

# NEWSLETTER

## Autistic Thriving at School and Beyond Public event – 6<sup>th</sup> May 6.45pm

As part of the University of Reading's centenary celebrations, the Centre for Autism Wellbeing Hub is hosting a free hybrid event on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May exploring what supports autistic children to flourish in education and everyday life.

The evening will bring together autistic children and young people, families, professionals, students and researchers, and will feature talks from Professor Elizabeth McCrum, members of the Wellbeing Hub team, and Andy Smith (Spectrum Gaming).

In-person attendees can also view poster presentations of current autism research from current staff and students.

**Date:** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May

**Location:** Palmer Building, Whiteknights Campus (or online via Teams)

**Time:** 18:45–21:00 (in person) | 19:00–20:30 (online)

Full details, including booking links and a full agenda for the evening is [available on our website](#)

## Our New Facebook Page!

The Centre For Autism Wellbeing Hub have a [new Facebook page](#) with all our latest news and events. Please follow us for regular updates.



## Monthly talks

Please note that there will be no webinar in April due to the Easter break

## Spaces Available – Family Wellbeing Course (Ages 11–16)

A few places are still available on our 6-week Family Wellbeing Course for parents and carers of autistic children aged 11-16 (including those awaiting assessment).

- **Thursdays 19:00–21:00 from 22<sup>nd</sup> April**
- In person - University of Reading
- £60 per person (financial support available)

Delivered in partnership with Parenting Special Children, this course has been co-developed with autistic children and young people. It includes video insights from them about what supports their thriving, alongside practical, evidence-based strategies to support whole-family flourishing.

[More details on our website](#)

**Centre for Autism**  
Special Interest Group  
*Free in person event for professionals*



**Date:** Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
16:00 – 18:00 p.m.  
Tea and coffee provided.

**Title:** The Wellbeing Hub: current work and future directions

The Wellbeing Hub team will present an overview of the current activities of the Wellbeing Hub. Attendees will be invited to share their perspectives and ideas to help shape the future direction of the Hub.

**Venue:** School of Agriculture, Earley Gate, University of Reading. Satnav Postcode RG6 6ES

**Register:** [Please visit our Eventbrite page](#)

All advertised studies have been granted ethical approval by the University of Reading's Research Ethics Committee

### Music and Early Word Learning in Autism

Learning new words can sometimes take longer for autistic children, and using those words in different situations can also be challenging. While we know a lot about how children learn language in general, we still do not fully understand what best supports autistic children who experience language delays. Many autistic children show a strong interest in music, and research suggests the brain may respond more strongly to song than speech. This study explores whether music could support word learning in young autistic children.

#### We are looking for:

- Autistic children under 6 with little or no language (diagnosed or awaiting assessment)

#### The study involves:

- 2-3 visits to the University of Reading (4 hours total)
- Standardised assessments of autism, language, and cognitive skills
- Word learning task with and without music

Families receive a £40 Amazon voucher for taking part. If you are interested, please contact: Sina Meyer ([s.meyer@pgr.reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.meyer@pgr.reading.ac.uk))

### Does your child have trouble sleeping?

Many children with autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions experience sleep difficulties. This study seeks to understand whether children benefit from sleep interventions and why some children benefit from sleep hygiene training while others may require melatonin. Your participation will help us better understand the impact of sleep interventions for children.

#### Who are we looking for:

Children with autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions aged 2-15.

#### What will the study involve:

- Up to three visits to the University of Reading involving,
  - questionnaires about your and your child's sleep and well-being,
  - a short play-based sensory assessment with your child
  - wearing sleep watches for up to 7 nights.

Families receive £20 per visit (for 2nd and/or 3rd visit).

**If you are interested, please contact:** Rhea Varghese ([r.varghese@reading.ac.uk](mailto:r.varghese@reading.ac.uk))

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If you have any feedback for the newsletter including anything you would like to hear about then please get in touch [autism@reading.ac.uk](mailto:autism@reading.ac.uk)

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