

West Berkshire SEND Local Offer Newsletter Spring 2023



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

West Berkshire Council's SEND newsletter

Thank you for taking a moment to read through our latest SEND Newsletter – I hope you'll find lots of information on local services, groups, and activities.

We've been working hard to promote our new app, **50 things to do before you're 5**, which was launched in November 2022. This is a great, free, resource for families, carers, and settings; and each of the 50 activities has SEND specific links, ideas, and resources. The app also includes a long list of Events in West Berkshire – all of which are free or very low cost.

If you have any one-off events or activities that you think would be relevant to either (or both!)

our What's On page, 50 things app, or Facebook page, please let us know! You can email the details to:

Fis@westberks.gov.uk

If you have a regularly running weekly or bi-weekly group or activity, we'd encourage you to complete a record for the Directory, so this can be added to our rolling calendar. You can register for a record via the Directory homepage:

<https://directory.westberks.gov.uk/kb5/westberkshire/directory/home.page>

Thank you and happy reading!

Autism Berkshire

Autism Berkshire is now providing the new Berkshire Adult Autism Support Service, to help adults aged 18+ in the county who have an autism diagnosis, or who are waiting for assessment.

The aim of the service, which is funded by the NHS, is to provide advice and support to autistic adults who do not meet the criteria for help from specialist NHS-funded services, such as mental health and learning disability teams.

Help available from the Berkshire Adult Autism Support Service includes:

- Adult Support Helpline
- One-to-one Support
- Autism advice workshops – the first of these are taking place in February and March
- Activity groups – details to follow soon

More information about the service – and other support for adults provided by Autism Berkshire, including benefits advice – is available at <https://www.autismberkshire.org.uk/>

To contact the Berkshire Adult Autism Support Service, email:

adult.support@autismberkshire.org.uk

or call 01189 594 594 (option 1) and leave a voicemail message including your contact details, so our team can get in touch.



Talking sense about autism.

40 Caversham Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 7EB

Black and White thinking

What is 'black and white thinking'?

'Black and white thinking' is the tendency to think in absolutes. You are either right, or you are wrong, no in between.

It is possible for anyone to have a tendency to black and white thinking, but it can be more common in autistic people. Often it can represent a very logical, precise way of thinking, but it can also bring challenges.

Understanding black and white thinking

To some autistic pupils, black and white thinking just makes *sense*. It is *logical*.

The grey area in between black and white thinking on the other hand, may make no sense at all. Something either is, or it isn't, how can it be both? Phrases such as 'good enough' may seem very vague and can be really difficult for some autistic pupils to make sense of. If getting 10/10 is 'good' and 0/10 is 'not good enough', what number *is* 'good enough'? And *why*? For many autistic children the phrase 'good enough' is so arbitrary it is meaningless.

Black and white thinking can be exacerbated by the ability to see the *detail*. An autistic child may well be able to see *more* detail in their drawing, and therefore to see *more* ways in which their drawing differs from the original and is 'wrong' (even while a non-autistic child or adult sees no difference at all). When the drawing is torn up, non autistic onlookers can feel completely perplexed and unable to see what the autistic child could see so plainly.

The problem may also lie with *change*. Many autistic children can find change very difficult and when they form a clear picture of what they want to achieve (whether it is in a drawing, a piece of work or even a friendship) it can be very hard when the final product does not perfectly match up with this. It is a 'change', a difference from what they expected, and this can cause a great deal of distress.



Black and white thinking

What does black and white thinking look like in school?

Black and white thinking can be reflected in beliefs such as:

- If I do not get 100%, I have failed.
- If you are not my best friend, you are not my friend at all.
- If I am not happy, then I must be sad/depressed
- I was not successful the first (and only) time I played football; I am bad at football
- It is unhealthy to eat sugary foods; anyone who eats anything sugary is unhealthy
- The rule says 'do not run in the hall'; anyone who runs in the hall is 'bad'
- You did not understand when I was upset on day 1; you will never understand.



Perfectionism is one of the hardest consequences of black and white thinking. Autistic pupils who tear up 'good enough' pieces of work can end up with not enough evidence to prove what they can do. These pupils may be very difficult to support in their learning, with any attempt to offer suggestions to improve or develop work being taken as statement of failure. This can also leave autistic pupils with very low self-esteem.

Friendship issues can also be a big problem, with one argument being taken to mean a **friendship** is over. A criticism from a peer may be taken to imply 'he/she hates me'. Understanding that disagreements and differences of opinion are part of normal relationships may be very challenging for some autistic pupils.

Often hardest of all for many well-meaning staff in school: you may only get one chance with an autistic pupil who is black and white in their thinking. Break their **trust** once, and you may struggle to ever get it back.

Managing black and white thinking in school

The advantages of black and white thinking can be pupils who are very **careful** in their work, who put in great amounts of **effort** and who are high **achievers**. They may rarely break the rules, be extremely punctual and be the most reliable pupils you have in school.

On the other hand they may also be pupils who find it hard to begin tasks (the effort it will take to complete it absolutely perfectly may feel overwhelming), who tear up/destroy their work, struggle

Black and white thinking

with everyday ups and downs of friendships and have difficulties with self-esteem. The effort to continually strive for perfection may also take a mental toll.

It can be hard to help autistic pupils who are black and white thinkers. However some good tips to try, include:

- ✓ Providing **visual examples** of what 'good enough' looks like. Remember that the opposite - leaving an autistic pupil to imagine what 'good enough' looks like for themselves - can leave them with unattainable visions of perfection. Offer visual examples of 'good enough' handwriting, drawings etc.
- ✓ Set **realistic goals**. It is obviously good to have high expectations, but be very careful about what you tell a black and white thinker to aim for.
- ✓ Give autistic pupils **clear, realistic descriptions** of what normal friendships look like: explain that arguments, disagreements and different opinions are *normal*. Produce a visual or a social story to make this clear and to act as a reminder. Try not to wait for a big falling out between friends before you do this (when it may be too late!).
- ✓ Remind autistic pupils that making mistakes is OK, and that it is often through our mistakes that we learn. This will often not go down too well, but it should help a little!
- ✓ Carol Grey has produced **social stories** on making mistakes and arguing with friends that can help to explain these 'grey areas'.
- ✓ Help autistic pupils **prioritise**, so they know what they need to complete as well as possible, and what they can spend less time on.
- ✓ Use **timers**, and set a certain amount of time per question/activity to avoid the assumption that an answer/effort must be perfect no matter what.
- ✓ Reward for **effort**.
- ✓ Get **creative** to explain 'good enough'. Try using 2 pots of paint: 1 black, 1 white. Mix them together and explain how an answer to a question (or a picture, or a friendship) can be mixtures of 'good' and 'less good' elements and that the resulting grey is normal! Or try this with lego pieces instead. Explain that work and friendships (for example) are all made up of both black and white pieces.
- ✓ Be prepared to listen and to go into the **detail**. It may be that a pupil is not being stubbornly black and white in their thinking, but that they have just seen or considered details that others (including you) have not.
- ✓ Above all be understanding, be patient and be **kind**.

"When someone says, "But have you considered..?" Yes. Yes I have. I've thought of every possible permutation I could come up with. Nothing I do is unplanned or baseless. But – and this where I argue that my black and white thinking is different – if someone showed me evidence to change my mind, I would"

Rhi Lloyd-Williams. (2019). 'Ten things autism isn't'. Retrieved from <https://researchautism.org/ten-things-autism-isnt/>

Physical Activity in Early Years

Physical Activity in Early Years

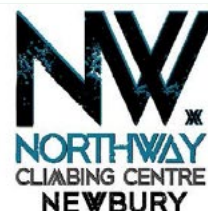


GBA are excited to announce the details of our second workshop for Physical Activity in the Early Years. You are invited to a morning of information, networking and practical ideas to compliment your Physical activity offer within your settings.

Location Hilton Reading, Hilton Reading
Drake Way, Reading, RG2 0GQ
Contact Sarah Ashton / earlyyears@getberkshireactive.org



SEN SESSIONS



DURING THESE SESSIONS
THE CENTRE WILL ONLY
BE OPEN TO SEN
CHILDREN AND THEIR
FAMILIES

UPCOMING DATES:

4TH FEB - 9AM - 10AM

4TH MARCH - 9AM - 10AM

1ST APRIL - 9AM - 10AM

6TH MAY - 9AM - 10AM

WITH MORE TO FOLLOW

BOOK IN VIA OUR WEBSITE
WWW.NORTHWAYCLIMBING.COM



Berkshire

Secure your FREE place on the CPD accredited This Mum Moves educational programme.

Date: Monday, 27th March 2023

Time: 9.00am to 1.30pm

Location: Online via Zoom

Contact: mumszone@getberkshireactive.org

Find out more about This Mum Moves:

www.activepregnancyfoundation.org/thismummoves.



Parenting Special Children

Spaces available on the next Social Interaction Course run by Parenting Special Children. The course aims to develop the confidence and emotional wellbeing of young people through meeting regularly with peers and exploring the social world together. The course will focus on issues including knowing ourselves, friendships, self-esteem, independence and self-advocacy.

The course is for young people in mainstream education (school years 4-8, though year 9 may be considered) who either already have a diagnosis of Autism and/or ADHD or are on the

Berkshire CAMHS waiting list for assessment, and are registered with Berkshire West NHS GP surgery.

Dates: Mondays: 20 and 27 February, 6, 13, 20 and 27 March

Time: 4.30pm – 6.30pm

Venue: Tilehurst

For an application form and more information > <https://bit.ly/3WSsv3c>

Berkshire West Autism & ADHD Support Service



February Activity Days with Chance to Dance Stars CIC

Schedule of the Day 10am Arrive 2pm Pick Up - *Students to be left*

5th February - Cookery and Sports with Zak 1

2th February - Poundfit and Dance with Medley

19th February - Zumba and Movie/Pamper

26th February - Games with Dawn and Yoga with Ali



Booking

chance-to-dance.class4kids.co.uk

Facebook: @C2DStars

Email: sendanceclub@hotmail.com

Call/Text: 07736343570

If your child requires 1:1 support please contact Chance to Dance Stars CIC before booking

Costing

£10 for Reading Borough Council Residents

£20 for Everyone who lives outside of RBC

Funding has been provided by RBC

Venue

Beansheaf Community Centre, Calcot, RG31 7AW

March Activity Days with Chance to Dance Stars CIC

Schedule of the Day 10am Arrive 2pm Pick Up - *Students to be left*

5th March - Games with Dawn and Sports with Zak

12th March - Poundfit and Yoga with Ali

19th March - Zumba and Mother Days Special (Afternoon tea for mothers and their children)

26th March - Cookery and Dance with Medley



Booking

chance-to-dance.class4kids.co.uk

Facebook: @C2DStars

Email: sendanceclub@hotmail.com

Call/Text: 07736343570

If your child requires 1:1 support please contact Chance to Dance Stars CIC before booking

Costing

£10 for Reading Borough Council Residents

£20 for Everyone who lives outside of RBC

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Berkshire West Keyworking Programme Newsletter

(for young people, parents and carers)



Berkshire Healthcare
Children, Young People and
Families services

Hello and welcome

Issue 2, February 2023

This newsletter brings you all the latest information about our new Keyworking Programme.

Our Keyworking Service is being set up for children and young people with a learning disability, autism, or both, and are at risk of being admitted to a mental health inpatient unit/hospital or are already an inpatient.

It's being developed to make sure that children, young people and families get the right support at the right time, and that local systems respond to their needs in a holistic and joined up way.

