

# COSY UP



A half termly newsletter for by the Autism Advisory Teacher Service for Peterborough's Autism community

*Our half termly newsletter has changed. Our newsletters have combined into one half termly newsletter. Cosy Club and Lock Down Lift Up have now become 'Cosy Up'. So grab a cuppa, find a comfy chair and join us for this term's issue!*

## A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

**Rob Emery** (*Autism Advisory Teacher*)

**As we approach the winter months, the nights draw in and the clocks change, some of us can find it difficult to adjust our sleep patterns. For people with Autism, sleep can be an ongoing problem. In this issue we discuss sleep and offer some tips to support your slumber.**



Problems with sleep can have many causes so it is worth considering what the underlying issue may be in your situation. Difficulties in settling, 'switching off' ready for sleep is perhaps the most common issue. Waking in the night and not being able to re-settle is similar to this and increased anxiety can also contribute to this problem. There can be sensory related issues with not being able to pick up on the body's signals that you are tired. Increased sensitivity to 'blue light; from screens (which studies have shown can affect sleep). Hyper-sensitivity to noise can be distracting and unsettling. People with Autism can often experience Gastrointestinal problems (digestion) which can also add to night time discomfort. There can also be neurological problems related to the secretion of melatonin (the body's sleep hormone) which helps to regulate your circadian rhythm (body clock). With all of this going on identifying the underlying reasons can be tricky, but it is worth thinking about before starting to consider the solutions.

The first step you might take is to keep a sleep diary. This is a really useful way to help identify patterns/possible underlying causes relating to sleep loss but will also track whether any changes that you make have been effective. It can also be useful to share with GPs, Social Workers, Teachers or other professionals.

You may have heard this before but establishing routines can be the key. A basic order in which things are done leading up to bedtime, supported by a visual timetable, can help with 'settling'. Consider how long it takes your child/young person to recover from 'screen time' as part of this routine and also at what time your child/young person needs to eat in order to avoid any gastrointestinal issues from interfering with being able to settle.

Consider the bedroom and your child/young person's sensory profile. Black out blinds or dark curtains can help block out more light. Thick carpet or a rug might help dampen sounds from downstairs. Fully closing doors, moving the bed to a quieter side of the room and using ear plugs or listening to music/calming sounds on headphones or a quiet speaker might help with sound sensitivities. Relaxing scents, using bedclothes of different materials/without labels or using a weighted duvet may also help with sensory processing around bedtime.

Most people have issues with their sleep at times but long term sleep problems can have a negative impact on the whole family. You can seek advice from your GP, Social Worker or your child/young person's school.

Cerebra.org have some excellent resources and advice. To find out more [click here](https://www.cerebra.org).

# THE SENSORY CORNER

Oral sensory processing is complicated, it is linked with speech development and diet, and it is an area in which many Children with Autism can take more time to develop. This is because in the mouth there are three sensory systems that receive input:

**Tactile (touch):** There are a lot of tactile receptors in the lips, gums, tongue and cheeks.

**Proprioception (deep pressure):** The jaws can give a lot of deep pressure input as can sucking and chewing which can help regulate the proprioceptive system.

**Taste:** The tongue is covered in taste buds allowing us to taste a range of flavours. Sensory play activities that are safe to explore orally can help develop these senses.

R H Q V B I S P H X  
L E B Z C M T M A S  
H E B K R K S N L Z  
K F A O I N O V L P  
I N E V T I R S O J  
L Y E P E C F M W F  
O P Y U A S O H E J  
E R E B M E T P E S  
W A A A U T U M N V  
B O N F I R E Y G V



- Edible Play Dough Recipe
- Cereal
- Soggy Spaghetti
- Whipped Desert Mud
- Edible Sand Recipes



|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| Autumn    | leaves  |
| Halloween | October |
| September | bonfire |
| frost     |         |

## Out & About

### Halloween at Flag Fen Oct 25-29

- costume competition
- wand making
- Beastly burials
- ghost stories
- spooky face paint
- witches trail

### Half term at Nene Park

- Make a scarecrow
  - Tree hunt and broomsticks
  - Make a bird box
  - Climbing wall
- Thursday Oct 28  
[Click here](#) for more info.

### Peterborough Museum

Myths & Legends daily 10:00 – 16:00 (FREE!)

### Scarewell at Sacrewell Farm

Halloween Fun from Saturday  
October 23 – Sunday October 31

### Peterborough Cathedral

#### Oct 25-28

Gallery view of the moon daily  
from 11:45-13:45

Science Interaction – free with  
donation -

Run by Cambridge Science  
Centre daily 10:00-16:00

## Rainy Days

### Try these...

...Autumn Scavenger Hunt  
([click here](#))

...Autumn Spice Playdough  
([click here](#))

...Autumn Tree Painting  
([click here](#))

...Leaf Printing  
([click here](#))

...Coding Ghost Game  
([click here](#))

### No Carve Pumpkins

[Click here](#)



### Apple Chocolate Slices

[click here](#)



## N O T I C E

### To do:

- Apply for school places by Oct 31<sup>st</sup> (secondary places)
- Apply for School Places by January 15<sup>th</sup> (Primary places)

[Click here](#)

### Upcoming events:

- ASD/ADHD Parent Consultations (25<sup>th</sup> Jan)
- Behaviour Workshop (12<sup>th</sup> Feb)
- EHCPs Open Forum (22<sup>nd</sup> Feb)

... And more!

[Click here](#)

## B O A R D

### Welcome to the team: Jodi

My name is Jodi Kaus.

I have lived in the Peterborough area for 19 years.

I have a daughter and a son who are both at university, one in Liverpool and the other in Birmingham.

I have a dog called Jackson, he is a chocolate brown miniature poodle.

I started my career working with children when my youngest started at the local preschool.

If I wasn't working with children, I would love to work as a gardener for somewhere like the National Trust.

Nutrition and wellbeing are 2 of my biggest passions and I love cooking and baking.