MAKING IT A SUCCESS:

Practical Strategies for Home and School for an Autism Spectrum Disorder

It takes a COMMUNITY to raise a child with an ASD.

I would like to thank everyone reading this Newsletter for taking time to understand and support a child or person with an ASD. I recently heard the saying 'it takes a village to raise a child' and I thought this is so true of all children but particularly a child with an ASD. My Newsletter is called Making it a Success and we all play an important part in this success. I hope you enjoy this Newsletter and find helpful hints or ideas to help a child or person with an ASD or support their family. ENJOY!

WHAT is NEW! In this Newsletter I will discuss some great ideas:

1. Portable Schedules: How to manage time on tasks, routines and more;
2. Girls with an ASD;   3. Tips for Organisation;   4. New: Fidget Dinosaurs great for kids who love Blu-Tac   5. Fasteners (Velcro) and more.
We have not been able to fit all the information into this edition, so please visit my website for more resources, books, sensory toys and location of workshops in Term 3 and 4. www.suelarkey.com
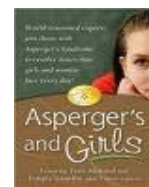

NEW PORTABLE SCHEDULE with Digital Timer!
Links Visual Schedules (WHAT to do) to Timeframes (HOW long or when)

This is the first time I have seen something useful that links visual schedules with a timeframe, and is small enough for individual children. I am always looking for new ways to help children with timeframes. It is great to let the child know what is going to happen (visual schedule) but the missing piece has always been HOW LONG or when these activities will happen. Managing the child's expectation just got easier with these Portable Schedules as you can incorporate both. Many of you are using the Time Timers and getting fantastic results, some schools now have them in every classroom. This new Portable Schedule can be used in conjunction with your Time Timer or on its own.

WHAT IS IT? It is actually called "*mark-my-time digital bookmark*", and is meant for reading programmes. BUT people are getting great results by turning these into "PORTABLE SCHEDULES" I think these are just FANTASTIC to use for students with an ASD. For example: routines, concept of time, pre-warn how long until finish, self monitor and more! **See page 3 for more ideas**

HOW TO USE: Just attach Loop Fasteners (Velcro) strip to bookmark. Create your schedule by making a range of visuals (photos, pictures, words) and put Hook Fastener on back of visuals. Now use your digital display at the top of the bookmark /schedule to count UP or DOWN to time each activity/task.

PORTABLE SCHEDULE: **JUST $15**, they count UP and DOWN and have a clock.
STARTER PACK SPECIAL: $20 Portable Schedule PLUS 40 Dot Loop & Hook Fastener to get you started with your schedules.

Sue Larkey
Autism Consultant

Training Days
See page 12 for details

GREAT RESOURCE

Asperger's & Girls $35 see page 9

Inside this Issue

Ideas to Help with Organisation and Routines

<u>People with an ASD often have difficulty with organisation:</u>

Some examples of this could be:

- Forgetting or losing things.
- Difficulty moving from one activity to the next.
- Asking constant questions about when activities are going to occur.
- Difficulty making choices.
- Difficulty starting activities, for example a student asked to write a story may have difficulty organising: pen, book, place to sit (table/chair)…. then trying to decide what to write about.

SUCCESSUL STRATEGIES for Classroom Routines

- ✓ Set up routines: always sit in the same seat.
- ✓ Have pen/pencil attached on string to table (if they constantly want to sharpen pencil have set times in day when they can sharpen OR have a box all sharpened at the start of the day).
- ✓ Have an outline/template on table of where to put book, pencils, etc.
- ✓ Instead of going to a locker/tote box have all their books at their table (this can be in book boxes which stand up or bag on back of chair).
- ✓ Pencil case has list of what to have inside and student must check before leaving classroom (or you can use pictures cut out of catalogues on a card, covered in contact).
- ✓ Minimise number of folders/books/stationary.
- ✓ Use Diary's, Calendars, and Notes to help remember.

> **Many of us rely on visuals to help us: To do Lists, Diary, Sticky Notes, Calendars**

SUCCESSUL STRATEGIES for Work Activities

- ✓ Have a Schedule of sequence of activities to be completed. This can be pictures, written word etc.
- ✓ Let the student tick off/ turn over/ put completed items in box etc.
- ✓ Break activities down into small, manageable tasks.
- ✓ Minimise organisation requirements: If your aim is for the student to sit and complete a written task have everything set up so they can get straight to work (i.e.: book already ruled up, pencil on table etc). Some students spend SO long getting organised they never get any work completed.

More ideas in my books: 'The Teacher Assistants Big Red Book of Idea', 'Making it a Success' and 'The Essential Guide to Secondary School' see Resource Insert for more information.

Fast Grip® Hook and Loop Fasteners (also commonly known as Velcro) are an essential resource for EVERY child with an ASD. Children with fine motor difficulties find hook and loop fasteners quick and easy to use – making attaching visuals to calendars, schedule boards, sentence makers, etc stress free.
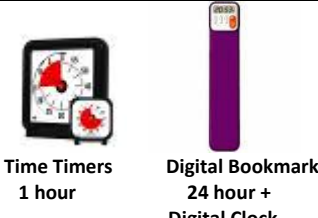
Fast Grip® Hook and Loop Fasteners are super strong, high quality, 5 second fastener, and re-useable.

To help you set up your visuals/schedules we now have a range of self-adhesive Fast Grip® Hook and Loop Fasteners available. Order page 7.

15mm white dots	Large Pack - $15. Includes 60 pairs of 15mm hook and loop dots. CODE Q
	Small Pack - $10. Includes 30 pairs of 15mm hook and loop dots. CODE S
22mm white dots	Large Pack - $15. Includes 60 pairs of 22mm hook and loop dots. CODE R
	Small Pack - $10. Includes 30 pairs of 22mm hook and loop dots. CODE T
White strips	Large Pack - $15. Includes 2 metres of hook and loop strips. CODE P
	Small Pack - $10. Includes 1 metre of hook and loop strips. CODE U ORDER FORM 7

TIMERS + SCHEDULES = SUCCESS

TIMERS (When, How long)	+	SCHEDULES (What)	= SUCCESS (Understanding)

Time Timers 1 hour — Digital Bookmark 24 hour + Digital Clock

ADD Visuals Words Objects etc

Consistency
Routines
Structure
Positive Behaviour

Timers

✓ Tell the child **HOW** long and **WHEN** they are going to have to do an activity.
✓ Timers allow us to pre-warn: It answers many of the questions these children have: What is happening?, What order?, What time?, What is next?, How long?

Schedules/To Do Lists/Routines are a vital tool for children with an ASD

✓ Many children have difficulties accepting change and transition from one thing to another – a schedule helps them see and understand what is going to happen next.
✓ Schedules also help people to organise themselves and to plan ahead.

Ideas to try using: Schedules + Timers = Success

1. Break tasks down into small achievable tasks, with realistic timeframes. Use digital timer on Portable Schedule to count UP or DOWN. For example: Time for school = clean teeth, toilet, bag, hat.
2. Help move from one activity to the next. For example: Mat Time, Reading, Recess.
3. Finish. Letting a child know how long to go and what is next.
4. Independence. Allow students to self monitor and move from one task to another without prompts.
5. Toilet Timing! You all know I am a BIG fan of toilet timing, you can now actually put the visuals for toilet on the Portable Schedule: Toilet, Flush, Wash Hands, Dry hands and re-set for 1 hour or more!
   At Home
6. Set 10 minutes to get dressed – attach relevant clothing visuals to Schedule.
7. Morning Routine – Breakfast, TV, Get Dressed.
8. 5 minutes doing Lego and then Mum will be ready.
   At School
9. 10 minutes work, 5 minute break, 10 minutes work etc.
10. How long will it take to write x sentences or how many words can you write in x time. You can use this idea for reading, maths, worksheets etc.
11. Set up for Recess/Lunch with a schedule of activities.
12. 20 Minutes for Assembly put visuals on strip for song, awards etc.

Secondary: The new Portable Schedules are perfect as they are a bookmark, they are nice and discreet for students to keep track of time of class, to complete tasks, prepare for class bells to ring etc.

Great Websites to download free visuals and lots of ideas:
These show everything from Schedules to Classroom Layouts
www.sparklebox.co.uk   www.card.ufl.edu   www.dotolearn.com   www.icontalk.com

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I think **Pics for PECS** is the best value for icons/visuals. The 2000 symbols is more than enough to set up your classroom, pre-school or home. For $55 it is a great resource and saves hours of searching on the internet or trying to draw your own pictures.

Just $55

Using Communication to Manage Behaviour
Adapted from "Practical Communication Programmes" by Jo Adkins & Sue Larkey

More often than not, negative behaviour is a consequence of communication frustrations rather than a consequence of the disability, and by implementing simple communication strategies many behavioural issues can be significantly reduced.

Negative behaviours are often linked to a child's lack of communication skills. It creates a high level of frustration for these children which in turn creates negative behaviour. You need to put communication aids in place to reduce the frustration. Imagine not being able to tell people what you want to eat, drink, activity you want to undertake! At first you may need to use communication temptations to encourage children to communicate. For example: putting their favourite activity out of reach and prompting them to point to activity to request. At first they may find this

very frustrating however if you create lots of positive opportunities to communicate they will link pointing with getting their favourite activity. Creating communication enriched environments will reduce a child's frustrations and thus help manage behaviour.

In my new book "*Practical Communication Programmes*" I explain a number of ways of using communication to manage behaviour, particularly by reducing a child's frustration due to limited communication skills. One way of doing this is teaching the child about emotions and helping them to understand their own feelings, and be able to communicate these feelings.

Feelings/Emotions
An excerpt from "Practical Communication Programmes" by Jo Adkins & Sue Larkey

As Temple Grandin so beautifully put it **"*It is a mistake to assume that people with autism have no emotions. I definitely have emotions.*"** (Quill et al, 1995).
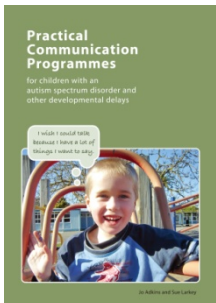
The issue is not that children with an autism spectrum disorder DON'T have feelings or emotions – it's that they don't always understand their feelings or emotions and often don't have strategies to deal with them. Teaching them to understand how they are feeling is a very useful tool in helping them to manage their own behaviour. Feelings of frustration or anxiety can very quickly escalate into major meltdowns but with an emotional toolbox children can learn to manage these feelings before they reach boiling point.

An emotional thermometer can be used for the child to indicate how they are feeling. Emotional thermometers as shown opposite can be used to help
teach emotions in themselves and others. For example, do a fun activity
and point to excited or happy or get the child to circle or point to where they are feeling on the scale. Feelings is a complicated area for children with an autism spectrum disorder so you may need to use a range of strategies to teach.

See *Practical Communication Programmes* for more ideas
and strategies on using communication to manage behaviour
and for a full range of Boardmaker emotion symbols!
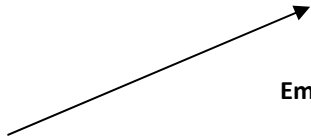
Emot

	10	Explosive
	9	Frustrated
	8	Angry
	7	Cross
	6	Anxious/ worried
	5	Confused
	4	Okay
	3	Calm
	2	Happy
	1	Excited

GIRLS with an ASD

Girls with an ASD are often undiagnosed, because original diagnostic criteria have a boy bias. The criteria were created by actually examining mainly boys, and the girls can be very different. I think we all know 'neuro – typical' boys and girls are very different in their social, communication and behavior. There are many characteristics that are very similar to boys with an ASD but I thought I would list the main differences to girls with an ASD.
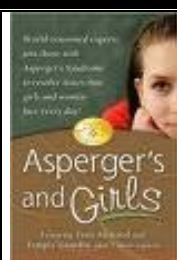
Ten Ways Girls with an ASD differ to Boys with an ASD

1. Their special interests are usually animals, music, art, literature.
2. They often have a very good imagination which includes imaginary friends, games, being animals or taking on persona of other girls.
3. They often see speech therapists for their speech and may be diagnosed with specific language disorders however there is something different about this girl no one can quite put their finger on.
4. They often play with older children or much younger children. This play is sometimes unusual for example 'Mums and Dads' but she will want to play the same role and game every time. She usually wants to be the pet or baby, whereas most girls want to be the Mum or Dad.
5. They often have hyperlexia – the ability to read but comprehension does not always match their reading skills. They are often the class book worm or write stories but they write the same story over and over changing a few characters. Many have a special interest in literature.
6. They have unusual sensory processing, like the boys, however bigger fluctuations often going from one extreme to the other.
7. They get anxious like boys, however their anxiety is rarely physical or disruptive. In fact many have great coping mechanisms at school however the family see a very different child at home where the anxiety can explode.
8. Often their difficulties with social skills are called 'shy', 'quiet', 'solitary'.
9. They often like to organize and arrange objects. I watched one little girl spend hours seemingly playing "My Little Ponies" however on closer examination she was just arranging and re-arranging the horses over and over.
10. The main difference is there are MANY more undiagnosed girls/women than boys/men. Currently we only diagnose 1 girl to 7 boys. In the future it is thought by many psychologists the ratio could be more like 5 to 7 as we become more aware of this group.

If you know someone who fits this list, they will need many of the same strategies for boys.
*** IMPORTANT NOTE: Of course these are generalisations and I would encourage you to read more.
Many boys also have the above however they usually get diagnosed with an ASD.**

Why and How to Use Visuals

Adapted from "The Early Years" by Sue Larkey & Gay von Ess

Why?	How to promote
• Most children with an autism spectrum disorder have strengths in visual areas compared to other areas. • Up to 80% of families have their child's (with autism spectrum disorder) hearing test first because of delays in language development. Children with an ASD can hear but they can't process verbal language. • A symbol or picture remains constant long after the word or sign has been completed. • People with autism tell us language is confusing. Temple Grandin, a well-known American with autism reports "I think in pictures." She has also written a book by the same name. • Sensory processing difficulties are part of autism spectrum disorder so it makes sense to support one sensory input system (i.e. hearing) with another – sight. ***REMEMBER:*** • *Visuals need to be paired with looking at other person to be useful communication.* • *All visuals should be accompanied by speech.* • *Keep visuals in place even after your child has learnt to talk.*	• Visuals include: real objects, parts of objects or remnants (e.g. empty packet of sultanas); photographs of the actual object, photographs of similar objects, drawings, computer generated symbols, (e.g. Boardmaker, Pics for PECS Symbols – see Resource Insert) and words. Even the McDonalds' golden arches are a visual, and one that every child seems to know! • Your child's age and ability will be the determining factor when deciding what type of visual support to use. Generally very young children and those who have additional difficulties need visuals that most closely resemble the actual object. These children may respond best when you show them the car keys rather than a Boardmaker symbol of a car. As it is easier to use photos or Boardmaker symbols than carry round bags of objects. Professionals usually will trial photos or Boardmaker with your child. However, if they don't have meaning for your child at this point remnants or objects are fine. • Always couple visuals with speech. They are an aid to help you understand spoken language, not a substitute. • Be eclectic. You do not need to only use one type of visual. You can still use objects even if your child recognises Boardmaker symbols. • Always print the name of the visual in the bottom left hand corner in lower case letters. This will ensure that everyone calls the object the same thing (is it a mug or a cup?) and as words are only another visual code your child might crack this code as well! • To be valuable visuals must be accessible. Keep them near where you are likely to use them – on the fridge or someone else handy in the kitchen; in the bathroom; next to the nappy changing area; near the front door etc. Sticking the finish symbol on the door frame in every room means one is always available. Put a few key symbols on your key ring (finish, toilet, car, home etc.). • Wait! Like all communication you need to allow child time to process and point. • Persevere. Your child may need many trials before he makes the connection between the visual and the real object. • Speak to your speech pathologist about introducing your child to PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System).

For more information on Visuals see Resources Insert: Making it a Success, Practical Communication Programmes, Visual Learning or make visuals using Pics for PECS with over 2000 symbols.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

As I get many emails asking for guidance about which resources would be helpful for different ages, groups, skills. I thought it would be helpful to list which I would recommend!

Recommended for 0-5
- The Early Years
- Practical Sensory Programmes
- Practical Communication Programmes
- Teach Me to Play CD
- Tips for Toileting
- Pics for PECS
- Working with Teachers
- Talking to Family and Friends about the Diagnosis

Recommended for Primary Age
- Making it a Success
- Teacher Assistants Big Red Book of Ideas
- Visual Learning
- Practical Sensory Programmes
- Practical Communication Programmes
- How to Stop your Words from Bumping
- Putting the Pieces Together: Helping Young Children Understand ASD

Recommended for Secondary School
- Essential Guide to Secondary School
- Teacher Assistants Big Red Book of Ideas
- How to Stop your Words from Bumping

Recommended for Parents and Families
- Working with Teachers
- Putting the Pieces Together: Helping Young Children Understand ASD
- Talking to Family and Friends about the Diagnosis
- DVD: Preparing for Success
- *PLEASE look in the recommended AGES above as well*

Professional Development, Staff Meetings and Training
- PD Pack George Negus and Norman Swann DVD plus Sue Larkey Training CD
- Tony Attwood's Books
- Range of DVDs available

Recommended Visual Resources
- Time Timers
- Portable Schedule with Digital Timer
- Visual Learning
- Pics for PECS
- Teach Me to Play CD
- Photo Cookbooks and Photo CD

Recommended for Social Skills/Play
- Teach Me to Play CD
- How to Stop your Words from Bumping
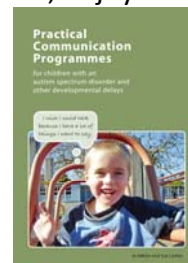- Photo Cookbooks
- Putting the Pieces Together

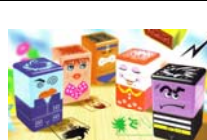**School Library**
Create an ASD section in your school

- **All Cats have Asperger**
- **All Dogs have ADHD**
- **How to Stop your Words from Bumping**
- **DVD: Intricate Minds**

NEW Communication Book
Thank you to all of you who have let us know how helpful this book is, enjoy.

SENSORY TOYS / Fidget toys See Page 7

Chewy Tubes are wonderful for students who bite their clothes, bodies or seek objects

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