Littlies night*. Children will be split into 2 groups and do some separate activities tonight

Friday October 15 *Fancy Dress Night* tonight with dinner and games at BCC

New Website Subcommittee

Our association has a new subcommittee look after our website. We need mostly non-technical help.

The Autism Asperger ACT website (see <http://autismaspergeract.com.au>, 'www' optional) is a valuable resource for people with autism spectrum disorders, their families & carers, interested professionals and the community generally in the Canberra/ACT region.

We have a wide range of smallish tasks we would like help with. The association is run by volunteers so we need volunteers to help with any of the following tasks, or in any other way.

- Collecting images to use on the website to make the website appear more modern, dynamic and appealing.
- Graphics design to create new graphics for the website (and for the association)
- Adding graphics to items on the website
- Finding information for the website
- Reviewing the content of the website
- Helping others to add their material to the website.
- Planning, strategy and developing ideas to improve the website
- Researching and implementing the features on the website
- Task management

People who can contribute only a little time are welcome; we expect much of what gets done will be self-paced. We do not need experts: we can/will help people develop skills in their role. People with only technical interests can contribute.

If you, or someone you know, would like to help improve our website please get them to email us at web@autismaspergeract.com.au.

Autism Asperger ACT Awards Night

7th April 2010

The following people received awards at this year's Awards Night. Autism Asperger ACT thanks them for all they do to support people and families on the autism spectrum.

Parent Award

Jason McCarthy

Jason is a father of a son with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition to being a dedicated parent who has gone overseas seeking intervention for his child, Jason is a successful swimming teacher for children with autism spectrum disorders. In 2009 he was asked to speak about his teaching technique at the Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association conference. Now many teachers around Australia have adopted Jason's approach

Carer Award

Margaret Clark

Margaret has a grandson with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. She takes an active role in her grandson's life at home, in the community and at school. She ensures that he has the opportunity to participate in a wide range of community activities as well as being an advocate for ASDs in his school. Margaret works closely with the teachers to ensure that they understand how ASD affects her grandson and how the teachers can help him both in the classroom and on the playground.

Margaret is also an invaluable support to many other families, including one with a child with autism. In a voluntary capacity Margaret provides respite care, often for whole weekends for this child.

Margaret is a regular attendee at Autism Asperger ACT events being an invaluable source of support for many of our members.

Teacher Award Preschool

Pam Cording

This award recognises Pam's dedication to children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families. She is an enthusiastic teacher who willingly shares her knowledge of autism with families and her colleagues. Pam works in Early Intervention and is a great support to parents in the early stages after their child has received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Outside her work she continues to contribute to disability as she helps at the Special Needs Christmas Party and is the President of the ACT Chapter of Early Childhood Intervention Australia.

Teacher Award Primary School

Phillip Hall

Phillip is an exemplary teacher and leader in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder who has established an Autism Information Board within his school.

His pupils benefit from the strong home school partnership he has established as well as his implementation of many strategies of particular value for children with ASDs.

Phillip is a dedicated teacher who seeks opportunities to develop his knowledge and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders. He has worked hard to instil a genuine respect for and appreciation of children with ASDs within the general school community.

Phillip is always willing to share his experience, skills and expertise as he mentors other teachers. He is highly regarded by both his colleagues and the parent community.

Exemplary Service to the Autism Community

Kara Potter

Kara is the brains and organiser behind two amazing groups for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other developmental difficulties. These groups (Playworks Therapy Playgroup and Hit the Highway) are highly suitable for children with ASDs as they are structured, use lots of visuals and have motivating reward systems in place. Both groups are staffed by volunteer teachers and therapists that Kara has encouraged to join the programs.

In addition to the therapeutic assistance Kara offers to the children she also supports parents through a parent support group.

Both children and parents have benefitted enormously from Kara's dedication and selflessness. Thank you Kara and all your volunteers.

Exemplary Service to Autism Asperger ACT

Amanda Plowright

Amanda has been a wonderful mentor and support for Autism Asperger ACT for many, many years. Her knowledge of the community not for profit sector is vast. She has willingly shared this information with

many committees and more recently with our Autism Advisors and Polly, our business manager. Throughout all she remains calm. We would be lost without you Amanda!

Business Partnership Award

Simon Mitchell

Simon is the manager of Achieve Corp , a local accounting firm, has contributed to the Autism Community firstly by employing a person with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and secondly by regular financial support of Autism Asperger ACT. He is sponsoring our Rain Man reception in July.

In his journey with Autism Spectrum Disorders Simon has discovered that when a person with Asperger Syndrome is placed in the correct job that person is a hard and willingly worker who is not distracted by the social politics of a work environment.

Patronage Awards

For their ongoing support of Autism Asperger ACT , financially, behind the scenes and by attending our events we would like to award the following Patronage Awards.

Centric Wealth

Calwell and Wanniasa Branches of the Bendigo Community Bank

Individual Achievement Award

Jeanette Purkis

Jeanette, a woman with Asperger Syndrome, is a source of inspiration for many families who have a child, especially a girl, who is on the Autism Spectrum.

Throughout her life Jeanette has overcome many challenges to become a highly successful and productive person, a model public servant and an advocate for all individuals with ASDs.

Jeanette has written about the challenges she faced as a child teenager in her book *Finding a Different Kind of Normal - Misadventures with Asperger Syndrome*.

Jeanette is a tireless advocate for autism, speaking at a number of conferences and on radio. She has participated in a Compass Program *Alone in a Crowded Room* which will be screened on May 2nd.



We're Mad as Hell

We're not taking it anymore - and there are millions of us

<http://australiansmadashell.com.au/>

Time to make YOUR vote count

We want to inform you personally of the launch of an Australia-wide, grassroots, web-based political lobbying campaign to support a [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#) – a no-fault insurance scheme designed to fund the essential services and supports needed by people living with a disability.

This would transform Australia's broken disability support system and finally give real hope and control to millions of Australians affected by disability. Full details of this electoral campaign are available now at the campaign website - aptly named [Mad as Hell](#).

The Mad as Hell campaign is directly relevant to:

Ø More than **one million** Australians with permanent disabilities

Ø **Over 500,000** family members who are primary, full-time carers, plus extended family members, including sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and grandparents

Tens of thousands of health professionals, teachers, therapists and disability workers who witness each day the devastating impact of Australia's dysfunctional, crisis-driven support system on people with disabilities and their families

Thousands of Australians working for the disability service organisations that now overwhelmingly support the introduction of an NDIS

Every Australian now and in the future – because none of us is immune to disability arising from accidental injury, chronic illness or from birth

The Mad as Hell campaign will harness the voting power of every person who understands the need for fundamental reform to Australia's broken disability system. The numerical strength of our combined votes can make political parties commit to full implementation of an NDIS – regardless of which party is in power.

The Mad as Hell Campaign features a Pledge of Voting Intent at the next Federal and State elections. The Mad as Hell Pledge states:

I pledge that in the next Federal and State elections, I will only vote for a political party which publicly promises to transform Australia's broken, inefficient, crisis-driven disability support system.

All Mad as Hell Pledge postcodes will be matched to Federal and State electorates, and candidates standing for election in these seats will be notified of the number of Pledges made by electors – *with particular attention paid to marginal electorates.*

How you can help Mad as Hell achieve an Australian national disability insurance scheme

To support the Mad As Hell campaign you don't have to give any money to anyone; you don't have to write to your Federal or State MP or local newspaper; you don't have to become a member of any organisation or political party; you don't have to march in the streets. All you have to do is:

- 1. Go to www.australiansmadashell.com.au**
- 2. Click on the Pledge, enter your name, email address and postcode, then click Send.**

Millions of people Voting Power

Ordinary Australians have just one moment of power in a democracy – when we cast our votes on election day. Proposals for a transformative National Disability Insurance Scheme are now being considered by the Federal Government, and a Federal election is due later this year. So now is the time for all NDIS supporters to unite and **harness our combined voting power** to ensure fundamental reform of Australia's disability support system.

Please send this email to every person in your email contact list today, and ask them to send it to every person in their email contact list, so that information about www.australiansmadashell.com.au blankets Australia within days.

Remember, there are millions of us who are directly affected by the dire state of Australia's current disability support system. We belong to one of the most **numerically powerful groups** in Australian society, united by the anger and outrage we feel at the grave injustices we see all around us every day; and united by our wholehearted desire for sweeping, transformational change, justice and equity, in the shape of a no-fault, entitlement-based National Disability Insurance Scheme.

It is way past time those of us who are Mad as Hell united to make our millions of votes count.

www.australiansmadashell.com.au Sue O'Reilly and Fiona Porter

Thursday, April 8, 2010

From IRCA and Indiana's Autism Leadership Network

This April, the Indiana Resource Centre for Autism (IRCA) and Indiana's Autism Leadership Network offer several tips for working with students on the autism spectrum.

1. Approach students quietly from the side to avoid startling them. Their peripheral vision may be better and it gives them time to process information that tells them you are coming toward them. Once they are startled, it can be difficult for students to calm themselves.
2. Use non-verbal communication (e.g., gestures) when you can. For example, point to the location where you wish the child to be, put your finger to your lips to remind him/her to stop talking, or give a thumbs up when s/he is doing well.
3. Use literal, succinct and direct instructions. "First, put your coat in the closet, and then come to class." Avoid idiomatic phrases or sarcasm that the student may not understand.
4. Use a calm, even tone of voice. Excited adults yield excited students. Practice your poker face.
5. Visual supports are beneficial even after the child no longer seems to "need" them. Do not discontinue their use without a case conference discussion. In times of stress, these visual supports may be a great support.
6. Remember not to take behaviours personally, even when the child has a perfect knack for targeting your most vulnerable attribute.
7. Children on the spectrum often have poor social skills. It is part of the diagnosis. Insert naturally occurring lessons into the day as they arise. For example, prior to the event, coach a child to say happy birthday to a peer, raise their hand to answer a question, cover their mouth when they sneeze, say no thank-you to non-preferred treats, etc.
8. Give the student ample time to respond BEFORE you repeat instructions.
9. Structure is your best friend. When there is downtime, help students develop a repertoire of things they can do. For example, in line they can recite a poem in their head, count, read a book, make a list, etc. If there are too many choices, narrow it to two or three and have the child choose.
10. If there is a given schedule, follow it. Prepare for any upcoming variations. Prepare in a manner not to enhance anxiety in anticipation of the change.
11. Information processing and sensory issues are more difficult when the child is stressed. Make sure they have strategies to use when overwhelmed.
12. Know the signs of anxiety or stress for your students: pacing, hand-wringing, cussing, flushed face, laughing, etc. Know what causes anxiety or stress for each student. Adjust your language and demands when anxiety is heightened.
13. Spend time with a student before making programming judgments. Listen to and observe the student with input from family members, teachers/therapists or other involved staff before commenting.
14. When trying to extinguish unacceptable behaviour, always identify an alternative skill or replacement behaviour. And when you are targeting a behaviour, be sure to choose your battles carefully. Sometimes focusing too much attention on a behaviour may actually intensify that behaviour.
15. Forewarn a student when an activity is about to end, even if s/he is using a timer.
16. Educate students using their knowledge, interests and fixations. Build lessons around these special-interest topics so that others see them as experts in something. This will help build self-

esteem.

17. Stay in close contact with family members and physicians about what is working and what is not, especially when students are on medications.

18. Build in many small breaks, even in secondary school, for relaxation. Identify a safe area or safe person for the student to access when they are stressed.

19. Help find a social group, a club or some sort of organization that can connect them to peer mentors that are positive.

20. Pre-teach new concepts so students can re-hear them in the general education classroom. This allows them to contribute to the classroom discussion and promotes their success when topics have been rehearsed.

21. When you are feeling overwhelmed by a situation, surround yourself with a team of people with whom you can brainstorm. Using the resources and the wisdom of others helps us to be more creative and problem-solve more effectively.

22. The ultimate goal for any student is to have a successful adult life. No matter what the age of the individual, teaching specific procedures and skills and then fading support is essential for this to happen.

23. And finally, enjoy working with these students. They have many gifts and talents. Building a strong and positive rapport may be your most effective tool.

Downloaded from the web 9.4.2010

Rules of the Road: Driving and ASD

Interactive Autism Network

<http://www.iancommunity.org/>

Teresa Foden
IAN Assistant Editor

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IAN Online Community Facilitator

Kennedy Krieger Institute
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Date First Published: November 24, 2009

Getting behind the wheel of a car is a rite of passage for many teenagers, but for high-functioning individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) this task may prove particularly difficult. Along with the impulsivity, inexperience, and other traits of adolescence and young adulthood that can make driving a challenge, an individual with ASD may find him- or herself struggling with potential obstacles posed by autism itself. Can he or she quickly intuit and react to the "big picture" of any given driving situation? Can he or she interpret and respond to the actions, attitudes, or intentions of other drivers? Can he or she keep calm, neither overly anxious nor angry? Can he or she avoid "zoning out"?

This is an important area to explore, particularly as the high number of children with ASD transition to adulthood. Related research in the area of mobility of individuals with other disabilities, or of the elderly, shows that the ability to get from place to place enhances health, improves overall quality of life, and promotes participation in the community.³ From an economics perspective, mobility also can reduce the need for public supports. After all, to keep a job, you have to be able to get there.

For some, driving will not be an option. Others may have the potential to drive, but find the prospect too overwhelming. For many, using public transportation will be taught as a life skill -- a good idea whether



they are planning to learn to drive or not. Transportation needs may also be addressed as part of disability services. Still, there are some individuals with ASD who *can* learn to drive, especially if given sufficient support.

Typical teens, plus

A typical adolescent is an inexperienced driver by definition, and is hampered to some extent by a brain that is not finished developing. The prefrontal cortex -- the part of the brain that is home to executive function skills, such as planning, setting priorities, inhibiting impulses, and weighing the consequences of actions -- is not mature when most teens get their first driver's license. This may help explain why they are about four times more likely to be involved in a vehicle crash than a more experienced older driver, according to the annual Fatality Facts recently released by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Adolescent drivers are more likely to speed, tailgate, and otherwise increase their accident risk. At the same time, their inexperience makes it difficult for them to recognize the less obvious signs of a potential hazard. Also, while young drivers are less likely than adults to drive after drinking alcohol, their crash risk is substantially higher when driving under the influence.

When it comes to sitting in the driver's seat for the first time, a young person with ASD faces all the same issues a typically developing adolescent does, as well as additional difficulties posed by ASD. There are definitely some aspects of driving that he or she may need special help to master.

Imitation, coordination, and planning the next move

It often has been observed that individuals with ASD have a difficult time copying others' gestures or movements. How much of this is because of impaired motor skills and how much is because of difficulty with the process of imitation is not yet known. In any case, clumsiness or problems with coordination have long been noted, especially in people with Asperger's syndrome.

Research also has shown that individuals on the spectrum may have trouble "chaining motor acts into a global action." In other words, people with ASD can find it hard to plan all the steps to carry out an action from *a* to *z* all at once. Instead, they may do this in smaller, less global steps.

Taking all of the above into account, we may speculate that individuals with ASD will need some extra help learning the skills necessary to drive. There is not yet research on what techniques are ideal, but it is likely that breaking down driving skills into component parts and allowing more time than the typical beginner might need to master them will be required.

Seeing the 'big picture'

Studies show that one of the biggest strengths for many with ASD is attention to detail. What is more of a challenge is grasping the "gist" of a situation. ¹ In fact, according to the *weak central coherence* theory many individuals with ASD tend to focus on details rather than the overall meaning of information. To use a common metaphor, they may see each and every tree in the forest without clearly perceiving the forest as a whole. An ability to see "the forest" is important to quick and accurate decision making in tasks such as driving.

For example, an individual driving a car over a winding road, approaching a bridge, in the pouring rain on a winter's night, with the silhouette of a pedestrian emerging from the shoulder up ahead, may be required to sort through the relevant details -- darkness, a winding roadway, a bridge where water tends to freeze first, the pedestrian's body language (is he about to step out onto the road?) -- in order to arrive at a decision to proceed more slowly than the posted speed limit.

Using eye-tracking technology, a driving simulator, and other strategies, an Australian study is taking a look at how this difference in processing may affect visual strategies in inexperienced drivers with ASD compared with inexperienced drivers without a disability. Exploring this aspect of ASD is important if we are to understand how possible interventions may work in various situations, such as learning to drive. Identifying and teaching visual strategies to individuals with ASD could ultimately promote independence and participation in the community. ¹

The 'body language' of traffic

Individuals with ASD can have a hard time reading the "body language" of other people: expressions, gestures, stances.

Traffic has its own "body language." A car with a confused elderly driver at the wheel may move slowly and drift over the yellow line, while a car driven by someone intoxicated may move at a high rate of speed or careen before the driver regains control. A tailgating car may indicate impatience in the driver, irritation that the car in front is traveling at the speed limit in the fast lane, disapproval of a political bumper sticker, an overall aggressive attitude, or simply a lack of courtesy. Experienced drivers can pick up on the anger, upset, aggressiveness, or confusion of other drivers. They usually can recognize when a car is about to turn or change lanes, even when the driver doesn't use a turn signal. Recognizing these and other subtle traffic behaviours becomes second nature, and plays a key role in how expert drivers respond during emergencies.

How do novice drivers become expert drivers? At what point do they internalize this important skill of "reading" other vehicles and drivers? Can these skills be broken down and taught to an individual with ASD, much as they might be taught about human body language or personal space? Researchers are beginning to explore these and related questions.

Staying cool...and focused

Additional concerns often raised as a family thinks about whether their child with ASD is ready to drive are emotional regulation and the ability to focus. Some individuals with ASD can be irritable, anxious, or have meltdowns. Some individuals have difficulty maintaining attention. Quite a few have been diagnosed with anxiety, attention deficit, or other issues in addition to their ASD, while others suffer from seizures. Any of these issues may impact the ability to drive. Furthermore, it is clear that some individuals may be taking medications that could interfere with that ability.

Although these issues and their relation to driving aptitude have not yet been addressed by researchers, they are clearly important to consider. If a person with ASD cannot keep his focus on the road, or stay calm enough to drive responsibly, he may not be ready for this rite of passage. On the other hand, if he is able to stay calm and focused, whether thanks to treatment or simply growing maturity, driving may be a real possibility.

People with ASD may have one extraordinary strength when it comes to driving: They are often sticklers for rules and regulations, and may obey traffic laws better than typical drivers. What may be more of a problem is coping with the transgressions of neurotypical people far more comfortable with bending or breaking the rules.

Research in the future, adults in the now

Many individuals with ASD, like many of their parents, are not inclined to wait for the results of research studies. Teenagers and adults visiting WrongPlanet.net (www.wrongplanet.net) -- an online community for people with autism and Asperger syndrome -- expressed a host of frustrations, worries, and feelings of accomplishment in recent discussions about driving.

One young man, a good driver but nevertheless nervous about having to parallel park during his upcoming driver's test, wondered: "How did other Aspies deal with obtaining their licenses? Was it very stressful? Were you relieved afterwards? Also, is [it] common for high functioning autistics to have licenses?"

Another poster, having recently earned her driver's license, offered him this advice, "I had the same worries you [do] about parallel parking. Most instructors will see you know what you're doing, and won't expect a 'blindfold perfect' parking job. They know that the test is very nerve wracking. Just make sure to follow the rules of the road, and you'll be fine. Make sure it looks as if you're aware of your surroundings (glancing around, checking mirrors before backing, etc)."

A young man likewise offered reassurance and posted an exhaustive list of the specific skills involved in driving, including more than two dozen items broken down by subject heading.

The following day, the original poster wrote: "Today, at 3:40, I obtained my driver's license! I am so happy right now...."

Some shared such happy endings, while others said the obstacles had been too much to overcome. Society has few, if any, scientifically based interventions to offer them as they consider learning to drive. Much of today's research focuses on early interventions that will be critical for the future of infants and young children with ASD, but research that addresses critical life skills in adolescence and adulthood also is needed. There are vast numbers of young people growing up to join the already large number of adults with ASD.

Fortunately, in the United States, interest in adults with ASD, their abilities, and their needs is growing. A national town hall was recently held by a new organization, Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism (AFAA), with the aim of setting a national agenda regarding housing, employment, and community life opportunities for adults on the spectrum.

At the same time, researchers are beginning to address issues faced by adults with ASD, including how to help them learn to drive. For example, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is currently conducting a study on the "learning to drive" experience of teens with ASDs. The researchers hope to learn enough to develop guidelines to help families decide whether their child is ready to drive, as well as educational tools to support families of teens or young adults with ASDs during the learning-to-drive process.

Hopefully, future teens with ASD and their families will have much more information and many more resources available as they approach this and other important milestones on the path to adulthood.

http://www.specialneedstoys.com.au/shop/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=3_78&products_id=437

Testosterone in girls' brains offers clue to autism's cause

JULIE ROBOTHAM HEALTH EDITOR Sydney Morning Herald

March 12, 2010

GIRLS with higher testosterone levels at birth are more likely to have poor communication skills and social difficulties at age 10, Australian scientists have discovered.

The research supports an emerging theory of autism as an extreme form of typical male brain development.

The girls in the study with greater testosterone exposure - measured from samples of umbilical cord blood stored when they were born - were more likely to show deficiencies in female traits considered positive, such as empathy and social awareness.

The findings were made by Andrew Whitehouse, a research fellow at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research in Perth. "They showed the tendency towards social difficulties. They talked too much or talked too little," Dr Whitehouse said. But the girls did not score higher on positive traits linked to maleness, such as spatial awareness and problem-solving ability.

Dr Whitehouse, a psychologist and autism specialist, said if excessive testosterone exposure before birth was proven to adversely affect child development, it might be possible to intervene in high-risk pregnancies with hormone-altering drugs.

The 78 girls in the Rotary-funded study represent the largest group of children ever investigated for the link, and the oldest - important because subtle social and communication problems may not be apparent in very young children.

They come from a larger group of more than 2000 West Australian children whose mothers were recruited while pregnant, and whose health and development has been followed up at multiple intervals.

Dr Whitehouse, whose study was published this month in the journal *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, said he would now seek funding to repeat the study across the entire WA cohort, including boys, to definitively answer whether autism was linked to prenatal testosterone levels, and if so how strongly.

Dr Whitehouse said umbilical cord blood taken at birth might not be representative of mid-pregnancy hormone levels, when brain development was most likely to be affected. But amniotic fluid, used by British scientists who have also linked male hormones to autism traits, was potentially more flawed because only older mothers usually underwent the amniocentesis test.

Dr Whitehouse said the so-called "extreme male-brain" theory of autism was attractive because, "there aren't too many actual biological theories ... this ties in most of the behaviours we see." High prenatal testosterone levels were unlikely to occur randomly, he said, and it was probable there would turn out to be, "a genetic susceptibility to increased androgen [male hormone] concentration within the uterus, or foetal ability to soak up androgens."



STREET BY STREET

SUBURB BY SUBURB

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

NATIONAL STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE
ANGLISS CONFERENCE CENTRE MELBOURNE 21-22 APRIL 2010

At this conference we will set goals and strategies for the **practical implementation and coordination** of ideas and initiatives generated at the *Natural Neighbourhoods, Real Communities* Conference in June 2009, including (amongst others):

- **[Street by Street](#)**
- **[Neighbourhood Power](#)**
- **[Circles of Support](#)**
- **[Neighbourhood Supported Living Networks](#)**
- **[The Sharehood](#)**
- **[Neighbourhood Cultural Exchange](#)**

And introducing, from Buderim, Qld,
Sustainable Streets:

Several streets in our neighbourhood have joined together to create a Sustainable Streets Group. We meet monthly to exchange produce, homemade food and household items, as well as swap useful hints and ideas. We have gotten to know just about everyone in our immediate area, and life for adults and kids alike has been greatly enriched. This great social event costs nothing and swapping your excess produce for something you don't have saves everybody loads of money. Trenna M.

[Circles of Support](#) can be developed in many areas including:

- Disability
- Mental illness
- Young person in foster care
- Foster care family
- Ageing
- Young parent
- Vulnerable school student or child
- Drug/alcohol
- CALD

We would like to hear from individuals and organisations around the country interested in developing Circles of Support in their community.

And we'd like to hear from people who are already participating in or running Circles of Support, so we can share experiences and information and assist others to start up.

More information is available at **[Circles of Support](#)**
<http://www.civilsociety.org.au/Circles.htm>

NEW BOOK ON ASPERGERS RELEASED IN SYDNEY

“My Life with Aspergers” by Megan Hammond, New Holland Publishers

This book is particularly exciting because Megan is from Sydney and attended ASPIA's workshop last March at the Wesley Conference Centre in Sydney, when Tony Attwood and Isabelle Henault presented for us.

Let's put our support behind Megan in this courageous venture by purchasing copies of her book, and recommending it to our friends, other groups, schools, libraries, etc.

Megan is a delightful young woman whose poignant story reveals what it was like growing up as a female with undiagnosed Asperger's Syndrome in a society where "we don't do difference well" (words of Megan's father). Megan's parents and brother have also contributed chapters to the book. A moving and informative read, and valuable addition to our libraries and shelves.

<http://www.newholland.com.au/product.php?isbn=9781741107883>

<http://www.newholland.com.au/authordetail.php?first=Megan&last=Hammond&number=306>

(One final note: Tony Attwood will be returning to Sydney on 2 October, 2010 to speak on Girls and Women with Asperger's Syndrome: make a note in your diary now! Further information will follow as available.)

Carol Grigg, ASPIA INC

www.aspia.org.au

Teaching Children to Understand and Respond to Feelings

Sandbox Learning

www.sandbox-learning.com

Children often struggle not only with understanding their feelings, but also relating to other people's feelings. These skills are critical for personal well being and building relationships. This article includes steps for teaching children to understand and manage their feelings as well as identify and respond to other people's feelings.

1. Identifying Feelings – Teach children to recognize when they have a specific feeling. Whether happy, sad, or angry the first step in coping with a feeling is identifying it. Help children identify feelings by discussing emotions when they occur. If a child is angry say, “I see you are angry. You have your arms crossed and are stomping your feet.” Another tool is to role play times when specific emotions surface. Use novel examples as well as recent experiences for the child.

Discuss and write about different feelings in a feelings journal. Use the journal to write about events and the emotions, responses, and consequences the events elicited.

2. Planning for Strong Feelings – Help children cope with intense feelings by creating coping strategies. Have a quiet place for children to take a break when angry or sad. Give children tools and teach them how and when to use them such as a stress ball or a trampoline. These tools help children release energy in a positive way. Encourage children to use words or write about their feelings. Establish a phrase the child can use to remove themselves from stressful or upsetting situations. The phrase gives children a way to politely excuse themselves, regain control, and then return to the situation. Select a short phrase that can be used in a variety of situations such as, “Excuse me. I need a minute to think.”

3. Recognizing Other People's Feelings – Learning to empathize with other people and respond appropriately to another person's feelings, is an important skill for building relationships. Show pictures and drawings or role play situations to discuss the words, body language, and experiences that indicate a person's feelings. When discussing a child's own feelings, incorporate the concept that peers and adults have similar feelings in the same situation. This helps children develop empathy. Read stories where characters experience events that are happy, sad, surprising, or frustrating. Discuss why the characters felt the way they did and what they said or did to indicate their feelings.

4. Responding to Other People's Feelings – Not only do children have to identify other people's feelings, but they also need to learn how to respond when someone is angry, sad, or excited. Teach children appropriate responses through role play and reviewing past events. Discuss how different people in the role play feel, how their body language and words show their feelings, and the best response for the situation. Also discuss how the child would feel if this happened to them and how they would like other people to respond. This helps children learn to empathize with other people.

Proposed Changes Affecting Autism Spectrum Disorders in DSM-V

Thursday, February 25, 2010

By: Carin Yavorcik

Asperger's, PDD-NOS may no longer receive separate diagnoses

Recently, the American Psychiatric Association released some preliminary draft changes to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) that may affect those diagnosed on the autism spectrum. There are several significant changes proposed that are now posted for public view, including: Asperger's Syndrome and Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) would both be subsumed into the Autistic Disorder category, meaning that they would no longer be considered a separate diagnosis from autism, and the inclusion of potential co-morbidities with ADHD and other medical conditions.

The Autism Society is currently investigating the implications this change could have for the service and support systems currently in place for those with autism spectrum disorders. We will also be holding a town hall meeting at the Autism Society's National Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders in Dallas July 7-10, 2010 (learn more about the conference or register at www.autism-society.org/conference). You can also give your feedback on the changes at the Web site www.DSM5.org – look for the diagnoses on the autism spectrum under “Disorders Usually First Diagnosed in Infancy, Childhood, or Adolescence.”

These changes are not yet official – they are proposed for the update to the manual, which is expected to be published in May 2013. Whatever changes do go into effect surrounding autism spectrum disorders, the Autism Society will continue to work as we have always done to improve the lives of people across the entire spectrum of autism.

26th Feb downloaded from www.autism-society.org



By ROY RICHARD GRINKER
The New York Times

Published: February 9, 2010

Washington

IF you ask my daughter, Isabel, what autism means to her, she won't say that it is a condition marked by impaired social communication and repetitive behaviours. She will say that her autism makes her a good artist, helps her to relate to animals and gives her perfect pitch.

The stigma of autism is fading fast. One reason is that we now understand that autism is a spectrum with an enormous range. Some people with autism are nonverbal with profound cognitive disabilities, while others are accomplished professionals.

Many people with milder symptoms of autism have, for the past 20 years or so, received a diagnosis of Asperger's disorder. Some autistic adults call themselves "Aspies" to celebrate their talents and differences. And many parents have embraced the label because they have found it less stigmatizing, and so it has eased their sense of loss.

This may soon change, however. The American Psychiatric Association, with its release this week of proposed revisions to its authoritative Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, is recommending that Asperger's be dropped. If this revision is adopted, the condition will be folded into the category of "autism spectrum disorder," which will no longer contain any categories for distinct subtypes of autism like Asperger's and "pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified" (a category for children with some traits of autism but not enough to warrant a diagnosis).

The change is welcome, because careful study of people with Asperger's has demonstrated that the diagnosis is misleading and invalid, and there are clear benefits to understanding autism as one condition that runs along a spectrum.

When the American Psychiatric Association first recognized Asperger's disorder in 1994, it was thought to be a subtype of autism. As the diagnosis became more common, it broadened the public understanding of autism as a spectrum. It helped previously undiagnosed adults to understand their years of feeling unconnected to others, but without bestowing what was considered the stigma of autism. And it helped

educators justify providing services for children who, in the past, might have been unappreciated or even bullied because of their differences, but received no help from teachers.

It's no longer a secret that people with autism can have careers and meaningful social relationships. Witness the spate of recent movies, from HBO's "Temple Grandin," about a woman with autism who became an animal scientist famed for her designs of humane slaughterhouses, to "Mary and Max," an animated feature about a friendship between a 44-year-old man with Asperger's and an 8-year-old girl.

But a culturally meaningful distinction isn't always a scientifically valid one. Almost everyone with Asperger's also fits the profile of the more classic autistic disorder. Indeed, in the current diagnostic manual, a child who has good language acquisition and intelligence qualifies as autistic if, in addition to having restricted interests and problems with social interactions, he has just one of the following symptoms, which are common among children with Asperger's: difficulty conversing, an inability to engage in make-believe play or repetitive or unusual use of language. Even the best available diagnostic instruments cannot clearly distinguish between Asperger's and autistic disorder.

People who now have a diagnosis of Asperger's can be just as socially impaired as those with autism. So Asperger's should not be a synonym for "high functioning." Likewise, people with autism who are described as "low functioning," including those without language, can have the kinds of intelligence and hidden abilities that are associated with Asperger's — in art, music and engineering, for example — and can communicate if given assistance.

Moreover, large epidemiological studies have demonstrated that mild symptoms of autism are common in the general population. In particular, scientists have found that family members of a child with autism [often exhibit isolated autistic traits](#). With autism, as with many medical diagnoses — like hypertension and obesity — the boundary lines are drawn as much by culture as by nature. Dividing up the workings of the mind is not as neat and orderly as categorizing species.

The proposed new diagnostic criteria, by describing severity and functioning along a single continuum, would also capture the often unpredictable changes among children with autism. When Isabel was 3, she had all the symptoms of autistic disorder, but if she walked into a doctor's office today as a new patient — a chatty, quirky high school senior — she would more likely be given a diagnosis of Asperger's disorder. Narrow diagnostic categories do not help us understand the way a person will develop over time.

We no longer need Asperger's disorder to reduce stigma. And my daughter does not need the term Asperger's to bolster her self-esteem. Just last week, she introduced herself to a new teacher in her high school health class. "My name is Isabel," she said, "and my strength is that I have autism."

Roy Richard Grinker, a professor of anthropology at George Washington University, is the author of "Unstrange Minds: Remapping the World of Autism."

Study Nook gives special needs students added focus

By Jeff Salton

16:28 February 18, 2010 PST

http://student.designawards.com.au/application_detail.jsp?applicationID=7731



The Study Nook helps students with learning disabilities remain part of the classroom environment but away from distractions

For certain school children with learning disabilities, focusing on the task at hand is a major challenge, especially with so many distractions to be found in the classroom. As part of our ongoing series on the leading entries in the Australian Design Awards - James Dyson Award 2010, we take a look at this solution from University of Canberra student Aaron Kowald. The Study Nook is a miniature desktop office that acts as a learning aid for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), like autism and Down's Syndrome.

The Study Nook is a portable workstation, which opens up to provide a child with the necessary day-to-day educational tools, commonly used in a classroom. The unit is easily collapsible, allowing a child's parent or career to take it with them to school, home or elsewhere.

Kowald approached a local "special needs" school in 2009 with a proposal to design a piece of equipment that would fill an identified need in the classroom. With input from staff, he set about creating a portable study unit that would students with disabilities to learn at their own pace while enabling them to remain part of their class. After liaising with specialist teachers and therapists, and experiencing first-hand how these children interact in the classroom, Kowald says the Study Nook practically designed itself.

"After some trials and further testing with the children, the Study Nook began to produce real results. The users of the device are the teachers and their students, and both were involved in the continuous process of prototyping and testing.

"The final prototype is easy to use, and quick to set up, which meets the needs of the user. The operation of the Study Nook was designed to be intuitive for the user," he says. Kowald says Autistic children struggle with perceptual organization, and the ability to relate certain stored information to sensory experiences. "The Study Nook allows a child to explore their perceptual and sensory skills, whilst interacting with the product.

"Children with autism are distracted very easily. Colour selection was important for the Study Nook and could not interfere with the child's learning, but had to enhance their experience," he adds.

So far students using the device have shown improvement in their work focus while remaining in the classroom environment, Kowald says.

Judging of the Australia Design Award - James Dyson Award takes place later this year.

Pointers for Parents giving a talk on ASDs

Sometimes parents are asked to give a talk to their child's class on Autism Spectrum Disorders and are uncertain where to start.

An abbreviated form of Carol Gray's *The Sixth Sense* is always a good starting point. (This booklet is available through Autism Asperger ACT's library.)

Gray talks to the children about difference and in particular the difference caused when one of the five senses is impaired. The children quickly relate to what it would be like not to be able to see or hear. Valuable discussion can then be generated around how to best help a hearing impaired or vision impaired child.

After a more cursory discussion of the other senses, taste, touch, smell (children who have allergies and anaphylactic reactions will relate to these), the adult introduces the concept of the sixth sense - *the Social Sense*.

This can be explained to the children as a difficulty to make friends, interpret body language and understand what other people think.

The main focus of the discussion needs to be on helping the children come up with ways that they can help children who have difficulty with the Sixth Sense.

Get a teacher to scribe the ideas that arise from this brainstorming session.

It can also be interesting to ask the children to all shut their eyes and then raise their hand if they think they have difficulty making friends - it is surprising how many children do.

Whether the child with an ASD is present for this discussion is something that should be discussed privately with the child beforehand. Obviously if the child has not been told about his/her diagnosis, the words autism, Asperger Syndrome or ASD should not be mentioned.

Remember that the association has a number of boxes of children's books on ASDs for loan to schools. Please contact our business manager, Polly McIntyre, if you wish to borrow a box for a term. (email: bm@autismaspergeract.com.au)

Sensory Tools Australia

www.SensoryTools.net

We are excited to announce the grand opening of our first ever Sensory Tools shop. You can now come in and browse our large range of books, CDs, therapy equipment and more! The Sensory Tools shop is conveniently located in one of the downstairs shops below the state of the art paediatric occupational therapy clinic 'The Sensory Gym'.

Shop hours are:

Monday to Friday - 10.30am to 5.00pm

Shop Address:

Shop 8, 28 Laurence Street
Hobartville NSW 2753

Workshop Opportunity:

The Traffic Jam In My Brain

Holt ACT 29 May 2010

Parents registration for Gen Jereb's "The Traffic Jam In My Brain". 29 May 2010 at the West Belconnen Leagues Club, Hardwick Cres. Special Early Bird rate expires 28 April

AU\$189.00 Parent AU \$199 Professional

Register online at
http://shopau.sensorytools.net/as_course-registration?product_category=229

Rain Man@the Canberra Theatre

A fundraiser for AAAC!

Join us for a pre-theatre and interval celebration of the Rain Man theatre experience...

Get your friends together for a great night out!

Rain Man is based on the true life experiences of an autistic savant. It will provide an intimate personal insight into the complex world of people with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Wednesday 14 July 6.30 pm for pre theatre wine and canapés

Book now: 100 great seats (the following night is booked out!)

Cost: \$65 all inclusive (no booking fee)

Major sponsor: Achieve Corp

Sponsors: Canberra Theatre Centre: YumYumTree Catering: Mount Majura Vineyard

Ensemble Theatre presents:

Rain Man Experience brotherhood!

Alex Dimitriadis and Daniel Mitchell take on the roles of Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman in this intimate adaption of the Oscar award-winning Film, Rain Man.

Charles Babbit is in crisis. His business is about to go under, his girlfriend is leaving him and he's just learnt that his father has died, leaving his entire fortune to an unknown beneficiary. What follows is an incredible journey where Charlie discovers both his long lost brother, Raymond, an autistic savant with an astonishing gift for numbers, and the true meaning of love and brotherhood. Usually stories travel from stage to screen, but this is a rare example where a Hollywood blockbuster neatly transforms into a very different and much more intimate theatrical experience in this Australian premiere.

BOOKING DETAILS

Please reserve Tickets @\$65 each Total price \$

Your name & address

.....

Email:

BY BANK TRANSFER:

Bank Name: National Australia Bank

Account Name: Autism Asperger ACT Inc.

BSB: 082 926

Account: 86 773 3581 (please detail your name & 'rain man' reference with transfer)

BY CHEQUE: Please post your cheque, payable to Autism Asperger ACT Inc. to us at
PO Box 717, MAWSON ACT 2607

BY CREDIT CARD: email bm@autismaspergeract.com.au or phone 6176 0514 with details or:

Name on Card

Card type (Visa, Mastercard etc).....

Card Number

Card Expiry date

Please email bm@autismaspergeract.com.au with details of your order, or a copy of this form

Please remember we only have 100 tickets for this event, and they are likely to sell out fast!



AUTISM
ASPERGER ACT

SUBSCRIPTION ALERT!

PLEASE NOTE - that *Autism Awareness* newsletter is no longer being sent out by snail mail unless you take out a subscription.

You can collect a hard copy at SHOUT free of charge or join the email distribution list. If neither of these options are suitable for you a subscription of \$20 per calendar year is available. Subscription form below:-

Yes, I would like to subscribe to Autism Awareness hard copy format

Name:

Address & postcode:

Phone No:

Price \$20.00 per year

I enclose a cheque (payable to Autism Asperger ACT Inc.) or cash. For Credit Card payments call Polly on 02 6176 0514

Please post to:

Polly McIntyre, Business Manager, Autism Asperger ACT Inc., PO Box 717, MAWSON ACT 2607

OR Please email bm@autismaspergeract.com.au if you wish to be added to our email distribution list

PLEASE REMEMBER TO LET US KNOW ABOUT ANY CHANGES IN YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

Thank you

Book Box Loans

Contact Polly McIntyre 6176 0514 or email bm@autismaspergeract.com.au if you wish to borrow one of our community education book boxes. We have boxes especially for child care, preschool, primary and high school aged children as well as one for community services.

S.H.O.U.T
PO Box 717
Mawson, ACT, 2607

Telephone: (02) 6176 0514
Facsimile: 02 6286 4475
www.autismaspergeract.com.au

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	Hilary Huggan	

Business Manager: Polly McIntyre 6176 0514 Autism Advisors: Annette Andrew; Kathy Blair-Lewis 6176 0515

Autism Asperger ACT General Meetings

Meetings are held in the large meeting room at SHOUT, Collett Place, Pearce. The meetings are 7.30 for a 7.45p.m. start. There is time for a cuppa and a chat after the speaker
A gold coin donation would be appreciated. Autism Asperger ACT uses the money collected to buy an item for each autism unit and special school in turn.

LIBRARY

The Association continues to buy new books for the library. **The Library is open for borrowing and returns before and after the monthly meeting and during the week when the SHOUT office staff will assist you.**

Please make sure that you have read the latest Library rules before you borrow books, videos etc from the Library. When you return these rules and your details a borrowing card will be issued to you.

In future there will be a small charge (\$5) for borrowing the very expensive DVDs and videos as these items only have a limited life span. Relevant items will be clearly marked.

Disclaimer

Autism Asperger ACT does not necessarily endorse the views and opinions expressed in the articles in this publication, nor does the association provide them as advice, nor does the association take any responsibility for the accuracy or validity of the data within the articles. These articles are produced for information only. Autism Asperger ACT provides information on services for the information of members. Autism Asperger ACT does not endorse any individual person or method of treatment.

This edition of Autism Asperger ACT's newsletter was compiled and edited by Gay von Ess and Polly McIntyre.