



Parent Workshop on Autism

Tuesday 12th March 2024

On Tuesday 12th March we welcomed **Jackie Tarpey** to school to lead a workshop for parents on autism.

Jackie is the **SEND Consultant for Autism and Social communication** for Trafford; she is part of the SEND Advisory Service.

The reason we asked Jackie to lead the training is not just because of the work she has done in Holy Family School; leading training with staff, but because of her extensive knowledge in this field. Jackie quite openly states that she is a parent of children with additional needs, so she can also talk as a parent as well as an adviser.

Below is some of the key information Jackie shared with the parents at the workshop.

Feelings of parents

- Parents go through a grieving process when the child they think they are going to get is not that child. That can be difficult at times.
- Parents love their children for who they are, but we have to let go of that vision of the child we thought we were going to have, which is difficult.
- Parents can feel denial and anger along with many other things. Schools need to be aware of this and think of the bereavement stage that parents of children with additional needs might be at.
- Parents of children with additional needs can be very tired which can impact how they feel and so how they communicate; they may come across as angry.
- By the time teachers see parents, they may have had to do a lot of fighting. As a result, parents of children with additional needs might be 'prickly.' Consequently, they might think teachers are not listening, or they might take things said to them the wrong way. We are tired both physically and mentally. All we want is the best for our children! We go over and over things teachers say to us later on. Think what it might be like to be in parents' shoes?
- As parents, we need to be kind to ourselves.

How parents of children with Autism can feel around other parents

- The school community can be very judgmental. Other parents can make things difficult by telling their children to keep away from children with additional needs.
- They can avoid talking to parents of children with additional needs. For this reason, it is important to have a supportive parent network to share problems. Having people with similar experiences.

At Holy Family, we have started our parent working party, the Chatty group, to support parents with children of similar needs. The group gives parents chance to chat and share experiences and realise that they are not on their own. The feedback from the group has been really positive. The next meeting is : **Wednesday May 22nd at 2:00pm**. As always, everyone is welcome to join.

Jackie also discussed that in society there are some schools who don't support parents by :

- Not listening to parents concerns
- Not keeping parents updated.
- Not see their child as an individual.
- Not being creative with support.

She did state that this was generally and not the workings at Holy Family.

At Holy Family we:

- Support parents by holding meetings to discuss concerns with children
- Take advice from Mrs Clark our SENDCO on next steps of support
- Review the possible routes to support children
- Seek advice from outside agencies such as the Jackie and her team
- If a child is put on a Personal Provision Plan (PPP), set and review targets termly to support the development of the child
- Offer additional meetings to set and review the PPPs
- Each classroom has a Zen Zone to support children who need more time to regulate their emotions
- Created 'The Cave' in the library which is a sensory area for children—ask class teachers to have a look at it

How Holy Family supports parents cont.

- Have an open door policy to work together with parents and the child
- Use Seesaw as a tool to communicate with parents and visa versa
- Listen to parents and put provision in place if a child has not had a good morning
- Listening to parents because you might see more of your child's behaviours than we do at school
- Signpost parents to support groups

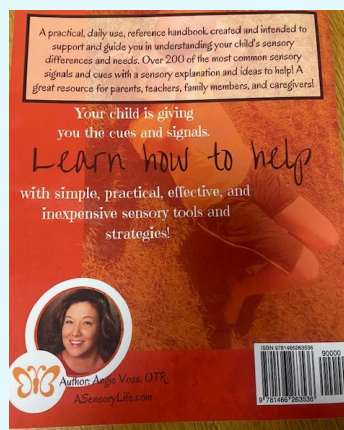
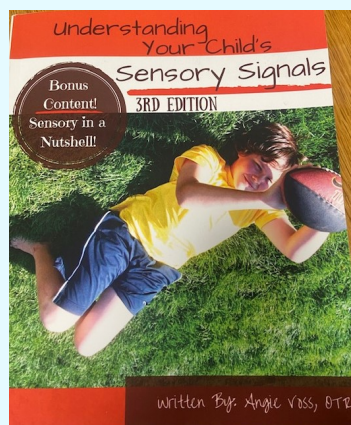
Understanding your child's sensory signals

- What is this communicating?
- Sometimes learn to ignore as behaviour can be a learnt way of getting attention

Further reads recommendations:

www.SEMH.co.uk These tools would be helpful

as well as "Understanding Your Child's Sensory Signals" [Angie Voss, OTR \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://AngieVoss.OTR(nsw.gov.au))

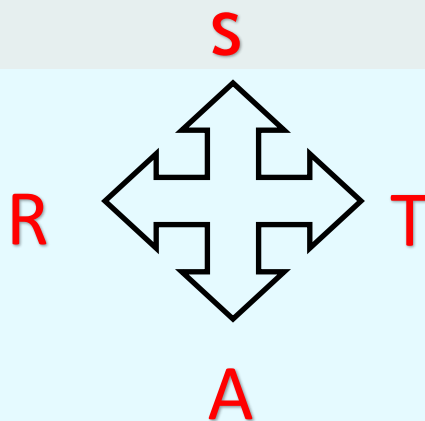


Find out as much information as possible about incidents with your child to investigate why they happen:

Use STAR method : Setting, Trigger, Action and then Result.

Setting: Where? Who was there, what was happening? What had happened earlier?

Result: What was the result for the child?



Tigger :What happened **just before** the incident?

Action: What the child does- and what adults did in response.