



Welcome to
Mansfield SEND!



Your newsletter for
parents and carers of
children and young
people with Send.

Inside this issue:

Hints and tips for a
successful day out.

Outdoor activity ideas
- at home or out and
about

Online events for
parents and carers

NAME CHANGE!

Here at Schools and
Families Specialist
Services, we have
changed our name -
we are now **SEND**
Inclusion Services

Outdoor Activities and Parent Events.

Summer Term A '25

May 2025

After what has felt like a very long winter, it has been lovely to finally see some sunshine over the last few weeks. Fingers crossed it will continue into the summer!

As the weather gets warmer, we do start thinking more about days out, and enjoying the sunshine. This can be very different though with young people who have send, and so this half term we will be looking at some hints and tips to help when planning days out, and also some ideas for outdoor activities that you can try at home or in your local area.



Cat Village North in Chesterfield, hold animal assisted therapy sessions with cats every Sunday at 3pm. Sessions are free, but you do need to book. Find more details using the links below...

[Cat Village North](#) | [Cat Cafe](#) | [Chesterfield, Peak District](#)

[SEND Group - Animal Assisted Therapy with Cats Tickets, Multiple Dates](#) | [Eventbrite](#)



If you're a cat person, the journey is probably worth it.

Activities



My Place at Westfield Folk House in Mansfield, offer a range of social and recreational activities for young people aged 13+. Activities include music, dance arts, sports and adventure activities as well as usual youth club activities such as Pool, Table tennis, Games, coffee Bar. There is a Saturday Morning Cooking Club, Two Left Feet Inclusive Walking Group and Square Peg inclusive Dance. You can find details of all of these on their Facebook page using the link below.



Plan the journey as well as the day. However you are getting there, think about what your child or young person likes to do on a journey, and how you will keep them relaxed and regulated during the journey. Also make sure you pack so that anything you are likely to need during the journey is on the top!



Don't be afraid to ask for help. If it's too much to manage on your own, ask family or friends to come with you. Be kind to yourself, and recognise how hard taking our children out can be sometimes. Go for something that you feel comfortable with, and build up from there. It doesn't have to be a massive day out to have fun, going to the local park and having an ice cream, or driving somewhere and eating a snack in the car may be all your child can manage, and that's fine. Do what works for you.

SUCCESSFUL DAYS OUT

HINTS AND TIPS

Having a day out with children or young people can be tricky at the best of times, but even more so when you have additional needs to think about and plan for.

Here are some hints and tips to try and make it a bit easier...

Plan ahead.

- **Find out about the place you want to go to.**

Look up the location and check for accessibility features, quiet areas, and any special adaptations they offer. They may also provide free carers tickets.

- **Prepare as much as you can.**

Make a list of items to bring, such as sensory toys, snacks, spare clothes or medical supplies.

Think about taking items that provide comfort, such as favourite toys or blankets, or sensory support items such as headphones to block out noise.

Consider the food you take, and make sure you have familiar snacks and drinks to keep your child comfortable and hydrated.

Consider using a GPS tracking device if needed for added safety and peace of mind.

Create a schedule

- **Make a visual timetable.**

Use a visual timetable to outline the day's activities. This helps children understand what to expect and reduces anxiety.

- **Routine.**

Stick to familiar routines as much as possible, especially around meal times and rest periods.

Communicate

- **Explain the Plan**

Talk to your child about the day's activities in advance. Use simple language and visual aids if needed. Make sure they understand well in advance what is going to be happening.

- **Social Stories or photos**

You could even create social stories to help your child understand what will happen during the outing. You could look at photos of where they will be going, or help them to look at the website.

Choose the Right Time

- **Quiet Times**

Visit places during quieter times to avoid overwhelming crowds and noise.

- **Short Trips**

Start with shorter trips to gauge your child's comfort level. You may find it works better to go on two shorter trips rather than one big long day out. Think about how you can pace the day to make it relaxed—you may want to go out a bit later and come back a bit earlier to make the day shorter, or you may want to build breaks and rest times into the day.

Be Flexible

- **Adapt Plans**

Be prepared to adapt your plans based on your child's needs and responses. If they become overwhelmed, have a backup plan or a quiet place to retreat to.

If you are going as a group you may want to think about building in extra quiet times for your child— give them opportunities to have a quiet time and regulate themselves whilst everyone else goes off and does something else for a while.

- **Follow Interests**

Engage in activities that align with your child's interests to keep them engaged and happy. Try to maintain the balance between activity times, and down times to make sure the day doesn't become too overwhelming or exhausting.

Involve Your Child

- **Choice**

Let your child have a say in the activities or destinations. This can increase their excitement and willingness to participate. Try giving them choices throughout the day, and involve them in making the decisions, for example - shall we go for a walk or have a drink first?

- **Participation**

Encourage your child to help with planning and packing to make them feel involved. Let them choose which toys or snacks to bring with them. (You may need to take some additional ones if they've not chosen everything you think they'll need!)

Safety First

- **Identification**

Ensure your child has identification with your contact information in case they get separated. If they are happy for you to do so, you could write your phone number on their arm. Another option is to write contact details on a key ring that you attach to their clothes.

- **Emergency Plan**

Have an emergency plan in place and make sure everyone knows what to do if something goes wrong.

And finally...**Enjoy the Moment and Relax**

Take time to enjoy the outing and celebrate any lovely memories that you create together.

Even if the day as a whole didn't work out too well, think about the bits that did, and you can build on these next time.

For some of our children and young people, a day out would just be too much at the moment. We have some incredibly anxious young people just now, who are finding life difficult to cope with. If that is your child, put the hints and tips to one side, and save them for that time in the future when things are looking brighter. For now, consider if there is anyone who will look after your young person for a few hours so that you can get out for a couple of hours yourself. Or, put the kettle on, make yourself a cuppa, and if the sun is shining take a few moments in the sunshine. (If the sun's not shining, sit inside and look out at the rain whilst you drink your coffee!)

Sensory Walks

You could go for a sensory walk around your garden, in a local park, or around your neighbourhood.

- ♦ **Sight**—look for different colours, shapes and patterns in nature or on buildings.
- ♦ **Sound**—sit still and listen carefully—what can you hear? Can you draw a sound picture?
- ♦ **Touch**—feel the texture of leaves, bark, stones. Can you find something rough, smooth, hard etc.
- ♦ **Smell**—can you smell flowers, leaves—go outside after rain, or add soil, leaves etc to a jar and add water.

Outdoor art and creative projects

- ♦ **Nature collage or sculpture**—collect leaves, stones and twigs to create collages or sculptures
- ♦ **Rock painting**—collect rocks to draw or paint with bright colours and patterns
- ♦ **Chalk art**—use chalk to create drawings on pavements or driveways
- ♦ **Outdoor story time**—find a comfortable spot outside to sit and read books together

Scavenger hunts

Create a scavenger hunt to use in the garden or neighbourhood.

Items to find;

- ♦ Something smaller than a penny
- ♦ Something smooth
- ♦ Something yellow

Themes:

- ♦ Colours
- ♦ Shapes
- ♦ Textures
- ♦ Bugs—go for a bug hunt.

Physical Activities

Think about your child's sensory needs, with vestibular and proprioceptive activities;

- ♦ **Obstacle courses**—set up simple obstacle courses using simple garden or household items
- ♦ **Nature Yoga**—look up and learn simple yoga poses inspired by animals and nature
- ♦ **Games**—play traditional outdoor games such as tag, hide and seek or hopscotch



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

Schools and Families Specialist Services
Communication & Interaction Team

Mansfield Parents' and Carers' Group

A network for families of autistic children and young people on roll at Mansfield Schools and Colleges (no diagnosis necessary)



Next meeting
Monday 19th
May. Speak to
your child's
school for a link.

and Jenny Byrne, specialist advisory teachers from Nottinghamshire County Council's Communication and Interaction Team, to be part of a supportive local network to discuss and learn from each other about 'all things autism'.

Through a mix of virtual drop-in sessions with opportunities to ask questions and chat to other parents and carers, to focused sessions covering the areas that most matter to you, you will find a warm 'neuro-affirming' welcome where autistic differences are celebrated and creative ways to support your child's unique needs are explored.

Choose from a morning or after-school session each half-term to best suit your availability:

Monday 19th May 10.30—11.30am OR 4—5pm
Monday 30th June 10.30—11.30am OR 4—5pm

Please express your interest to your child's school and give permission for them to share your name(s), child or children's age(s), your email address(es), and preferred time with us, and we will send you Microsoft Teams links to each session.

Please feel no pressure to come to all sessions or stay for the whole of a drop-in, but we look forward to meeting with you soon at a time and session that suits you.

NOTTS PARENT EVENT: iPad Apps for Learners with SEN

General Outline

So, you have an iPad but aren't sure what apps you could use, the app store has more content than you could ever cope with, and you haven't got the time or understanding of what to look for. During this session we will look at some of the free and low-cost apps you could use to support your child, as well as using some of the features built-in to the iPad to help make them more accessible whilst retaining control

- Free apps
- Low-cost apps
- Accessibility
- Peripheral devices
- Strategies for managing the iPad

Having an iPad with you will be useful if you want to download the apps during the session: you will need credit on your device if you want to install them. Details of the apps demonstrated and discussed will be shared after the event

Course Details

Thursday, 19th June 2025 – 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

VENUE: NETHERFIELD FORUM,
St George's Centre, Netherfield, Nottingham NG4 2NN

The course presenters will be **Neil Oldbury** and **Jane Hare** from the Cognition & Learning Team, Schools & Families Specialist Services (SFSS)

PLEASE NOTE: There is a FREE event and there will be no charge in attending

TO BOOK via EVENTBRITE Ctrl + Click Link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/notts-parent-event-i-pad-apps-for-learners-with-sen-tickets-1105615368329>

Closing date: Friday, 13th June 2025 at 12:00 noon

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