

KINTOA

Strength of Family, Courage of Warriors

September/October 2024



S.E.N.D

Our Way

*Let's seize the
chance to lay down
some ground rules!*

SUPPORT

EMPOWERMENT

NOURISHMENT

DISCOVERY

Editor's Letter

Dear Reader

As summer fades and we gear up for the new school year, we're all feeling that mix of excitement and uncertainty. Whether your child is heading back to school or you're re-establishing a homeschool routine, the transition can be challenging.

If you're anything like me, the summer holidays were a mixed bag—moments of laughter, a few tears, and some “you wouldn't believe it” moments. Whether you spent the summer soaking up the sun, dodging the rain, or just trying to survive the chaos, we're here to say: you did it, well done on getting through to the other side.

Since our last edition, we've seen significant changes—a new Labour government and unsettling riots that have left many feeling isolated and uncertain, something we can relate to. However, when we come together as a community, we find strength in our shared experiences. Each of us brings something unique to the table, and it's through supporting one another that we become stronger, more united, and better equipped to handle whatever life throws our way. Together, we can overcome obstacles, celebrate victories, and move forward with the confidence that we're never alone on this journey.

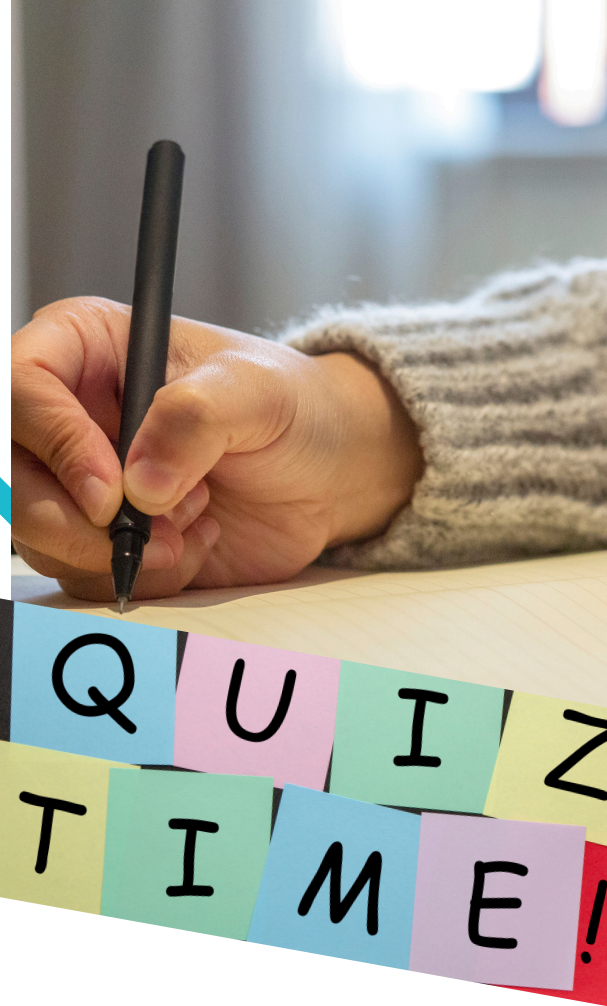
This edition brings some practical tips and advice to help you navigate the weeks ahead. Whether it's finding a new routine, easing the transition back to school, or just making it through the day, we've got you covered.

**WARM
REGARDS,**

*Debs
Aspland*



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School Year Sorted



Yes, we know that some mornings won't go to plan - this isn't a movie - but most mornings, we leave the home a bit more ready to face whatever the day throws at us.

If visual schedules work for your loved one, then think about creating a visual timetable so they can see the routine in a way that makes sense to them. If you struggle with making one, ask your class teacher or perhaps an online group of friends. Some people are more creative than others and will enjoy making this.

Now the schools are about to go back, you can hear that sigh of relief tinged with anxiety about how the new teacher, new school, new taxi driver etc will work out.

In this edition of KinToa, we want to chat about the things you can control and share some tips on how to make the school year run a bit smoother for you.

Evening Routines

Make sure uniforms or school outfits are ready and at hand. Don't give yourself the task of searching for items on a morning if you can avoid it. The same goes for things like PE kits, letters that needed your signature, etc. You can be super organised and make sure these items are all together on a Sunday evening, but let's keep it real, as many of us won't have the time or capacity for that.

Morning Routines

Routines are a must have in our home. We have a set time to wake up and then a routine to get us from bed to out of the door. We also include time to just chill once we're washed and dressed, so the school day starts in a more relaxed manner.

Keep the School up to date

We know how many appointments we have, or how behaviour and triggers can change without warning.

If you have received appointments over the summer for the next school year, write a list of these along with any that were already in the diary. We know schools do not always communicate well within their walls. Sending an up to date list of when your child will be absent at the beginning of each term (or half term as we know them) is really helpful. Send via email so you have a record of sending it.

If there are new triggers or new behaviours, or perhaps even a new diagnosis, or contact details, please make sure you email that into the school too.

Top Tip for emails

Use headings and bullet points with an offer that they can contact you if they need more information.

School Year Sorted

. . . Continued

One Page Introduction

It can be helpful to send in a one page introduction to you and your child if there is a new teacher or perhaps a new taxi driver or escort this year.

Talk about the things they love doing, the targets that were set at the last Review meeting (some teachers won't have read their EHC Plan), any tips or tricks you know that work on helping them to refocus or engage with a topic.

Also, include information about whether you prefer phone calls, emails or if you collect your child and are happy to chat at the beginning or end of the day. Provide your contact details here too, to save them having to search for them.

School Calendar

Make sure you add the school holidays to your diary or calendar. We make it easy by just highlighting the holiday dates with a bright pen. If, like us, you have a variety of schools, use a different colour pen for each one (and make a note of this at the front of the diary or calendar, so it is easy to remember).

Schools usually have term dates on their website, along with staff development days, so you can find the information easily.

Also include things like World Book Day (6 March 2025) in your diary - with a note to find out what the school theme is.

Get ahead wherever you can, so nothing comes as a surprise.



Use coloured highlighters in your diary to see school holidays and events at a glance

Deadlines

It's useful to add dates to your diary such as last year's review date so you can prompt the school before that date this year if you haven't heard from them. (and yes, we know the law says they should, but we all know some schools are better at this than others).

Timetables

It can help to have a copy of your child's timetable in your notebooks. It can help if you start to see new behaviours when they come home. Sometimes you can see there is a certain lesson that seems to happen on those days and you can start to unpick what is happening.

Christmas gifts

Start a list as soon as possible of any staff, drivers, escorts etc you wish to buy a small Christmas gift for. On the next page, we are going to provide some ideas for cheap and cheerful gifts so you can get ahead of the game and not sit there on the last week of term going "oh *&%!".

REFER BACK TO OUR PREVIOUS ARTICLE ON BULLET JOURNALING FOR PARENT CARERS IN EDITION 2. USING A BULLET JOURNAL CAN HELP YOU KEEP TRACK OF IMPORTANT DATES, QUESTIONS, AND NOTES. OR CHECK OUT LIFE ASPLAND'S DOWNLOADS TO HELP YOU STAY ORGANISED

Christmas Gift Ideas

Personalised Thank You Cards

- **What to Do:** Get your kids involved! Have them draw, colour, or even write (or dictate to you) a heartfelt message. You can print out a template or use card stock. Add a bit of colour, maybe a funny message or two, and voila!
- **Why It's Great:** Personal and from the heart, plus it's a keepsake they can treasure.

Homemade Treats

- **What to Do:** If you enjoy baking (or even if you just tolerate it), whip up a batch of biscuits, brownies, or fudge. Pop them into a decorative tin or cellophane bag with a ribbon.
- **Why It's Great:** Who doesn't love a sweet treat? It's thoughtful, and homemade always adds a nice touch.

DIY Hot Chocolate Kits

- **What to Do:** Fill a small jar with layers of hot chocolate mix, mini marshmallows, and chocolate chips. You could even throw in a candy cane for stirring. Add a festive ribbon and a little tag with instructions.
- **Why It's Great:** Perfect for those chilly days and super easy to put together.

Decorated Plant Pots with Succulents

- **What to Do:** Buy some small, inexpensive plant pots and let your kids decorate them with paint, stickers, or whatever crafty bits you have lying around. Pop a little succulent inside (they're usually quite cheap and low-maintenance).
- **Why It's Great:** It's a lovely, long-lasting gift that brightens up their space.



Gifts don't need to be expensive.

Memory Jars

- **What to Do:** Fill a jar with little notes of appreciation, fun memories, or even quotes and jokes. Decorate the jar with ribbon or paint.
- **Why It's Great:** It's a pick-me-up for those tough days when they need a reminder of how brilliant they are.

Handmade Bookmarks

- **What to Do:** Use card, ribbons, and stickers to create personalised bookmarks. You can even laminate them if you've got the kit.
- **Why It's Great:** Teachers and teaching assistants probably read a lot—this is both thoughtful and practical.

Gratitude Jar with Teabags

- **What to Do:** Fill a jar with different teabags and attach a label that says "Thank you for being a 'tea-riffic' teacher!" (corny but it'll make them smile).
- **Why It's Great:** It's a relaxing gift, and tea is like a warm hug in a cup.



How Do You Handle Stress as a Parent Carer?

Being a parent carer can be incredibly rewarding, but let's face it, it can also be pretty stressful. How you cope with that stress makes all the difference. This quiz will help you discover which area of your well-being—physical, emotional, mental, or social—you naturally lean on the most. But that's not all! You'll also find out where you might need to show yourself a bit more love and attention. Let's get started!

1. You've had an incredibly tough day. What's the first thing you do when you finally get a moment to yourself?

- A. Go for a quick walk or do some stretches.
- B. Call a friend or vent in a support group.
- C. Journal about your feelings or meditate.
- D. Dive into a book, puzzle, or hobby that engages your mind.

2. When you're feeling overwhelmed, which of these sounds most appealing?

- A. A workout session or a bit of yoga to release tension.
- B. Meeting up with a friend for coffee and a chat.
- C. Spending some quiet time reflecting on your day or doing breathing exercises.
- D. Learning something new or working on a creative project.

A

B

C

D



3. How do you recharge after a particularly stressful week?

- A. Going for a long walk in nature or a workout session.
- B. Attending a social event or having a deep conversation with someone who understands.
- C. Taking a bath with some calming music and candles.
- D. Engaging in a hobby that challenges your mind, like a puzzle or a game.

4. What do you do when you start to feel disconnected or lonely?

- A. Join a local exercise class or group activity to get moving with others.
- B. Reach out to friends or family for a catch-up.
- C. Write down your thoughts in a journal or practice self-compassion.
- D. Explore an online community with shared interests or dive into a new project.

5. When things feel out of control, how do you regain your sense of balance?

- A. Exercise or take a walk to clear your head.
- B. Talk things through with someone who listens.
- C. Spend some time reflecting on your feelings or practice mindfulness.
- D. Distract yourself with a challenging mental task or creative activity.

AS PARENT CARERS, WE OFTEN POUR SO MUCH INTO OUR CHILDREN THAT WE FORGET TO FILL OUR OWN CUPS.
FINDING YOUR WELL-BEING BALANCE ISN'T JUST SELF-CARE—IT'S SURVIVAL.

- **Mostly A's:** You handle stress by moving your body and staying active. This helps you release tension and boost your energy. Consider adding more emotional or social activities to your routine to keep things balanced.
- **Mostly B's:** You focus on your emotional health, processing feelings through mindfulness, journaling, or self-reflection. Try incorporating more physical activity or community connections to round out your well-being.
- **Mostly C's:** You thrive on mental challenges and creativity when stressed. While this keeps your mind sharp, don't forget to nurture your body and emotions with physical activity and self-care.
- **Mostly D's:** You find strength in your connections, relying on friends, family, and support groups. This is great, but also consider balancing this with some solo activities or physical movement for a holistic approach.



Ideas for alternative things to try

- **Breath-Paced Walking:** If you typically lean on community or mental activities, take a 10-minute walk where you sync your breathing with your steps. This mindful movement can help you feel more grounded and physically relaxed.
- **Expressive Writing:** If you usually handle stress through physical activity or social connections, try writing down your thoughts and feelings for 5 minutes. This can help you process emotions you might not even realise are there.
- **Quick Brain Game:** If you usually focus on physical or emotional well-being, try a 5-minute brain game or puzzle app. It's a fun way to give your mind a workout and shift your focus from stress.
- **Join a Quick Online Chat:** If you usually manage stress through exercise or introspection, spend 5 minutes in an online support group or forum. Sharing or even just reading others' experiences can help you feel more connected and supported.

EACH AREA—PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, AND COMMUNITY—PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN HELPING YOU NAVIGATE THE UPS AND DOWNS OF PARENT CARER LIFE.
BY INTEGRATING A BIT OF EACH INTO YOUR ROUTINE, YOU CAN BUILD A MORE WELL-ROUNDED APPROACH TO SELF-CARE THAT SUPPORTS YOU IN EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE.

From Overwhelmed to Organised: Discover Life AsPland

Parenting children and young adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) comes with unique challenges, and as a mum of three, Debs knows this all too well. Love is the foundation, but to navigate the daily complexities, you need more, you need a solid strategy. That's where Life AsPland comes in.

Life AsPland offers a range of organisers and downloadable templates, specifically crafted to meet the needs of SEND families.

Designed for SEND Families Cut Through Chaos, Save Time Feel Empowered with Every Plan

Born from Debs' real-life experiences, Life AsPland is all about turning the chaos of SEND parenting into manageable, stress-free routines. Take charge of your family's journey—let Life AsPland guide you to a more organised and balanced life.

*Debs
Aspland*



FIND OUT MORE AT: LIFEASPLAND

5 Minute Fitness

Quick Workouts for Busy Parent Carers

We don't always have time for that 30 minute workout everyone tells us we need to do, but we do have a few odd "5 minutes" here and there.

Just a few minutes of movement each day can help reduce stress, boost mood, and improve overall energy levels. Exercise also promotes better sleep and mental clarity, which are essential when managing the complex needs of your child.

Here are some quick, simple workouts you can do anytime, anywhere—no gym required!



Stretch and Destress

- Perfect For: Anyone feeling stiff or tense.
- What to Do: Spend five minutes stretching out tight muscles. Focus on areas that tend to hold tension, like your neck, shoulders, and back. Try gentle neck rolls, shoulder shrugs, and a standing forward fold. Breathe deeply and let the tension melt away.

Seated Strength

- Perfect For: Those who prefer to stay seated or have limited mobility.
- What to Do: Sit in a sturdy chair with your feet flat on the floor. Start with seated leg lifts: lift one leg straight out in front of you, hold for a few seconds, then lower and switch legs. Next, try seated arm curls using small weights (or water bottles). Finally, do some seated twists to work your core—sit tall and twist your torso to one side, hold, then twist to the other side.

The Kitchen Cardio Burst

- Perfect For: When you're waiting for the kettle to boil or the oven to preheat.
- What to Do: Turn your kitchen into a mini cardio zone! March or jog in place, adding high knees if you're up for it. You can also do a few jumping jacks or step side-to-side. Keep the intensity up for five minutes to get your heart pumping and energy flowing.

Bedtime Burn

- Perfect For: A gentle workout to wind down before bed.
- What to Do: Lie down on your bed or a yoga mat. Start with some gentle leg raises—lie on your back, lift one leg at a time, hold for a few seconds, then lower slowly. Follow up with some glute bridges—lie on your back with knees bent, lift your hips towards the ceiling, hold, and then lower. Finish with a few minutes of deep breathing to relax your body and mind.

5 minute fitness

Continued.....

Mindful Movement

- Perfect For: Those who want to combine fitness with mindfulness.
- What to Do: Stand tall and start with some deep breaths, then move through a series of slow, deliberate movements. Try a few gentle yoga poses like a standing forward bend, tree pose (standing on one leg), or a simple side stretch. Focus on how your body feels with each movement, and breathe deeply throughout.

Family Fun Fitness

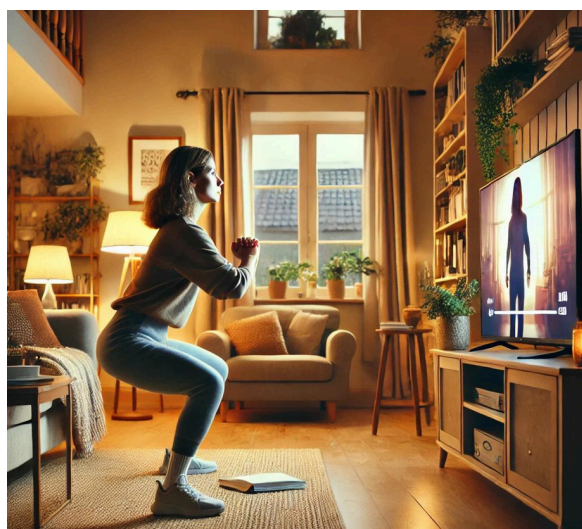
- Perfect For: A quick workout you can do with your kids.
- What to Do: Get the whole family involved with a quick dance party! Put on a favorite song and dance around the living room together. You can also try a mini workout circuit: 1 minute of jumping jacks, 1 minute of squats, 1 minute of arm circles, 1 minute of marching in place, and 1 minute of playful stretching.

Wall Workout

- Perfect For: A simple, low-impact workout using a wall for support.
- What to Do: Stand facing a wall, about arm's length away. Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height and do some wall push-ups—bend your elbows to bring your chest towards the wall, then push back. Follow with a wall sit—slide down the wall into a seated position with your back against it and hold for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Finish with some calf raises—stand tall, lift your heels off the ground, hold, then lower.

TV Time Toning

- Perfect For: When you're catching up on your favorite show.
- What to Do: During a commercial break, stand up and do a quick circuit: 1 minute of squats, 1 minute of lunges, 1 minute of arm circles, 1 minute of standing marches, and 1 minute of deep breaths and stretching. If you're streaming, just pause for a quick fitness break!



Tips for Success:

- Start Slow: If you're new to exercise or it's been a while, ease into these movements and listen to your body.
- Set a Reminder: It's easy to forget about fitness, so set a timer or leave a sticky note somewhere you'll see it to remind you to squeeze in your five-minute workout.

Remember, the key is **consistency**—five minutes a day adds up over time. So go ahead, take a few minutes for yourself, and enjoy the benefits of these quick, energising workouts!

Running a Facebook group



Running a Facebook group for parent carers can be incredibly rewarding, providing a supportive community where members can share experiences, advice, and encouragement. However, managing an active group comes with its challenges. Here are some tips and ideas to keep your group engaged, make life easier as an admin, and ensure a positive experience for everyone involved.

Set the Tone with Clear Guidelines

- **Why It Matters:** Establishing clear, respectful guidelines helps maintain a positive atmosphere and prevents misunderstandings.
- **What to Do:** Draft a set of group rules that outline acceptable behavior, posting guidelines, and the types of content that are encouraged or discouraged. Pin these rules to the top of the group and remind members periodically. Be clear about the consequences for breaking rules, such as warnings or removal from the group, to keep the environment safe and supportive. You can also ask people who join to comment on the rules post saying they have read and agreed.

Foster Engagement with Regular Content

- **Why It Matters:** Consistent, varied content keeps the group lively and encourages interaction among members.
- **What to Do:** Plan a content calendar with a mix of post types—questions, polls, tips, and discussion prompts. For example, you could have a “Motivation Monday” where members share what’s helping them get through the week, or a “Wisdom Wednesday” for sharing advice. Consider creating theme days that align with your group’s focus, such as “Self-Care Sundays” where members can share how they’re taking time for themselves.

Encourage Member Participation

- **Why It Matters:** A group feels more like a community when members actively contribute.
- **What to Do:** Encourage members to ask questions, share their own experiences, and support one another. Highlight member contributions by featuring “Post of the Week” or “Member Spotlight” posts. Running occasional challenges or events, like a photo contest or a virtual coffee chat, can also boost participation and strengthen connections within the group.



Facebook Groups

Stay Organised with Admin Tools

- **Why It Matters:** Managing a group efficiently prevents admin burnout and ensures the group runs smoothly.
- **What to Do:** Utilise Facebook's admin tools to automate some tasks. For example, set up automatic membership questions to screen new members and use post approval settings to manage the flow of content. Consider scheduling posts in advance using Facebook's built-in scheduling feature or third-party tools. Creating a small team of trusted co-admins or moderators can also help share the workload and keep the group active even when you need a break.

Monitor Group Dynamics and Address Issues Promptly

- **Why It Matters:** A well-managed group is one where all members feel safe and respected.
- **What to Do:** Keep an eye on group interactions to ensure discussions remain constructive. If conflicts arise, address them quickly and privately if possible. Be prepared to step in and mediate if discussions become heated, and enforce your group's rules consistently. Consider having a zero-tolerance policy for bullying or harassment to maintain a supportive environment.



Make Use of Group Insights

- **Why It Matters:** Understanding how your group is engaging with content can help you tailor future posts.
- **What to Do:** Regularly review the Group Insights provided by Facebook, which offer data on engagement, member demographics, and the most popular posts. Use this information to adjust your content strategy—if you notice that members respond well to certain types of posts, consider creating more of that content.

Protect Your Privacy and Well-being

- **Why It Matters:** As an admin, you need to maintain your own well-being and boundaries.
- **What to Do:** Keep your personal information private by using group settings that prevent members from accessing your profile. Consider setting boundaries around your availability by not responding to admin tasks at all hours. It's okay to step back when needed—your health and well-being are important. If managing the group becomes overwhelming, don't hesitate to ask for help from co-admins or moderators.

Facebook Groups

Stay Informed on Facebook's Policies

- **Why It Matters:** Understanding Facebook's guidelines helps you manage the group effectively and avoid issues.
- **What to Do:** Familiarise yourself with Facebook's Community Standards and ensure your group's rules align with them. Stay updated on any changes to these standards to avoid penalties or issues with your group's visibility. Periodically review your group settings to make sure they're aligned with current best practices for privacy and security.

Celebrate Milestones and Achievements

- **Why It Matters:** Recognising milestones helps build a sense of community and pride among members.
- **What to Do:** Celebrate group milestones like reaching a certain number of members or anniversaries of the group's founding. You could run special events, create custom badges, or simply post a thank-you note to the members. Acknowledging the collective achievements of your community strengthens the bonds between members and makes the group feel more personal.



Provide Resources and Support

- **Why It Matters:** Offering valuable resources can make your group a go-to destination for parent carers.
- **What to Do:** Share useful articles, websites, or tools that align with the interests and needs of your group members. Consider creating a "Files" section in your group where members can easily access resources like helpful links, templates, or guides. Offering regular Q&A sessions where members can ask for advice or share tips is another great way to provide ongoing support.

Final Thoughts

Running a Facebook group for parent carers can be a powerful way to build a supportive community. By setting clear guidelines, fostering engagement, and staying organised, you can create a positive space where members feel valued and connected. Remember, the key to a thriving group is balance—keep things active and engaging, but don't hesitate to take a step back when you need to.



Remember

“You are not just a parent; you are a warrior, an advocate, and a constant source of love and strength for your child. Remember, it’s okay to take a break and recharge—you cannot pour from an empty cup.”

Gardening in Autumn

As the leaves start to change and the air turns crisp, September and October are perfect months to tend to your garden. Gardening can be a wonderful escape, a place where you can find solace and recharge after a busy day of caregiving. Here's a guide to the essential gardening tasks for this time of year and some tips on creating a cozy corner just for you—a spot to enjoy a well-deserved cup of tea (or something a bit stronger).

Essential Gardening Jobs for September and October

Tidy Up Flower Beds

- **Why It's Important:** As summer blooms fade, it's time to clear away spent plants and prepare your flower beds for the colder months.
- **What to Do:** Remove any dead annuals and cut back perennials that have finished flowering. Compost the healthy plant material and dispose of any diseased or pest-ridden plants to prevent problems next year. This tidy-up will give your garden a neat appearance and reduce the risk of disease over winter.

ANNUALS - TYPICALLY BLOOM FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD, OFFERING VIBRANT COLOURS THROUGHOUT THE SEASON. ONCE THEY HAVE COMPLETED THEIR LIFE CYCLE, THEY DIE, AND NEW PLANTS MUST BE PLANTED.
EXAMPLES: MARIGOLDS, PETUNIAS, AND ZINNIAS.

PERENNIALS - PLANTS THAT LIVE FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS. PERENNIALS RETURN YEAR AFTER YEAR.
EXAMPLES: LAVENDER, PEONIES, AND HOSTAS.



Plant Spring Bulbs

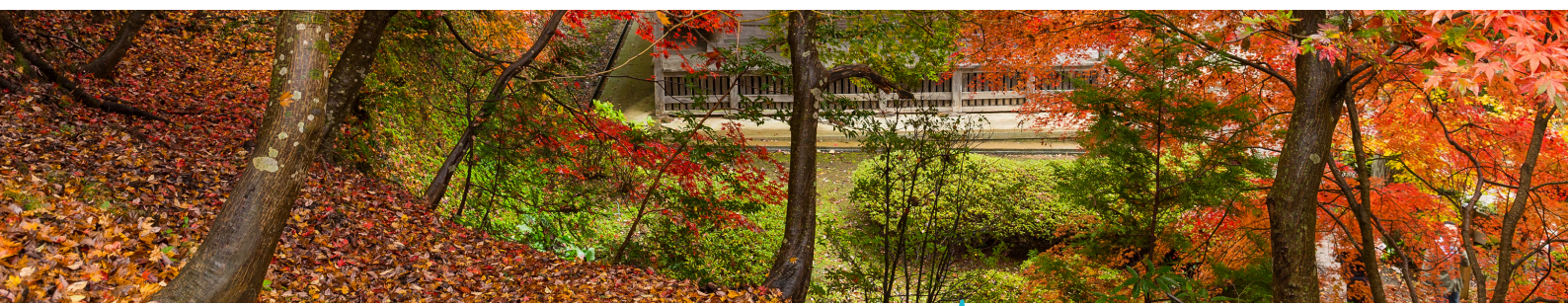
- **Why It's Important:** Autumn is the ideal time to plant spring bulbs like daffodils, tulips, and crocuses, ensuring a burst of color when the warmer weather returns.
- **What to Do:** Choose a sunny spot and plant bulbs at a depth of about three times their height. Make sure to space them out so they have room to grow. This simple task can provide you with something beautiful to look forward to as you navigate the winter months.

Prune Shrubs and Trees

- **Why It's Important:** Pruning now encourages healthy growth and shapes your shrubs and trees for next year.
- **What to Do:** Trim back overgrown branches, focusing on removing any that are dead, damaged, or crossing over each other. Be cautious not to prune spring-flowering shrubs too heavily, as you might inadvertently remove next year's blooms.

Harvest and Store Vegetables

- **Why It's Important:** If you've been growing vegetables, now is the time to harvest and store them to enjoy over the winter.
- **What to Do:** Pick the last of your tomatoes, beans, and other crops. Root vegetables like carrots and potatoes can be dug up and stored in a cool, dark place. Consider planting garlic or overwintering onions for next year's harvest.



Gardening in Autumn

Prepare the Lawn for Winter

- **Why It's Important:** A little lawn care now will keep your grass healthy through the winter and ready for spring.
- **What to Do:** Rake up fallen leaves to prevent them from smothering the grass. Consider giving your lawn a final mow, but set the blades higher to leave the grass a bit longer. You can also aerate the lawn by spiking it with a garden fork, which helps reduce compaction and improves drainage.

Add Mulch to Beds

- **Why It's Important:** Mulching helps protect your plants' roots from the cold and suppresses weeds.
- **What to Do:** Spread a layer of mulch, such as compost, bark chips, or leaf mold, over your flower beds. This will help retain moisture and keep the soil temperature stable as the weather cools.



Create a Relaxation area

Look for a quiet corner of your garden, ideally somewhere that catches the sun in the morning or afternoon. If you're short on space, even a small patio or balcony can be transformed into a relaxing nook.

Add comfortable seating

Plant lavender, rosemary, or thyme nearby, or place potted herbs around your seating area. As you brush past them or sit in your spot, the soothing scents will help you relax.

Add a small table to hold your cup of tea, a favorite book, or a candle. Consider hanging a wind chime or placing a small water feature nearby for gentle background noise. Fairy lights or solar-powered lanterns can create a warm, inviting atmosphere as the evenings draw in.

Consider adding an umbrella or pergola for shade and rain protection. A small fire pit or patio heater can extend the usability of your relaxation spot into the colder months.

Final Thoughts

Gardening in autumn is not just about preparing for the colder months; it's about creating a space that nurtures your well-being. By taking care of a few essential tasks now, you'll set your garden up for success next spring while also crafting a little corner of peace just for you. So take those five minutes with a cup of tea, sit back, and enjoy the fruits of your labour in your garden sanctuary.

Autistic Minds and the Power of Potential



NADINE HONEYBONE
DIRECTOR
BEST SELLING AUTHOR

Every day I work with a team of autistic adults who inspire me, each in their own way and collectively as members of staff at our charity Autistic Minds.

As a charity, we began in 2010 as The Autism Directory with a service to provide information and resources for the autistic community across the UK. As a parent and wife of two amazing yet very different people on the autism spectrum, my world was not the same as my group of friends and family, and a new life began to emerge for me, together with a passion to learn, help and support others in my new-found world.

Over the years the charity and the directory grew. In 2021 we renamed and rebranded ourselves to better represent who we are and who we serve - a community of people with phenomenal potential, yet marginalised and excluded in many ways by society.

I'd love to share more about who we are.

We are a team of 42 neurodiverse adults, of whom 36 are autistic and together we are Autistic Minds. We believe in the power of potential in all autistic and neurodivergent adults to advocate for themselves and build a more independent life.

We help by improving access to support, education, employment and social opportunities. We use our lived experience to develop creative ideas, create powerful solutions and deliver practical grassroots services for the community we serve to have equal access to opportunities.

We are based in Treforest and Caerphilly in South East Wales, yet our reach is further afield with our outreach services. These include community talks, befriending, awareness training and our annual shows in Llandudno and Cardiff. Here businesses and community groups exhibit to share their services and resources, and speakers from across the UK share their stories and knowledge at our all-day seminars.

At our offices in Treforest we have five charity enterprises which provide skills training and employment opportunities for autistic adults that have found it difficult to find employment elsewhere. They are; Ambition Prints, a design and printing service which can put any design on a mug, T-shirt, tote bag etc. Green Valley Workshop is our carpentry enterprise creating all things from wood such as bird boxes, hedgehog hotels and recycling units. Safe Shred Wales provides confidential document waste destruction for local businesses.



Resin Rat is our latest enterprise which produces 3D printed models for gaming. Then we have our first-ever service, The Autism Directory which is now the largest niche directory for our neurodiverse community in the UK, and second largest in the world (for now!).

All our autistic staff are supported in work by a dedicated Support Worker from The Autism Support Service, who have a huge amount of experience helping neurodivergent employees get the best from themselves in the workplace, and supporting employers to learn that too.

We are all very proud to be a part of a movement that is creating better outcomes in our small part of the UK, with other organisations and groups across the country that provide other great support services. We work closely with other charities and enterprises in our area and would love to expand this across the rest of Wales and the UK too.

A Network of Autistic Minds

Our longer-term vision is for a connected network of individuals, groups, organisations and businesses across the country who share the same vision for integrated communities in which all neurodiversity is accepted, understood and celebrated. Local hubs in your towns and villages that support the autistic community by those who understand them best - the autistic community themselves.

This is a vision we have had for a while now, taking the blueprint of what we do in our corner of South Wales and helping others do the same in their corner of the UK.

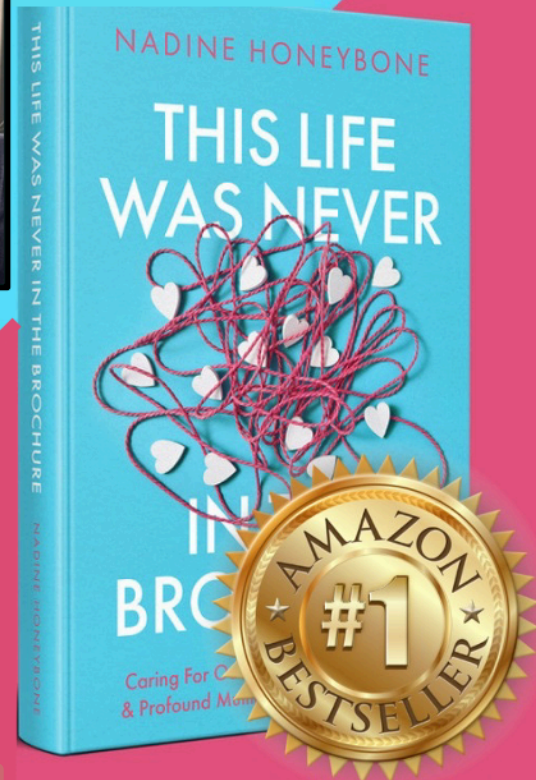
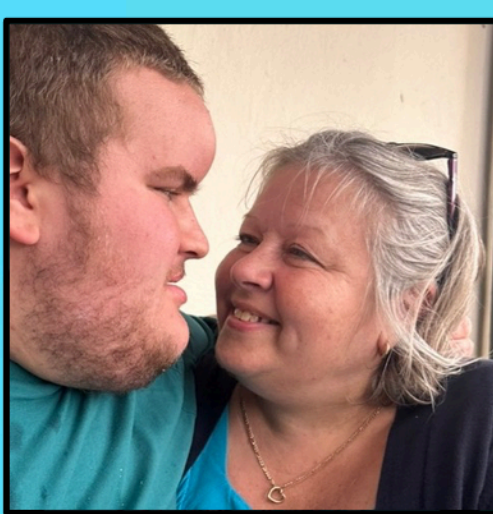
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead.

In the July issue of this fabulous magazine, I wrote about how to start your social business and start making a difference. I've had some really lovely conversations with people about their ideas and supporting them to bring these ideas to life - if you missed out on my offer of a 15-minute chat to discuss your ideas you can still grab one, but only available until the end of September 2024.

If all that seems a bit daunting though and your passion is to help and support the autistic and neurodiverse community in your area, then maybe this could be another way to help you do that. Become a part of our network of autistic minds across the UK and together we can work on creating better outcomes for the community in your part of the country too.

If you're interested to chat with me about starting a social business or becoming part of the Autistic Minds network. you can book a 15-minute chat with me here - <https://bit.ly/NadinesCalendar> or email me at nadine.honeybone@autisticminds.org.uk

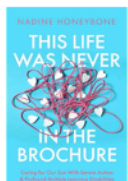
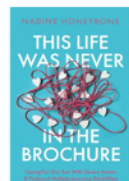
We support the autistic community in a truly unique way because we are the autistic community. We would love to have you with us.



Amazon Best Sellers

Our most popular products based on sales. Updated frequently.

Best Sellers in Autism Spectrum Disorder

<p>#1</p>  <p>This Life Was Never In The Brochure: Caring For... Nadine Honeybone ★★★★★ 2 Kindle Edition</p>	<p>#2</p>  <p>This Life Was Never In The Brochure: Carin... Nadine Honeybone ★★★★★ 2 Paperback</p>
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Outcomes v Targets

As parent carers, we're juggling a million things at once – school runs, appointments, therapies, and let's not forget the endless paperwork! Amidst this chaos, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by EHC plans, especially the tricky bits about outcomes and targets.

But don't worry, let's break it down in a way that even I, Debs, can understand (and I've been known to turn up a month early for appointments... or to the wrong building!).

Outcomes: Your Child's Shining Star

Outcomes are like your child's very own wish list for the future. They're the big, beautiful dreams you have for them – making friends, feeling confident, finding their place in the world. These aren't just any old goals, they're personal and unique to your child.

Think of it like this: if your child's dream is to be a rock star, the outcome might be "confidently performs in front of an audience."

Targets: The Stepping Stones

Targets are the little steps that help your child reach those big dreams. They're specific and measurable, like learning a new song on the guitar or joining a drama club.

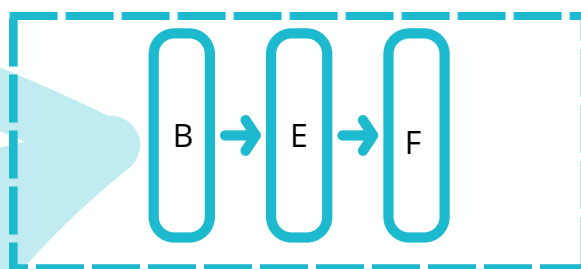
Think of targets as the stepping stones on the path to your child's dreams. They help break down those big outcomes into smaller, achievable goals.

Why It Matters: Making the Connection

Now, here's the important bit: every single special educational need (SEN) listed in your child's EHC plan (section B) should have a matching outcome in Section E. And for every outcome, there should be specific support (called "provision") in Section F of the plan to help your child achieve it.



It's like baking a cake (and you know how much I love cake!). You need all the right ingredients (the support) to create the perfect masterpiece (the outcomes).



Don't Be Afraid to Speak Up!

If you're looking at your child's EHC plan and something doesn't feel right, don't be afraid to speak up! Remember, you know your child best. If an outcome is missing or the support doesn't seem enough, have a chat with the SENCO.

We're all in this together, trying to make life a little bit easier for our amazing kids. And if that involves a bit of cake along the way, well, that's just a bonus!

Remember:

- Outcomes are the big dreams
- Targets are the stepping stones
- Make sure every SEN has a matching outcome
- Check that there's support in place for every outcome

Now, go forth and conquer those EHC plans! You've got this! And if you need a bit of extra support or just fancy a chat over a cuppa (and maybe a slice of cake), you know where to find me.

From Caregiving to Career: Unlocking Your Hidden Potential

The journey of a parent carer is one filled with unwavering dedication, boundless love, and a unique set of skills honed through countless challenges and triumphs. While the primary focus remains on providing the best possible care for your loved one, it's important to acknowledge the immense value of the skills you've acquired along the way. These skills, often developed through necessity and refined through experience, are highly transferable and can open doors to fulfilling work-from-home opportunities.

Recognising Your Unique Skill Set

As a parent carer, you've likely mastered a range of skills that may not seem immediately "marketable." However, in today's interconnected world, there's a growing demand for individuals with genuine empathy, resilience, and problem-solving abilities. These are precisely the qualities that parent carers embody.

Let's explore some of the key skills you've likely developed and how they can translate into potential career paths:

- **Patience & Empathy:** Caregiving demands unwavering patience and the ability to navigate emotionally charged situations. Your capacity for empathy allows you to connect with others on a deeper level, understanding their needs and perspectives. *These skills are invaluable in customer service or support roles, where providing compassionate and patient assistance is paramount.*
- **Multitasking:** Juggling appointments, managing household tasks, and providing emotional support are all part of a parent carer's daily routine. *Your ability to multitask efficiently and effectively makes you an ideal candidate for virtual assistant positions, where organisation and adaptability are key.*
- **Research & Resourcefulness:** Finding creative solutions to unexpected challenges is second nature to parent carers. *Your problem-solving skills and resourcefulness are highly sought after in fields like online research, where the ability to gather and analyse information is crucial.*
- **Advocacy and Communication:** You've likely become a powerful advocate for your loved one, navigating complex systems and communicating effectively with healthcare professionals and educators. *These advocacy and communication skills are transferable to roles in public relations or outreach coordination, where clear and persuasive communication is essential.*
- **Time Management:** Keeping track of medications, appointments, and daily routines requires exceptional time management skills. *Your ability to prioritise tasks and maintain meticulous records is a valuable asset in any self-employed venture, particularly as a productivity coach or consultant.*

Caregiving to Career

- **Teaching and Instruction:** Explaining complex information in a clear and empathetic manner is a skill you've likely honed through caregiving. *This ability to teach and instruct can lead to fulfilling opportunities as an online tutor or course creator, sharing your knowledge and expertise with others.*

Taking the Next Step

Transitioning into a work-from-home role requires self-assessment, research, and a willingness to embrace new challenges. Start by recognising and listing the skills you've acquired as a parent carer. Research the demand for your skill set and consider taking online courses to further enhance your abilities. Building a portfolio showcasing your skills and networking with others in your chosen field can also open doors to exciting opportunities.

Remember, the challenges you've overcome as a parent carer have equipped you with resilience, adaptability, and a unique perspective. Embrace your strengths, explore your passions, and unlock your hidden potential. The journey from caregiving to a fulfilling career is within your reach.

The demands of caregiving often lead to the development of remarkable skills that extend far beyond the home. Recognising and valuing these skills is the first step towards unlocking new opportunities and personal growth.

Here's a simple guide to help you on this journey:

Reflect and Acknowledge: Take a moment to pause and reflect on your daily routines and responsibilities as a parent carer.



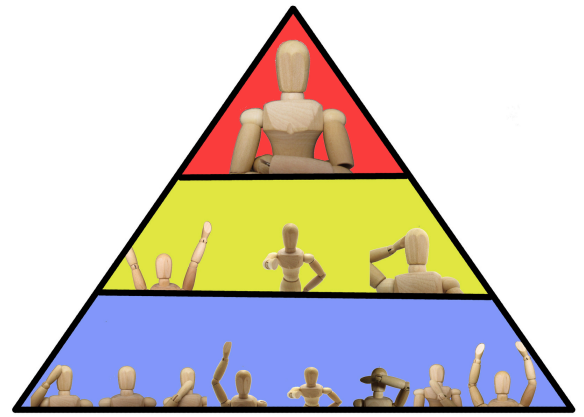
What challenges do you overcome? What tasks do you juggle effortlessly? What strengths have you discovered within yourself? Write down your observations, no matter how small they may seem. You might be surprised by the depth and breadth of your skills.

Connect the Dots: Now, look at your list of skills and consider how they might translate to the professional world. Are you a master multitasker, capable of managing multiple priorities with ease? Perhaps you're a skilled communicator, adept at explaining complex information in a clear and compassionate way. Or maybe you're a natural problem-solver, always finding creative solutions to unexpected challenges. Draw connections between your caregiving experiences and potential career paths.

Explore and Embrace: Once you've identified your transferable skills, it's time to explore the possibilities. Research work-from-home opportunities that align with your strengths and interests. Consider taking online courses or workshops to further develop your skills and boost your confidence. Network with other parent carers and professionals in your desired field. Remember, your unique experiences and perspectives are valuable assets. Embrace your skills, explore your passions, and step confidently into a future filled with possibilities.

Building a strong foundation

Being a parent carer is a journey of immense love, dedication, and resilience. It's a role that comes with both profound joys and significant challenges. While the focus is often on the needs of the loved one you're caring for, it's equally important to remember your own well-being. Think of your life as a house that needs care and attention to stand strong. Here's a gentle guide to nurturing yourself while you continue to care for your loved ones:



The Foundation: Basic Needs

Every house stands on a foundation, and for parent carers, this foundation is your basic needs—things like eating well, getting rest when you can, moving your body, and looking after your health. This doesn't mean you have to have it all figured out perfectly. Small steps, like grabbing a healthy snack when you can or sneaking in a short walk, make a big difference. It's about doing what you can, when you can.

The Walls: Safety and Security

The walls of your life house your need for safety and security. This could mean anything from creating a safe environment for you and your loved one, to finding ways to manage your finances, or just having a simple plan for those "just in case" moments. It's okay if this feels overwhelming; tackling one thing at a time, or asking for help when you need it, is more than enough.

The Doors and Windows: Staying Connected

Doors and windows let light and life into your house, and for you, this means staying connected with the world outside your caregiving role. Whether it's a quick chat with a friend, joining an online support group, or finding a moment to indulge in a hobby, these connections can help lift your spirits. Don't worry if this doesn't happen every day—reaching out whenever you can is what matters

The Decor and Paint: Acknowledging Yourself

Your house is uniquely yours, and so are your achievements and strengths. Take a moment to recognize the hard work you put in every day. It's okay to feel proud of what you do, even on the days that feel tough. Celebrate the small wins, like getting through a challenging day or finding a new way to bring joy to your loved one. Your efforts deserve acknowledgment.

The Loft/Attic: Nurturing Your Passions

The attic is where we often store things we treasure but don't always have time for. In your life, this represents your dreams and hobbies. While it might be hard to find time for yourself, it's okay to dream about the things you love. Even if you only get a few minutes to think about a project or something that excites you, it's important. These moments remind you of who you are beyond your caregiving role.

The Roof: Taking Care of You

Your roof shelters everything inside your house, just as taking care of yourself supports everything you do for others. Self-care isn't a luxury—it's essential. It doesn't have to be grand gestures; sometimes, just taking a deep breath or finding a quiet moment can make a world of difference. You deserve care, too.

Just as every house is unique, so is your journey as a parent carer. You don't need to do everything perfectly or all at once. The key is to take things one step at a time, doing what feels right for you.

Find Out More: ↘

W

The Nurturing Advocacy Programme



THE Nurturing ADVOCACY PROGRAMME



THE Nurturing ADVOCACY PROGRAMME



- ☆ Disability Rights
- ☆ The Advocacy Basics
- ☆ Nurturing Understanding
- ☆ Nurturing Acceptance
- ☆ Nurturing Advocacy Plan (NAP)
- ☆ Reasonable Adjustment Journey
- ☆ Unreasonable, Reasonable Adjustments
- ☆ 'But No One Believes Me' & 'What Next?'
- ☆ Transitions
- ☆ Imposter Syndrome
- ☆ Supporting Anxiety
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Black RAINBOW

“Filled with warmth and humour, and frequently emotional and eye-opening, *Black Rainbow* is ultimately an uplifting story of redemption, self-discovery, finding personal freedom and discovering your own truth.”

Rebecca Huseyin
A Boy Less Ordinary



www.pdaparenting.com

Meal Planning



Meal planning often gets pigeonholed as simply deciding what's for dinner each night. But in reality, its benefits extend far beyond just knowing what to cook. For busy parents, it can be a game-changer, offering relief from decision fatigue, a tighter grip on the grocery budget, and less food going to waste.

Beyond the Menu: Easing Mental Load and Curbing Impulse Buys

Parents are masters of multitasking, juggling work, childcare, household chores, and countless other responsibilities. Meal planning lightens this mental load by eliminating the daily "what's for dinner?" dilemma. No more staring blankly into the fridge or pantry, trying to conjure up a meal from thin air.

Moreover, a well-thought-out meal plan and accompanying shopping list act as a shield against those tempting impulse buys at the supermarket. We've all been there - grabbing that extra bag of chips or a box of cookies that wasn't on the list but looked oh-so-good in the moment. Meal planning helps you stay focused, buying only what you need for your planned meals. This not only saves money but also reduces food waste, as you're less likely to end up with unused ingredients languishing in the fridge.

Saving Money: Stretching Your Grocery Budget Further

Meal planning has a direct, positive impact on your wallet. With a list in hand, you can shop strategically, taking advantage of sales and discounts while avoiding those unnecessary extras. You'll also be able to identify ingredients that can be used in multiple meals throughout the week, allowing you to buy in bulk and save money.

Batch cooking is another powerful tool that meal planning unlocks. By preparing larger portions of certain components - think grains, roasted vegetables, or protein - you can assemble quick and easy meals later in the week. This not only saves time but also reduces the temptation to order takeout or rely on expensive convenience foods when you're short on time.

Tips and tricks

- **Start Small:** Begin by planning just a few meals a week, like dinners only, to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- **Embrace Repetition:** There's no shame in repeating meals or having theme nights (e.g., Taco Tuesday, Pasta Friday). It simplifies planning and grocery shopping.
- **Collect Recipes:**
- **Check Your Calendar:** Consider upcoming activities and busy nights.
- **Inventory Your Kitchen:** Note what ingredients you already have on hand to avoid repurchasing.
- **Choose Your Meals:** Select meals based on your family's preferences, schedule, and budget.
- **Make Your Grocery List:** Categorise your list by aisle to make shopping more efficient.

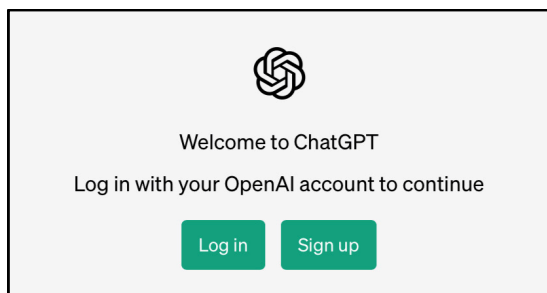


Making ChatGPT Your Back-to-School Assistant

As we dive headfirst into another school year, the to-do lists for parent carers seem to be growing longer than ever. Between juggling school runs, therapy appointments, and daily routines, we could all use a bit of extra help. That's where ChatGPT comes in! This clever tool isn't just for finding out random trivia or checking the weather—it can be a practical ally for parent carers navigating the complex world of education and SEND. From drafting emails to teachers, creating tailored routines, or simply coming up with a few calming strategies for when things get a bit much, ChatGPT can lighten the load. Here are some tips, tricks, and ideas on how you can make the most of ChatGPT as you head into a new school term, with communication and organisation as the focus.

Finding ChatGPT:

Online Access: ChatGPT is primarily accessible online. You can use it through a **website** or there is also a free App. Once you access ChatGPT, you'll find a simple chat interface, similar to a messaging app.



This column is about empowering you to harness technology for the betterment of your family's life. Each piece of advice, every suggestion, and all creative ideas are shared with the intention of supporting your incredible role as a parent carer.

A few prompts to try

We asked ChatGPT to provide us with some prompts parent carers could use to help them throughout the school year.

The joy of ChatGPT is once you get your first response, you can ask it to change things to suit you. You can do this numerous times until you are satisfied with the result.

Organising the Chaos: Schedules and Routines

- Prompt Example: "Help me create a morning routine for my child who struggles with transitions."
 - *Tip: ChatGPT can help design a visual schedule or break down a morning routine step-by-step. You can even specify if your child benefits from a bit of humour or specific positive reinforcements!*
- Prompt Example: "Can you draft a weekly family schedule that balances school, therapy sessions, and downtime?"
 - *Tip: Get a customisable plan that considers everyone's needs. Ask ChatGPT for suggestions on building in downtime to avoid burnout (for both the kids and you!).*



ChatGPT - the parent carer assistant

Communicating with School Staff and Professionals

- Prompt Example: "I need to write an email to my child's teacher explaining their sensory needs. Can you help?"
 - *Tip: ChatGPT can help parent carers articulate specific needs, requests for accommodations, or concerns in a clear, professional tone.*
- Prompt Example: "Draft a letter requesting a meeting with the school's SENCO about my child's progress."
 - *Tip: Get a template for formal requests, or ask ChatGPT to add in some soft but firm language if things need a little push!*

Advocating and Navigating the SEND World

- Prompt Example: "Help me prepare for my child's upcoming EHCP review meeting."
 - *Tip: Get a rundown of what to expect, a checklist of points to cover, and even some "polite but firm" phrases to use if things aren't moving in the right direction.*
- Prompt Example: "Explain Section F of an EHC Plan in simple terms."
 - *Tip: Break down complicated, jargon-filled SEND terms into plain English, so you feel more empowered and in control.*

Emotional and Social Skills Support

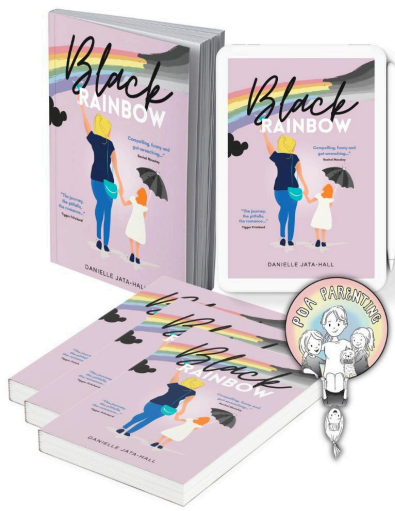
- Prompt Example: "What are some calming strategies for when my child feels overwhelmed at school?"
 - *Tip: ChatGPT can provide a toolkit of strategies, from breathing exercises to creating a 'calm corner' with sensory items.*
- Prompt Example: "Help me with some conversation starters to help my child make friends at school."
 - *Tip: Get suggestions tailored to your child's age and interests. You can even role-play scenarios to prepare for social situations.*



Self-Care for Parent Carers (Because You're the MVPs!)

- Prompt Example: "Suggest a self-care routine I can fit in between school runs and therapy appointments."
 - *Tip: ChatGPT can help create tiny, manageable moments of self-care. Maybe it's a 5-minute breathing exercise, a mini-meditation, or a cheeky bit of escapism through a quick story or humour break.*
- Prompt Example: "I need some words of encouragement. Today's been rough."
 - *Tip: Sometimes, we all need a little pep talk or a bit of a laugh. ChatGPT can offer some encouraging words, an uplifting quote, or even a quick, silly joke to lighten the load.*





Black Rainbow: A Novel That Speaks the Unspoken Truths of SEND Parenting

Are you a SEND parent who feels like you're constantly battling a system that seems determined to break you? Or perhaps you're a professional tirelessly advocating for children who learn differently, banging that drum and desperately hoping someone will listen? Maybe you're a teacher or caregiver, struggling with a child whose defiance seems insurmountable, leaving you at a loss. If any of this resonates, *Black Rainbow* by Danielle Jata-Hall is the book you've been waiting for.

This is not just a story; it's a lifeline for those navigating the often isolating world of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). At its heart, *Black Rainbow* is about Sarah—a woman who, on the surface, appears to have it all: a husband, two children, a suburban home, and a good education. But beneath that veneer, she is grappling with the very real challenges of raising a child with PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) and the toll it takes on her family, her friendships, and her own sense of self.

A Story That Mirrors Real-Life Struggles

Sarah's journey in *Black Rainbow* is a painfully relatable one for many parents. She's constantly butting heads—with her husband, her family, her daughter's school—and finds herself trapped in a world where her voice is continuously quashed. Her parenting skills are judged, her concerns are brushed aside, and her desperation to be heard becomes palpable. It is only with the support of her two best friends that she begins to understand her spirited daughter in a new light and, in doing so, uncovers parts of herself she never knew existed.

Danielle Jata-Hall has masterfully crafted a story that doesn't shy away from the messiness and frustration of advocating for a child who doesn't fit the mould. When your child doesn't respond to rules, praise, punishments, or rewards, you have to find a new way of doing things. And that's no easy task. This novel shines a light on the ordinary yet extraordinary lives of SEND families, telling a truth that our community desperately needs to hear.

A Fictional Lens That Feels Like Real Life

One of the standout elements of *Black Rainbow* is that Danielle chose to write it as a work of fiction. While many parent carers share their stories in biographical form—valuable in their own right—Danielle's fictional approach makes the narrative accessible to a broader audience. Whether you're part of the PDA community or have never even heard of it, you'll be drawn into the plot and the characters. Sarah's struggle is something many of us can nod along to: feeling judged, frustrated, and isolated while trying to hold it all together with duct tape and a strong cup of tea (or something stronger).

As Sarah faces the brink of losing her friends, a chance meeting with a stranger offers a glimmer of hope. Can she find her voice before it's too late? Will she find a way to help her daughter be better understood and accepted? These are the questions that drive the reader forward, eager to turn each page.

Black Rainbow: The Unspoken Truths of SEND Parenting



A Journey of Understanding, Advocacy, and Change

Danielle's inspiration for the novel comes from her own harrowing experiences, which she poignantly describes as being "framed for fabricating illnesses in [her] children" and facing accusations of fraud and emotional abuse—all because she was advocating for a proper assessment for her children's neurodiversity. In *Black Rainbow*, she channels that trauma into a narrative that both entertains and educates, offering a new perspective to readers who may not fully understand the emotional toll of such battles.

Rachel Moseley, Principal Academic in Psychology at Bournemouth University, describes the book as "a beautiful book which speaks to the worry, heartbreak, and unseen battles faced by countless parents whose children are failed by the system." This isn't just a story—it's a call to action. By reading *Black Rainbow*, you're not just consuming a narrative; you're becoming part of a movement for change.

More Than Just a Book—It's a Message of Hope

Danielle's writing is filled with humour, heartache, and hope. You'll find yourself laughing, crying, and feeling every emotion in between. For PDA parents, it feels like Danielle has peeked through your windows (in the most non-creepy way possible). She knows our struggles because she's lived them. Her storytelling is so spot-on that you'll swear she's writing about your life, not Sarah's.

Alice Running, a reader and fan, praises *Black Rainbow* not only for its storytelling but also for its sensory-friendly format: "The cover is wonderfully tactile, and that newly printed smell is delicious! Inside, the font choice and size are easy on my sensitive eyesight, and the illustrations throughout the book make it a joy to read." It's no surprise that the book shot straight to the top of the Disability Fiction charts.

Why You Need to Read *Black Rainbow*

Black Rainbow is more than just a good read—it's a must-read. It's like a cup of tea for the soul—comforting, eye-opening, and exactly what you need. Whether you're new to the concept of PDA or have been living it for years, this book will speak to you. It offers a chance to see things from a different perspective, to question the status quo, and, most importantly, to feel understood.

So don't wait—**get yourself a copy of *Black Rainbow*** and dive into a story that's as much about finding your voice as it is about understanding and advocating for those who can't. You won't regret it!

"Filled with warmth and humour, and frequently emotional and eye-opening, *Black Rainbow* is ultimately an uplifting story of redemption, self-discovery, finding personal freedom and discovering your own truth."

Rebecca Huseyin
A Boy Less Ordinary



About KinToa

Welcome to **KinToa**, your beacon in the journey of SEND parent caregiving. At KinToa, we see the real heroes: you, the parent carers, who navigate the complexities of special educational needs and disabilities with unmatched strength and courage.

Our Philosophy: KinToa, merging 'Kin' and the Maori word 'Toa' for warrior, stands as a symbol of your inherent bravery and resilience. It's more than our name—it's our commitment to honour your journey.

Understanding Your Challenges: Forget the superficial fixes like another hand massage at carers' meetings. You deserve practical, real-world support tailored to the unique demands of your life. KinToa is designed to be that robust pillar of strength, offering hands-on advice, relatable stories, and a sense of solidarity that cuts through the isolation often felt in the world of SEND caregiving.

Why KinToa? Because true strength lies in unity and shared wisdom. Our content is curated to resonate with your experiences, enlighten your caregiving path, and inject moments of joy and discovery into your daily routine. From navigating SEND systems to celebrating personal victories, we cover the spectrum, ensuring you feel seen, understood, and most importantly, not alone.



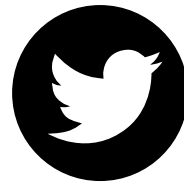
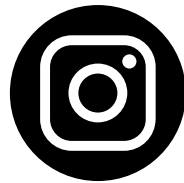
Our Mission: To empower you, the hero, in your quest. KinToa stands as your guide, illuminating the path with insights, empathy, and encouragement. We're more than a magazine; we're a companion and a champion for the incredible work you do every day.

Join Our Family: Dive into a world where empathy meets action, where your stories and challenges light the way for others. With KinToa, embark on a journey of empowerment and connection, knowing that, together, we're invincible.

Thanks to **Jodie** from
The Nurture
Programme for her
amazing design work



Because nothing is typical!



*Debs
Aspland*

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Debs is a mum to three amazing, challenging, loveable teenagers, each with a variety of special educational needs and disability labels attached.

Over the years, Debs has spent hours trying to juggle the chaos that comes from having to use a system that doesn't actually work, unless you shout loudly and constantly. Even then, there are no guarantees.

She has turned up late for meetings, a month early for some and even, on one occasion, to the wrong building.

She has set up support groups, forums, online support, accessible music festivals, award events and much more.

Her biggest passion?

Making life that bit easier for other parent carers.

Oh, and stationery. She has a real passion for stationery (and cake)! She really loves cake.

Her biggest fear?

One day, her husband will find out that some other partners enjoy cleaning and doing housework.

The Dream?

KinToa envisions a world where every SEND parent carer feels empowered, connected, and fully supported in their pivotal role

This will give them more time to do the things they want to do, rather than just doing the things they need to do. And if that involves cake, they know who to call.