



parents autism workshops & support

Children can be affected by an autism spectrum condition (ASC) in so many different ways. If there is a child with ASC in your family, or maybe this condition interests you from a personal or professional perspective, the PAWS project could well have a big impact.

Some children with ASC can find the morning routine of getting dressed for school difficult to cope with, others may find it hard to brush their teeth, for some it is distressing when asked to go to sleep in a room alone. Dogs for the Disabled, a dynamic charity specialising in the training of assistance dogs to help a range of people including those on the spectrum, recognise the huge value that a dog can bring to these children and their families.

Observing the incredible calming effect that dogs can bring when a child with ASC is angry, anxious or distressed, or witnessing a dog distracting a child away from disruptive or dangerous behaviour for example, has led the charity to believe that whilst for some there will always be a need for a fully trained assistance dog, a family pet dog, of different breeds and ages, can have a massively beneficial impact for these children.

PAWS (Parents Autism Workshops and Support) has therefore been set up under the wing of Dogs for the Disabled, with funding by The National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund, and a number of trusts and donors, to bring together the parents and carers of children with ASC to share experiences and to explore the helping potential that a pet dog might have within their family. The project is supported by the National Autistic Society and Lincoln University who are undertaking research in this area to increase our knowledge of the relationship between dogs and people.



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Families nationwide are already finding amazing results; some have found their dog to be crucial when intervening in 'meltdown' behaviour; others have found the dog useful when developing a child's verbal skills; and others can happily walk to the school gates so long as their new best friend walks beside them.



"The day we brought Claude home from the breeder, was the day that Jude actually spoke directly to someone for the first time."

"Since attending the workshops, we have developed our training so that now he can gently touch his nose to my son's hand to help interrupt a tantrum."

"To be supported by experts, not only in choosing and raising a puppy, but also in training a family dog to fulfill its potential as a loyal and dependable companion, is a vital service to families like ours."



**Dogs for the
Disabled**

Registered Charity Number England & Wales: 1092960
Registered Charity Number Scotland: SCO39828



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About the Workshops

Workshops are designed to provide parents with the information and long-term support for sourcing, choosing, handling and training a pet dog specifically to benefit a child with an autism spectrum condition and the family as a whole. Parents will attend a series of three, one day workshops. These workshops cover a variety of topics, from gaining ideas as to how the dog can help your family, to selecting the right dog, the most effective training methods, and so much more, through practical demonstrations as well as discussion.

Ongoing Support

Following the workshops, the PAWS team will offer ongoing support to families, through a variety of media, from telephone support to an online forum and family support network.

Eligibility

It doesn't matter if you have a dog or not! The PAWS workshops cater for both families who do not have a dog, and those that do.

Don't be put off if you have an older dog, or if you think your dog is not the most intelligent! We cater for a range of breeds; with everything from Jack Russell Terriers to Bernese Mountain Dogs doing incredibly well after coming on the workshops.

The eligibility criteria is simply;

- Child with a clinical diagnosis of autism
- Child aged between 3 and 16 years

Public Access

Please note that the PAWS project is a different service to the Autism Assistance Dog Service also offered by Dogs for the Disabled. Pet dogs will not be able to receive public access rights or full assistance dog status i.e. entry into shopping centres etc.

Costs

As we are a charity, a one off payment of £30 (taken upon booking) is required. All workshops, refreshments, lunch, resources and PAWS membership aftercare support is all included in this fee.

Book your Place

Feel free to contact us either by telephone or email, whether just for a chat or to book your place.

PAWS@dogsforthedisabled.org

01295 759836

<http://paws.dogsforthedisabled.org>



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