

I'M A PARENT, GET ME OUT OF HERE!

THE WEEKLY SCHOOL CLOSURE NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS/CARERS OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

SUMMER BUMPER ISSUE!



This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

The Summer holidays are almost upon us and with everyone spending so much time at home lately we know that keeping everyone entertained for another six weeks will have its challenges. We've put together a bumper summer newsletter to try to help. There are some hints and tips for organising the time, some ideas for indoor and outdoor activities, strategies for getting ready to go back to school and of course something to help you unwind and relax.

Although we are enjoying a few more freedoms and some businesses are open again, many of the planned events for the summer won't be going ahead. It is still important to socially distance and avoid the crowds but here we have put together a list of local attractions that are set to open. Many attractions will be open with different rules and/or procedures. Some attractions require you to book into a particular time slot, wear masks in certain areas and/or follow a particular route. You might need to go through these with your child/young person to prepare them for this before you go. Remember, a person is not required to wear a mask if it will cause distress for them to do so. The National Autistic Society have free downloadable cards that you can print that help explain to people that you or your child/young person might need some extra support. These are available for free download here: <https://www.autism.org.uk>

Peterborough Museum https://vivacity.org/heritage-venues/peterborough-museum-art-gallery/	Free
Ferry Meadows https://www.nenepark.org.uk/about-us/locations/ferry-meadows	Free (Pay for Parking)
Sacrewell Farm https://www.sacrewell.org.uk	Adults (13+): £5 Children (2-12): £3.50
Burghley House and Garden of Surprises (Stamford) https://www.burghley.co.uk/	Much of the Estate is Free Garden of Surprises: Adults: £9.50 Children (3-15): £5.50
Fineshades Wood https://www.forestryengland.uk/fineshade-wood	Free (Pay for Parking)
Barnwell Park https://www.northamptonshireparks.co.uk/barnwell-country-park/	Free (Pay for Parking)
Rutland Water https://anglianwaterparks.co.uk/rutland-water	Free (Pay for Parking)
Hammerton Zoo Park	Adult: £15 Child (3-12): £10

Managing the holidays!

Claire Nunn – Autism Advisory Teacher Service Manager

A few years ago, just as the holidays finished and I was thinking to myself how many lovely things I had managed to do with my children, they reeled off a whole list of things they wanted to do but we hadn't done. As you can imagine this made me feel really guilty! So just before the next holiday I presented them with a jam jar and some post it notes and felt tips. I gave myself a different coloured pack of post it notes. I explained the yellow post it notes were for the things we had to do that holiday – the dentist, haircuts, the boiler service and these had set days so I couldn't move them - the non-negotiables. I pinned to the fridge a very simple week planner with the days of the week on. Then I put my yellow post it notes (the non-negotiables) onto it. This meant that the children could see which days and times of the week were free for other things. The other jobs we had to get done – school shoes, food shopping etc might be negotiable in terms of days but they still had to be done. These exciting jobs I wrote on the same coloured post it notes as I gave them. I explained that we could all put in the same number of post it notes into the jam jar so it was fair. I think I decided 3 each for the week I didn't want to be shattered by the end of the week!

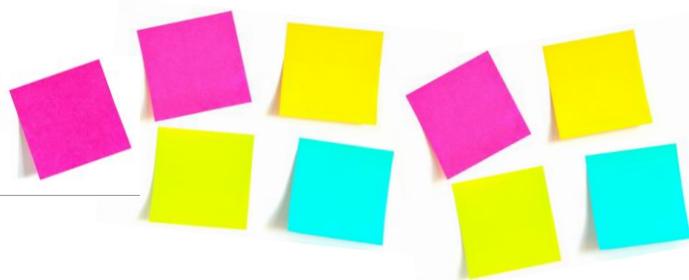


To my surprise they all went very quiet, wrote their ideas on the post it notes and I wrote mine. We mixed them around and then one at a time they pulled them out from the jar. We looked at them and then gave them a slot on our week planner. I hadn't thought of setting any limits around what they could ask for and at this point I did have a panic! So, I would set limits in terms of money or anything else beforehand. I was amazed with what they came up with – eating pizza, a pyjama day, making play dough, shaving foam on the kitchen table, playing monopoly, going to Ferry Meadows, making mocktails, taking a friend's dog for a walk, a water fight and sleeping out in the garden. Thankfully nothing expensive or complicated. Seeing their own ideas across the week in their different coloured writing helped them understand that everyone had different things they wanted to do and that everyone's ideas for activities were important.



This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND.

Once all the activities were on the fridge my children then began talking about doing swaps on the day's activities and making sure that no one got all their activities done on the first day or so. Because it was visual, they could see to rearrange the week to make it fairer. If it rained, I could move the post it notes as appropriate and they found it easier to accept a change of activity as it just moved on the planner. We got to the end of the holiday with everyone feeling much happier that they had all done what they wanted, and I felt more relaxed as generally they had been calmer knowing what was happening and we got the jobs done too.



At the moment, we are all having to spend more time together but when was the last time many of us freed ourselves from doing other 'jobs' to give our full attention to our children and what they want to do, not need to do? I know many of you will have been 'teaching' your children this term alongside parenting and maybe working from home too. So, I think it is more important that we switch off from the other 'roles' and have some fun, 'quality time' with our children this summer. Using a simple week planner and post-its can help you and your family plan for the summer weeks. Give it a go and see.....

Summer Holiday Planner

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

Good to know...

Clarks shoe fitting...

Clarks are happy to arrange an Autism Friendly shoe fitting. Contact the manager, Clare, on 01733 348995 to book an appointment.

M&S Easy Dressing Uniform Range...

Designed to be soft on the skin, with elasticated waistbands, this uniform range is well suited to children with sensitivities to certain fabrics. Find it [here](#).

CEA Card...

For children who are 8 years of age or older and are eligible can apply for a CEA card which entitles them to be accompanied by an adult to a cinema for free. More details [here](#).

Autism Friendly Screenings....

On the second Sunday of every month Showcase Cinemas hold sensory sensitive screenings. There is soft lighting in the auditorium, lowered film volume and no trailers. More details [here](#).

Face Masks...

Although Masks are compulsory in shops, supermarkets and on public transport, young children and people who may become distressed as a result of wearing one are exempt. A social explanation to support your child/young person to wear a mask or to explain why others are wearing a mask can be found [here](#). You can download the National Autistic Society Autism card [here](#).

Great Ideas for the Great Outdoors



Hopefully, the summer will bring us some good weather. Getting outdoors can have a positive affect on our wellbeing so even if your child/young person prefers the indoors, maybe you can tempt them out with one of our outdoor activity ideas. There should be something for everyone to have fun, young and old!

Find some flat stones on your walk and then come home and decorate or paint them.



Play frisbee in the park



Outdoor skipping with a large rope,

Play hop scotch



Look at the clouds and imagine what picture you can see – an animal, face, angel.

3

Play the 3 things gameGo for a walk and then one person decides when to stop still and listen for 3 things that they can hear, someone else has to say 3 things that they can see, someone else 3 things that they can touch.

Draw on paving with coloured chalks



Toast marshmallows



Build a den

Camp overnight in the garden.



Create a treasure hunt with a map and clues and of course treasure!



Make an obstacle course in the garden/park. Time who can get round the quickest

Ideas for Rainy Day



Let's all hope the weather plays ball during the summer break and we can get outside and enjoy some fresh air and exercise, but it may be that some days we need to take a rain check. So we've included some suggested indoor activities from the AATS team.

BOARD GAMES

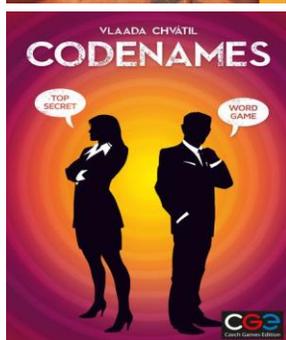
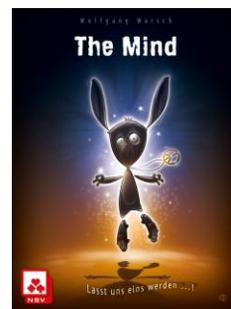
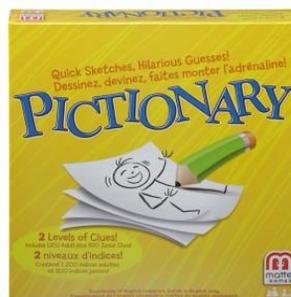
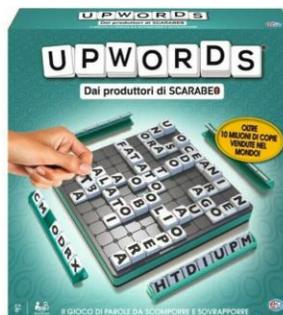
Board games are becoming increasingly popular again. Games are fun but they can also develop a lot of other core skills such as concentration, turn taking, winning and losing (with good grace is a bonus!) and flexible thinking. Here are some recommendations from AATS team:

Key Stage 1: Guess Who? Uno, Junior scrabble

Key Stage 2: Top Trumps, Dobble, Junior Scrabble, Upwords, Downfall, Camel Up, The Mind, Exploding kittens (make sure it is NOT the not safe for work edition, Bananagrams, The Mind,

Secondary: Pandemic, Codenames, Sushi Go! Colour Brain, Settlers of Catan,

Low Cost: Beetle Drive, (pen, paper, dice), battleships, (pen and paper) Call my Bluff (pen, slips of paper and dictionary) – look up a word in the dictionary and get everyone to make up their own definition and then guess which is correct), Charades (pen, slips of paper) – everyone thinks of 5 celebrities, writes the names on individual pieces of paper. Put then altogether in a pot and one person has a minute to describe/act out as many as they can in the time.



If your child is feeling really creative, they could **make their own**. Top trumps for example, is brilliant for using a child's special interest.

MORE INDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Make an **indoor den**.
- **Race** and time who can run up the stairs the quickest five times and try and beat your time each day.
- Try simple **chemistry experiments** 3plearning.com (It's not as dodgy as it sounds!). Make things like a lolly fountain, rubber egg, bath bombs with common household items.
- **Jigsaws** – cheap from charity shops (I'd wipe down the box first) or you can have your own photos made into a jigsaw. Ravensburger make them from 49 pieces up to 2000!
- Make a **stress toy**. spruce crafts have a very simple version: you need a small round balloon, a funnel, corn starch, scissors and a permanent marker to decorate (optional).

Getting Ready to go Back to School

Some hints and tips to support the transition back to school after a long break.

This Photo by Unknown author is licensed under CC BY.

Rob Emery – Autism Advisory Teacher Service

Some pupils haven't been back to school since the lockdown began in March and the transition back into school might be more problematic than usual. Schools are aware of this and emotional wellbeing and mental health have been prioritised for pupils over the summer and once they return. Here we will look at 5 strategies that might support your child/young person to prepare for school.

1 Re-set the body clock

After so long without a set routine it might be necessary to begin to train the body to fit in with school routines again. This means fixing sleep patterns so that the body begins to get used to the waking hours of the school day. It also means eating at set times and limiting snacks to fit in with the school day.

2 Ease the Anxieties

Try to make the unpredictable as predictable as possible. Understandably, some pupils will have a lot of anxieties around the return to school. A lot of these anxieties will centre around the unknowns, particularly if your child/young person is transitioning to a different school. Visit the school website, look at the pictures of the school to make it more familiar. Many schools have produced virtual tours, pupil guides and other resources which can help to familiarise pupils with what to expect. A good resource to use can be the 'big world, my world' resource that helps to centre attention on what is controllable. This can be found [here](#) and can be adapted for transitions.

3 Look the Part

Try uniform on in plenty of time. This is especially helpful for children/young people with sensory processing difficulties. It may take time to get used to new textures/items of clothing including shoes. You want to avoid a situation where the uniform adds to the anxieties that they are feeling already. Information about shoe fitting and Autism-friendly uniform is on page 3.

4 3...2...1...Countdown

A countdown can help prepare some children/young people for their return to school. For older children this might be crossing the days off a calendar or counting down numbers. Younger children might need a less abstract visual aid such as a photo of them moving along a track towards a photo of the school.

5 Practice Skills

Try to promote your child/young person's independence. If your child is going to primary school for the first time, help them to practice skills that they will need (putting their own coat on, changing into PE kit, eating more independently..etc). Pupils starting secondary will need personal organisation skills. They can practice these skills by helping with creating the shopping list or getting things ready for a day out.

Remember, schools are putting an emphasis on emotional health and wellbeing and are considering the September transitions carefully. If you have any concerns then contact the school.

SOMETHING FOR ME

Eat

Easy Scones with Jam and clotted Cream

- 50g Butter (unsalted)
- 200g Self-raising white flour
- 1 tbsp White caster sugar
- 1 pinch Salt
- 125ml Milk (whole)

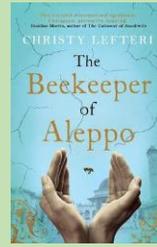
Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Rub the butter into the flour, until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar and salt. Make a well in the centre of the mix and stir in the milk. Stir until the mixture is even and the dough comes together. Turn out onto a floured surface and shape into a rough square about 3 - 4 cm thick. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet. Brush all over with milk and score into 9 rough squares. Bake for 15 minutes until golden and cooked through.

Read

The Beekeeper of Aleppo



"The Beekeeper of Aleppo" by Christy Lefteri is a thought-provoking book. It is beautifully written with characters that are easy to identify with, fortunately their circumstances are not. It is a book of hope, courage and resilience but also challenged my perceptions as it gave a genuine insight into the complexities of life as a refugee and the traumas that many live through. It is a challenging read at times but is beautifully written, very believable and presents its message poignantly.

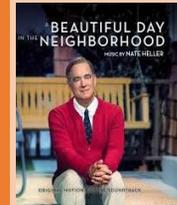
Watch

Eurovision

This uplifting film follows two Icelandic singers (Will Ferrell and Rachel McAdams)



as they are given the chance to represent their country at the Eurovision Song Contest.



A Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood

A biographical drama starring

Tom Hanks as children's TV icon, Fred Rogers, and his relationship with a troubled journalist played by Matthew Rhys.

Useful contacts

Young Minds Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544 free number. Monday – Friday 9.30 -4.00pm Email www.youngminds.org.uk

Barnardos project: "see, hear, respond" supporting children and young people experiencing an adverse reaction to Covid 19 0800 157 7015

Partnership for Children helpline for anyone parenting a child 0808 800 2222 familylives.org.uk

Please note that the AATS help line and parent consultation will stop during the summer holidays and restart in September.

Check out our other Summer newsletters:

Cosy Crew – A newsletter for Primary Aged Children with Autism.

Lockdown Lift Up – A newsletter for teenagers and young people with Autism.

Plus, all of the past issues and other resources are available from our [Local Offer Page](#).

Newsletter News

We hope you have enjoyed our weekly newsletters and found them helpful. As a team we have appreciated your feedback and intend to continue with a half termly edition. During the summer, we will be considering how we can support our children, young people and families as they return to school. As a service working in multiple settings, our work may continue to be different from our usual working practices in the Autumn term, as we follow government guidance to ensure everyone's safety. Please contact us by email or phone if you have any queries. Staff will be taking leave over the holidays but Jill Groutage and myself will be checking in periodically. Take care everyone and have a good summer.

Claire Nunn, Manager Autism Advisory Teacher Service

SENandInclusion@Peterborough.gov.uk