



AUTISM
ASPERGER ACT

Autism Awareness

June 2010

Newsletter of Autism Asperger ACT Inc.

Helping people with ASD, their families and their carers

www.autismaspergeract.com.au

From the President....

Drs June and Jerry Groden from the Groden Centre on Rhode Island provided us with an interesting day where the high degree of anxiety that people on the autism spectrum have was discussed in detail. The work done at the Groden Centre and the facilities offered there highlighted the enormous gap in services between Australia and the United States. We all need to keep pressing for services for people with an ASD whatever their age or ability!

Our next workshop is being presented by Carol Gray in mid-August. To ensure that this is a successful event as well as coming along yourself, please make sure that you distribute information about Carol Gray to all child care, preschools, schools, after school care settings that your child attends. Carol is an animated speaker and the day will give us all a true understanding of social stories and how to write them!

We still have some tickets for **Rain Man**, the play 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.

As part of the move from SHOUT in Pearce to the Health and Well-Being Centre in Chifley the library will be closed from mid-June for two or three weeks while we move the books and prepare a new catalogue. If you are planning to borrow books please ring SHOUT before going there to check that the books are still available.

Our lobbying group continues to raise issues relating to autism with the government and its departments. I was recently invited to address the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Respite Care following my submission on behalf of the association. I look forward to reading their findings.

Advertising is about to begin for our annual Gala Dinner to be held this year on September 11th at the Hotel Realm. We rely on the support of our members so please come along and enjoy the evening with us.

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	2 nd Thurs
Grandparents' Group	Termly
School Age Parents' Support Group	25th June

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.

Web sites

www.calmingkids.com.au www.speakingofspeech.com/Social_Skills_Pragmatics.html Free downloads for social speech skills

<http://kindergarten.com> iphone applications

<http://taptotalk.blogspot.com/2010/04/now-you-can-taptotalk-on-iphone->

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

- Jane Koomer et al. *Answers to Questions Teachers Ask about Sensory Integration.*
Brenda Smith Myles et al. *Asperger Syndrome and Sensory Issues.*
Jerry and Mary Newport. *Autism-Asperger's sexuality.*
Patricia Stacey. *The boy who loved windows.*
Ellen Yack et al. *Buildin g Bridges through Sensory Integration.*
Stanley Greenspan. *The Challenging Child.*
Stanley Greenspan. *The Child with Special Needs.*
Marie Whitrow . *An Extraordinary Gift. The Australian Asperger's Resource Guide*
Elaine Aron, *The Highly Sensitive Child.*
Jodi Picoult. *House Rules.*
Betsey King. *Music Therapy.*
Carol Gray. *The New Social Story Book.*
Jed Baker. *No More Meltdowns. Positive Strategies for managing and preventing out-of-control behaviour.*
Carol Stock Kranowitz. *The Out-of-Sync Child.Recognizing and coping with Sensory Processing Disorder.*
Carol Stock Kranowitz. *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun.*
Bonnie Arnwine. *Starting Sensory Integration Therapy*
Mary Sue Williams et al. *Take Five Staying Alert at Home and School.*
Sharon Heller. *Too loud, too bright, too fast, too tight. What to do if you are sensory defensive in an overstimulating world.*
Emily L. Burows et al. *Understanding Asperger's Syndrome. Fast Facts.*
Frances Bierens. (2010). *A Spectrum of Light. Inspirational Interviews with Families Affected by Autism.*
Clare Sainsbury . (2009). *Martian in the Playground. Understanding the Schoolchildwith Asperger's Syndrome.*
E. Amanda Boutot and Matt Tincani (eds). (2009). *Autism Encyclopedia. The Complete Guide to Autism Spectrum Disorders.*
Shana Nicholsand others. (2009) *Girls Growing Up on the Autism Spectrum*
Clare Lawrence.(2008). *How to Make School Make Sense. A Parents' Guide to Helping the Child with Asperger Syndrome.*
Dion Betts and Nancy Patrick. (2008). *Hints and Tips for Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Useful Strategies for Home, School and the Community.*
Rudy Simone. (2009). *22 Things a Woman Must Know if she loves a man with Asperger's Syndrome.*
Carol Hagland. (2010). *Getting to Grips with Asperger Syndrome. Understanding Adults on the Autism Spectrum.*
Janice Janzen (2009). *Autism Handbook for Parents. Facts and Strategies for Parenting Success.*
Wendy Ashcroft and others. (2010). *Success Strategies for Teaching Kids with Autism.*

Book Reviews by Gay von Ess:

House Rules by Jodi Picoult 2010.

This story is reminiscent of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* in the way that Picoult captures the essence of Asperger's Syndrome in her character Jacob. At times funny and at times heart-breaking this story is told from several points of view - Jacob himself, his mother Emma, brother Theo, lawyer Oliver and police officer Rich. Their journeys with AS unfold as Jacob's obsession with forensic science lands him in trouble.

An Extraordinary Gift. The Australian Asperger's Resource Guide by Marie Whitrow.

An excellent resource for newly diagnosed families with Asperger's Syndrome this book is a combination of practical support and ideas and reference book of Australian services.

WORKSHOP

Solving the Social Equation in Autism Spectrum Disorders With Carol Gray

17th August 2010

Autism Asperger ACT is proud to welcome Carol Gray from the US to Canberra. She will be running a fun and practical workshop exploring strategies that will address the core deficits in ASD through utilization of *everyone's* strengths. Unable to quickly 'get the gist' of what is happening, a day at school for example, may be a frustrating series of events for a child with ASD, filled with directions that are misunderstood, and failed interaction with peers. Participants at this workshop will learn:



- about the cognitive theories that are relevant to teaching social concepts and skills (for example, theory of mind, central coherence, and executive function);
- how to write and implement a **Social Story** and receive a demonstration of Social Stories in practice;
- how to work as a team with parents/professionals to effectively and efficiently address challenging behaviours and situations; and
- how to build and promote friendly behaviour and friendship opportunities among all children in the general education classroom.

Carol Gray is the Director of The Gray Center for Social Learning and Understanding in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. In 1991, Carol developed Social Stories™ and Comic Strip Conversations strategies that are used worldwide with children, adolescents, and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). She has published several resources on topics related to children and adults with ASD, including articles on bullying, death and dying, and how to teach social understanding.

Download flyer and booking form

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

Autism Asperger ACT Grandparents' Group for 2010

Next meeting is August 6th

Venue: SHOUT

Time: 10 - 12

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 10th June

Everyone welcome, for more information please contact:

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

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.

Rain Man@the Canberra Theatre

A fundraiser for AACT!

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.

Download flyer and booking form

http://autismaspergeract.com.au/sites/default/files/RAIN%20MAN%20flyer_1.pdf

Help make our Singapore Sling Gala Dinner a Success!

You can help us in three ways:

Auction items

We have already sourced a number of great auction items for the Gala dinner but are still after a number of 'big ticket' items as well as smaller more affordable gifts. So far we have achieved:

A South Coast Explorer Package donated the Paperbark Camp Huskisson. The total value of the donation is \$1,345. The package includes:

- Dinner, bed and breakfast for 2 nights
- Dolphin Cruise
- Entry to Illawarra Fly Treetop Walk in the tropical Minnamurra Rainforest
- Use of bikes and canoes
- Picnic lunch

One basket of Curves products plus 3 month Curves membership donated by Curves
A modern Ricky Tims design quilt made by award winning quilter Elizabeth Rose.

Donated by *Quilts for Others*, Canberra Quilt

A framed antique print donated by Sally Burdon of the Asia Bookroom Jamison.

A Magic Realms Birthday Party package

Wine

Captain's Lounge package for two to a Brumbies match donated by the Brumbies



Do you have contacts with any Canberra businesses, sporting organisations, clubs or shops which may be happy to donate items for our auction or raffle?

Donors will be acknowledged in the Association newsletters to members and in the Program/Auction booklet where their logo and a photo of either their donation or other advertising will be included.

Sponsorship

We are moving upmarket this year to the Hotel Realm, and are featuring a Singapore Sling/Raffles theme. Entertainment will be fantastic, along with music and dancing - however costs have, of course increased, and we really need a significant amount of sponsorship this year to make the event the success it deserves to be.

Do you have contacts with local businesses who would like to sponsor the event? If so, please email Polly bm@autismaspergeract.com.au for information on the sponsorship packages available.

Ticket Sales

Invite your friends to make up tables with you. We are maintaining our \$100 ticket price for members **only** so please take advantage of this great price - its a real bargain. Non members tickets will be \$130 with an Early Bird price of \$115. We are budgeting for 100 more guests than last year - PLEASE put us in your diary, come along with friends, family and colleagues and dance the night away.

[More Gala Dinner Details later in the Newsletter](#)



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.

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

We particularly need help with organising sponsorship for the Gala Dinner, and Auction Items

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

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

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 University of Canberra, Autism SA and the Department of Education and Training, Western Australia

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.

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 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.

February 6, 2010

Autism and Asperger syndrome underdiagnosed in women, researchers say

David Rose, Health Correspondent and Rachel Carlyle

Autism and related conditions are being underdiagnosed in women and teenage girls, with many cases being confused with eating disorders or other problems, researchers say.

With symptoms such as social isolation, communication difficulties or a fanatical interest in categorising objects or obscure mathematical problems, autism has previously been seen as a male preserve.

Up to 80 per cent of diagnosed cases of autism are in boys, with the proportion rising to an estimated 15 male cases for every female with Asperger syndrome, a milder form of the condition. However, researchers due to speak at Britain's first academic conference on the issue will suggest that many more girls are on the autistic spectrum than previously thought, with doctors and parents failing to notice or misinterpreting the telltale signs.

Cases at the less severe end of the spectrum, where sufferers do not have speech problems and can have high IQs but have difficulties interpreting the world and its complex social rules, are thought to be particularly underdiagnosed.

"Girls are less likely to have language delay than boys with autism, so all the right boxes get ticked when they are toddlers and their autism can get missed," said Richard Mills, research director of Research Autism, the charity that is organising the conference this month. "Autistic girls are also more likely to be outwardly social when they are younger whereas boys are less so."

Boys commonly have autistic spectrum conditions diagnosed aged 5 to 7, whereas girls are usually adolescent or older, if they receive a correct diagnosis at all.

Dr Mills's own research, due for publication this year, suggests that even when girls are screened for autism it is not picked up. In a study of 60 patients at an English psychiatric hospital, none had an autistic condition diagnosed after routine screening, despite 11 later being shown to have been confirmed cases.

"What was happening was that other diagnoses were being made — personality disorder or perhaps schizophrenia," Dr Mills said. "This is possibly because most tests were developed around male characteristics of autism."

Last year a survey of 7,500 British adults suggested that about 600,000 people in Britain suffer from an autistic spectrum condition but that rates are far higher among men (1.8 per cent of the population) than women (0.2 per cent).

It is unclear how many cases in girls are not being diagnosed but charities and patients' groups say that a growing number of adult women are contacting them, having recognised themselves in autistic characters on television or through articles about autism, and are relieved finally to discover why they are "different". Dr Mills believes that because it is assumed that autism is rare in girls, doctors are less likely to consider it. "I have spoken to parents of girls who have said that the first response from the doctor has been, 'She is a girl, it is highly unlikely to be autism'. Not just GPs but paediatricians too."

A further barrier to diagnosis is that girls are often better at masking the symptoms, such as difficulties with language, because they tend to be more advanced than boys, less disruptive and able to compensate better for their problems. Girls are also much less likely to have an obsessive lifelong interest in collecting facts, as boys with autism commonly do.

Janet Treasure, an expert on eating disorders at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, said that women or girls on the autistic spectrum often focused on diet or calorie control, which became their obsession. About one in five women with an eating disorder is thought to be on the autistic spectrum.

A study led by Professor Treasure on 150 women with acute anorexia or bulimia suggests that up to 60 per cent also develop the psychological signs of autism. "Those who are severely underweight and unwell, with serious disruption of eating patterns, share a lot of the cognitive and emotional styles common to autism," she said. "Their poor nutrition means that they can't see the bigger picture, they focus on detail and have a rigid way of thinking, finding it hard to adapt."

These psychological symptoms were lessened when most of the women gained weight. But "girls with autism are at high risk of getting into a pattern of behaviour that can cause a vicious cycle of problems", said Professor Treasure. "It is important that people notice and try to stop it."

Campaigners are worried that the lack of diagnosis can have catastrophic effects. Low self-esteem can cause self-harming and even suicide, and social naivety can lead to bullying and sexual exploitation.

Mark Lever, the chief executive of the National Autistic Society, said: "We are extremely concerned that many women with autism may be going undiagnosed. So many tell us that trying to get a diagnosis feels like an insurmountable hurdle and they have to fight tremendous battles to get the help, support and services they desperately need.

"Autism is a serious, lifelong and disabling condition and without the right support it can have a profound effect on individuals and families."

Autism and Asperger syndrome

— Autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) are developmental conditions that can vary from child to child, and from mild to severe. Their symptoms are grouped into three broad categories:

— Problems with social interaction, such as a lack of understanding and awareness of other people's feelings.

— Impaired communication skills, such as delayed language development and an inability to start or take part in conversations.

— Unusual patterns of thought and physical behaviour, including repetitive physical movements. The child can become upset if the routines are broken.

— There is currently no cure for ASD, but there are a range of treatments that can improve the symptoms.

— There are three main types of ASD: autistic disorder (also known as "classic autism"); Asperger syndrome (milder symptoms that affect social interaction); and pervasive developmental disorder (children who have some symptoms of either).

— ASDs are uncommon but not rare. In England it is estimated that 1 in every 100 children has an ASD.

— In the past, many children with an ASD may have been labelled as "slow" or "shy".

— Kim Peek, the most famous autistic savant and inspiration for the film *Rain Man*, died aged 58 in December. He could read eight books a day, taking just ten seconds to read a page.

Parents of autistic students sue for more funding

NATALIE CRAIG

May 23, 2010



Program director Shannon Eeles (left) and behavioural therapist Gabby Dargan with Alex Arena (left) and Matthew Flemming.

PARENTS of autistic children are suing the state government for failing to provide learning assistance at mainstream schools.

Students with autism spectrum disorders win government funding for a classroom assistant if they have a speech delay. Children who speak capably, but without social or emotional understanding, are generally refused funding and decipher the world unaided.

Disability discrimination advocates have told *The Sunday Age* at least seven parents have had their complaints against the state government over autism funding referred to the Federal Court.

They are suing under discrimination law, arguing that the withholding of funds means their children are not getting the necessary support in the class.

Dozens of other parents are also interested in legal action and are considering a class action to force widespread change in autism funding to provide a harmonious, supportive environment for all students.

Some say their children are so bereft in social situations that they are refusing to go to school, absconding, disrupting classes, are not learning and have repeated grade levels.

Melody Lind is suing to get funding for son Cody, who was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome by a child psychologist in 2008 when he was five.

"Cody is smart," Mrs Lind said. "Locked in there somewhere is a brilliant little child ... But he is like a train that constantly derails, he needs someone there to keep him going.

"His one strength is that he does use slightly sophisticated vocabulary. That accounts for squat on the overall scheme of [autism], but that is why we can't get help for him at school."

Autism spectrum disorders, including Asperger's syndrome, are thought to affect about one in 90 people. They encompass dramatically varying social and communication difficulties.

Students with such problems are eligible for disability support funding in mainstream schools if they score poorly on a test for "expressive and receptive" language skills. Students with poor "pragmatic" language alone are ineligible.

Those students may have a reasonably sophisticated vocabulary and know the literal meaning of words, but they cannot use or understand language in a social context.

Mrs Lind said that in July 2009, Cody's pragmatic language was assessed as poor enough to win him disability funding to pay for a learning aide. But she said that in September, the Education Department changed its mind.

"They changed the goalposts," she said. "All of a sudden Cody's pragmatic language deficits were no longer important, and we didn't meet the criteria."

Cody is now in year 2 and Mrs Lind says he is falling behind as he struggles to work in a classroom with 23 other students, despite his teacher's best efforts.

The Education Department wrote to speech pathologists in September, saying that "pragmatic language disorder alone is not sufficient to meet the language criterion".

Health professionals said the criterion was easily manipulated by bureaucrats and students lacking pragmatic skills could be eligible for funding in one round, but lose it in another.

Disability discrimination advocate for Access Law Julie Phillips said she was seeing a steady stream of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder wanting to take legal action against the state government.

"There is potential for a class action," Ms Phillips said. "Their approach to kids with ASD in mainstream schools is bereft of best practice, and teachers get little support ... Kids are labelled as being difficult and are maligned as a result, when what they need is an expert approach using positive behaviour programs."

Almost 1000 principals from the Victorian Principals Association have put forward a position paper arguing for criteria that will state explicitly the level of pragmatic skills that will qualify autistic students for funding.

"The bottom line is autism is a growing concern in our country," said association president Gabrielle Leigh. "Students aren't being assessed properly in government schools, and therefore they aren't getting the specific help that is needed for them to learn at an optimum level."

A spokesman for the Education Department said it "considers a student's pragmatic language ability as it impacts on their expressive and receptive language skills in the context of overall language abilities" and that pragmatic language abilities "may contribute" to evidence for funding.

He said the government had committed an extra \$8.3 million over the next four years to autism services, including for diagnosis, staff development and support to preschoolers, as well as \$2.4 million for specialist inclusion support units in mainstream schools.

Schizophrenia shares genetic links with autism, genome study shows

By [Katherine Harmon](#) May 10, 2010 in [Mind & Brain](#)



Schizophrenia involves some of the [same genetic variations](#) as autism and attention deficit disorders, a new whole-genome study has confirmed.

Schizophrenia, which affects about 1.5 percent of the U.S. population, can result in a variety of symptoms that include disrupted thinking, hallucinations, delusions and abnormal speech. The disease is thought to have [genetic links](#) but usually does not manifest itself [until adolescence or early adulthood](#).

In an effort to assess some of the [common genetic variations](#) that might underpin this fairly common but thorny mental illness, researchers sequenced DNA from 1,735 adults with schizophrenia and 3,485 healthy adults. Across the patients

that had the disease, the researchers found many frequent variations related to copying or deleting genes, known as copy-number variations. And among the genes that were more likely affected by these changes in schizophrenic individuals were *CACNA1B* and *DOC2A*, which help make proteins for calcium signals that regulate neurotransmitters in the brain. Two other relatively common variations, in *RET* and *RIT2*, would likely impact brain development.

"These genes affect synaptic function, so deletions or duplications in those genes may alter [how brain circuits are formed](#)," Hakon Hakonarson, director of the Center for Applied Genomics at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and coauthor of the new study, said in a prepared statement.

Previous research had turned up a few rare copy-number variations in schizophrenic patients, but they "explain only a small fraction of the genetic risk of this common complex disease," the researchers noted in their study, published online May 10 in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The new work confirmed higher rates of variations in some of the same networks disturbed in people with autism and attention deficit disorders.

"Although different brain regions may be affected in these different neuropsychiatric disorders, these overlaps suggest that there may be common features in their underlying pathogenesis," Hakonarson said.

Initial gene links for schizophrenia were [reported nearly a decade ago](#), after researchers at Julius-Maximilian University of Würzburg in Germany found a common mutation on the 22nd chromosome in the protein-encoding gene *WKL1*. Since then, many studies have helped home in on triggers and therapies for the disease, but a cure for schizophrenia remains elusive.

"Much research remains to be done," Hakonarson said. But "detecting genes on specific pathways is a first step to identifying more specific targets for improved drug treatments."

downloaded from The Scientific American website

Diets aimed at fighting autism 'flawed'

By Collin Eaton, Daily Texan Staff

Published: Monday, May 3, 2010

Decades of studies supporting gluten- and casein-free diets as treatments for people with autism are flawed and

insufficient, according to a recent study led by a UT graduate student.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye and barley, and casein is a protein found in dairy products, such as milk and cheese. Austin Mulloy, a special education graduate student, led a review of 15 studies dating from 1977 to 2007 on the effectiveness of gluten- and casein-free diets as a treatment for autism. Mulloy said further analysis of the research exposed flaws in the studies' measurements and design.

"The conclusion that we drew from the research was that the diet should only be implemented if the child's doctor determines that the child has an allergy or an intolerance to gluten or casein," Mulloy said. "However, [the diets are] not worth considering if autism is the only factor. We don't recommend it across the board for autism."

Peer-reviewed journal *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders* Mulloy's study in its July-September 2010 issue. Other researchers from UT, Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, the University of Bari in Italy, Texas A&M University and the University of California, Santa Barbara collaborated on the study.

According to a 2006 study that surveyed one sample of 552 parents of children with autism spectrum disorders, 23.1 percent of parents were currently using the gluten-free diet and 21.7 percent had used it in the past, while 26.8 percent currently were on the casein-free diet and 18.5 percent had used it in the past.

Mulloy said a common design flaw in the studies reviewed was the way data was collected. He said the measures were prone to bias, as researchers would not measure quantitative changes in a behavior or observe the children directly; rather, they would interview the parents about whether the diet was worthwhile.

Texas A&M assistant professor Mandy Rispoli, who worked on the study with Mulloy and others, said when parents eliminate wheat and other bread products in addition to dairy products such as milk, cheese and butter, they risk taking away too many nutritional foods.

“When you eliminate gluten, you’re eliminating a wide range of foods, and the risk would be, for children with autism, that many of them are already picky eaters,” Rispoli said. “That’s the main concern, that they’re not getting the nutrition they need. That can have a major impact.”

According to data collected over several decades by the Autism Research Institute, 66 percent of the 2,561 parents involved in the study said the gluten-free and casein-free diets improved their child’s condition while 31 percent said the diets had no effect.

Cynthia Singleton, the mother of an autistic boy and the regional advisory committee chair of the Houston chapter of the Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders, said the diet really has worked, despite the results of the Mulloy study.

“From my perspective, the diet has been the cornerstone of my son’s recovery,” Singleton said. “

Dairy was 70 percent of his diet, so we just cold-turkey took him off of all of dairy.

My father asked me the following week if I had put him on tranquilizers because he was so much calmer. That study is not going to change our reality, that everybody who knows my son can tell when he’s had something off the diet.”

New Genetic Clues to Autism Found

2 New Gene Mutations Linked to Autism

By Kathleen Doheny

WebMD Health News

Reviewed by Laura J. Martin, MD

May 3, 2010 -- Researchers have discovered two new genes that may be involved with autism, the brain disorder marked by difficulty in communicating and relating to others.

The evidence for one of the two new "susceptibility genes" is stronger than that for the other, says Daniel Notterman, MD, the senior author of the study and a professor of pediatrics, biochemistry, and molecular biology at Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey.

One of the newly discovered gene mutations is in NCAM2 and the other is in PTPRD.

"We are more confident about NCAM2 and less about PTPRD," Notterman tells WebMD.

The researchers announced the discovery Sunday at the Pediatric Academic Societies annual meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Autism or autism spectrum disorder, involving less severe forms of the condition, affect one in 110 U.S. children, according to estimates from the CDC.

The new finding, Notterman says, adds to the growing evidence for genetic links for autism but doesn't rule out a role for environmental factors. "Over the last couple of years, beginning in 2007, it's become clear that some cases of autism, maybe up to 15%, will be caused by rare mutations, either occurring spontaneously or that can be inherited by a parent," he says.

Tracking the Autism Genes

Notterman and his colleagues analyzed data from the Autism Genetic Resource Exchange (AGRE), a collaborative gene bank for autism, on 943 families, most of whom had more than one child diagnosed with autism. In all, they evaluated 3,742 family members.

They compared these with genetic data from 6,317 people without developmental or neuropsychiatric conditions.

Comparing genetic information on those affected with autism and those not, Notterman says, "gave us a starting list of about 25 genetic mutations" found more commonly in those with autism.

Next, the researchers looked at whether the 25 were substantially different in the two groups, and in the process narrowed the list of suspect genes to four.

Two of the four had already been identified by researchers as linked with autism. The other two were new. "No one had shown this [link] statistically," Notterman says.

Next, Notterman's team validated the finding to see if the genes were expressed in the brain. They found that NCAM2 was "expressed in some regions of the brain that may be associated with autism -- the hippocampus and the cerebellum."

"Many of the genes described [recently as having a link to autism] are genes involved in the synapse," Notterman says. A synapse is a specialized junction at which a nerve cell communicates with another cell.

The genetic mutation of NCAM2 is probably rare, Notterman says. "We would estimate that 0.5% or fewer of kids with autism have the NCAM2 [mutation]."

"About six to 10 rare genetic mutations to date have been associated with autism," Notterman says. "Most people working in the field predict there will be 50 to 100."

Some parents and siblings of the children with autism were found to have the NCAM2 mutation but not the disorder, which the researchers expected to find. This suggests other genetic factors or environmental triggers play a role.

Notterman conducted the research while at Princeton University. The research was supported by the Simons and Nancy Laurie Marks Foundations and the AGRE Consortium.

Tracking Autism Genes: Implications

While there is no immediate application of the discovery for parents, Notterman says the new research suggests that "science is probably on the right track over the next decade to understand much more about the basic biology of autism."

The recurring theme recently, he says, is the finding of structural variations in the DNA that cause mutations in the genes affecting the synapses.

Second Opinion

The new findings reflect the complexity of the origin of autism, says Daniel Coury, MD, chief of developmental and behavioral pediatrics at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, and medical director of the Autism Treatment Network, a consortium of 14 U.S. and Canadian sites focused on improving treatment.

"There was the popular belief that we were going to find 'the gene,'" says Coury, who reviewed the study results for WebMD.

"That got expanded," he says, as ongoing research turned up several more genetic mutations associated with autism.

The recent research also suggests that genetic mutations don't seem to affect everyone equally, he says. "One of the things that was interesting," he says, "is they are seeing variations, where there are less complete [genetic] deletions in some people than in others."

Some families, he says, appear to be at greater genetic risk due to small changes in the mutations that might change how a gene is expressed. That, in turn, could affect the severity of the autism features and symptoms, he says.

While the study adds to the evidence of a genetic basis for autism, the possibility of environmental triggers is still present, Coury says. "The research is further confirmation that autism is probably caused by an interplay of genetics and environmental factors."

Project to boost opportunities for autistic people

A project providing training for schools and businesses to raise awareness of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) is to begin in parts of Wales.

Deis Cyfle, which means "opportunity" in Irish and Welsh, aims to provide greater opportunities for autistic school-leavers and job seekers.

The three-year project is a collaboration between Autism Cymru and the Irish Society for Autism. The scheme will be officially launched at the Senedd on Monday.

Autism Cymru said levels of understanding and awareness about ASD among typical post-school providers such as companies, higher or further education and leisure services were often minimal, and in some cases were misinformed.

The charities have developed a three-day training package and self-evaluation tool, with material tailored for secondary school teachers, further education and leisure providers, and employers.

The project will be run in Gwynedd, Anglesey, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Wrexham and Flintshire, and through parts of the Irish Republic.

Lynn Plimley is the project manager for Deis Cyfle. She said: "The understanding and knowledge of the issues for people with ASD is critical to achieving success in the world of work, leisure and further and higher education.

"Without knowledge and understanding behaviours and actions can be easily misinterpreted with often negative consequences.

"By developing relevant training and awareness raising packages, teachers, employers, lecturers, leisure workers and other service providers will appreciate the many gifts and competencies of people with ASD as well as understanding where the individual is coming from."

The project has received European Regional Development funding for three years.

She added: "It is hoped that the data and research generated through the activity of the project will sustain the work beyond the end of funding and enable the training to be delivered across the whole of Wales and Ireland."

Thomas Pinder, a Year 11 student with Asperger syndrome, said he did not see the condition as a weakness or disorder, but as a difference.

"I have no doubt that I am happy and succeeding at school because of one thing - and that is awareness. I'm sad to say this hasn't always been the case.

"Awareness of Asperger's and autism is essential. I know, as someone who has Asperger's, how many times I have told somebody that I have it, only to be greeted with a blank face and shrugged shoulders.

"More and more members of the public need to be aware that Asperger's Syndrome and autism do exist and that people do have it.

"I know that when I leave school and go to university and into employment, it would make my life much easier if staff and colleagues were aware of my disorder."



Science and literature

Lewis Carroll believed 'we read to know that we are not alone'. Thomas Carlyle wrote that the effect of a book 'excites the reader to self activity'. Why we read fiction is a question that has had writers, academics, critics and philosophers debating for centuries.

In more recent years science has entered the discussion. Cognitive psychologists, biologists and now neuroscientists are examining why and how we read fiction by looking at the chemistry and biology of the brain. And now the MRI or brain scan is being used to look at how the brain reacts when we read certain types of fiction. What happens to our brain when we read Jane Austen or Proust, and is it different when we read Harry Potter or a detective novel?

Lisa Zunshine

Professor of English University of Kentucky

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/01/books/01lit.html>

The upshot of her work so far is that reading fiction books, literacy in general certainly enhances/exercises our theory of mind skills/ability (read the article from the link above). This discovery/confirmation is very positive for people with ASD who are not so good at mind reading/theory of mind.

<http://www.insideautisticminds.com/>

The Grace app.

Few can legitimately boast that an iPhone app changed their life but for 10-year-old Grace Domican, unable to speak due to autism, the touchscreen phone has given her a voice for the first time.

Her mother, Lisa Domican, created a picture-based iPhone application to help her communicate and the tool was so successful she is now trialling it in a school for autistic children in Ireland.

Domican, who was born in Australia and lived here until she moved to Ireland in 2001, is also planning to provide it to schools in Australia and is selling both iPhone and iPad versions on the iTunes App Store.

Aspect, Australia's largest non-profit organisation providing support for people with autism, has expressed interest in trialling the app with its clients, while Domican said she had also been in contact with the Woodbury School in Baulkham Hills.

The **Grace app** is essentially a digital version of the Picture Exchange Communications System - **a book of laminated pictures** attached to a board by velcro that allows children with autism to build sentences and communicate.

Children with autism are often unable to use and understand expressive language because the developmental disability means those parts of the brain don't work. Some children with autism go on to develop speech, while others never do.

As the child learns new words via pictures they are added to the PECS book, a system that quickly becomes unwieldy, particularly outside the home setting.

"You have to take the photo, print the photo, laminate the photo, velcro it and repeat this every time they decide they like something new," said Domican, whose older son Liam, 12, also has autism.

With the app, which is being sold for \$45 on the App Store with some of the proceeds going to charity, Grace has access to more than 400 symbols and photos in the palm of her hand. She can add new ones herself by taking pictures with the phone's camera.

Domican is able to share new words and interests instantly with Grace's carers and teachers so they can use them in their interactions with the child.

The iPhone's touchscreen was critical as Grace was used to pointing at the pictures in her PECS book, so it was second nature to open and operate the apps.

"With the phone showing exactly what she has requested, it is now very clear to all of us what she needs and we see a huge reduction in frustration behaviour as a result," Domican said.

"Grace is capable of a two- to three-hour tantrum that leaves your ears ringing, so this is a good thing."

Now the app is being trialled on several of Grace's fellow students at a Saplings school in Ireland, designed specifically for children who cannot be taught in mainstream schools. Members of the public have been donating their second-hand iPhones, which are then cleaned up and donated to autism schools.

Domican even credits the app with improving Grace's verbal communication, saying she can now make many three- to four-word verbal requests, such as "I want to drink" or "I want purple chocolate" (Cadbury).

Anthony Warren, Aspect's director for children, young people and families, said he thought the Grace app was "a great idea" but suspected it would not be a substitute for the formal PECS program. He said he was sure Aspect's schools and speech pathologists would be interested in trialling it.

"It certainly sounds as though it would be very motivating and helpful for clients who have higher support needs and who are motivated by that sort of technology," he said.

Domican said she got the idea for the app after seeing iPhone ads on the sides of buses just before the device launched in Ireland. The telco O2 Telefonica supplied her with an iPhone after meeting Domican at a World Autism Day event.

Last year, Domican tracked down an iPhone developer, Steve Troughton Smith, who helped her make the app. Since the pictures used by Grace were owned by a company, Domican had to draw sketches of each image she would need for a basic vocabulary and then contracted an artist to make professional, digital versions.

Smith created a prototype of the app in September and "by the end of November we had four additional phones and we were trialling it with three more children in the school".



Domican and her family have lived in Ballarat, Melbourne and Sydney. They regularly fly down to visit family in Ballarat.

Liam was diagnosed in the Royal Brisbane Hospital in 2000 and attended the Autistic Association of Queensland school in Brighton for almost a year. Grace was diagnosed by a paediatrician in Ballarat in September 2001, just before the family moved to Ireland.

Domican said she would like to move back to Australia but said at the moment there were inadequate provisions for autistic kids in state-funded schools.

"A one size fits all special needs education would not suit kids like mine and their potential could be lost," she said.

Grandparents Can Help Recognize Autism in Children

By [NANCY SHUTE](#)

Posted: April 9, 2010

Grandparents are often the first to realize that a young grandchild has [autism](#), but they often hesitate to say something to the child's parents, which can delay the best available treatment for autism: early intervention. That's the news from a first-ever survey of grandparents of children with autism, conducted by the Interactive Autism Project (IAN), the largest online autism research registry in the world. More than 2,600 grandparents responded to the online survey, which was sponsored by the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore and the advocacy group Autism Speaks.

"I was the first to put a name to his condition," one grandmother reported. "I knew earlier, but [it is] extremely difficult to tell your child that you believe her child has autism." Another grandmother said she noticed signs of autism in her grandson at age 2, but didn't know how to voice her concerns without hurting the boy's parents. "What is wrong with him?" was a third grandmother's initial response to meeting her three and a half month old grandson. "My daughter said nothing was wrong; we were scaring him," she recalled. But her grandson wouldn't tolerate anyone touching him, he screamed constantly, and he wasn't eating well, she said, behavior she didn't feel was typical for a child his age. "Three-month-old babies love all the attention and love they receive," she said.

We parents shouldn't be so quick to brush off suggestions from our parents or in-laws that something doesn't seem quite right with our young children. "Grandparents may have had a lot more experience with toddlers and infants and just know," says Connie Anderson, community scientific liaison for IAN. But any parent—or grandparent— can tell you that family dynamics can make that type of communication painful, if not impossible. "Back when I suspected it, my son got bitter with me, and still is," said one grandmother.

Once a child is diagnosed with autism, grandparents often find themselves trying to help both grandchild and adult child. Fifty-seven percent of those surveyed said they worried about the stresses on their adult child a great deal. Some grandparents quit work to help care for the child, while others said they left retirement and went back to work so a parent could stay home. Some struggled to meet the challenges of caring for a severely disabled grandchild, but many said they treasured their relationship, and confided that the grandchild with autism was their favorite.

"This is the largest set of data on autism and grandparents in the world," says Paul Law, a pediatrician who directs the IAN project (and who has a son who was diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified). "In the future, the IAN project hopes to involve grandparents in its research project on the genetics of autism, which includes 11,000 families." But the project doesn't yet have the resources to include grandparents in its database, which would enrich the research by providing another generation of genetic data. In the meantime, Law says, he hopes that grandparents will encourage their children to get involved in IAN or other autism research projects. Or, they can do what many grandparents are already doing and become advocates for autism awareness through fundraising walks, advocacy, or legislation in their states.

For more on the IAN Project, check out my interview last fall with Paul Law last fall on the project's effort to create a research database of families with children on the autism spectrum disorder, and how that can help speed research on causes and cures.

Clarified on 04/15/10: An earlier version of this story imprecisely described the Interactive Autism Project (IAN). It is the largest online autism research registry in the world.

Earmuffs for children

My name is Toni King and I work for a company called Baby Banz.

Amongst other things we manufacture Earmuffs for children.

Whilst at a recent Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo I was approached by a lady who's son suffers from a type auditory sensitivity where he found loud noises painful and distressing. At the show she purchased a pair of our earmuffs for her son and came back the next day to tell me how much of difference it had made for him.

Whilst I don't profess to know much about Autism at all I do understand that one of the traits can be a sensitivity to noise therefore I wanted to send some information about our product in the hope that we may be able to help other families that are faced with a similar situation. Here are the details:

Banz Earmuffs:

Weighing only 190grams , they are small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. They have a category 4 noise reduction rating and come in five colours - pink, blue, pink camo, green camo and blue camo.

An Extraordinary Gift

In *An Extraordinary Gift: The Australian Asperger's Resource Guide*, Marie Whitrow takes the reader on a journey through the labyrinth of information and misinformation that parents of a child diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder face. This book is the most practical gift you could give anyone who loves or works with a person affected by this disorder. It offers profound insight and knowledge about how to parent and educate children with Asperger's Syndrome in Australia.

Mrs. Whitrow wrote the book to provide information and guidance to families and professionals because there was nothing out there that explained how and where families can access assistance. She states, "It's the book I wanted but didn't exist when my daughter was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome."

Internationally acclaimed writer and academic on autism, Wendy Lawson PhD recommends this book for parents, "Whether you want to dip in and out of it for relevant information or whether you want to use it as a map for ongoing support, this book could become an invaluable tool in raising your AS child."

Mrs Whitrow has a background in early childhood development and counselling. She resides in Bendigo where she works as an advocate in disability services and is the current president of the Bendigo Autism Asperger Group. She is a mother of two girls one of whom lives with Asperger's Syndrome.

Copies of *An Extraordinary Gift* are available from online at www.lulu.com.

It is also available from the Autism Asperger ACT library

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.



Singapore Sling Gala Dinner & Auction
Autism Asperger ACT
Hotel Realm
11 Sept 2010



We are pleased to announce details of our Fundraising Gala Dinner for 2010

This year the event will be larger than ever, with a fantastic theme and plenty of exciting entertainment, dancing and music. Featuring:-

- **Exclusive venue with large capacity and dance floor!**
- **Great entertainment - Annie & the Armadillos, Mandolin Orchestra, and hopefully Chinese Lion Dance (negotiations underway)**
- **MC – Andrea Close from ABC 666**
- **Mario Sanfrancesco will be our Auctioneer**
- **Plenty of fantastic Live and Silent Auction items**

Ticket Prices \$130 (Corporate table \$1500)
 \$100 for members – fantastic value
 \$115 Early Bird for non members (23rd July)

We would love you to:

- **Get your friends together and make sure of your tables now, before we start advertising to non members**
- **Ask your employer to take a corporate table to support our organisation, or suggest they take up one of our sponsorship packages – ask us for more information**
- **Try to source auction items for us so this Dinner becomes our most successful ever. Securing items is a time-consuming business, so the more people that can help us with this the better – ask us for suggestions of who to approach, but your own contacts/employer is a great place to start!**

Please contact Polly or Vicki on 6176 0514
or bm@autismaspergeract.com.au

Booking form on following page

GALA DINNER 2010



AUTISM
ASPERGER ACT

TAX INVOICE & BOOKING FORM

ABN: 77 473 757 782

Please reserve _____ places @ \$ _____ Each Total price \$ _____

Name _____ Phone no: _____

Organisation (if appropriate) _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

PAYMENT BY BANK TRANSFER:

Bank Name: NAB. A/c Name: Autism Asperger ACT Inc. BSB: 082 926 Account No: 86 773 3581
(please include your name & 'GD' reference with transfer)

PAYMENT BY CHEQUE:

Please post your cheque, payable to 'Autism Asperger ACT Inc.' to PO Box 717, MAWSON ACT 2607

PAYMENT BY CREDIT CARD: email admin@autismaspergeract.com.au or ph: 02 6176 0514 with cc details .

Alternatively enter your details below and fax to 02 6286 4475.

Name on Card _____ Card Expiry date _____

Card type (Visa, Mastercard etc) _____ Card Number _____



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



Spectrum Connections: - Circle of Friends

Friendship skills group for Children with ASD

1. Does your child have a diagnosis of Aspergers, or High Functioning Autism?
2. Is your child aged between eight to twelve years?
3. Does your child enjoy playing games and want to make friends?

If you answered **yes** to the above, **you are invited** to Express Interest in your child participating in a new innovated programme designed to encourage and facilitate friendship development for children on the spectrum.

Facilitators: Julia Bowden and Ray Bartlett (Youth Workers, CIT Woden)

Location: Meeting room, Autism Asperger ACT,
The Chifley Community Hub (formerly Chifley Primary)
Corner of Eggleston Crescent and MacLaurin Crescent, Chifley
(Look for the entrance near the big YMCA sign).

This program will focus on improving your child's social self confidence and self esteem to better improve awareness of social interactions for your child's every day social situations.

Each ninety minute weekly session will have a parent/child home task to consolidate the learning experience. Participation will involve a short (pre and post) written questionnaire. The social action evaluation study will be used to measure and improve the programme's effectiveness. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. A report will be made available to parents on their child's progress, on completion of the programme.

- The program will run on Wednesdays from 3 30pm to 5 00pm.
- The sessions run for seven weeks; starting 28th July.
- Expressions of Interest must be received by 14th July

Autism Asperger ACT is part sponsoring this program for members, so the total programme **cost** per child will be **\$105**. That equates to only \$15 per week.

There is a limit of ten students per program. We are seeking Expressions of Interest from families keen to participate in the programme.

For further details please email bm@autismaspergeract.com.au or telephone Autism Asperger ACT on 02 6176 0514.

ASPIA invites you to a one-day workshop on

GIRLS AND WOMEN WITH ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Presented by

Professor Tony Attwood

With contributions from two women with Asperger's Syndrome

Camilla Connolly and Megan Hammond

About the Workshop

The presentation describes how girls and women accommodate and camouflage the characteristics of Asperger's Syndrome with examples of the life experiences of girls and women with Asperger's Syndrome. Strategies are provided to help girls and women with Asperger's Syndrome develop friendships and relationships, cope with bullying and teasing, manage emotions and develop a successful career.

<u>DATE</u>	SATURDAY 2 October 2010
<u>TIME</u>	8.30am – 4.30pm
<u>COST</u>	\$155 per person (including GST) Family Rate - \$135 per person for <u>2 or more</u> registering from the <u>same family group</u>
	Price includes all refreshments and lunch
<u>VENUE</u>	<u>The Fitzroy Room</u> <u>Campbelltown Catholic Club</u> <u>20 – 22 Camden Road, Campbelltown NSW 2560</u>
<u>INFORMATION</u>	Email: info@aspia.org.au Phone: 0432 507 828

Autism Asperger ACT Inc.

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

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

Email: bm@autismaspergeract.com.au

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President	Gay von Ess	autism@gvones.com 0413 776922
Vice President	Bob Buckley	
Minutes Secretary	Chris Oppert	
Secretary	Margaret Froggatt	62318860
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	Corinne Follett	
	Tam Goddard	
	Trish O'Neil	
	Michael Nelson	
	David Weeden	
	Hilary Huggan	

Business Manager: Polly McIntyre; Admin. Assistant: Vicki Wood 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

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