

**contact** a family  
for families with disabled children

incorporating  
**The Lady Hoare Trust**

# in **contact**



**The newsletter of Contact a Family North East**

[www.cafamily.org.uk/northeast](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/northeast)

Issue 64 Summer 2016



## **ECCDS**

Pictured left are children learning and having fun at a session at the Education Centre for Children with Down Syndrome.

See page 4 for more information.

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LOTTERY FUNDED



Contact a Family would like to thank the Big Lottery Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation for their support of the North East Office

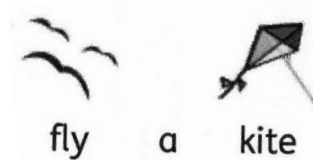
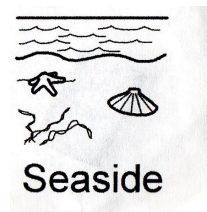
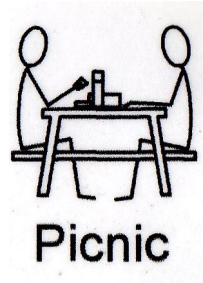


Garfield Weston  
FOUNDATION

# Summer Survival Tips

Below our team of Parent Advisers share some tips & hints on how to survive summer:

- Take photographs before school ends of teachers, friends, school building, next term's classroom
- Plan ahead – look for FREE activities/coupons in local press
- Set a budget – summer holiday activities can be costly!
- Go outside and enjoy the weather – remember to wear sunscreen UV 15+, hat, sunglasses
- Play in the rain too – splash in puddles
- Go for a picnic – that you have helped to prepare OR have an indoor picnic
- Play a board game/play cards
- Go to the beach and build a sandcastle
- Eat fish and chips out of newspaper
- Read a book
- 'Sign' a song (see [www.makaton.org.uk](http://www.makaton.org.uk))
- Watch the sunset
- Take a bus trip/go for a Metro ride
- Bake a cake/make a pizza 'a la you'
- Plant a sunflower
- Visit a museum/visit a farm
- Make a kite and fly it
- Pick some strawberries
- Take photographs every day
- Make a 'Summer memories scrapbook' of your photographs/or create a Blog
- Have a 'Joggers' day (as pyjamas are for bedtime only – CaF Sleep advice)
- Visit a friend
- Go on a 'Mystery Tour' to somewhere you have never been before
- Dance to different types of music – like Glastonbury in your garden!
- Have a water fight (in the garden!)
- Watch a new film that you have not seen before/watch an old favourite film
- Draw with chalk
- Make a fruit smoothie/make Ice lollies to keep you cool
- Go on a bike or scooter ride
- Laugh until your tummy hurts
- Go for a swim at a local pool or paddle in the sea (stay safe near water)
- **Don't forget - Contact a Family North East and our Helpline are open if you need help and advice**



**HAVE FUN AND ENJOY THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS!**

**Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300**

## And then...Back to School

Our North East Parent Adviser Shona shares her Back to School suggestions.....

When the Summer Holidays are over and we have ticked off everything on the 'Summer Survival Tips' list, it is time to think of going back to school or college. The scrapbook idea comes in handy for this too. Maybe your child or young person can take some photographs of themselves in their school uniform, some pictures of the school building, class teachers, school friends - then the scrapbook can be used as a reminder of what is to happen come September. If you are organised, these photographs can be taken before the end of summer term?



stick



photographs



in



a scrapbook

Preparation for back to school in my house starts a week before the big day. Our bedtime routine is the same all of the time, even summer holidays do not interrupt what works for us. We begin to get up a little earlier and quickly revert to the routine of a school morning; bath and downstairs by 07.30 for breakfast. We use Symbols and Signs to help with this. School friends are mentioned in daily conversations and we arrange to meet the Bus Driver and escort and check what time to expect them each day; we swap mobile numbers so have direct contact with them.

Two days beforehand we look through the scrapbook and mention the 'school/college' word. We hang the school bag on the bannister at the bottom of the stairs so it can be seen whenever we pass. We use Makaton and I sign more school related phrases/use more school related symbols in this time, being careful not to overload with too much information.

The day before term starts we get the school bag ready. This includes the Home/School diary, juice bottle, cash in a wallet (dinner money cheque etc.) Clothes are ready (new ones tried on beforehand so no big sensory surprises) and together we place everything in a tidy pile and PECS visuals are prepared and ready if needed.

The first day of term is imminent but we are ready and hopefully everything will go according to plan. The first day back or first day at a new school or college can be daunting so there may be nerves (yours and theirs!). Set the alarm for 30 minutes before the routine is to start; try not to rush and keep calm and carry on!

**Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300**

# ECCDS

The Education Centre for Children with Down syndrome (ECCDS) is a unique educational charity working in the North East of England. Their registered office is in Newton Aycliffe and they have a base in Hexham, and welcome children from across the North East, including the counties of Durham, Darlington, North Yorkshire, Redcar and Cleveland, North Tyneside, Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, Northumberland and Cumbria.



**the EDUCATION CENTRE for  
children with Down syndrome**

Set up in 2005, the charity has gone from strength to strength and in 2015 celebrated 10 years with a new strategic vision for families. The focus of ECCDS is on improving the abilities and confidence of children with Down syndrome through specific, high quality educational programmes and therapeutic interventions that are largely unavailable elsewhere. Children and their parents and carers benefit from the commitment that they give to teach children in the presence of their parents so that they learn together. Parents and carers can continue to work with their children at home using the skills developed at ECCDS classes.

In 2016 the charity appointed a new Chief Executive to lead the innovation and new services offered. They will be introducing a new curriculum that contains new services and opportunities that are appropriate to the educational, social, emotional and spiritual needs of children as they grow into their teenage years. This involves working with parents in the creation of a curriculum for teenagers that addresses the challenges that they and their parents and carers will meet as they join the wider world community as citizens, as consumers and as confident individuals who know how to keep themselves safe. Within their portfolio of available training, ECCDS are also developing packages for parents and carers that address sensitive personal issues raised, as their children become teenagers, such as sex education and safe use of the Internet.

ECCDS offer sessions in Northumberland on Thursday mornings and Saturdays, and Newton Aycliffe on Friday mornings and Saturdays. To contact them to find out more, email the office at [admin@eccds.org.uk](mailto:admin@eccds.org.uk), or contact the ECCDS Office Manager Alison Wishart at [alison.wishart@eccds.org.uk](mailto:alison.wishart@eccds.org.uk) or telephone **01325 329 939** or **07581 114 018**.

**Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300**

# A Time to Talk

Are you feeling overwhelmed?

Would you like to voice how you are feeling?

Is anyone listening to you?

Would you like to discuss or talk

through your problems in a safe environment, with someone who will not judge you or what you are thinking?



At A Time 2 Talk they offer a safe non-judgmental environment in a confidential setting for people to explore how they are feeling and coping with life. The service is tailored to the needs and wants of those who choose to come to use the service.

They support Individuals; Carers; Partners; Family members and Friends. They also offer counselling to children (over 5 years of age). The Community Counselling service is currently free to anyone in receipt of benefits and this is due to the generosity of Disability North who are providing a counselling room for free and also to the counsellors who volunteer their time to A Time 2 talk.

Individuals can refer themselves via the website by completing the referral form and sending it to A Time 2 Talk at the address below, or you can also contact them by telephone.

Professionals should refer any individuals via the website by completing the referral form, however if you would like to discuss their services prior to referral, please contact the service on the number below.

The service is open Monday to Friday from 9.00am-5.00pm. A Time 2 Talk is based within Disability North at The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear, NE3 1PH. The service is open to anyone living in the North East who can travel to the Dene Centre for appointments.

You can contact A Time 2 Talk by telephone on **07538891325** or email **[atime2talk@hotmail.com](mailto:atime2talk@hotmail.com)**

Please visit their [website](#) for more information about A Time 2 Talk and the counsellors.

**Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300**

# Local Groups

## Hemihelp and Hemichat

Do you have a child/young person or other family member affected by Hemiplegia & live in the North East?

Would you like to meet other families in a similar situation? Hemihelp and Hemichat are national organisations supporting families affected by hemiplegia across the UK. In the North East a number of families have connected via these charities and created a group. Fliss Hunter-Nott organises the group and says:

“We meet up for friendship, support and fun. We organise meets for the full family and also mum’s nights out (which are always popular!) It’s an excellent way to connect with people who understand and can offer advice about challenges that we face in everyday life. We are very friendly and welcoming, so please do get in touch if you would like to join us!”

You can contact Hemihelp for contact details for this group on **0845 1203713** or email [support@hemihelp.org.uk](mailto:support@hemihelp.org.uk) . If you would like more information about the national charities and what they offer, please see the [Hemichat](#) or [Hemihelp](#) website

## New Hope North East

New Hope North East is a community organisation whose aim is to give support to disabled children/young people and their families by breaking barriers which prevent them from accessing social, educational, economical, health/wellbeing provisions available, have their voices heard, their needs met and enjoy life.

Their current project is entitled “Breaking Barriers-Opening Doors” and is supporting Black and Minority Ethnic disabled children/young people and their families but as New Hope’s aim is to support families from all backgrounds in promoting inclusion and diversity; all families are welcome to make contact.

The project offers free learning together sessions covering issues such as accessing health, education and social care services, grants and form filling and signposting to relevant service providers. They also run free adventure together trips and activities for the family which have recently included visits to the Centre for Life and Beamish. If you would like to find out more about the project, please contact Elizabeth on **07985661602**

**Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300**

# Local Autism Support Groups

## **NAS Northumberland Branch**

The NAS North Northumberland branch hold support group meetings every second Wednesday of the month at Bell View, Belford and in Berwick every third Tuesday of each month. Both meet from 9.30-11.30am. They also walk from Ross Farm every fourth Tuesday at 9.15am. They also run regular workshops/training on topics that are burning issues for families living with ASD.

The group was started by 6 women who all have children with ASD and other conditions. They met on a Cygnet course ran by the local LIST team and all found a big gap for support, activities, workshops and services in North Northumberland for families like theirs. They therefore got together and formed this branch which has been a great success. The group hope to continue to make a big difference to families in their area.

If you would like to contact the group, please call **07825192863** or email **[NASNorthNorthumberlandBranch@nas.org.uk](mailto:NASNorthNorthumberlandBranch@nas.org.uk)**. The group also has a [Facebook page](#)

## **NAS Tyne & Wear new North Tyneside Meetings**

These meetings are being held at the Shiremoor Children's Centre, NE27 0TA (parking available at the rear of Moorbridge PRU, Earsdon Rd, close to Shiremoor metro). Next school year they will be held on the second Wednesday of every month from 10.00-11.30am.

These are sessions for parents and carers who look after someone with autism to get together for a chat, a cuppa, to share ideas and support each other. There will also be occasional speakers covering topics such as sensory play. Areas they hope to develop in the future include family fun sessions and strong links with statutory agencies. All parents/carers are welcome. For more details call **07920 086299** or email **[NASTyneandWearBranch@nas.org.uk](mailto:NASTyneandWearBranch@nas.org.uk)**

## **Costa Autism Socials**

Costa on Fore Street in Hexham, Northumberland host Autism Socials on the 1st Thursday of each month from 6.30-8.00pm. They have been set up to provide a safe and friendly environment where families and carers with people on the autistic spectrum can relax. No diagnosis is necessary; all hot drinks are free and this is a private event. You can find out more through their [Facebook page](#) or by contacting Karen Slee by email at **[karen.slee@rmec.co.uk](mailto:karen.slee@rmec.co.uk)**

**Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300**

# Annual Survey - Thanks

Thank you so much to all the parent/carers who kindly gave up some time to complete our 2016 annual survey included with the last edition of **In Contact** and with our email bulletin. We are currently pulling together all the information that was included and will be including details of the findings in our Autumn newsletter and bulletins. A parent from County Durham was the lucky winner of our prize draw and received a £50 gift card to spend at her local ASDA supermarket.

We also had many people sending in their updated details so again thanks for this. A number of parent/carers though ticked that they would like to receive future newsletters by email - but didn't include an email address so if you are reading this and this was you, please email us at [northeast.office@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:northeast.office@cafamily.org.uk) so we have your email address to change you to this format.

## National Freephone Number - 0808 808 3555

Contact a Family's **National Freephone Helpline** for parents of disabled children is open from Monday to Friday 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Our **SEN National Advice Service** and **Benefit Advisers** are available through this helpline so please give them a call if you need specialist advice. Language Line is available for parents whose first language is not English.

## help us help more families like yours

The need for our services is growing all the time. Families with disabled children are more likely to struggle financially and often feel isolated and exhausted. With your support, we can help change this. Contact our fundraising team to see how you can help on **020 7608 8786** or email [fundraising@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@cafamily.org.uk)

**If you did not receive this newsletter at your own address and would like to be added to our mailing list**, please give us a call or write to us at Contact a Family, The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1PH.

Tel/Fax - 0191 213 6300

E-mail - [northeast.office@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:northeast.office@cafamily.org.uk). [Website](#)

The next edition of **In Contact** will be circulated **October 2016**

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