

**MAKING IT A SUCCESS:**

Practical Strategies for Home and School for Autism Spectrum Disorders

**Happy New Year!**

2009 will be the best year so far spreading the skills to make teaching and living with Autism Spectrum Disorders a success!

**In this Newsletter and NEW in 2009**

1. **SETTING UP YOUR CLASSROOM FOR SUCCESS IN 2009:** 11 Key Strategies (pg 1 & 3), Setting up your Classroom and Keeping on Task (p9).
2. **NEW COMPETITION:** Inspiring Stories Competition.
3. **NEW RESOURCES:** DVD: Preparing for Success by Sue Larkey and Dr. Lee Sturgeon, new picture book: Grandmas' Place, new cooking photo CD.
4. **NEW Workshops and Presenters!** Join us for a range of workshops. Includes: Wendy Lawson, Dr. Richard Eisenmajer and Dr. Tony Attwood.
5. **NEW TOPICS: (Beyond ASD) Michael Carr Gregg,** on Child and Adolescent Mental health issues: *"When to really, really worry.- what every teacher needs to know about child and adolescent mental health."* This workshop is a must see for all anyone in education and for parents too. (see p 11)

Last year sessions sold out VERY quickly so please register ASAP to avoid disappointment

For more information on workshops go to my website [www.suelarkey.com](http://www.suelarkey.com)

You can reserve a place at the workshop and pay closer to the date.  
Just email my secretary through the website and let her know which session.

**Sue Larkey**  
**Autism Consultant**



**Training Days**  
See page 12 for details

**NEW**  
**Dr Michael Carr Gregg**



**Workshops**  
More information p11

**Preparing for Success: 11 Key Strategies**

The start of the year is an important time to look at how to create an environment for success. Over the years I have found there are 11 key strategies that are most important to set EVERYONE up for success.

1. **Individual:** Everyone with ASD is different and we need to get to know the individual child.
2. **Routines:** Creating predictable routines gives students confidence, independence and reduces anxiety.
3. **Schedules:** Allow the student to anticipate activities and routines. They are a great tool to develop independence.
4. **Visuals:** Use visuals to enrich the learning environment. There are a huge range of visual tools available to support students learning, this can include photos, black and white line drawings, gesture, written word. Visuals can be used in many ways including; schedules, calendars, worksheets, social stories.
5. **Communicate Clearly:** Do not assume the student understands you. Most people with ASD are visual learners and need time to process speech. Many students find whole class instructions difficult to follow. Communication can be supported by using visuals, sign language, gesture and written word to support verbal language. For example: if you write whole class instructions on the board many students will find them easier to follow.

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**Upcoming Sessions**

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# Together we Cook 'n' Learn: New Photo CD

## Photos to make your own recipes and learning activities

Cooking is a marvelous tool to teach everything from maths to social skills. Cooking is a favourite activity for all children so is a wonderful teaching and learning activity. As well as being appropriate for all ages and stages!

After many requests we have finally made a CD with all the wonderful photographs from our cookbooks so you can make your own recipes. Plus use the photos for a range of other teaching activities.



Complement your Photo Cookbooks with the new Photo CD

**Together we Cook 'n' Learn**  
**NEW PHOTO CD – over 400 photos!**  
 Make your own resources and recipes  
**Just \$45**  
**BONUS:** 2 NEW Recipes – Chocolate Crackles and Fruity Drops

### WHY COOKING?

Through cooking you can teach over 300 skills

#### This CD contains:

- Over 400 photos
- Photos of food and cooking procedures
- Pre-made layouts to save time

#### Photos include:

- Key appliances and utensils
- Food: vegetables and fruit
- Common ingredients
- Cooking terms
- Cookbook 1 & 2 photos grouped to make your own resources  
*(please note just pictures not recipes)*

#### Use the Visual Foods Photo Collection to create:

- Shopping lists
- Photo menus
- Photo recipes
- Choice boards
- Cards to teach vocabulary for foods and kitchen words
- Sequencing cards for step-by-step food prep and kitchen jobs
- Create worksheets and games using the wonderful photos

Computer: Suitable for MAC & PC users

### ORDER ON PAGE 8

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES OUTCOMES FROM COOKING PROGRAMME		
Together We Cook 'n' Learn		
ENGLISH	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE
READING	NUMBER	PROBLEM SOLVING
WRITING	MEASUREMENT	COOKING
LISTENING	PROBLEM SOLVING	SAFETY AWARENESS
AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION	MATCHING	TECHNOLOGY
COMMUNICATION: EXPRESSIVE (Speaking) RECEPTIVE (Listening)	SEQUENCING	DOMESTIC APPLIANCES
	CATEGORISING CLASSIFICATION	BODY AWARENES
	MONEY	
STUDIES OF SOCIETY & ENVIRONMENT	HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION	THE ARTS
SOCIAL SKILLS	MOTOR SKILLS	PLAY DEVELOPMENT
GROUP LEARNING	SELF HELP INDEPENDENT LIVING	ART/CRAFT
WORK TASKS	PEOPLE & FOOD	MUSIC
COMMUNITY ACCESS	HYGIENE	TECHNOLOGY
SHOPPING	RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	DOMESTIC APPLIANCES
	SAFETY	VISUALS & Augmentative Communication Systems
	SENSORY INTEGRATION	COMPUTER
		COMPUTER GAMES

Suggested Learning Outcomes  
(These are guidelines to help program development for individual students)

Above: Exert from Cook Book Manual

**Fundraiser Idea – Why not make a photo cookbook at your school as a fundraiser.**  
**Use the photos and templates on the CD to create wonderful photo recipes for everyone to enjoy!**

## Preparing for Success



### 11 Key Strategies for Success (continued from page 3)

6. **Limit Choices/Adapt Activities:** By adapting activities and reducing choices you will find students with ASD engage quicker in activities and are more successful. For example if a student is told to choose a book from the shelf to read they may find that overwhelming or keep changing their mind and swapping books. If instead you have 2 books to choose from, they are more likely to engage in reading – which is the goal.
7. **Create Social Opportunities:** Just putting students with ASD around other children will not magically create friendships and social interaction. Most students need support in social situations, creating opportunities will help interaction. For example a club in the playground where the child can interact with a small group of children in a structured activity.
8. **Prepare Environment and for Transitions:** Transition times can be the most confusing and stressful time for students with ASD. It is very important to plan ahead and have strategies in place to ensure smooth transitions. This is where routines and schedules are very effective, these allow the student to anticipate the change and know what is expected. Time Timers (see pg 4) are also wonderful as they pre-warn the student how long before a change.
9. **Prepare for Behaviour:** Knowing the student and having information on what may upset the student or cause a meltdown is very important. However, over the years I have seen many behaviours and had NO idea “what” triggered the reaction. As you can’t anticipate all behaviour and in a busy classroom may miss triggers I actually feel the MOST important part is to have a strategy to calm the child once you notice their behaviour is escalating. Talk to family, carers, past teachers and find out WHAT strategies work once the student’s behaviour is escalating.
10. **Choose your battles. Prioritise:** When you start the year and talk to parents you could end up with an extremely LONG list of goals for the student. I would recommend you decide the top 2 or 3 goals and work on these first. It is very important that everyone at home and school is focused on the same goals as this ensures success. If you were to try EVERY GOAL at once you will find you get inconsistent and burnt out, whereas with a few clear goals you will hopefully quickly achieve these and move onto new goals.
11. **Set up for Success / Reward/ Motivate:** EVERYONE needs to be motivated and rewarded not just the student. EVEN the smallest successes are worth celebrating.

**MORE information on ALL these strategies available on NEW DVD: Preparing for Success**

#### Sue Larkey’s Three Most Important Things to Remember!

1. Remember “to know someone with ASD, is not to know ASD” (every child is different).
2. Strategies wear out, you need to use a range of strategies and change.
3. Just because a strategy works for one child with ASD does NOT mean it will work for every child.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COVER HERE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$50</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr. Lee Sturgeon and Sue Larkey</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>NEW DVD: PREPARING FOR SUCCESS</u></b></p> <p><b>DVD PACK:</b> 3 x DVDs Sue Larkey: 2 Discs 149mins and Dr. Lee Sturgeon: 1 Disc 100 mins</p> <p><i>This is a live recording of a full day presentation. Includes 100s of great ideas and explanations.</i></p> <p><b>Dr Lee Sturgeon:</b> Clinical Psychologist discusses:  <b>1)</b> An introduction to ASD  <b>2)</b> Anxiety management in ASD with a focus on practical strategies.</p> <p><b>Sue Larkey:</b> ASD Educator discusses:          11 Key Strategies for Success <i>(see above for more information)</i></p>	  
<b>Order Form Page 5</b>		



## NEW YEAR – NEW GOALS: Make toilet training one of them!

Most parents DREAD toilet training – no more so than parents of children with autism! But armed with my new book *Tips for Toileting* it needn't be so stressful. Summer is a great time to start toilet training so if you have a child over the age of three then make toilet training a priority this summer.

**So how do you know if your child is ready?** Signs of readiness in children with autism are not evident like they are with neuro-typical children. The main sign of readiness is compliance, or the child's ability to imitate. If you can get the child to do what you ask, and/or copy an action – then they are READY.

**Make sure YOU are ready!** The child needs 100% commitment during toilet training and it can be emotionally draining on parents. So get yourself in the right frame of mind and set to it. The key with this programme is consistency, everyone needs to be committed. It only takes one person to put a nappy on the child and all your hard work can be ruined.

Think "toilet timing" NOT "toilet training". Toilet timing is achievable for all children with autism. Success will look different for different children. Every child should be nappy free during the day. I recently received this feedback from a Mum who had tried to toilet train her four year old twice before purchasing my new *Tips for Toileting* book: ***"Thank you so much for providing such wonderful, practical, and clear instructions to follow and ideas to use. In my last four years of parenting, this is the most useful information I have come across – it really has changed our lives. I am now excited and actually looking forward to training our younger boy as I know I'm armed with a great resource."***  
 More information on *Tips for Toileting* on page 5

 <p><b>NEW Australian PICTURE BOOK</b></p>	<p><b><u>GRANDMA'S PLACE – \$30 (hardback)</u></b>                  "How does your Grandma cuddle you?" This is just one of the many questions a child will encounter when they experience Grandma's Place. Grandma's Place is an interactive picture book which encourages children to explore, and reflect upon the special bond they share with their Grandmother.  <i><b>This is a wonderful book about a Grandma. After reading this book you can do follow activities that look at different people and the activities children do with them. This would be a great book for students with ASD to help their social understanding of different people they know.</b></i>                  Order on page 8</p>
 <p><b><u>Wooden Toys Back in Stock!</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>NEW NAME FOR FIDGET TOYS!</u></b> THANK YOU to everyone for the wonderful suggestions for the fidget toys. There were 100s of wonderful ideas and I have decided let people vote on the favourite at some of my sessions this term.                   The new WOODEN TOYS have had a fantastic response. Here is an example:  <i><b>"When I introduced these toys to the children I called them 'Tune in toys' as they help the students tune in to the teacher during floor work or whole group discussions. The students will now even ass for their 'tune in toys' and I find it a catchy name for such a highly useful learning tool."</b></i></p>

### TIME TIMERS™

		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>20cm Time Timer Audible \$60 plus P&amp;H</b></p> <p>This classroom-tested timer comes with a base for free standing operation. With the Time Timer Audible you have the option to use a visual depiction only, or add sound to signal the end of a time segment.   <b>**The base is removable and it can be easily attached to the wall.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7.6cm Time Timer Audible \$45 plus P&amp;H</b></p> <p>The small size and durable lightweight construction make it simple to carry for easy accessibility.   <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>ORDER FORM PAGE 7</u></b></p> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Time Timer CD \$35 plus P&amp;H</b></p> <p>With the Time Timer CD you have the option to use a visual depiction only, or add sound. It has the ability to easily change from minutes to seconds or even hours, offers a lock-down feature, and the on-screen size can be altered. The Time Timer CD is Macintosh® and Windows® compatible.</p>

# Setting up your Classroom for Success

***“Equity is about everyone having what they need to manage and learn in a school environment”***

*Putting the Pieces Together, Sue Larkey & Gay von Ess*

## **Setting up Boundaries and Expectations**

As the teacher you must set up very firm boundaries and be consistent with these boundaries everyday and for everyone. One of the biggest issues for ASD students is social justice, as perceived by them. A way to overcome this is to have clear boundaries and expectations of everyone.

### **Boundaries**

These need to be clear and concise. They need to include:

- What is acceptable behaviour and what is not acceptable behaviour
- What is an acceptable level of noise and what is not acceptable
- Where to sit in class
- Number of questions the student can ask

### **Meanings have to be very explicit**

**For example, bullying is an unacceptable behaviour but what is its boundary?**

What do you consider to be bullying? Is it pushing someone around? Is it hitting someone, or is it words muttered under someone’s breath? Do you include put downs with this as well?

# Keeping on Task and Completing Work

*Pg 27-28 “Teacher Assistants Big Read of ideas”*

### **Ideas to try:**

**These are some tips for keeping the student on task and ready to complete work.**



- ✓ Subtle refocusing by pointing to their place on the page
- ✓ Break task into more manageable pieces
- ✓ Instead of colouring whole sheet, colour only three items
  - Instead of ten maths practice examples, do only two
  - Consider how much time the rest of the class takes to complete the task and modify the students work to fit into the same timescale.
- ✓ Only give the student part of the task sheet with fewer words.
- ✓ Give clear expectations, guidelines and parameters of the task to be completed. For example
  - “Write ten words”
- ✓ Tell the student how long to spend on each task.

### **Have strategies in place for mistakes:**

- Show them how to cross out neatly
- Teach them to use an eraser
- Have a spare worksheet in case the first one is ruined

### **Ensure they know the sequence of activities to be completed**

eg Maths, Outside Play, Mat time, etc

- Ideas to try to show sequence of activities
  - Visual schedule
  - Start and finish boxes
  - A timetable
  - Consider how much sequence they can cope with at a time



### **Example**

If the class has to write a full page of journal in half an hour, the ASD student may only need to write half a page in the same amount of time. Note: of course if the student can only complete one sentence, this is a good starting point to build from in the future. The aim is to keep them on task not to focus on the amount produced.

## **Reward each small accomplishment!**



## INSPIRING & MOTIVATING STORIES

While strategies and knowledge are essential to support students with ASD, it is the real stories of their application that inspire me and motivate me to keep trying different strategies. I am sure that is true for many of you too, so I thought I would share a couple of examples sent to me that I particularly enjoyed.

### JOHN

I have a brother  
His name is John  
He is Autistic and artistic with shaving cream  
He loves to dream about the Wiggles and  
likes to giggle

He is sneaky and cheeky  
He is funny and cuddly as a bunny  
John loves Hi 5 it makes him jive  
I'm in the middle, Cassie the oldest  
John the youngest, the baby of the family

He can't talk but he loves to walk  
We have the best Mum in the world  
She is never glum

I know John has a disability  
But he can do things to the best of his ability  
John is my brother so you can see  
He can be annoying  
But that's just how things are meant to be

By Rebecca Tuckey  
**Secondary School Student**

**A parent after attending a session where I talked about sharing diagnosis with communities sent me this lovely example her son wrote with her to explain autism to new students in the school.**

### Nicholas who is 6 years old with ASD wrote this:

*Everyone is different, some are big and some are small.  
Some kids are good at reading; Some kids are good at sport.  
Some children wear glasses. Some children are quiet and shy.  
Some children are noisy and friendly.*

*My name is Nicholas. I am in room 4. I love bionicles, my dog, break time at school and playing on the computer. I have autism. Autism isn't like a cold, you can't catch autism! And autism doesn't mean I am ill.*

*Autism sometimes makes me difficult for you to understand, and sometimes it makes it difficult for me to understand you. It means even though I really like to play I don't always understand the rules. I have lots of friends in my class, they understand all about me and my autism. I would like you to be my friend too because I am very friendly.*

*(Nicholas tells his Mum that this is the sad part of the story)  
I sometimes get annoying, but mostly I'm friendly.  
You can tell me if I am annoying you, it's okay!*

*Sometimes I am noisy but I prefer not to be. When I am noisy it means I need some space on my own.  
I've got two teacher aids, Ms W... and Mrs S... – they keep me safe and help me to understand what's happening.  
I am quite smart really, autism doesn't mean I'm silly. I am good at reading and maths – sometimes I am not.*

*Don't be frightened to be my friend cos I'm a neat guy.*

*By Nicholas and his Mummy.*

I hope you agree these are amazing insights into living with autism. In my travels people tell me the most beautiful stories about teaching and living with children with ASD. This year I would like to share more of these in my Newsletters so please send them to me.

### **INSPIRING STORIES COMPETITION**

***This is your opportunity to share your stories and WIN a \$400 Gift Voucher. Send in your poem, story, anecdote – be it funny, quirky or moving – and it will go in a competition to WIN a \$400 gift voucher to spend on resources from the Newsletter.***

***Send your entry to [suelarkey@optusnet.com.au](mailto:suelarkey@optusnet.com.au)  
Competition Closes Wednesday 1 April 2009***



## **Behaviours**

### **Classroom & Playground: Ideas to Try**

#### Behaviours - In the classroom

##### They often take the form of

- Irrelevant comments
- Interrupting
- Talking over the top of others
- Doesn't follow instructions well
- Doesn't always understand the intent of words

##### Ideas to try



- Use 'comic strip conversations' \* regarding irrelevant comments
  - Model what is appropriate
  - What is not
  - And why (The reason must relate to the individual circumstances of the student and how it would affect him)
- Teach the student how to ask for help
- Teach the student to wait
- Teach the student to Start and Finish
- Explain metaphors and double meanings
- Teach student to ask for clarification of instructions
- Pause between instructions to give him time to catch up
- Limit oral questions

Exert "Teacher Assistants BIG RED book of Ideas" pg 31-32

#### Behaviours - In the playground

##### They often take the form of

*Dobbing, Following other students around but not engaging, Escaping and running, Irrelevant and rude comments, Students who want to be inside, Students who constantly sit outside staff rooms, office etc, Hitting other students, Walking around peripheral of playground, Walking and talking to teachers regarding special interest, Sitting and reading books (for girls)*

##### Why they happen

*The following are some ideas to understand why there are playground behaviours, Wanting friends, Wanting to be good, High anxiety in playground/unstructured time, High anxiety causes them to lose basic social skills they have already learnt Inability to generalise play skills learnt in various settings (this means they may copy with loosing in classroom but struggle with loosing in playground)*

##### Ideas to try

*Observe what is happening and identify the issue(s)*

*Set up structures, activities, clubs*



*Teach the student the skill that is required for this issue in a small group in the playground ( As this is where the issue is, where the skill must be used, it is vital that it is taught in context.)*