

Exercise Group



Our members expressed a need for their children to be able to participate in a structured exercise class, a program to complement their OT sessions and to provide an opportunity for their children to meet like-minded friends.

This program has been a positive alternative for those children that have steered away from after-school sport programs.

Physical education classes and after school sports can be a real challenge for children with ASD. Many have poor: gaits, motor co-ordination (cannot throw or catch balls), balance, visual tracking, reaction times or master movements which involve a number of steps. Additionally, sensory issues may overwhelm an ASD child in a group sport environment (noise, movement, smell). There may be some confusion when receiving instructions, especially if it is modelled as a mirror movement. Some ASD children are very rigid with rules and how a game is to be played which may induce some social anxieties and melt downs.

The personal trainer engaged by Autism NT has direct ASD experience and has contextualised the program to incorporate further sensory desensitisation considerations. All tasks are demonstrated as individual micro skills to build confidence (note: this program does not replace OT assessments).

The outcomes that Autism NT has identified through the previous delivery:

- improvement of physical and mental health
- participants meet like-minded friends (there are others like me)
- can address specific needs i.e. if the kids want to be able to join in soccer at school (i.e. how to run and kick a ball). Each activity is broken down into individual skill components for example skipping involves many coordinated movements and micro skills.
- parents and kids learn relaxation techniques - can utilise at home for self-regulation
- parent support groups have created external social contact between families
- we are seeing students starting to take on leadership roles, congratulating and encouraging each other, accepting each other's idiosyncrasies.

About the club

Running time: One hour each including a 5-10 relaxation component.

Ages: 7 years and over

Limits: 10 students with minimum of two adult staff.

Students that are lower on the ASD spectrum, but can follow instructions, may participate but must provide their own support aide where required.

For venue, times and availability please contact Autism NT office on 89484424 or email: autismnt@autismnt.org.au