

COSY UP



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

SENSORY SMILES

Rob Emery (*Autism Advisory Teacher*)

For many of us, brushing our teeth is a simple part of the daily routine. But for children and young people with autism, it can be a deeply uncomfortable and distressing experience. In this issue, we explore practical strategies to help parents navigate this challenging aspect of daily life.

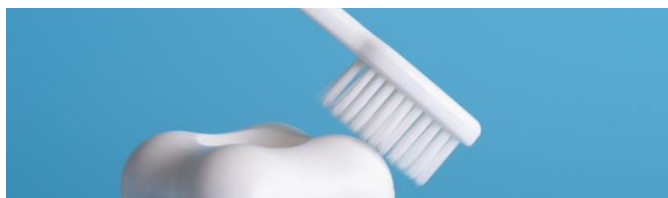
UNDERSTANDING SENSORY PROCESSING

The mouth is one of the most sensitive parts of the body, and brushing teeth can trigger a range of sensory responses. Children with autism may experience sensory input differently—some may be hypersensitive (over-responsive), while others may be hyposensitive (under-responsive). Below, we outline ways to support different sensory systems to help make tooth brushing more tolerable.

PROPRIOCEPTIVE INPUT

Proprioception helps us understand where our body parts are and how much force we're using. Supporting this system can help prepare the jaw and mouth for brushing.

- Apply firm pressure to the jaw and neck before brushing.
- Encourage biting down on a towel or cloth several times beforehand.
- Use fingertips to gently press around the cheeks and gums.
- Consider using a vibrating toothbrush for added sensory feedback.



VESTIBULAR SUPPORT

The vestibular system controls balance and head position. Stability can help reduce anxiety during brushing.

- Have your child lean against a wall while brushing.
- Make sure they can see themselves in a mirror to stay oriented.



TACTILE SENSITIVITIES

Texture and touch can be overwhelming. Gradual exposure can help build tolerance.

- Start with a Nuk training brush before introducing bristles.
- Use soft bristles initially, then transition to firmer ones.
- Try chewable toothbrushes for a different sensory experience.
- Use warm water instead of cold to reduce discomfort

AUDITORY CONSIDERATIONS

The sound of brushing—especially in an echo-prone bathroom—can be unsettling.

- Play calming music or use a countdown timer to distract.
- Try ear defenders or noise-cancelling headphones during brushing.

TASTE AND SMELL

Strong flavours or smells can be off-putting.

- Encourage regular rinsing if needed.
- Experiment with mild, flavourless, or differently flavoured toothpastes.

BUILDING POSITIVE HABITS

Establishing a consistent routine early on can make a big difference.

- Make tooth brushing a regular part of the day from a young age.
- Brush your teeth together to model the behaviour.
- Use apps like the Aquafresh Brush Time app to make brushing fun and rewarding.

Not just an AGM – join us for free talks and workshops!

- 3:00pm – 6:00pm: **Mini Marketplace**
- 3:15pm – 3:45pm: **Keep the Conversation Going: Talking About Relationships & Sex** – Workshop with Marisol Sanchez-Blesa, Education Manager
- 4:00pm – 4:30pm: **Good Kids Can Do Bad Things – Talk on Harmful Sexual Behaviours** by Rian Perry, Sexual Behaviour Service, Peterborough City Council
- 4:45pm – 6:15pm: **Annual General Meeting** – Hear what we've been up to, discover our plans for the year ahead, and see how our support makes a difference. Ask questions, get involved, and enjoy refreshments throughout!

Thursday

13th November 2025

3:00pm – 6:15pm

Can't attend in person?

Join virtually – just let us know when you RSVP.

RSVP: enquiries@dhiverse.org.uk

The Maple Centre

6 Oak Drive, Huntingdon

PE29 7HN

College Open Days:

Peterborough College:

13th November, 27th November.

5:30pm [register online](#)

City College:

18th November, 11th December

[Click here.](#)

John Mansfield College:

18th November, 11th December

[Click here.](#)

Stamford college:

19th November

5:30pm [register online](#)

Out & About

Half term at Nene Park
Holiday Trail, Pop-up fun
park, boat trips.

[Click here](#) for more info

Inflatanation SEN
Friendly sessions

[Click here](#)

Dr. Who at

Peterborough Museum

Including a sensory friendly
session.

[Click Here](#)

Burghley Halloween Trail

[Click here.](#)

Sacrewell Farm

The Big Halloween Mashup!

[Click here](#)

Rainy Days In

Try these...

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

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

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

**Make floating
ghosts!**

[Click here](#)



EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS WORKSHOP

What? Learn about what school can put in place for
your young person to support their exam access.

Who? For parents of secondary aged pupils

When? Tuesday 4th November 1:30-3pm

Where? Nene Park Academy

How? Email to sign up:

Rhys.Baker@peterborough.gov.uk

NOTICE BOARD

To do:

- Apply for school places by Oct 31st (secondary places)
- Apply for School Places by January 15th (Primary places)
[Click here](#)

Welcome to the AATS Team: Rhys Baker

My name is Rhys. I have worked in and around schools for 15 years, including 3 years as a SENCO. Most of that time has been in secondary schools where I taught Biology to 11-18 year olds. I have taught in inner-city schools and grammars. I have been classroom based and worked in Alternate Provision. I spend my spare time doing ballet, powerlifting and volunteering. I think bow ties are cool, waistcoats are underappreciated and that the world would be a lot better if we stopped to listen more. Two fun facts about me: I used to work as a children's entertainer for birthday parties, and I had a brief stint playing international dodgeball for Wales. I am married and have two children who take full advantage of Dad's Taxi Service.

