

Newsletter



Winter Edition '22



Social Communication Team

Social Communication Team Newsletter



Welcome to our Seasonal Newsletter, which you have received because your child is known to the Social Communication Team (SCT) or is on our waiting list for an assessment. We understand how frustrating it is to wait, and can only express the importance for parents, carers, schools and the wider community, to think in terms of the child's *strengths and needs* in the meantime.

A child may have sensory, communication, or behavioural needs. These needs can be sometimes become more apparent depending on the season, but their strengths may also become more apparent, too.

Sensory Needs: During the winter, you may notice a child's needs shift. Winter impacts the way we live in lots of small ways, but for children with sensory needs, these small differences can have a big impact. For example; daylight savings time and the dark afternoons might feel confusing, scary, or both. They may be uncomfortable with lots of layers on, or cold despite being wrapped up. Some people find certain fabrics scratchy or distracting, and they might feel more discomfort than others when wearing a coat, gloves, or a hat. Some children find they actually really love wearing outdoor clothing, and refuse to take it off indoors! Changing sensory needs can cause some people to feel distressed, especially if their environment doesn't reflect their needs, and they may display behaviour that causes concern.

Look for the signs of sensory needs, and see if small changes can be made. Different foods can cause sensory distress, and even subtle seasonal changes in diet can be distressing. It can be a good idea to let someone with sensory needs adjust to something new, like gloves, around the house to get used to the feel of them before they are needed for school or socialising. Someone who enjoys heavy layers may benefit from having a weighted blanket, or weighted soft toy, to hold to gain sensory feedback.

Activity and Workshop dates to BOOK UP!

December: Relaxed performances of Pantomimes and theatre shows in London can be found here: [Relaxed Performances](#) | [Pantomimes](#) | [ATG Tickets](#)

February: 20th/27th CAMHS Workshop Building Confidence and Managing Anxiety in your child - EVENINGS (2 Parts). Children DO NOT need a diagnosis. For CAMHS workshops, please email to book: Whh-tr.camhscwpworkshops@nhs.net

Regular Activities:

Bright Start run various stay and play groups and activities for young children across Islington. Look out for a group called '**Extra Boost**': A specialist group activity for under 5s with additional needs, who benefit from a quieter space where their individual needs can be met.

Visit their website for more information about what's on: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/childrens-centres-and-under-5s>

Find a range of activities in Islington for children of all ages on this website: [Find Your Islington | Things to do](#)

Arsenal Football Club run many different sessions, covering a wide range of needs, contact: jiroside@arsenal.co.uk

Vue Cinema has regular autism friendly screenings [Islington Cinema](#) | [London Islington Cinema Film Listings & Times](#) | [Vue \(myvue.com\)](http://Vue(myvue.com))

LEGO-based play therapy sessions for children in Archway: The TOY Project runs LEGO-based play therapy sessions for children with social communication needs. Book on: 0207 503 9590

Last Friday of every month: 'RELAX its Friday' Parents Group @ SENDIAS islingtontsend@family-action.org.uk

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS:

During the festive season, there are changes to the school schedule, which can make some children feel unsettled. Ask your child's class teacher or SENDCO for these dates and changes, so that you can tell your child in advance, and they will feel prepared. Many schools have parties, a Christmas dinner, and plays, which include lots of practice and changes to the timetable. Social Stories can help with these, and so can keeping a visual calendar at home. Ask your SENDCO for a Social Story, or create your own using a social story app such as [Free Social Story Creator AppTouch Autism](#) and/or further information available here: [Social stories and comic strip conversations \(autism.org.uk\)](#).

Many families have visitors come and go over the Christmas holidays. Add these visits to your calendar or visual calendar, for your child to access. They will then know what to expect and will feel more prepared. Give them the option, agreed in advance, to retreat to a quiet place (i.e. their bedroom) whenever they feel overwhelmed.



Applying for schools 2023

Applications for school places must be made online by **15th January 2023** (it is recommended that you apply before 12th January). Visit this website to complete an application: [Guide Section | Islington Council](#). For help filling in this application, call 020 7527 5515.

Speak to your school/nursery SENCO about an SEN Support Plan

Your child does not need a diagnosis for this. It will give you a chance to discuss your child's strengths and needs, and to set short-term and long-term goals at school. For more information about the local offer, please see Islington Council's SEN Practice here: [Find Your Islington | SEND Local Offer](#)

Articles and videos about Sensory and Communication:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z8fdr2p> Sensory Activities and why they are so beneficial

www.whittington.nhs.uk/sct has resources on supporting children to develop attention, language, communication and play

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/> has printable resources, videos, books, and strategies for children and caregivers

If you have moved house, changed GP or there is something you think we should know, please contact:

The Social Communication Team on whh-tr.islingtonsc@nhs.net

