



# Aukids



Summer 2013  
STILL ONLY £2.50!

Positive Parenting for Children with Autism Spectrum Conditions



And the Winner is...  
Who will top our Big 5 awards?



What A Scoop!  
Autism like you've never seen it before

**FREE INSIDE!**  
Your own AuKids car sticker!



Look After The Pennies  
Readers join the 'homemade' brigade



**GIVEAWAYS GALORE!**  
Books, apps and a set of ten 'cool comics' for social skills!

**Get Up to Speed with Autism:**  
AuKids magazine - helping parents along their journey



[www.aukids.co.uk](http://www.aukids.co.uk)




# Letter from the Editors

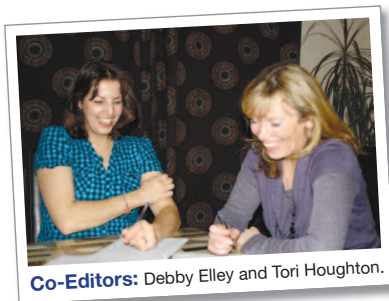
## The Five Years That Changed Me



**TIM TUFF** has autism, dyspraxia and dyslexia. He has been part of AuKids' team virtually since our launch, having volunteered when he read the magazine. Now he is employed part-time thanks to our sponsors Time Specialist Support. For our 5<sup>th</sup> birthday issue, he wanted to write about the five ways in which AuKids has helped him:

- 1 Before, I used to be nervous on a computer. I thought that if I pressed the wrong button I'd break it or delete things. Now I enjoy finding information and I've learnt how to save my work.
- 2 I used to feel unsure about how to organise the magazines for delivery. Now I have my own system.
- 3 Before I used to think that it would be stressful working in an office. Now I get job sheets which help me to know exactly what I need to do. I have a quiet room that helps me to calm down.
- 4 Before I used to think that no one understood me. I felt that they judged me on what I couldn't do. Now I feel I have lots of people around me who understand me.
- 5 I am learning to trust people. I wasn't confident talking to people about autism before. Because I have AuKids to talk about, I feel more confident going up to new people. I feel much more relaxed about approaching new people and being around them.

## Welcome to AuKids' 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue!



Co-Editors: Debby Elley and Tori Houghton.

Ever had that *really* productive feeling when stuck in a traffic jam? We thought not. Well traffic jams just got that little bit more exciting now that you have your new AuKids car sticker to display, free inside this issue. Slap it on the back window and help someone else to discover the little bundle of joy that is AuKids magazine.

Speaking of little bundles of joy, we are very pleased to introduce to you the youngest addition to the AuKids team – Thomas Graham Perry, a first baby for our graphic designer Jo and her husband Paul. Congratulations to both of you on behalf of the AuKids team and all our readers!

In other news, we've just attended the Autism Show in Manchester with Tori's sister company, Time Specialist Support. Big thumbs-up to Time for helping AuKids out with the cost of a stand. Our next big event is Cheshire Asperger's Parents Support' Party in the Park on August 11<sup>th</sup> at Cuddington Village Playing Field. This free event is the largest exhibition of information stands about autism in Cheshire, and

includes lots of entertainment for the kids. Check out [www.asparents.org.uk](http://www.asparents.org.uk) for details.

We're also happy to announce a new line of AuKids T-shirts with cool slogans. They're great quality, great fun and washable at 40 degrees. Best of all, thanks to the generosity of producers Fins Design & Print, AuKids gets a £2 donation from every sale. See the advert below to be one of the first to show them off this summer.

Finally, as we reach our 5<sup>th</sup> year in circulation, we'd like to thank everyone who has helped us make it this far, not least our loyal readers for making AuKids into such a warm and welcoming community both in print and online. Happy anniversary, everyone!



*Tori & Debby*

e-mail: [aukidsmag@gmail.com](mailto:aukidsmag@gmail.com)



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### COMPETITION WINNERS FROM ISSUE 19:

**TOM TAG:** Lisa Hopkins, Kent; Rachel Kaye, Manchester; Jo Dutton, Crewe and Leila Weaver, Derbyshire.  
**TOP TEN TIPS:** Shelley Kershaw, Newquay, Cornwall; Emily Amos, Farnham, Surrey; and Nicky Pratsas, Worsley, Manchester; **TOTALLY CHILL:** Paula McClinton, County Antrim and Richard Griffiths, Alfreton;  
**TWO-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION:** Christina Cramise.

Whilst the products and services advertised in AuKids are recommended to us by readers, we are not an industry inspector or regulator. We advise readers to seek independent advice from regulatory bodies before signing up with a new service provider and to check that products and equipment meet with industry standards.

The opinions expressed in AuKids magazine are those of the contributor. Please seek medical advice before embarking on any therapy or behaviour intervention. All articles are copyright AuKids.

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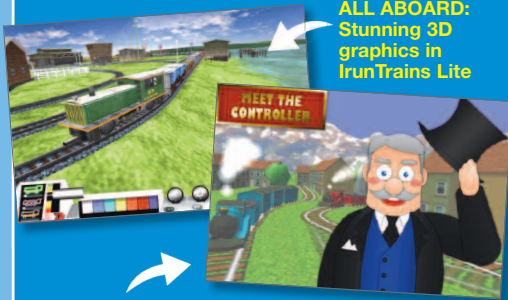
Flo Longhorn has tried and tested plenty of train apps for children with autism. Here she summarises her current favourites. With thanks to Flo and to the Autism GM Newsletter where she first mentioned them [www.autismgm.org.uk](http://www.autismgm.org.uk)

In **SuperTrains Free**, the train looks just like Thomas but is quite thrilling. It takes you on a journey through mountains, into tunnels or over viaducts. It is in 3D orientations and well worth buying the full version. In **Toca Train**, created by Toca Boca, you are the train driver in this fun and friendly train simulator. The controls are intuitive and there are no written instructions. Just pull the levers, push the buttons and start!

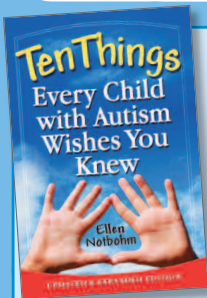
On **Clicky Sticky Trains** you tap on a train and drag into a range of settings to create a train scene. **Choo Choo Steam Trains** is one of my favourites. This has brilliant music and train effects, lots of activities, steam engines and games. Play trains or build train tracks.

**IronTrains Lite** is serious stuff with a set of controls to use and visually stunning as you zoom into the track, control the train and signals or swirl into 3D. **Aboard The Number 123 Train** is a simple counting train. **Collins Big Cat: The Steam Train** is a lovely interactive story with train effects. It rhymes and is in short sentences. You can record and do your own story line for the scene. Have fun!

ALL ABOARD: Stunning 3D graphics in IronTrains Lite



CHOO HOO! In the Choo Choo app by Chillingo you can build track or race against time to collect your passengers



**BOOK**  
**Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew**

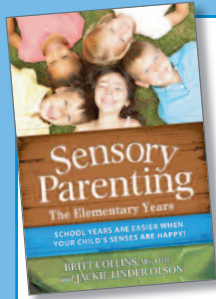
By Ellen Notbohm  
Published by Future Horizons Inc.  
£15.50  
ISBN 9781935274650

Following on from the huge success of the first edition by the same name, Ten Things serves as the voice of the child with autism, giving important key messages. These are more powerfully received as the book is written from the child's own perspective.

Written by a mother of a boy with autism, this edition is the continuation of her journey and reflects her further understanding as her son has grown up, overcome challenges and experienced more successes.

The new edition features the same 'Ten Things' but is chunkier and has more content. It's full of great quotes and positive affirmations. Whether you are a parent, professional, friend or sibling, this book will remind you that, no matter what the behaviours, issues or difficulties being addressed, there is a child in the middle of this and the most important thing about understanding is acceptance.

Tori Houghton



**BOOK**  
**Sensory Parenting: the Elementary Years**

By Britt Collins and Jackie Linder Olsen  
Published by Future Horizons Inc.  
£15.50 • ISBN 9781935567417  
[www.SensoryWorld.com](http://www.SensoryWorld.com)

This is a collaboration between an occupational therapist and parent of a child with SEN. It's suitable for all parents, with or without children with special needs.

Informative and easy to read, it offers good ideas and strategies for supporting your child in their sensory development, some of which are in use here in the UK. A positive, friendly

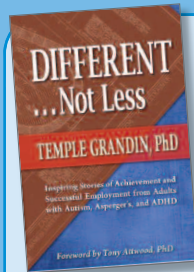
and at times humorous approach is also easy to relate to.

There are also lots of useful links and references to other relevant resources, websites and similar titles – although some are US-based and not as relevant for a UK audience.

Some of the information, too, is specific to the US health and schooling system. And whilst most ideas are insightful and useful, I found some a little unrealistic as they are complicated and time consuming.

There is a danger that checklists included in the book for some disorders could be misconstrued - you'd have to be sure of adequate occupational therapy support before jumping to any conclusions on the strength of them.

Alison Walters  
NNEB and speech therapy assistant.



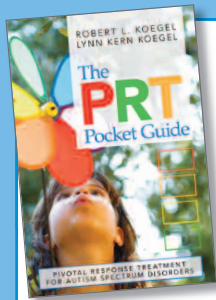
**BOOK**  
**Different...Not Less: Inspiring Stories of Achievement and Successful Employment from Adults with Autism, Asperger's and ADHD**

By Temple Grandin  
Published by Future Horizons Inc.  
£15.50 • ISBN 9781935274605

*Different...Not Less* is a fantastic collection of mini autobiographies from adults living with Autism, Asperger's, and ADHD, brought together by Temple Grandin, a highly-revered individual in both the world of ASC, and the livestock and farming community (if you don't

know of her already, you should, so get Googling!). The book describes the development and difficulties that these people have had in their lives, and applauds their successes, be it in personal relationships or accomplishments in their professional lives. The book is easy to read and fantastic to dip in to when you're having a not-so-positive moment. Each of the personal accounts manage to make the reader feel empowered and optimistic, while still acknowledging that not everything is going to be easy all the time. This book is perfect for any parent of a more highly-functioning child, to be able to begin to recognise realistic possibilities for them as they grow.

Laura Keeling  
Speech and Language Therapist.



**BOOK**  
**The PRT Pocket Guide: Pivotal Response Treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorders**

By Robert L. Koegel  
Published by Brookes Publishing Co  
£17.95 • ISBN 9781598571059

Let's start with what this book isn't. The title, to the uninitiated (and that included me by the way) suggests that this is some guide on a new, possibly whacky, style of autism intervention. Fearing an untested scientific remedy, I cringed.

But there is nothing unscientific about this. PRT is simply a way of describing 'cutting to the chase' and doing what counts. The writers assert that through sound research based on many years of clinical intervention (often on the part of the authors themselves), they have identified certain practical intervention techniques for learning social and communication skills that are pivotal – they count for a lot.

It is time-saving and effective, they argue, to focus on interventions that have a positive knock-on effect on a child's development, causing them to learn for themselves.

As far as the authors are concerned, this no doubt is a pocket guide, as it has reduced a lot

of complex research into one easy gulp. For the layperson, it's not the sort of thing that you pick up and digest in a day, it takes a bit of focus. The intro is fairly heavy duty (the authors keen to convince you that they haven't just made this up!) but the tone relaxes quite quickly and it's worth persevering for some wonderful clinical observations and case studies.

I learnt loads from this book. It convinced me again, as if I need convincing, that parents offer the most effective intervention at home and that it doesn't have to be something you 'make' time for.

It identifies motivation and interest as the key to change and learning in autistic children and shows how this can work in practise. It reinforces the need to get kids responsive rather than develop 'learned helplessness'. It shows how child-centred choices and the experience of success can vastly improve learning outcomes and it talks about 'behavioural momentum' – the idea that if you bury a difficult task among easy ones you'll be far more successful than if you just hand a tricky task to a child on its own.

In a fascinating chapter, it shows how autistic children can be taught to ask questions, a technique that ordinary children use in order to speed up language development.

For those who want to know the whys and the wherefores of such effective techniques, this is a meaty and rewarding read.

Debby Elley

# THE AuKIDS OSCARS

Earlier this year we announced that to mark AuKids' 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we were launching our Big Five Awards – one award for every year that AuKids has been around. Thanks to your votes, we are happy to announce the winners. Cue cheesy music and Graham Norton in a glittering suit...



## PRODUCT

All sorts of timers scored very highly with our readers. Good old Lego® scored some votes as did SEN Assist's educational CD-Rom games.



### iPad 2 by Apple

The iPad (and the iPod) have revolutionised our kids' playtime, making education easy and accessible. The range of special needs apps is incredible and many of our readers' children are reaping the benefits.

Reader Gareth Child, who runs the popular ASD Friendly website, is a particular fan. He told us:

"First, it is an excellent reward and motivator for Ned, and a good way of keeping him happy on journeys or waiting rooms and so on. He never managed a hospital waiting room before - but with a film and headphones he is very content.

"After lessons at school he looks for YouTube videos - he recently learned about the planets at school and found some very interesting animations for young

children. A song about Pluto losing its status as a planet actually made him cry, because it would be lonely without friends - the first time he has ever shown any empathy for anyone or anything else's feelings.

"We also use targeted special needs apps. A couple of years ago ASD Friendly members took part in a development trial of No More Meltdowns, which I still recommend very strongly. It provides a very good framework to help monitor and manage challenging behaviour, so good that I even used it in my classroom (13-15 year olds with autism and challenging behaviour).

"Proloquo2Go is a very sophisticated AAC (augmented communication) app that Ned found very easy to use, and he could make some very detailed requests with it while he was still struggling with spoken language.

"I would say that if you have a child prone to challenging behaviour, the most important app is 'Find My iPhone' and put a password on the device. There are times when it is necessary for us to remotely lock the iPad, but that is much better than trying to confiscate it."

Reader Ali Palmer says the iPad "engages Harry and motivates him – and it has raised his self-esteem. I would recommend the Big Grips case from Inclusive Technology: our iPad has had a few drops and survived because of this case."



## BOOK

Nominations included:

- ★ *The Out Of Sync Child and The Out of Sync Child has Fun* by Carol Stock Kranowitz.
- ★ *Not Stupid* by Anna Kennedy
- ★ *The Unwritten Rules of Social Relationships* by Temple Grandin and Sean Barron
- ★ *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
- ★ *The Boy Who Fell to Earth* by Kathy Lette



### Stand up for Autism A Boy, A Dog and a Prescription for Laughter,

by Georgina Derbyshire.  
Published by Jessica  
Kingsley Publishers.

Georgina Derbyshire tells AuKids: 'I am genuinely incredibly flattered (and surprised!) to have won the AuKids best book category. Thank you so much to everybody who has flattered me by finding the time to read *Stand Up For Autism* and for voting. Out of all the incredibly informative books about autism, I am astounded (but immensely happy) that you considered mine worthy of the top spot!

'I originally started writing what I like to call 'my ramblings', as an antidote for all the less optimistic things we hear and read on a regular basis. I sent a chapter to Jessica Kingsley Publishers and

expected to hear nothing back, other than maybe some constructive criticism. What started as a diary of funny incidents and conversations between me and my son, Bobby, ended up as a book and I am still amazed at that fact!

'I wrote on the basis that we all need the chance to smile, laugh and be very grateful for the quirks that make our children such amazing and unique individuals. Supporting and caring for any child on the autism spectrum is exhausting and requires patience, creativity, dedication and – most importantly – love! I always hoped that my book would give readers the opportunity to focus on the lighter side and appreciate even the smallest of achievements.

'Thank you, once again, for such a wonderful compliment. I wish you all many smiles and lots of laughter, now and in the future.'



Georgina Derbyshire with her son Bobby

We have four copies of *Stand Up for Autism* to give away. Simply answer the following question: Which company publishes *Stand up for Autism*? Send your answers with 'Stand Up' in the subject header to [aukidsmag@gmail.com](mailto:aukidsmag@gmail.com) no later than August 30<sup>th</sup> 2013. Winners will be chosen at random.



## SPEAKER

Nominations included Scott James and Wendy Lawson. Reader Claire Hughes wrote: "Wendy has an amazing ability to explain - and such a lovely lady too."



### Ros Blackburn

Embarrassment is not part of Ros Blackburn's repertoire. So what you get when you go to listen to Ros, who has autism, dyspraxia and dyslexia, is a full and frank account of what it means to have autism from an insider's viewpoint.

There are several reasons why Ros is such a successful speaker. The main one is that she's darn funny. By explaining how strange she finds our 'neurotypical' behaviour, she underlines just how logical the autistic mind is. She

does so in a way that highlights our many unnecessarily complex social manoeuvres. It really hits home how confusing our very silly world can appear to someone who takes things at face value and doesn't live to impress others.

There's also something highly inspiring about Ros. To see someone who is not yet fully independent able to hold an audience in the palm of her hand for nearly two hours makes you question the nature of success. To hear her talk about the skills that she mastered late in life – and the others that she is still developing – is a great reminder to parents that there is no deadline to development.



Ros Blackburn



# FAVOURITE APP

Nominations were too diverse to mention.



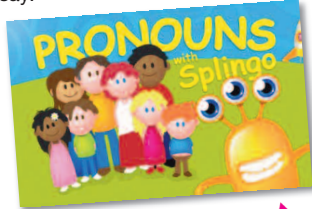
## Spingo's Language Universe

by Talking Wizard

Great fun whilst learning nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. Spingo is an alien who needs to get back to his home planet, but in order to do so he needs to build his rocket and then add fuel. Every correct answer helps him get a step further. Spingo's delightful praise makes language development fun. Kids can start very easy and gradually develop to quite complex understanding of nouns, prepositions, verbs and adjectives.

Producers Ele Leatherbarrow and James Adamson, both speech and language therapists, wrote: 'It's difficult to express how downright chuffed we are to have been awarded best app. A couple of years ago we took a punt on something we hadn't the first clue about and after a very steep learning curve and lots of late nights, Spingo's Language Universe came about. There are lots of people we'd

like to thank; all our friends and colleagues who have given us some great support and feedback along the way. We had both found that use of technology seemed to help the children we work with to engage in constructive learning. So it's really the children we work with who deserve our biggest thanks, as they are our inspiration. You're all eeeeeexcellent - as Spingo would say!



'P.S. Here's a sneak preview of our next app coming soon'.

We have 5 Spingo apps to giveaway. Just tell us what sort of creature Spingo is. Send your answers to [aukidsmag@gmail.com](mailto:aukidsmag@gmail.com) no later than August 30<sup>th</sup> 2013, with



# Together for autism

To support your child's journey through childhood into adulthood our ASC specialist services include:

- Inscape House School • step-up course at Bridge College •
- community support and short breaks • shared care and full-time residential care.

Together we work across the autism spectrum from birth to adulthood. We provide independent diagnostic and specialist assessment, speech and occupational therapy assessment and delivery. We also provide consultancy and training.



To find out more please contact us

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# SENSORY PRODUCT

Nominations included the Trabasack sensory play tray which won a good many votes, but we were inundated with nominations for our winner...



## Chewigem by Gemious

Chewigem fan Rachel Silvester says: "They're

British made, (no having to buy from abroad anymore!) arrive quickly, good price, friendly company, great choices - and most of all....my boy LOVES them!"

Amanda Yeager says: "It's allowed my daughter to try new foods and textures that she wouldn't before! This chewi has helped her regain her confidence in foods and not be afraid to wear it out of the home!"

So what's the story behind this massively popular chewing necklace?

Whilst on maternity leave, Jenny McLaughlan and her husband Stuart came up with the idea for a

necklace that would be safe for babies to chew on whilst teething. As a result, Gumigem was born. The concept was received

exceedingly well, has expanded globally and even has celebrity endorsement.

"We began to receive a lot of e-mails from thrilled parents of autistic children and parents of children with other sensory disorders who found the necklaces a godsend.

"These e-mails touched us as we realised that our product could serve a need to chew discreetly. As a result, Chewigem was born. It's now used by thousands of children and shipped across the world."



Jenny McLaughlan with Miller and Maisie

AuKids' Big Five Award comes at a time when the Chewigem range is expanding, with new funky bangles being added to the line. Jenny says: "We are so thrilled to have won best sensory product in the Aukids Big 5 Awards, it really does mean a lot and shows we have a great product that really helps people. Thanks so much to everyone who voted for us!"

As a special thank-you, AuKids readers can claim a 15% discount off Chewigem products from now until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2013. Simply use the promotion code: 'WEWON'



## Time Specialist Support

Specialist support services for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions

Given the special requirements of autistic children it can be difficult to find someone who you feel comfortable with, who understands them and has the experience of working with them. This is where Time can introduce you to people who have already been reviewed and who have experience of and an interest in working with autistic children.

Time Specialist Support Workers are all over 21, CRB checked and have experience of working with children and young people with autism. They all complete an insight into autism training.

"This is the only service ever which has provided the exact support I have wanted for my son for years now!"



Tel: 07942815845 Email: [tori@time-specialist-support.com](mailto:tori@time-specialist-support.com)

Web: [www.time-specialist-support.com](http://www.time-specialist-support.com)

# Ask the Experts

“Just as I’ve learnt some rules, I see other people breaking them! It really annoys me when I see other people doing things wrong. I get angry and confused.”

Illustration from *The Asperkid’s (Secret) Book of Social Rules: The Handbook of Not-So-Obvious Social Guidelines for Tween and Teens with Asperger Syndrome* by Jennifer Cook O’Toole, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, www.jkp.com. Illustration copyright © Brian Bojanowski 2013.



**Jennifer Cook O’Toole**

Author Jennifer O’Toole is the winner of the 2012 Temple Grandin Award, a recipient of GRASP’s 2012 Distinguished Spectrumite Medal, a nominee of the 2012 Autism Society Book Award and Godiva’s Woman of the Year. She has Asperger’s and is the mother to three young Aspie children.

We Aspies crave accuracy, and we are never going to escape our urgent need for precision. When something’s amiss, it needs fixing...now. Leaving it ‘wrong’ (or seemingly wrong, anyway) is as difficult and distracting as ignoring an itch.

That’s OK. Actually, it’s more than OK. It’s part of what makes our minds special and able to achieve the levels of intense analysis that allowed Marie Curie to discover radium and polonium or Mozart to compose such intricate genius.

It’s just that the playground is not the Curies’ lab. And a birthday party is not Mozart’s study. And to everyone else, our need for accuracy looks a whole lot like impudence. Cheek. Audacity. Generally, like we’re know-it-alls (which is extra embarrassing if we end up being wrong).

That’s where those ‘hidden’ social rules come into play.

Basically, when you follow the rules and someone else doesn’t, or when you know the right answer and someone else gets it wrong, whether or not you ought to speak up boils down to one question: Which is greater, the importance of making a particular correction right away (and the social stuff that will come along from calling someone out) OR holding on long enough to do something else about it (and the social stuff that will come along from NOT having embarrassed anyone)?

In *The Asperkid’s (Secret) Guide to Social Rules*, I offered these ‘**Need to Know**’ bullet points for those moments when you need to ‘scratch the itch’ but have a feeling that maybe you shouldn’t.

Remember:

- Being right isn’t always the most important thing, even when it feels that way.
- How you correct an error is as important as whether you correct it.
- Knowing when, how or if you should point out someone’s mistake isn’t easy, but it is doable.
- Evaluate. Can it wait?
  - Ask yourself:
    - ▶ Is he/she busy right now? Too busy to really listen?
    - ▶ Is he/she in front of other people?
    - ▶ Does the ‘error’ change the main idea? (it’s a rose, not just a flower)
    - ▶ Does an approximation have to be specific to get the general point across? (i.e. a trip is 13 minutes long not 10)
    - ▶ Is anyone going to be harmed by letting it be wrong?

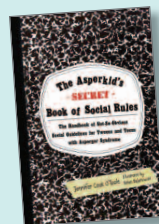
If you can, hold on until you think it through some more. Even then, *how* you correct someone is at least as important as *whether* you make the correction, which is why this is a topic we cover thoroughly in **The Rule Book**.

Look, I’m an Aspie. I know - this isn’t easy. Overriding your natural instincts takes preparation, practice and patience.

Think of the worst case of poison ivy or a giant mosquito bite and not being able to scratch it. But with time, it gets easier to see the payoff for leaving well enough alone. After all, there are times when we are all glad not to have our less-than-best moments pointed out.

If you mess up and over correct, forgive yourself and let it go...just as long as you’re willing to let go of other people’s mistakes, too.

## By Jennifer Cook O’Toole



**The Asperkid’s (Secret) Book of Social Rules: The Handbook of Not-So-Obvious Social Guidelines for Tweens and Teens with Asperger Syndrome**

Illustrated by Brian Bojanowski

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishing

2012 • Paperback: £13.99 • ISBN 9781849059152



**Asperkids: An Insider’s Guide to Loving, Understanding and Teaching Children with Asperger Syndrome**

Foreword by Liane Holliday Willey

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishing

2012 • Paperback: £13.99 • ISBN 9781849059022



**The Asperkid’s Launch Pad: Home Design to Empower Everyday Superheroes**

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishing

2013 • Paperback: £12.99 • ISBN 9781849059312





Graeme Croton at the Prince's Trust awards

### Graeme Croton

Graeme was diagnosed with dyslexia in 2009 and with Asperger's Syndrome in 2010 at the age of 25. Having struggled with school, he has now become an activist, campaigner, public speaker and mentor for those with Asperger's Syndrome. He is also the founder and director of Project Aspie ([www.projectaspie.com](http://www.projectaspie.com)). The project's mission is to spread awareness and to emphasise the great benefits that young people with Asperger's can offer to communities and to society.

Last March Graeme won a National Prince's Trust Award for his work for Project Aspie. Last year, he was nominated for a Pride of Britain Award.

When I started secondary school I could never understand why people were cheating in school lessons. I felt angry, annoyed, confused and frustrated. I struggled to understand why people in my class did that when I was trying my hardest to learn, which I often struggled with. It was sheer willpower that drove

me to ignore what the pupils were doing.

Truancing was another thing I struggled to deal with when I started secondary school. I felt a sensation of being betrayed and confused when I witnessed other pupils who chose to skip their lessons. At the time I really tried hard to not think about what the other pupils were doing. My personal coping strategy was to choose to ignore them, as I wanted to focus on lessons instead.

Rules bring structure and routine for a person on the autism spectrum but when rules are broken it can cause anxiety, tantrums and meltdowns. It takes a person with autism some time to get used to understanding why rules are broken and in many cases can lead to anger and confusion. The key is developing coping strategies.

I've found that Social Stories™ and draft scripts (stories with visuals) can be a great learning tool.

*Paint the sea blue or Sing this song in a deep voice aren't actually 'rules' - more like guidelines.*

For example, you may think someone painting the sea red is completely wrong but they might just be being creative. Perhaps a red sea is meant to represent something deeper than just a big body of water. Maybe someone who paints a red sea is using it as a metaphor for how their heart is big and open: just like how the sea is full of life. This sort of thing can seem confusing when you're young but you'll get it with time and practice.

If you're confused as to why someone is doing something that isn't the way you think it should be done, the easiest thing to do is often to ask them. Don't say something like: "Why are you doing that wrong?" (which might well hurt their feelings), just ask: "Why are you painting the sea red?" That gives them an opportunity to explain why they're doing it.

And who knows? You may find their reasons for doing so very interesting and make a new friend by asking about them.



### Sam Rowett

Sam Rowett has a Master's Degree in Creative Writing and is the architect of the blog *Pywrietechnics*. He also has Asperger Syndrome. In his own words, he's 'the result of an experiment to create the biggest, hairiest and handsomest nerd from Yorkshire.'

It really depends on what kind of rules you're talking about. It also depends on how people are 'doing things wrong'.

Some rules are based on good ideas and should be followed. Things like *Don't steal*, *Be respectful* and *Don't hurt each other* are good rules that people should follow. More fool anyone who doesn't.

On the other hand, rules like

The views reflected in these columns are the panel's personal opinions and may not be relevant to all children with an autism spectrum condition. Parents should embark on intervention programmes only after following the advice of their child's paediatrician and/or occupational therapist.



### Josie Santomauro

Autism spectrum author, presenter and consultant  
[www.booksbyjosie.com.au](http://www.booksbyjosie.com.au)

It's natural to feel angry, confused, upset and/or annoyed when you see others breaking rules that you have put a lot of hard work into learning how to follow. Following rules may then seem very logical to you and yet when others break them it's like they have placed the wrong piece into the jigsaw puzzle and it just doesn't fit and this action is just wrong until they make it right.

What may be important to remember is that you can only control what YOU do, not what OTHERS do - therefore it's YOUR choice to follow rules and THEIR choice not to. Look at the logic of not following rules: - If they don't

follow rules, yes they may have a consequence, but when they decided not to follow the rule, that's the choice they made. As Damian, a young man with Asperger's states: "Rules are more guidelines with risks if you break them."

It's as simple as a maths equation:

**RULE + CHOOSE TO FOLLOW  
RULE = SAFETY & NO  
CONSEQUENCE**

**RULE + CHOOSE NOT TO  
FOLLOW RULE = UNSAFE &  
POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE**

What happens when you see someone breaking a rule? Do you always have to point it out? No you don't, as it may hurt their feelings, or could ruin a friendship you may have with them. If you are unsure as to what to do, maybe you could chat with an adult and ask their opinion before you correct the rule-breaker. As another child said: "No need to tell them about it, unless they are hurting you," and, I'd add, if they are hurting themselves or someone you know.

Remember it's not your job to make sure others follow rules, because everyone has choices. But when you personally make safe choices when it comes to rules, you are being an inspiring role model!

**WIN**

## The Set of COOL COMICS!



COMMUNITY, GROUP SKILLS, MAKING FRIENDS, SIBLINGS, HOME AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS. Within each comic booklet there are five scenarios and with each scenario is a page where your child can record the 'thinking, feeling, doing actions' to the scenario to help them to learn from it.

You can buy the comics either individually or as a set from [www.bookworm.com.au](http://www.bookworm.com.au) (search for Cool Comics). The complete set (once you've converted Oz dollars) is about £50 and individual magazines cost £6.12. Shipment of one magazine to the UK by airmail costs £8.50. Shipment of the entire set to the UK costs £19.63. And yes we'll let you know as soon as they're available over here! Please note this is a one-off set, not a subscription magazine.

Australian-based author Josie Santomauro is co-producer (along with Dr Margaret Carter) of the Cool Comics series, written for kids on the spectrum. She has reserved for our competition winner the entire set of TEN Cool Comics which will be shipped directly to you from Oz. Bonza!

The Cool Comics set is a fun method to teach children constructive ways of responding in social situations. The main character in the comic scenes experiences all sorts of challenges in the social world. The comics illustrate how to respond to these challenges using positive self-talk. Students are introduced to resolving social conflicts in a positive manner.

The set of ten A5-size comics cover: SCHOOL, SPORTS, BULLYING, CAMPS/EXCURSIONS,

To win, just tell us in no more than 30 words why you deserve to have a set of Cool Comics! The best answer will win a set of comics and your address passed to Josie who will send you your prize. Send your answer to us with your name and address by August 30<sup>th</sup> at [aukidsmag@gmail.com](mailto:aukidsmag@gmail.com) with 'comic' in the subject header. Alternatively write to AuKids, PO Box 259, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 9BE.

If you're a parent reading this, the chances are that your child has been or will be diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition using the ADOS (Autism Diagnosis Observation Schedule) test.

This can leave you with the impression that autism is some sort of continuum.

Actually, the nature of autism isn't like that.

Rather than imagining it as a graph with 'high functioning' on the bottom and 'really severe' at the top, we prefer to think of autism as a series of ingredients. Whilst three core elements define autism, many other traits appear to different degrees or not at all depending on the person's condition, personality and environment.

To illustrate this, we've come up with the perfect image to get you in the mood for summer – the ice-cream sundae.



(Or ASD to some)

**WARNING!**  
This feature may cause a craving for ice-cream. We advise you to get some in the freezer before reading.

## The Definition of Autism

Traditionally, in order to be diagnosed on the autism spectrum, a person has to have three key ingredients - here shown with the traditional Neapolitan ice-cream. You may hear this termed the 'triad of impairments' but AuKids has never liked that term very much, as it implies that a person is lacking. We're not sure that Alan Turing or Isaac Newton would have seen themselves as impaired, for instance.\*

The three key ingredients are:

- Difficulties with communication, here represented by **CHOCOLATE**.
- Difficulties with social interaction, here represented by **VANILLA**.
- Difficulties with imagination, here represented by **STRAWBERRY**.



## Different Dollops



Why is autism so varied? Not everyone has equal dollops of ice-cream. Some may have less vanilla and more strawberry, some more chocolate but less vanilla. Some may have very little of all three. All combinations are possible. As long as the 'Neapolitan' combination is present, they have autism.

Although the Neapolitan combo remains with a person all their life, those dollops may well change in size over time. With some encouragement, children can develop communication skills and social skills. Imagination can also change and develop over time. The 'look' of their autism won't always be the same as the day they were diagnosed.

## The Flake

People sometimes think that someone with autism comes with behavioural challenges as part and parcel of the condition.

Not so. That's why we've added a Flake here to represent behavioural difficulties. They can be added and taken away, just as with any other child. Lack of an ability to verbalise can cause frustration, but if you ease that frustration by providing other methods of communication, you are less likely to get behavioural problems as a result. So it's not just the 'chocolate' that's responsible.

Isolation as a result of social difficulties can result in poor self-esteem, which in turn can cause problems. Or a child may be perfectly happy playing by themselves, and frustrated at adults' attempts to 'make them' socialise. Challenging behaviour doesn't come with the territory and can be affected or change itself over time. The key is to know your child and to deal with any negative knock-on effects of the autism as soon as you can, by understanding the source of their behaviour.



\*Please see AuKids' online news page for recent changes to the DSM-5 (diagnosis criteria) which describe 'vanilla' and 'chocolate' as one element of autism and repetitive behaviour and routines as another. The World Health Organisation's classification criteria (ICD-10) largely used in this country, remains unchanged.



## Chocolate Sauce

It's very rare that you get a Neapolitan without anything added.

One common aspect of autism, now recognised as playing a major part in a child's behaviour, is sensory issues, which we will represent by chocolate sauce, as they impact on all of your ice-cream and not just some of it.

A child can have sensory integration issues without having autism. Sensory issues, however, almost always come with autism, so much so that in the recent diagnostic criteria they are given particular emphasis. The combination of sensory issues and the key ingredients of autism can impact on a child's behaviour.

For instance, social difficulties (vanilla) may appear more extreme if sensory issues mean that a person

gets overwhelmed by noise and crowds. How do you learn social rules when you're busy defending your nervous system from overload? Very tricky.

This is what makes it so hard to define a person's autism clearly. It might be hard to know whether you're looking at a large dollop of vanilla, or just a medium-sized dollop of vanilla with a lot of chocolate sauce on it!

It's not enough to assume that the core traits of autism are themselves responsible for a child's difficulties. Look for clues as to how a person's environment (sights, sounds, smells, tastes) is affecting their behaviour. Although autism is a life-long condition, helping a child with sensory difficulties – and any other challenges that make them uncomfortable – can really impact positively on their overall behaviour and wellbeing.



## Strawberry Sauce



Our next ice-cream sundae comes with strawberry sauce. This represents other conditions that can occur alongside autism (referred to rather alarmingly by clinicians as comorbidity, another cheery term). We have chosen sauce because again, it 'covers' the autism to the extent that you may find it hard to work out what's caused by the autism and what's not.

If a child has learning difficulties, they may not play alongside their peers. How do you know whether what you're witnessing is problems with

social interaction (vanilla) or part of their learning difficulties (strawberry sauce)?

It's sometimes near impossible for even experienced professionals to assess what is causing a child's behaviour. What becomes more important is helping them with a particular difficulty whatever its source (or sauce...excuse the pun), whilst being aware that there are a number of possibilities impacting their learning style and considering them all.

## The Sprinkles

Ice-cream sundaes can have all sorts of extras added which we haven't shown here. The need for routine and special interests are a particularly common aspect of autism.

And what about our favourite bit of all...the sprinkles?

Some autistic kids show great skills on top of

everything. Does your child have a good memory, enjoy numbers, love computers? A 'savant' – someone who is at genius level, would no doubt have a high degree of sprinkles AND a cherry on top. But there are still many kids with autism who aren't defined as geniuses but certainly have some fantastic skills, here represented by a dash of sprinkles.



## No Two Sundaes Are the Same!

The Neapolitan sundae is presented in a glass – your kid's personality. Autism doesn't turn children into clones, of course! An outgoing child won't want to avoid other people but will perhaps need to practise their social skills to make them less vulnerable when approaching new people. A child who is naturally shy may feel inclined to isolate themselves more

and would need a double confidence booster to feel able to approach people because of their social difficulties.

So next time you meet a child with autism, remember our Autism Sundae Dessert.

What you're looking at isn't simply a score.



**How about your child?** What sort of ice-cream sundae are they? Tell us on Facebook or write to us at [aukidsmag@gmail.com](mailto:aukidsmag@gmail.com) We'll publish the best letters in the next issue.

# HERE'S ONE I DID EARLIER

Chris likes to rub his hands over textured wallpaper, so I made a book out of a photo album using different textures like wallpaper, sand paper, bubble wrap, washing scourers, paper, foam wash cloth etc. It is an alternative to him scraping the walls!  
- Netbuddy parent post.

Reader Jo Worgan made a DIY sensory den by draping a blanket over two chairs and covering with a cheap emergency foil blanket. She placed a rug underneath and her lad loves to hide in there with all his sensory toys on the rug.

Short of cash to spend on expensive sensory toys? Feeling a bit downhearted because your child won't play 'normally'? Ever fancied being a Blue Peter presenter but life got in the way?

If you've replied yes to any of these questions, then read on to find out how playing with your child can be cheap, easy and fun! And for those of a certain age, no double-sided sticky tape is required.

## HOMEMADE HAPPINESS

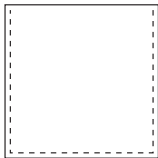
### Weighted Blanket

Sent in by Joe's gran, Carol Newbury-Smith

**You will need:** A sewing machine, some patience, an empty spare duvet cover or enough cotton fabric to make your blanket with and 5lb plastic pellets (Carol bought hers from [www.Tinkerbellcreations.co.uk](http://www.Tinkerbellcreations.co.uk)).



TOP OPEN

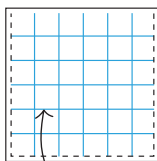


**Safety tip:** Make sure that no pellets can drop out of your stitching, as they're a swallowing hazard.

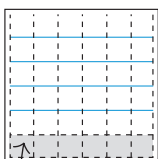
Choose which fabric you are going to use. Decide on the size and sew two pieces of fabric together leaving the top end open, like a giant pillow case. Or just use an old duvet cover.

Turn it inside out and mark it with equal squares to fit the fabric – five or six inch squares are fine. Count the squares and work out the weight of pellets you can put into each square to make an even amount.

INSIDE OUT



draw on fabric



fill first row with pellets

First, stitch the vertical lines along the fabric where you've marked your squares so that they make 'tubes'. Pour the pellets into the tubes (Carol weighed hers and put them in plastic cups so that she didn't miss a line). Repeat until all the tubes on that level are filled and then sew along your horizontal line, blocking off that line of squares.

Repeat until all the squares are filled, then sew the top together. This is ideal for when you want to try out the effect of extra weight without committing to a big budget.

### Tactile Pompom

Sent in by Alec and Bobby's grandma, who is just a little tired of being bopped round the head with flying plastic twiddly things!

**You will need:** Some cereal box card, wool, a pair of small sharp scissors.

**Safety tip:** Don't let junior near the scissors!

Get some bendy card and draw a doughnut shape with the centre cut out.

Put the two doughnut shape pieces of card together and wrap the wool around from the centre to the outside. When one strand of wool runs out, just tie it to another colour. Keep wrapping around the doughnut shape until you cannot see the card and it's hard for you to push the wool through the centre space.

Take small scissors and cut around the edge of the doughnut. Then grab a long piece of wool and slip it between the two discs of card. Knot it firmly in place as this is what makes your pompom indestructible!

Then very gently cut into your card template to remove it from your pompom. Fluff up your ball!



### Make Every Minute Count!

**In-Sync Activity Cards**

50 Simple, New Activities to Help Children Develop, Learn and Grow!

By Joye Newman, MA and Carol Kranowitz, MA, authors of Growing an In-Sync Child. Published by Sensory World [www.sensoryworld.com](http://www.sensoryworld.com) ISBN 9781935567356 Available at Amazon for £24.86

Ok, so you don't make these yourself, but all the fun they contain is free of charge! I remember a book that my mum used to own called What To Do When There's Nothing To Do. Well, quadruple that dilemma when it comes to playing at home on a rainy day with a child who has autism.

Eagle-eyed readers may have spotted that we really love Carol Kranowitz's various practical books on helping children with sensory integration difficulties. Now she's gone a step further and teamed up with Joye Newman to develop this pack of 50 cards to help develop sensory, perceptual and visual skills.

Children of every level can make use of them, and they can be tailored to suit their skills. There's very little here that can't be done with what's already in your house.

On the reverse of each card is a simple explanation as to how the activity aids development. With colour coding and cute cartoons, it's homemade occupational therapy.

Committed Craftsmen, make your own infinity mirror at [novelty-toys.wonderhowto.com/how-to/make-infinity-mirror-284332](http://novelty-toys.wonderhowto.com/how-to/make-infinity-mirror-284332) Post a pic on Facebook if you succeed!

This Cbeebies Blob Cushion was sent in by Heather Impey who made one for her 12 year old, Lewis. She used an old fleece jumper and a bag of toy filling, with scraps of material for the eyes. He loves it!



**SENSORY BOTTLE:** Old squash bottles can be filled with water, glitter and sequins. Put the lid on tight and seal!

Reader  
Kristina Hughes  
makes tactile toys from  
Ziploc® bags filled with  
cheap hair gel, marbles, glitter,  
water beads (and anything else  
that would otherwise be  
straight in the mouth!).  
Super-seal it with silver  
duct tape.

Body Socks give great proprio-  
ceptive and spatial feedback but  
unfortunately cost a fortune. Make  
your own out of Lycra tubing or  
Lycra fabric. Stitch one end closed  
using a zigzag stitch with Velcro,  
or a zip on the other end -  
Netbuddy parent post

## DIANNE'S HANDY BAG OF TRICKS

Dianne Sandler is a specialist teacher in  
an Early Support Inclusion Team.  
Contact handel@live.co.uk

Here she shares some successful ideas  
for entertaining kids with autism.

In 2010, I co-authored the book  
**Motivate to Communicate** with  
Simone Griffin, a speech and language  
therapist from Australia. We met when I  
was bumping down a short flight of  
stairs with a little boy on my lap in a  
children's centre in London. I was doing  
this (quite painful) activity because we  
were having fun together, making a  
connection and using PECS to ask for  
another bumpy ride!

This is the basis of all the activities I do  
with children with autism - shared  
enjoyment and motivation.

The key for me is to start with the  
child's interests and try to ensure that I  
have a pair of each of my key toys so  
that I can join in with their play and  
show them I enjoy the same things they  
do as well as trying to extend their play  
through example.

So, what are the toys I couldn't do  
without? Well, in my bag at the moment  
are Slinkies, stacking cups, a noisy  
shape sorter, spinning tops, rocket  
balloons, flying saucers, a variety of  
balls, some potty putty and stretchy  
string and bubbles. Many of these toys  
need an adult to 'facilitate' them and  
for me this is crucial because we need  
to become as irresistible as the toys!

I also have a repertoire of lap play  
games in my head that are useful to  
build communication and a  
relationship. One of my favourites is  
Press the Button.

Colour in three circles on a piece of  
paper and for each one assign an  
action - blowing raspberries, tickling  
and playing 'Peep-o!' for example.  
Demonstrate what you do when you  
press a particular button.

This and many more weird and  
wonderful ideas can be found on a  
website called Dana's Reinforcers at  
[www.users.qwest.net/~tbharris/reinforcers](http://www.users.qwest.net/~tbharris/reinforcers)

Toys and lap play not their thing? How  
about using play scripts to do more  
practical hands-on activities? Take a  
look at the Kitchen Science website of  
The Science Museum. These are  
activities you can do with items from  
the kitchen. My favourite one is '**Milk  
Magic**'.

You need: Whole milk, food colouring,  
washing-up liquid, a plate and a cotton  
bud. I like to say: 'My turn first, then  
your turn'. I take them through the  
activity with the use of a script and  
visuals and then they have a go. I use  
keys words only, like 'open the milk' -  
'pour, pour .....stop!'.

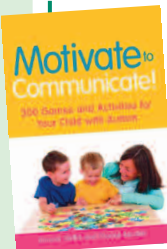
First you cover the bottom of the plate  
with milk, then add a couple of drops  
of each food colouring to the centre of  
the milk. Dip the cotton bud into  
washing up liquid and then into the  
milk and watch the colours swirl!

This strategy can be applied to any  
practical activity. It gives clarity and  
structure to fun whilst helping your  
child to listen, watch and wait for their  
turn.

There are a few golden rules to  
remember:

- Plan what you are going to say and  
do and stick to it
- Make it fun and don't give up too  
quickly
- Have everything ready and to hand
- Use visuals to help understanding

### Motivate to Communicate!



300 Games and  
Activities for Your  
Child with Autism  
by Simone Griffin  
and Dianne Sandler  
is available at  
£11.69 at Amazon.

I like to do 'smelly painting  
collages' with my daughter. Using  
mint sauce, coffee, chocolate,  
sherbert etc. We've also tried  
making a pulp from grass by  
adding a bit of water to it. My  
daughter is visually impaired so it  
really helps bring the world to  
her! - Netbuddy parent post

Reader Mark  
Mathews says that his wife  
got baby toys that you stick on a  
pram and attached a clip so their  
son could have then attached to  
his belt and chew them  
instead of grabbing  
random items.

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For more information contact Saskia Little, Administrator  
Tel: 0161 443 4060 Email: [peterlawson@cygnethealth.co.uk](mailto:peterlawson@cygnethealth.co.uk)



# The Last Word

By Debby Elley, journalist and mum of twins with autism.

## Busy Doing Nothing

I love Alec to bits and enjoy spending time with him, but when it comes to joining in his play, I can usually find a hundred other jobs to do. Just because you know what the right thing to do is, it doesn't necessarily mean that you always do it. I'm often more concerned with getting the kids fed, watered and clothed... not to mention dealing with the ever-expanding collection of toys that litter their bedroom floor.

Recently, I was enjoying a sunny afternoon outdoors with Alec. He was sitting in the sandpit and as usual, was trying to scoff the sand. As fast as I encouraged him to spit it out, he'd be chomping on another mouthful.

Mostly, I understand what Alec is thinking, but this is where we part company. I mean, why turn down a packet of Quavers with 'that' face when you're dining out in the sandpit and licking car windows for fun? I'm not sure that's the point, though. You're not supposed to eat sand and lick car windows, and that's part of what makes them so delicious.

If you want crunchy Alec, there's celery, and if you want cool I can find an ice lolly. I point to his stomach and make groaning noises. He grins - a hideous sand-filled, do-I-look-like-I-give-a-stuff? smile. Yet again I am overwhelmed with the urge to wander around his brain for the day and find out why 'sandpit' has made it into the food file.

After we'd rinsed his mouth out, Alec started to pour the sand

from his hands. I copied him. He became fascinated with burying his knee in the sand. I helped him. I didn't talk much, apart from a few key words. After 20 minutes, my mind had entered a new zone. In a spaced out way, I was rather enjoying his repetitive games.

For his part, Alec definitely liked me being in his world and keeping him company. I started doing my own thing, shaking some sand in a sieve, telling him it was a 'sieve' and it made 'sand rain'. I put down the sieve, expecting zero reaction.

Alec picked it up, grabbed a spade and tipped some sand in it. He tried to shake it, then handed it to me with a 'Bah bah!' - a request for help. Then he started to scoop with a spade and use the sieve for the first time. We did that for a while, practising 'shake shake!'

It was one of those times when I felt I'd really achieved something.

*How much of the day does this little fella actually have to play on his own, because his brother is beyond him and his play is repetitive?* I thought. It only took half an hour for a proper connection, and then his 'Bah-bahs' became little comments, not just his usual requests.

Sometimes I have to remind myself that a productive day doesn't necessarily mean getting the washing done...and I did get it done anyway. Just before half the sandpit came indoors with Alec.

# Celebrity SPOTLIGHT

## Elliott and Cole Barnes

Elliott and Cole are brothers. Elliot is 5 and has autism and learning difficulties. Cole is 2 and has autism, epilepsy and learning difficulties.

They live with their mum and dad in Hedon just outside Hull.



**My school:** Keyingham Primary school.

**I Love:** Lego® and computers.

**I Hate:** Water, mess, loud noises, changes to my routines.

**Me in four words:** Cheeky, funny, cute, loving.

**If I were Prime Minister:** Everything would be made of Lego®!



**My school:** Butterflies Nursery in Hedon.

**I Love:** Water in all its forms! Milk, juice, bubbles, bathtime, messy play.

**I Hate:** Sleeping, sharing, new places, change.

**Me in four words:** Loud, cheeky, fast, loving.

**If I were Prime Minister:** I would sit in the bath and drink milk all day long!

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