Summer 2024

ENFIELD ADVISORY SERVICE FOR AUTISM

EASA TERMLY NEWSLETTER

for Families, Educational Settings, Professionals and Partners

WELCOME

As we come to the end of another academic year we have been reflecting on all the wonderful things that schools and families have been doing to support autistic children and young people. There have been lots of success stories of children more settled in school, enjoying learning and making friends.

We are also looking towards the Autumn term when we will be launching new groups for parents. Details are all in this newsletter.

Best wishes,

Dr Rachel Walker, Head of Service

In the Spring Term 2024..

157 Parent referrals received

5 Settings requested bespoke training delivery for their staff

43 Individual Case Study Consultations took place

67 Settings had staff attending AET training modules

*"Our mission is to empower the education workforce, parents and autistic young people to **work together**, **share understanding** and **create opportunities** to **enhance the education, wellbeing and success** of all autistic children and young people in Enfield."*

Pokémon club

As part of EASA'S work with Educational settings we offer Case Study Consultations.

We use the Autism Education Trust's 8 Principles of Good Autism Practice as a framework to support and evaluate and also build on the settings existing good practice.

Over the past year we have had a torch-like focus on children's special interests. Under **Principle 6: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic children** schools have had lots of fun developing special interest groups for social time. One particular success has been Pokémon club!

A few of our Enfield schools have really embraced the children's enthusiasm for those little pocket monsters and given children the space to enjoy their interests together. These lunch time clubs bring autistic and non-autistic children together over a shared interest. There are no specific social skills teaching classes here! Just children interacting and enjoying time together. Often the autistic children are valued for their Pokémon knowledge and are asked questions about the Pokémon. This helps build their self-esteem and contribute to their well-being. One teacher recently became emotional when describing the impact on all the children, friendships being formed in different year groups and parents noticing that peers are now greeting their child when out of school.

Latest research suggests moving away from trying to teach social skills based on neurotypical ways of interaction. Special interest groups do work, and we have seen the evidence. These groups often run themselves, one teacher said they sit in the room and work while the children enjoy their time together. I would encourage us all to think about the different ways children play, for example lining up is a great skill! I learnt recently that one young autistic learner I worked with who lined up model animals as a child is now going to university to study environmental science! Let's embrace autistic interests and play and see what amazing things can happen.

Joanne Dudley
Specialist Autism and Communication Practitioner

EASA Conference 2024

Just before Easter, in the run-up to World Autism Acceptance Week, we held our EASA Annual Conference. The theme was **Enabling Environments.**
We were delighted to have the Enfield Mayor, Cllr Suna Hurman, to open the conference for us, talking about her work in supporting autistic people in the community.

We had presentations and workshops led by guest speakers and members of the EASA team, to help us consider how we can make our school, community and home environments more enabling for autistic youngsters.
Dr Helga Abernethy, OT, spoke about factors in adapting the learning environment and showcased the AET's Field Guide, which she co-authored. **Helen Cooke, Clinical Lead Speech and Language Therapist for Autism**, enlightened us on how she gains the perspectives of autistic children and young people so that reasonable adjustments can be made to reflect individual needs and preferences. **Claire Collins, Senior EP for Autism**, guided us through the Tree of Life programme, helping us to appreciate the strengths we have within and around us to help us cope with life's challenges. **Sue Collins, Sensory Consultant**, provided a fun, practical workshop on making sensory resources to support learning and engagement. **Jessica Patel, OT**, led a workshop on the development of self-care skills and the practical considerations needed to support this. **Jo Dudley, Specialist Communication Practitioner**, gave us a presentation on the impact of the environment on regulation and behaviour, adapted from the parents' ATLAS course. **Linda Nevin-Drummond, EASA Advisory Teacher** ran an online workshop for staff and parents looking at sensory issues in Secondary schools and how they could make some adjustments to the environment to make it easier for autistic young people to learn and feel safe.

If you missed our conference and you are interested in any of the talks, workshops or information mentioned, please get in touch.

A thoroughly enjoyable conference with lots of ideas and information to take back to school to further enhance understanding and provision.

Professional Feedback

Really thankful for all the info and tips from today's conference on Autism.

Parent Feedback

Thank you it was very powerful as both a leader over two schools but also as a parent of an autistic child.

Professional Feedback

Dr Rachel Walker
Head of Service

International Women's Day

We were delighted to present at Enfield Council's International Women's Day Conference on the theme of **Inclusion**. Rachel Walker, Jo Dudley and Jessica Patel gave a talk on **inclusion and wellbeing for autistic women in the workplace** and inspired the audience to think about adaptations to the work environment and working practices to support neurodivergent colleagues to succeed and feel included.

We were grateful to the young autistic adults from local charities One-to-One and ENAS for all their helpful suggestions on things that would make working life better for them, which we shared as part of our talk.

Cuppa and Chat Marketplace

At a recent EASA Cuppa and Chat session we were thrilled to be joined by other services to promote what they could offer to support our EASA families. We had presentations from:

- **Our Voice**, a parent–led organisation working with parents and carers, as well as the statutory and voluntary sectors, to improve services for children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs in the borough of Enfield.

- **NHS Talking Therapies for Enfield and Barnet,** who work with young people 16+ and adults, providing a confidential and free service to support anyone who is experiencing problems with their mood, feeling stressed, unhappy or unsatisfied with how their life is going.

- **One-to-One Enfield**, who support autistic adults and those with learning difficulties to live better lives, have a voice and be included with the community. They offer various activities and programmes.

Following the presentations, our EASA families had the opportunity to chat with these services and access advice for their child/ren or themselves. Families commented that they really appreciated the opportunity to find out more.

Don't forget to check our website to find out about future Cuppa and Chat sessions

Suzanne Goddard

Deputy Head of Service & Early Years Phase Leader

Upcoming Workshops for Parents on Supporting Childrens Self-Care

EASA is excited to announce a new self-care workshop course for parents, designed to help you support your child in essential daily activities. This five-part series will cover key areas including toileting, dressing, eating, and grooming. Our expert team, consisting of Occupational Therapist Jessica Patel and Parent Support Advisors Jacky Stevenson and Marsha Walton, will lead these workshops.

For more information and to book your place, please visit the Events & Training section on our website. We look forward to helping you enhance your child's self-care skills.

Young Person 16+ Self Referral Form

For young people aged 18 – 25yrs, we now have a self-referral form on our website.
Young autistic people and their peers can get in touch with us to seek advice or support.

We are happy to engage with young people by phone, email or text message and can tell you about other local services who may be able to help.

You can find this form in the Children and Young People's tab on our website.

Summer Holidays Playground Sessions

EASA families have again this year been invited to access the playground at Russet House School during August.

The playground will be open to EASA families on **8th and 15th August**.

The EASA team will also be providing cold refreshments for families and an opportunity to chat with the EASA team and access any advice. This will be available between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m.

On arrival, you will need to sign in at the main reception and complete a playground agreement form. You and your child/ren will then enter the playground from the car park via the fire exit gates; the gates will remain unlocked and parents will need to supervise their child/ren to ensure they remain safe and in the playground for all the time that you are on the school site. (staff will not be available to look after the children.) Toilets will be available for children and adults to use; these can be accessed from the playground. First Aiders are on site if needed. Please come along, bring a picnic if you would like to and enjoy the time. Please ensure to take any rubbish with you at the end. We hope for good weather!

Registration open - Visit our website to book your place.

Photos from last year's events

Family Enablement Program:
(Abridged SAFE: Systemic Autism Related Family Enabling)

What is on offer: A 6-week family enablement program is being piloted to provide parents/carers of autistic children and young people an opportunity to reflect on family life in order to build on their resources and strengths to overcome barriers, cope with challenges and improve wellbeing for family members. The program draws upon the SAFE Model – Systemic Autism Related Family Enablement Program by Dallos and McKenzie (2023) and involves reflecting on family relationships using a range of techniques and in a non-judgmental manner to enhance well being and bring about positive change.
Led by: Members of the EASA team including Claire Collins (Educational Psychologist and Family Therapy Practitioner), Marsha Walton and Jacky Stevenson (Parent Support Advisors) will lead the program.
When: Tuesdays 10.00am -12.30pm on November 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th & December 3rd, 10th 2024
Where: EASA, Bell Lane, Enfield, EN3 5PA
Format: Small group (6 maximum) sessions for parents/carers of children/young people. Attending all 6 sessions is important as the learning is cumulative. A combination of power point presentations and facilitated group discussions will take place with handouts provided where appropriate.
Pre-session meeting: Each family will be offered a pre-session consultation meeting prior to the program starting (dates and times to be arranged), where we will explain the nature of the program and explore hopes and concerns; as well as what is working well for families.
Follow up: A review meeting will take place on Tuesday 14th January 2025 to check in with the group and reflect on the impact of the program.
Sign up: Please email us at admin@enfieldasa.org.uk for expressions of interest about the program and we will be in touch.

EASA Head of Service Receives an Enfield Achievement Award

Earlier this year, Dr Rachel Walker, our Head of Service, was presented with an Enfield Achievement Award by Peter Nathan, Director of Education, having been nominated by local authority colleagues.
The award was given in recognition of the strategic and collaborative approach Rachel has brought to autism support and education in the borough.
Rachel's work has also been recognised nationally through her partnership with the Autism Education Trust.

Enfield Autism Strategy Film

A filming session with members of One-to-One and ENAS

The EASA and Educational Psychology Teams have been working collaboratively with local partners, services and Footpath Films to create a short film about autism in Enfield. The film showcases the priority areas that are in the Local Authority's All-Age Autism Strategy:

- *Celebrating and valuing autistic people*
- *Providing needs-based support*
- *Enabling fair access to education*
- *Supporting more autistic young people into employment*
- *Recognising and combating isolation and loneliness*
- *Providing inclusive mental health support*
- *Improving support in the criminal and youth justice system*

See the EASA website to watch the film.

What's coming up in Autumn Term 2024

Sessions for Parents and Carers

Cuppa and Chats:
For those with Early Years and Primary-aged children: 12th September, 10th October, 14th November, 12th December *(joint age-phases)*

For those with Secondary and Post-16 aged Children &Young People: 19th September, 17th October, 21st November, 12th December *(joint age-phases)*
Russet House School, Autumn Close, from 9:30am - 11am.

Time to Play (children 18 months and 3 years 6 months):
5th September, 3rd October, 7th November, 5th December

Supporting Self-Care Workshops (children under 12):
Starts - Wednesday 25th September 10:00am-12:00pm

Family Enablement Program:
(Abridged SAFE: Systemic Autism Related Family Enabling)
Starting Tuesday 5th November
Please email us to express your interest.

Therapeutic Sessions for Children and Young People

Therapeutic Groups for Children aged 11-15:

- PEERS (abridged)
- Tree of Life

7 week workshops starts Tuesday 5th November
4.15pm-5.15pm

AET Training

Training for Staff in Educational Settings:
AET Modules

- Good Autism Practice
- Making Sense of Autism
- Developing Toileting
- Understanding Anxiety

Leadership Modules:

- Understanding Good Autism Practice and the AET Frameworks for Leaders
- Leadership, Inclusion and Structural Reasonable Adjustments

Keep checking our website for dates and to register your place.

Post - Tag - Share

We love hearing how our service has impacted the community from small to big changes! So we invite you to tag EASA and share social media posts so we can all reach the wider community.

If you're not following us already, you can search our social media handles to find us on Facebook and X.

Enfield Advisory Service for Autism @EnfieldASA

Coffee Mornings in Schools

EASA continues to be invited to schools in the borough to present at their coffee mornings. These are a great opportunity for community building. All parents can be invited, giving autism families a chance to get together as well as helping others learn more about autism and creating a stronger autism friendly community.

If you would like us to attend a Coffee Morning at your school please email admin@enfieldasa.org.uk

Let EASA hear your thoughts!

Have you worked with EASA in the last year?
Attended a Cuppa & Chat session or had AET training?
Have you had a call or meeting with a member of the team?

Then we would love to hear from you!

We always like to receive feedback from parents and professionals, as we believe this contributes to developing and improving our services further.
Please take a minute to scan the QR code below to leave us a google review.

If you can't find the help you need or if you would like more information on our services, please get in touch.

Enfield Advisory Service for Autism
Bell Lane, Enfield, EN3 5PA
07921 298 440
admin@enfieldasa.org.uk
www.enfieldasa.org.uk