

Social Communication Team Newsletter

Summer '23



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

A child may have sensory, communication, or behavioural needs. These needs may become more apparent depending on the season, but their strengths may also become more apparent, too. Some children will thrive outside of the pressures of day-to-day routines, and some will struggle with the lack of structure. It is important to consider these differences and, where possible, try strategies such as those below to support their needs.

Trying out strategies early can help your child as well as help others to know how to support them. Using strategies will not impact on the outcome of your child's assessment.

Sensory Needs

For children with sensory needs, intense heat can be unbearable, but so can the feeling or sound of a fan, bare skin may feel too sensitive too.

Try giving your child a cool bag with a freezable pouch and wet flannel inside to access when they feel too hot. Show them how they can touch the cold flannel to their wrists to cool their body down. If they will be attending a group, let the staff know how your child copes best with heat, and consider asking them to make adjustments based on your child's level of need and comfort.

Additional advice can be found here: [12 ways to beat the heat this summer | Autism Speaks](#)

Summer holiday activities

All activities in Islington

Find out about free or low cost activities for children this summer on the Islington Council website. You can follow 'Islington Life' on Twitter, Facebook and/or Instagram to keep updated: [Summer Fun activities | Islington Council](#)

Bright Start activities for children 0-5

Bright Start are running activities throughout the summer for children 0-5 years. This includes a stay and play drop for any child who has additional needs every Monday 2-2.30pm at Whittington Park and Wednesdays 2 – 3pm at Highbury Bandstand Wildlife Garden. You can find out about all Bright Start stay and plays on this website: [Bright Start Islington, weekly timetable 2022/23 \(openobjects.com\)](#)

Summer Reading Challenge

Sign up to the reading challenge for all ages at your local library. You may win some prizes!

Main website: [Summer Reading Challenge Zone for pre-school children: Preschool-zone | Summer Reading Challenge](#)

Cinema and theatre

Many cinemas and theatres offer viewings which have been adapted to improve experiences for people with sensory and communication needs, or anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed environment. Adaptions may include changes to sound and lighting during shows. More information can be found here:

Cinema: [National Autism Friendly Cinema Screenings | Dimensions \(dimensions-uk.org\)](#)

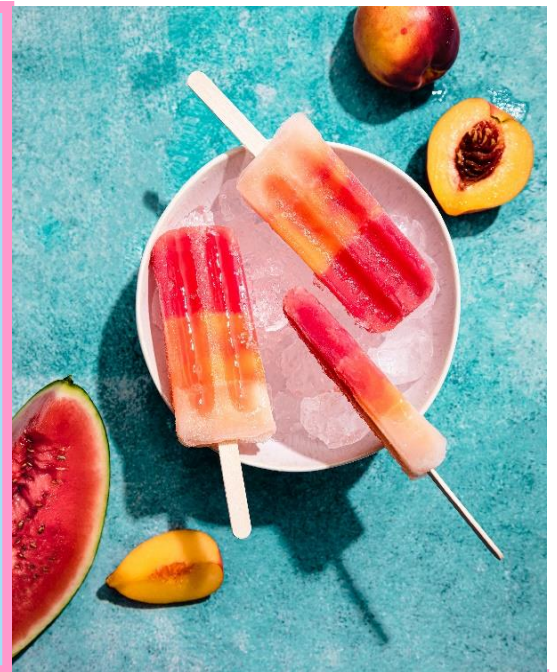
Theatre: [Home - Go Live Theatre Projects](#)



Social Communication Needs

For children with social communication needs, the end of the nursery or school year can often feel challenging. The routine they have been used to will become a long, unstructured holiday, and they may have the added worry of a new school in September. It can be helpful to set up a **family calendar**, and even a **visual timetable**, to help keep some routine in place, and to give a sense of order to upcoming events. If you are going on holiday, or your child will be going to a club, give them as much accessible information as possible, ideally with pictures, to give them time to process the information at their own pace.

Resources can be found here: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>



Speak to your Early Years nursery/school SENDCO about an SEN Support Plan

Your child does not need a diagnosis for this. It will give you a chance to discuss your child's strengths and needs, and to set short-term and long-term goals at school. For more information, please see Islington Council's SEN Practice here: [Find Your Islington | How your child with speech and language difficulties is supported in school](#)

[How your child with social, emotional and mental health needs is supported in school | Islington Directory](#)

[How your child with general learning difficulties is supported in school | Islington Directory](#)

Other services in Islington:

- **Growing Together:** is a service for families in Islington. They run various free workshops which can be booked via eventbrite (e.g., calmer nights sleep workshops) here: [Growing Together Events | Eventbrite](#)
- **Islington Family Information Service (FIS)** For information and advice about free early learning and childcare, activities and support services for families with children 0-25, contact: 020 7527 5959; fis@islington.gov.uk
- **Bright Start** is a service for children under 5 and their families. They run activities across Islington which include stay and play sessions and parent groups. Further information can be found on their website: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/bright-start-islington-start-for-life-and-family-hubs>

Additional resources:

- **Sensory Activities** and why they are so beneficial: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z8fdr2p>
- **Social communication team website** has printable resources, videos and strategies for caregivers to access: [Social Communication Team \(whittington.nhs.uk\)](#)

If any of your details change, please contact us on the SCT email: whh-tr.islington.sct@nhs.net

