



Newsletter - March 2026

PINS Project closure

Over the course of this term we have taken part in a variety of events via the PINS Project (Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools). This includes:

- Three parents/carer meetings run by Essex Family Forum
- Parent/carer workshops on neurodivergence and sleep, understanding neurodivergence, unique thinking styles, emotional regulation
- Coaching and reflective conversations for identified staff members
- A sensory environment audit
- Access to the Autism Reality Bus for staff and parents
- The PINS Conference
- Staff training on:
 - Social stories
 - Gaining pupils' views
 - Neurodivergence and eating
 - SENDStational Curriculum
 - Autistic Girls Network sessions

At the start of the project, we asked you to complete an online survey. The questions in the survey were to give an overview of the school's approach to inclusion to help us understand the current strengths and potential areas of improvement in your child's school.

Now that the project is coming to an end on the 31st of March 2026, we would like to invite you to complete the survey again, so we can measure any change since your school has been involved in the pilot.

Please use the link below to complete the Survey. It should take less than 5 minutes of your time and will be open for 2 weeks from today.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HWXTPO6>

A letter with more detailed information about the project is attached to this Arbor email.

Good Beginnings Parent Information Sessions

[Good Beginnings](#) is a face to face 8 course for parents and carers of children aged 5 or under, who are autistic or have social communication needs.

This course covers:

- understanding autism
- communication
- play
- sensory processing
- behaviour is communication
- eating, sleeping and toileting
- managing anxiety

Age

Parents and carers of children aged 5 and under. This course is for adults only.

Eligibility

A diagnosis of autism is not needed to access Good Beginnings

How to access

You need to fill in the [application form](#). Due to high demand, it may be necessary to add your details to a waiting list for the next course with availability.

SIBS - Charity for brothers and sisters of disabled children and adults

Sibs is a UK charity dedicated to supporting people who have grown up, or are growing up, with a disabled brother or sister. It provides information, emotional support, and training for children, adults, parents, and professionals, helping siblings understand their experiences and feel less isolated. The charity also works to raise awareness of sibling issues and influence services and policies so that siblings receive the recognition and support they need. Through resources, support groups, and educational programmes, Sibs aims to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of siblings across the UK. For more information about how you could benefit from connecting with SIBS - click here: [SIBS](#)

Essex Short Breaks

[Essex Short Breaks](#) gives parent carers and siblings of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities a break from their additional caring responsibilities, whilst enabling children and young people to meet friends, take part in activities, develop independence and have fun. It is part of Essex County Council's early help approach.

Who can access Essex Short Breaks?

Children and young people can access Essex Short Break's provision if they are:

- aged between 0-18, or 19-25 and have a personal budget
- have a diagnosis of special educational needs and/or a disability*
- living within the administrative borders of Essex County Council**

How do I sign up?

To access this provision, a responsible adult such as a parent, carer or family member can create a Short Breaks Digital Account for the child or young person. Access to the offer is then managed through that account. Families new to Essex SEND Short Breaks will need to [register](#) for an account.

Support videos for parents and carers early in their SEND journey

A series of 15 support videos has been created to help parents and carers at the early stages of their SEND journey, particularly while waiting for an autism or ADHD assessment. These films offer practical guidance on supporting neurodivergent children and can also help wider family members better understand different needs.

Developed in collaboration with providers, schools, families, and health professionals, the content reflects feedback from Essex parents and carers. The project was funded by the Department for Education's Short Breaks Innovation Fund 2024. Click here to view the videos: [Video Resources to support your neurodivergent child](#)

SPACE

[SPACE](#) (Supporting Parents and Carers in Essex) is a free charity service that provides advice, guidance, and emotional support to families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0–25. Run by trained peer educators who are themselves parents and carers, SPACE offers one-to-one support, online group sessions, and practical resources to help families navigate their SEND journey. The service aims to reduce isolation, build confidence, and empower parents with the knowledge and strategies needed to support their children effectively.

Peer Educators from SPACE will be attending our next SEND Family Forum which is being held on Monday 27th April at 9am. We look forward to seeing you there!

For more information about SPACE - please see the flyers below.



Essex County Council
Special Educational Needs
and Disabilities



SPACE

SPACE offers free support to families of children and young people with SEND.

Delivered by peer educators – all parents and carers with lived experience.

Get support your way:

-  **in person** – meet us at Local Offer roadshows, coffee mornings, and community events
-  **by phone** – talk one-to-one with a peer educator
-  **online** – join webinars on key topics, led by peer educators
-  **on the SPACE website** – find helpful info and guidance anytime



Book your place for an online session, or a phone call today!

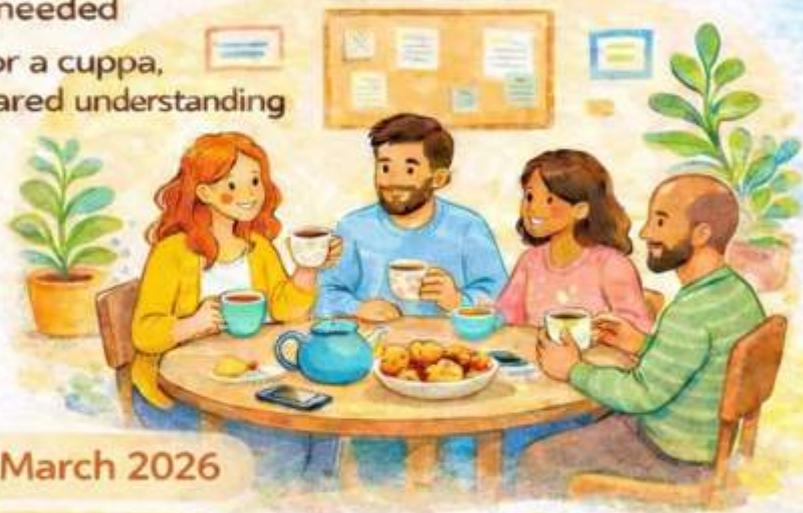
parent-send-support.essex.gov.uk

SEN Coffee & Chat

A relaxed, supportive space for parents and carers ✨

With peer educators from **SPACE** ❤️
Supporting parents and carers across Essex

- ✨ No diagnosis needed
- ✨ Come along for a cuppa, a chat, and shared understanding



📅 **Date** 23rd March 2026

🕒 **Time** 12pm – 2pm

🔄 **Frequency** Monthly meet-ups

- Whether you're at the start of your journey or further along, you're very welcome.
- 👐 A safe, informal space to connect, listen, and feel supported.



📍 67 High Street,
Braintree, CM7 1JX

Are you a parent or carer?

Join our community meet-up for parent carers of SEND children and adults with disabilities.



EVENT DETAILS

Date: Thursday 19th March

Time: 10:30am – 12:30pm

Venue: Zafferano Lounge, 12A Market Place, Saffron Walden, CB10 1HR

Save Thursday, 16th April, in your diary for our next catch-up

Scan the QR code or use the link to book.



<https://forms.office.com/e/OJAFHT8tHm>

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Friendly, informal space to connect with other parent carers
- Free refreshments and a light lunch, kindly provided by Zafferano Lounge
- Support, conversation, and information

For more info, contact:

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Rita@essexcarersnetwork.co.uk

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EStevens@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP



 Essex County Council

YOUTH SERVICE

Essex Young Carers Service supporting

YOUNG CARERS IN ESSEX

**How can the
young carer key
workers help?**



We offer free personalised support to young carers and their families that will be developed with you around your need for help and the caring you do.

To make a referral please scan the QR code



or visit: youth.essex.gov.uk/schools/young-carers-services

Email: young.carers@essex.gov.uk

Telephone: 0345 743 0430

youth.essex.gov.uk