

education otherwise™



No. 185 - December 2008

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS: 1st January 2008

Please mark material 'for publication' and include your name, address, phone number and e-mail (if you have it) as we may need to contact you to discuss your contribution (your personal details may be withheld from the publication on request).

E-mail contributions will be acknowledged within a few days. If you require a postal acknowledgement, please include an SAE. If no acknowledgement is received, or in the case of queries, please contact the NL Co-ordinator (see inside back cover). *Please also ensure that your EO membership is up-to-date.*

Please send contributions via the most appropriate section editor listed below:

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Editor for the next Children's Pages: Emma Stevens Deadline: 20th December 2008

Please send all material to the Children's Pages Co-ordinator who will forward it to the relevant Children's Editor. This is to ensure that if there is a last minute change, submissions from other children will not be lost.

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N.B. *If you change your address, phone number, e-mail or other details, or if your Newsletter does not arrive, please contact the Database Administrator (see inside back cover under Membership)*

Welcome to the December edition of the Education Otherwise Newsletter.

I hope you enjoyed October's Newsletter and had some fun making lanterns for these dark winter nights. December is a time of celebration for many faiths and can be a very busy time. The Disabilities Group have focused on the run-up to Christmas (although the articles would hold true for other celebrations) and the stress that this can place on families at this time of year.

We have new people coming to the Newsletter team this month too. Tammy is now co-ordinating Book and Software Reviews; Maya is the new Autonomous HE Support; and Jennifer, the new Structured HE Support and both have written a piece for what is hoped will become a regular slot for both autonomous and structured/curriculum-led HE in the Newsletter.

I hope you have a wonderful time this festive month.

Regards,

Nicola Haxell
Newsletter Co-ordinator

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Any Safeguarding Children concerns should be reported to the NSPCC Helpline
Telephone No.: 0808 800 5000.

If you are a child and you need someone to talk to, contact: Childline: 0800 1111



Diary of a Home-Educating Nobody

It's as I try and scrub the glitter glue off the kitchen table that I realise something...

Now I'm not often given to scrubbing. There's been two kids at home full time for years and I can think of better things to do - and so can they - and as soon as you've scrubbed one lot off there's something to replace it. But there comes a time when you know you've moved on and time has passed and it suddenly dawned on me that it isn't only glitter glue on our table but the story of the past nine years home educating!

If I look closely, our kitchen table bears the remnants of our HE lives. There are patches of colour from dyes and felt tips, smooth oiled bits from wax experiments and the occasional burn marks before we realised we should of course be using a fire proof tray for such things! There are accidental (or was it on purpose?) stab marks from scissors and compasses, craft knives, pins and other pointed tools and materials. There are little dents and grooves in the table's surface from heavy stuff like sewing machines, hammer, sculptures and other metal objects that seem to come into everyday HEing

like the insides of the computer which had to be dismantled and investigated. There are stains from food colour, paints, Play dough, Plasticine and grey clay in the grooves, plus pencil where they've tried to colour them in when I wasn't looking. Also in the grooves over the years I've found the odd lentil, bit of rice, cloth fibres, sand, and other unidentifiable things used for collage.

There's a slight saw mark off one corner, a definite hole where someone hammered a nail in. Shiny sides where little tummies have pressed against it eagerly. And of course there are food stains from things like the blackberries we gathered for the pudding because we did manage to clear enough space to eat off it occasionally. More often than not it was completely submerged under books, constructions, materials, experiments and ongoing projects which were left out to work on until it drove me mad and we had a major clear up.

Today I've actually got it empty. It's part of the Christmas tidy up and the end of another

HE year. But the sight of the glitter glue really brought home to me that so long ago now, this HE lark seemed so daunting and scary and strange. And totally unnerving in that we didn't know what the future would hold. Like some of you may be worrying now.

But the thing is, you don't need to worry about the future because we've found out that if you take care of the now the future takes care of itself. And actually, even if the children were in school, you still wouldn't know what the future would hold! We can never really have that much control over what's going to happen in our lives, who the children are going to come up against and how their experiences are going to shape up, whether we use school or not.

Our children grow and change constantly. Each little thing they learn and each little experience changes them. And we change too. So to always educate our children towards, and to always worry about, a major long term plan doesn't work that well if we cannot take into account these constant changes. And if we do not encompass and embrace changes in our lives it causes incredible stress.

Rather than worry what the future might hold a far better plan is to keep your focus on your daily and weekly intentions. These may be to achieve practice of some basic skills, learn a new science topic, go out for the day, or do some artwork. Or it may be an intention that your child is actively engaged on an activity of their own choosing and that they have a fulfilling and contented day.

But there is one intention that should be part of every day: enjoy your home educating!

Our table top is testimony to many enjoyable HE days. I'm not saying that there weren't days when I was absolutely tearing my hair out at the mess, the dilemmas, or the challenge of having children around all the time. Or that I didn't stomp off to my bedroom with the Nurofen in a paddy occasionally. Of course I did.

But all those little marks in my table top remind me that those days are gone now. So many lovely times working together, as well as the Nurofen days. Times when the kids were still in awe of things like mixing oil colour and water for marbled paper, making vinegar and bicarbonate of soda volcanoes, dissecting flowers, when there always seemed to be blobs of something on workbooks and when Christmas wasn't Christmas without





glitter glue! All passed, all moved onto more sophisticated stuff and I'm so glad I had that opportunity to enjoy the children's education rather than hand them over to schools.

And actually, it worked out well despite the mess and the hassle. The children are teenagers now, one investigating universities and moving away, the other finding her own pathways and taking charge of her own life. And the only type of future we ever focussed on was to have the children happy and fulfilled, both in themselves and in connection with a wider world, and we encouraged them to find ways to do this. And I'm sure that this is what develops children towards making mature and confident decisions about their education, rather than us making a decision about their future from the outset and pushing them towards it without regard for changes or what they bring to it themselves.

So now I'm looking at the table becoming clear and scrubbed and thinking about those Glitter glue days of card making and model building and wondering where all the time went. Like all aspects of parenting - it all changes so quickly. And I'm also thinking that maybe I'll leave a few remaining glittery, colourful stains and dents for memories sake. For I can always throw a Christmassy cloth over them and no one will be any the wiser about what's underneath. But when I lift it I shall see the story of all those happy childhood days we spent round it, doing a variety of activities with a variety of substances, glitter glue included!

Hope you have a glittery HE Christmas and many happy HE years to come.

Ross Mountney

Email: ross.mountney@tiscali.co.uk

If you'd like further guidance and support with your home educating you'll find it in my book; 'Learning Without School'. Home Education' published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers and due out later this month. You can pre order it from their website: www.jkp.com

EO on Facebook

Users of the social networking site "Facebook" might be interested to know that Education Otherwise now has an official page for the organisation, which can be found here: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kings-Lynn-Norfolk-United-Kingdom/Education-Otherwise/31310903659>. There is also now an official Education Otherwise Facebook Group which is here: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=31878667843>

The Importance of Movement in Learning



Movement and movement programmes have been used to help children with learning and behavioural difficulties. The aim of a movement programme is to treat the underlying causes of learning and behavioural difficulties by using activities and movement patterns to develop neurological organisation, and in some cases to integrate reflexes, while in others, address coordination difficulties.

The structure of the movements follow similar patterns to those naturally developed in very early childhood. There is evidence that children are born with the tissues of biological intelligence, the brain structure, but these only become fully activated when children move, explore and manipulate the world. It is assumed that the skills of writing, spelling and reading are the basics of learning - but these are now beginning to be viewed as very complex neurological processes that develop easily when there is good sensory motor development. Without this essential basis, it seems that the foundations are poorly organised and this leads to various problems later on.



Coordination develops through three basic levels: reflex-motor, gross-motor and fine motor. These levels build upon each other and if any level is not properly developed there will be a knock on effect on the other levels. Children go through certain developmental stages and if they have not gone through the necessary stages it can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. For example if children miss out the stage of crawling this can often lead to comprehension problems in reading. Researchers such as Houston (1982), Ayers (1972) and Hannaford (1995) verify that sensory motor integration is linked to school readiness. Research has also shown that students who spent an extra hour each day in the gym performed better in examinations than less active children (Hannaford 1995).

Research studies have also shown that the development of motor skills facilitates academic readiness and learning and also that when physical education time was increased to one third of the school time, academic scores went up. In addition research has also shown that children who do not crawl are more likely to be hyperactive and have learning disabilities. Further spelling, reading, auditory short term memory, arithmetic and visual attention to detail were significantly improved among a group of children

with learning problems who took part in a Perceptual Movement Programme.

One aspect that is improved by movement programmes are retained primitive reflexes. These are present during the first six months after birth. As the nervous system develops, however, they are inhibited or transformed and the persistence of primitive reflexes beyond their normal time span (12 months) interferes with subsequent development. They can affect reading amongst other things. Research has also shown that retained primitive reflexes may have a detrimental effect on behaviour, motor control, sensory perception, eye-hand co-ordination, and cognition. The primitive reflexes have the capacity to upset the maturation process and decrease the brain's ability efficiently to process sensory information. Sensory motor movement programmes help develop the brain for learning; they enable children to concentrate and stick at tasks better and thereby systematic movement and movement programmes are a vital component in learning. For example, the persistence of the Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Righting reflex seems to disrupt the emergence of gross motor abilities such as rolling, creeping, crawling, riding a bicycle and catching or kicking a ball. The eyes have to cross the midline when reading and there seems to be a link with the ATNR directly interfering with saccadic eye movements when reading and/or disruption of the general development of visual pursuit skills

One reason as to why movement is important and as to how movement programmes may work could be due to role of the cerebellum. The cerebellum is at the base of the brain, and is associated with motor skill. It is responsible for coordinating movement, planning, motor activities, learning and remembering of physical skills and for some cognitive abilities. Clinical observations suggest that mental activities are coordinated in the cerebellum. At least 80 studies suggested in 1995 strong links between cerebellum and memory, spatial perception, language, attention, emotion, non-verbal areas and even decision making. These findings strongly implicate the value of movement in

affecting learning. Dyslexic children have been found to have significant difficulties in the development of motor skills (Fawcett and Nicolson, 1995) and direct evidence of cerebellar impairments in dyslexic children and adults has also been shown

Another reason as to why these motor programmes may work could be due to the role of the vestibular system. One of the claims of many movement programmes is that they have an impact on the balance system, for example, McPhillips et al., (2000) provided further evidence of 'a link between reading difficulties and the control of movement, in children' and that children with specific reading problems have problems that extend beyond the range of underlying language-related deficits (e.g. they have difficulties with balance and motor control).

The vestibular system, located in the inner ear, provides information about gravity, balance and movement. There is a claim that there is a correlation between vestibular problems and reading and writing in children with learning disabilities. When astronauts go up in space and lose their sense of balance it can lead to reading problems which are alleviated when balance is restored. Most children should be able to balance on one leg for fifteen seconds and if they are unable to do this it can often indicate reading problems.

Dr Alweena Zairi

A study conducted by Dr Alweena Zairi in a West Yorkshire primary school showed that the SIMPLE movement programme raised children's learning and performance. Dr Zairi now runs the Childcentre that provides therapies and movement programmes to alleviate problems in these areas. The centre also provides afternoon classes for children who want to take part in a specially devised movement programme to help learning and other problems and to have fun.

For more information, telephone: 05352 75851, e-mail: alweenazairi@aol.com.
Also: <http://www.childcentre.net/index.htm>

Autonomous Ed. Intro

Like a lot of people, I didn't intend to home educate at all, despite having a truly horrible time at school due to bullying. I decided that was my experience and that shouldn't colour my thoughts on sending my four year old daughter to school. She never seemed very happy at playgroup even, but I thought it was a phase and she would adjust, so I duly sent her to the local junior school that was very small.

That's when the problems started. She wasn't ready for the long separation from me, despite having good friends there, and quite frankly the head mistress was the biggest bully in the school, if her treatment of the staff was anything to go by. Luckily for me she had an excellent teacher, who told me she hated the system and had actually home-edded her two sons till they went to uni! I'll never forget her support in my decision to take my daughter out of school. Six years later and we're still very happy in our home-ed lifestyle. Which leads me onto autonomous education.

Like most, we started off by trying to duplicate school, guess what? That didn't work, at least not for us. I had read a lot about child-led learning and it did sound possible, if a little out on a limb. Since then, and two other children later, we have done so many interesting things from mummifying a chicken in our Egyptian project to building a rabbit run from scratch. You may be thinking, how do you fit in maths or english? How can you know what they are learning and to what level? The honest answer is that sometimes I don't know, sometimes I do. I trust my children to learn when they are ready and to a level that's right for them at that time.

There have been many times, when we've gone to a museum show and the children have known the answers and if not, have been ready and able to work them out. They are not afraid to ask anyone how to do something or to ask a question to fill a gap. They are all intensely interested in everything, leaving no stone unturned.

Autonomous education works for us because we've had to adjust. I'm not the teacher trying to impart knowledge, rather I'm using leading questions or following their ideas. Recently my son has become very interested in myths and legends, so we've built an enormous model of a land filled with beasts and landscapes. It's taking up a lot of my kitchen space. Along the way we've used trial and error to find the best materials to use and learnt a lot about scale, rivers and mountains. My daughter is planning a halloween feast with a friend, looking up recipes and making lists of ingredients, planning what would be ok for people with allergies and so on. There is no typical day for us, but we are all learning and all happy. This is autonomous for us, it's just the way we live our lives. I'm currently the Autonomous Support for EO and the Local Contact for Herts.

Best wishes, Maya Lucas

We hope to make Autonomous HE a regular slot in the Newsletter and as such we welcome articles from members about their experiences with autonomous home-education.

Please send articles into Sue White, Articles Editor (details on inner front cover of the Newsletter).



Introduction from Jennifer

Well where do I start? I guess I should introduce myself. I am Jennifer and I have volunteered to offer support to any home educator who wants to make enquiries about structured HE.

I have been home educating for 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ years my three children now aged 11, 12 and 13. Why did I choose a structured approach over autonomous? Looking back I'm not so sure I made a conscious decision either way. My children had always been at school and were happy there. They liked knowing what each day was going to bring and what the next week may hold in store. Structure suited us.

We originally took the children out of school for 1 year so we could travel and maybe try and experience as many different cultures as possible. We started off with Europe so we could see if the kids would enjoy travelling and could we cope with trying to teach about the history, art, geography, geology, culture etc of all these different countries.

Slowly as we all became more confident and the kids adjusted to the new ways we travelled further a field. We spent time travelling in Egypt via train and plane. Fantastic and suddenly all the bits of history that had been covered at school came alive. Dates started to mean something and were not all this disjointed mix without any idea what came first Romans, Greeks or Egyptians.





Now we were ready. South and Central America here we come. We have been lucky to spend a month driving in Mexico and the children have covered parts of history that would never been talked about at school. We have climbed along mountain paths to get to the recently discovered 3rd highest waterfall (the Gocta Falls in Peru), spent nights camped in mountain villages in Peru and been fed by the locals, sailed on Lake Titicaca and seen some of the most breath taking sights ever. We have visited the Ballestas Islands and sand boarded in the

Atacama Desert. We have even managed Easter Island. Probably one of the most memorable was the time spent in the Amazon.

We have done all of this with structure. When we are home we have a daily timetable and cover all the basic subjects but I do not stick to the national curriculum for geography, history and teach about current events in the country we are about to visit.

Last year we slowed the travelling down as the older two children wanted to sit some GCSE's. Even with all that entailed we still have our own structure of what topics we cover and when, and always with the idea timed in for the day.

Structured Home education can be as similar to school as a family feels comfortable with or it can be the use of a timetable which changes by the week. It can be inflexible or flexible. We as a family need to know what we are doing each day so we can plan for it. This suits us and could suit others. All avenues of home education should be explored and the best one found for each individual and each family.



As from next month I am going to try and write a small article on one aspect of either our month as a structured HE family or something that I have experienced with our own personal structure.

We hope to make Structured HE a regular slot in the Newsletter and as such we welcome articles from members about their experiences HE-ing in a structured way, curriculum reviews and ideas for topic studies, etc.

Please send articles into Sue White, Articles Editor (details on inner front cover of the Newsletter).

Article in October's EO
newsletter (p.20)

I would like to point out the potential confusion between a medical diagnosis, as is usually the case in Autistic Spectrum Disorders and assessments, usually by an Educational Psychologist e.g in Dyslexia, where there may not be a medical diagnosis. An educational assessment may be helpful even where there is a medical diagnosis for it covers different areas. As regards usefulness of a diagnosis it should be noted that many conditions are lifelong and these problems do not go away with maturity.

Best wishes - Jeremy Marchesi

Farewell Education Otherwise

Education Otherwise has grown and grown up since I joined way back in January 2000, it's hardly recognisable but it is still doing a good job. Things are much more organised now what with the 0845 numbers and Generic email addresses for all post holders, it almost feels like a Business corporation rather than the ramshackle group of home edders who met up for camping that EO started as, some home edders still meet up to camp and I'm sure it is still great fun.

As I will not be renewing my membership in January I will be stepping down from the post of organising the Regional Diary. I have enjoyed chatting with the event's organisers throughout the years and will miss all of that, it is great to have an excuse to talk with other home-edders and to share our experiences. I have enjoyed my time with Education Otherwise, the trials, the tribulations, and good friends offering support through the hard times, as well as the happy home-ed years.

Over the years I have volunteered within Education Otherwise, I have been a Local Contact, an Enquiries Secretary and on a group offering help and support to teens. My daughter got involved too, she edited the Children's Pages and reviewed books which made her feel like she belonged and gave her something outside of her home life which she could be proud of. I really enjoyed being a volunteer, I got to know so

many people I would never have met if I hadn't volunteered and it was a good excuse to talk and listen to other home edders, a good way to feel that you belong in the home Ed community and also a great way to give something back.

Most of us have received help from some of the wonderful and hardworking volunteers of EO and there is no better way to pay back for this help than to offer to help yourself. I found that offering to help within Education Otherwise was a great way of repaying the help I received when I started out. That way the information is passed on from one generation of home edders to another.

We are all different in our outlooks and initially being in a group of such diverse people was daunting but the realisation that we all had one thing in common drew us all together, home education united us. I am still in touch with our local home educators, the original small group still going strong. It is a lovely feeling to see local groups today being so successful.

I will miss all the friends I have made within Education Otherwise. I hope that new home edders continue to offer their help and support, it is one way to make great new friends as you learn all about home education and what it has to offer.

So, long live Education Otherwise and may it continue to prosper and to support those starting out on the home education path.

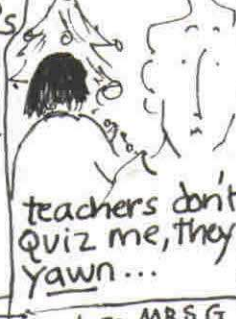
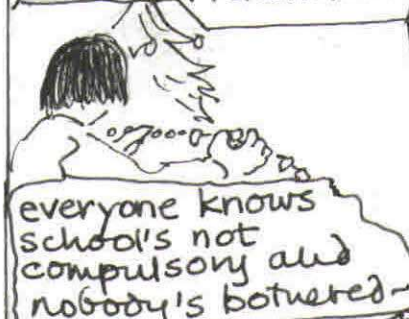
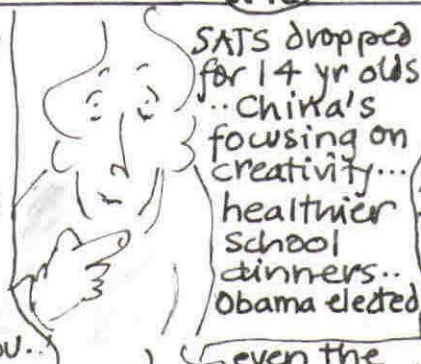
Jo Borthen, Jo4eo@aol.com or 01392 438876

New members in Bridlington area would like to know if anyone else would like to get together and do something with the children. Contact - Elaine Sommers Tel: 01262 679556

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify to readers that at no time did I claim that my recent article regarding single parents and income support suggest that it was the opinion of anyone other than my own. Also, that I have never criticised the work of the Education Otherwise Government Policy Group (GPG). If any part of my article had been construed by readers that I was implying either of the above I would like the GPG and those readers to accept my sincerest apologies as it was entirely unintentional.

Blessings and Light, Rowenna W Williams

EDUCATING ARCHIE - It's Christmas & Archie's relaxing by SEG



SEND YOUR FINAL ARCHIE EPISODE (for POSS PUBLICATION) TO SEG c/o THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Book Review section of the newsletter. My name is Tammy and I have just joined the newsletter team as Book Review Co-ordinator. I have some great ideas for the review section and look forward to implementing them over the next few issues.

I believe that home educators have a passion for books and look forward to bringing you reviews of books that will ignite that passion. I am going to need your help to do this though. Please submit your reviews on books that excite you no matter the topic. It would also be great to have reviews from children of all ages on their favourite books. Details on how to submit a review and the deadline for the next issue are at the end of the section.

Christmas Gift Ideas

The holiday season is almost upon us and books always make fantastic gifts. The books reviewed below may help to inspire you in your holiday shopping.

Jack Stalwart-Secret Agent Series

Author: Elizabeth Singer Hunt

Reviewed by Sam Dolling aged 7.

Jack Stalwart is a nine year old boy who is also a secret agent and he works for GPF, the Global Protection Force. He goes around the world by means of a globe and world map that teleport him to his destination. He has all sorts of gadgets and gizmos to help him with his quest. There are 8 books in the series and each book is set in a different country. They are really cool and I have read all of them.

The author has a good website it is: www.jackstalwart.com. There are fun games to play and also information about the author and the books.

Publisher: Random House



Monkey in Space

Author: Hiawyn Oram

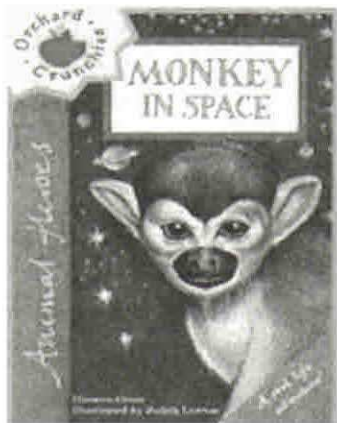
Reviewed by Kieran Fell aged 5

This book is a true story about monkeys sent to space. Miss Baker and Able get to go in a real rocket ship. When they land they get to go in a boat. I like this book because Miss Baker then gets to go on TV. That made me laugh.

Publisher: Orchard Books

ISBN: 978-1860391682

Editor's Note: Other titles by Hiawyn Oram you may enjoy are: Angry Arthur, In the Attic, A Boy Who Wants a Dinosaur



The Usborne History of Britain

Reviewed by Tammy

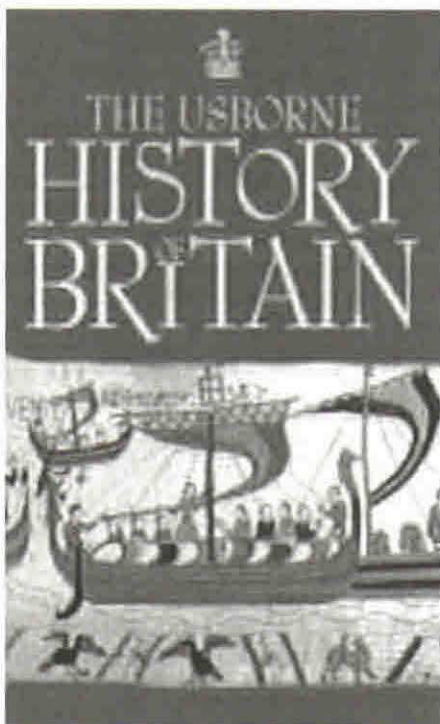
Usborne are renowned for their great reference books for children of all ages and their latest offering does the publisher proud.

It is a huge tome, 512 pages covering the history of Britain from the Ice Age to the Millenium. It has full colour pictures and illustrations to make history come alive. It is internet linked, by visiting www.usborne-quicklinks.com and putting in the title, book readers are given access to websites checked and vetted by Usborne.

The sites are categorised by the chapter of the book they relate to and are regularly updated by Usborne. The book covers history in an exciting and easy to understand way and it appeals to young and old alike. It is the perfect book for anyone with an interest in British History.

Publisher: Usborne

ISBN: 978 0 7460 8444 1



For your chance to win The Usborne History of Britain, either e-mail with subject heading: Usborne History of Britain to competitions@education-otherwise.org OR send a postcard to: Usborne History of Britain Competition, c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW ~ Entries will be assigned a number and the first number to be generated (using random.org) will win the book. Closing date: 15th December 2008.

Animal Ark : Lamb in the Laundry

Author: Lucy Daniels

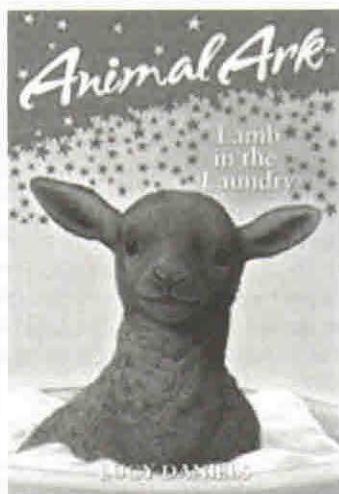
Reviewed by Hazel Fell aged 6

The *Animal Ark* series is about a girl named Mandy and her friend James. They help and care for animals. Mandy lives in Yorkshire with her parents who run the vet surgery Animal Ark. In Lamb in the Laundry Mandy and James help and care for a little lamb. They find out it's not that easy especially when the lamb gets lost! But in the end it's all OK. I like this book because I like it when Mandy rescues the lamb.

Publisher: Hodder's Children's Books

ISBN: 978 0 340 94444 8

Editor's Note: All of the books in the Animal Ark series are featured on the website: www.animalark.co.uk.



Guerrilla Learning: How to Give Your Kids a Real Education With or Without School

Authors: Grace Llewellyn & Amy Silver

Reviewed by: Jessica von Kaenel-Flatt

This is a book that brings the best ideas of the home education movement to families who have misgivings about school, or at least about the hegemony of school as the main source of education, but who either don't want to or aren't in a position to home educate full-time. Leaving the school system altogether is one of the authors' suggestions, but one among many: they recognise that not every family can or indeed would want to. So they have written a dynamic and inspiring book of ideas to help families seize real education - joyful, meaningful and connected to the world we live in - wherever they find it... and to create it themselves. The authors advocate the creative use of school as one resource among many: the book is among other things a call to liberate our world views from the model where school, an uncompromising concrete monolith, squats in the middle of our lives dictating terms. This is not a manual of dreary

compromises to help kids survive school (as if bare survival were good enough for children); it's a rallying cry to live your education. An open invitation to the great party of life.

Starting from the principle that school can be in your life without having to dominate your life, the book contains a lot of sound, sane and humane advice about how to use its opportunities while keeping it in its place, and keeping the school model of learning in perspective alongside other models. It affirms respect for styles of learning other than the academic, the inimitable benefits of learning through real participation in the community, the importance of following your own interests and the crucial need to keep the value judgements of the school system - through tests, grades, the time and weight given to some areas as opposed to others - firmly in perspective. Above all, it was written to rekindle the fierce spark of passion for real learning that school all too often dampens or kills.

This is an American publication written for an American readership. Therefore some of the factual information will not apply here, and some of the suggestions will not be practicable; however, that really doesn't matter too much. The basic ideas are adaptable, and beyond its practical application this is a book that just makes you excited about being alive. Grace Llewellyn's writing in particular fizzles with energy, but the whole thing is written with passion, compassion and conviction, resulting in a non-fiction work that's rich enough to read for pleasure, like a novel, whether or not you intend to use any of the ideas in it.

If you like the sound of this, I would also recommend Grace Llewellyn's *The Teenage Liberation Handbook* (the same sort of idea, but aimed at young people specifically rather than families, and much more uncompromising, not to say militant, in its view of the school system!) and Tom Hodgkinson's *How to be Idle and How to be Free*. These collections of essays on liberating your soul from the centre-stage domination of the work ethic celebrate exactly the same principles as the home education movement but as applied to the lives of adults - de-slaving rather than de-schooling your life - and share the same lovely excitement at life's possibilities. Read any of these books when you need reminding that the whole world is not a multi-storey car park in November.

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Disability Round Up

There seems to be no let up in the last two months from the government and their consultations. Fiona has a detailed report under the GPG.

One thing that may affect some of our members is a plan to move those in receipt of Carer's allowance onto active benefit, if they wish to find jobs. The Disability Group responded to this consultation. Although they are not saying that Carers will definitely be moved into work, it is something that we are keeping an eye on. More information can be found on this website: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/noonewrittenoff>

The Children with Disabilities Register

Every local authority in England and Wales has a register of children with disabilities. This is not to keep tabs on children, but to help local authorities to identify the extent and level of services needed to comply with their general duty towards children with disabilities. In some areas it is simply a register, but in other areas there is some effort into providing parents who register information about what is available locally, in terms of support and information.

In Gloucestershire they have a file that is given to new members with the many services available including in the areas of health, leisure, childcare, benefits, education, along side a list of self-help and support Groups. They also have a quarterly newsletter, and free membership to the local swimming pool. They have stressed that they are not part of the council, and will not pass on any information to the local authority other than the number and type of disabilities. In fact I was pleasantly surprised by their insistence that they have strict rules of confidentiality and do not pass on details.

However, not all counties are the same, some offer nothing at all, so it is a post code lottery.

It is worth either ringing your local authority and enquiring about the Children with Disabilities Register or looking it up on the Internet. You may find that you have been missing out on something!

Benefits and Work Guides

One of the many benefits to joining EO is getting access to the Benefits and Work guides on filling out DLA, and IB forms.

To receive a free copy of these guides, please send your name and membership number to disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org along with which guides you want and the pdf files will be sent to you.

If you do not have Internet access, please write to PO Box 325, Kings Lynn PE34 3XW with your name, address and membership number, and which guides you want plus whether you want them in printed format, or on a disc.

Goodbye

There is just one more little bit of news. After a year and a half as chair of the Disability Group, I have decided it is time to step down and let someone else take over the reins. I have enjoyed my time here, have learned a lot and have made new friends. I would like to thank my fellow members, both past and present, who have worked hard over the last year and a half to make sure that SEN and disability is given a voice in EO.

The Disability Group is always looking for more members, so if you are interested, email disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org, or ring Christine on 08445 003887.



Coping with Christmas

First of all, let me explain that this article (and those that follow) were written as a reflection of the Christmas celebration as it is in the UK, which is traditionally based on the Christian calendar. I am aware that there are also other festivals at this time of year, but the opening paragraph would have been very long if I included them all. If your particular favourite festival is not included here, it is not because it was left out deliberately but because the purpose of this article is not to highlight all winter festivals, but the reactions that some children have to them.

We all have an idealised image of what the Christmas season should be like. For many of us that will be the Dickensian vision of Christmas Carols, roasted chestnuts, trees and presents, family and friends gathered around. For some of us it will be the rising of the sun around Stonehenge on the Solstice, the frenzy of buying loved ones presents, office parties, home education group parties, and then collapsing with a drink of home made sloe gin and a nut roast. For others it will be Midnight Mass in the local church, followed by a day of religious celebration.

But for some, it will be a time of year filled with horrible sounds, smells, tastes, changes to routine, and meaninglessness.

Many children on the autistic spectrum have difficulty with Christmas, and for them and

their families it can be a very difficult time of year. The sound of Christmas carols being sung, whether they are on the door step, in a church or in the supermarket, can actually be painful for those with sensory problems. But these children often can't communicate that pain, so it comes out as 'bad behaviour'. Sometimes the only way a child knows how to get out of something that is uncomfortable is to misbehave.

Smell often triggers fond memories. The smell of a Christmas tree may trigger the memory of a childhood Christmas, the aroma of roasted chestnuts might bring forth the memory of a Christmas fair, and the scent of turkey wafting through the house will get the digestive juices rolling. But for some that smell may be a stench, that aroma may stink and that scent may be noisome.

Smell is very much part of taste, and if the smells that we find pleasant are so repulsive to a child, then it is unlikely that they will ever get to the point of tasting anything from which those smells emanate.

Many children on the spectrum prefer routine. It is how they make sense out of the world that to them is very chaotic and upsetting. Surprises are also very difficult for some children to handle. A surprise may be fun to us, but for some children it is terrifying not knowing what is in a box. They also find that the presence of other people can set them off, so the double dose of surprise visits from distant family or friends, along with a house full of people, is just too much for them.

So many of the things that we have come to think of as part of the festive season, can become a living hell for a child.

So what can we do to meet the needs of those that love this time of year, with those that loath it. Well, you can cancel Christmas, but then that is a huge sacrifice for those who do enjoy it, and is especially difficult for those families that have to meet the needs of several members.

Tradition

Over the years people have found some very creative ways of satisfying everyone's needs, and one of the first things to do is look at what you do, and why. Many of us just go along with what we think is tradition. We do things because we have always done them and carry on without questioning them. But have we always done these things? If we are honest with ourselves, sometimes what we think of as a tradition isn't. We may be basing our expectations on one single enjoyable Christmas we had as a child, or a Christmas we read about in a book. We conveniently forget all the other Christmases that were painful, upsetting or just plain boring.

Family Gatherings

Take the usual family gathering. I am always amazed at how many people say they hate having people round, but carry on doing it because they

think the others like it. But then the others carry on coming because they think you like it too! So be honest with friends and family. Tell them if it isn't working for your child, and see if you can work something else out. Many families find that they actually have a much better day if it is their own family only, and make arrangements to see others at another time.

Having more structure to visits and lowering expectations can help too. Stating times for arrival and departure and sticking to them, so that children know when they can have their house back, and letting the child control how the visit is handled can be helpful. After all, five minutes with granny then an hour in the bedroom with the Game Boy may be tolerable, and granny will enjoy seeing a happy child for five minutes rather than a child in a meltdown.

Food

Food is often the centre piece of Christmas. Turkey is traditional right? Not necessarily. In other cultures around the world, many other foods are traditional. It wasn't the turkey as such that was important, it was having a bird that was big enough to supply food for a whole large family. Right up through Victorian times that was often a goose, until Dickens came out with A Christmas Carol. If you are a small family, there is nothing wrong with having something else that you really love. And if you have a child that has a restricted diet, then Christmas day is not the day to try to introduce something new, especially if that something is only eaten once a year. If you have members of the family that are gluten or casein free, instead of thinking about what you can't have, think about what you can, and maybe a new tradition will start.

Shopping

Some people love shopping, but many don't because they are overwhelmed by the sights, smells, proximity of people, and the thought that something unexpected might happen, like someone might talk to them. If you personally enjoy shopping, then carry on, but don't expect everyone to share in that. Many children on the spectrum might prefer to choose something

from the internet, or ask someone else to go out and buy something on their behalf.

Christmas Fairs

Some may be thrilled by the lights, sounds and smells of the Christmas fair, but for others it will be a living hell. Do we really need to attend all these things? Surely they should be for pleasure, and if some are not getting pleasure out of it, then it has failed to fulfil its duty. If you have a split in your family, then arrange for some to stay home, and others to go. It is better to have happy people than the whole family together sometimes. And remember nothing is forever. If you do go, remember it is better to leave early on a happy note than to stay to the end and risk a meltdown.

Presents

And then there are the gifts. Some children are happy to make a list and get just presents from that list. Anything that is a surprise and not on the list will spoil the day. Some people have found that the child copes better with opening the presents on the day if they have wrapped them themselves before hand, others find that being able to see what the present is by having a 'window' in the wrapping paper helps. Others prefer not to have their presents wrapped at all. Some children can't cope with the gifts all on one day, and like to have one a day and spread things out over a week.

And make sure you don't ever say: "if you don't behave you won't get any presents from Father Christmas." This can make some children go through hell just to make sure that they do get presents at Christmas. They may endure something and not even tell their parents how

awful it is because they are so afraid that Father Christmas will forget them. This can lead to resentment when a child is older.

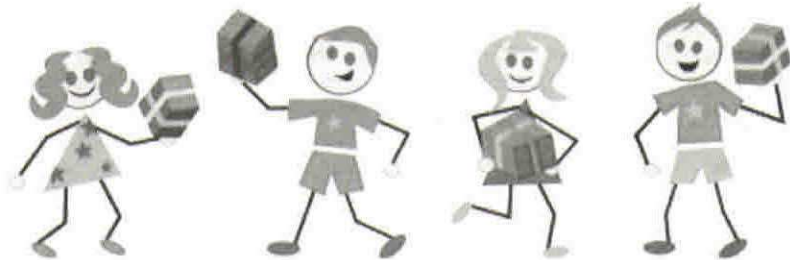
Father Christmas knows all about Autistic Spectrum Disorders, and will make sure that all his children get the presents in a way that suits them. So if Auntie Mabel insists on wrapping a present in a way that you know will upset your child, just tell her in front of the children that Father Christmas says it is okay to do things differently for your children! And Father Christmas always finds the right way to deliver presents to children, because he knows that for some, the thought of a stranger in the house brings on too much anxiety. For those children he leaves the presents outside and the parents bring them in while the children are in bed when Father Christmas is safely away again.

So when it comes to Christmas, think not from the point of view that you have to do things because it is traditional or accepted in our culture, do things because it suits your family and makes your children happy. Find the common ground between all the family, and a much better day will be had for all.


Don't expect perfection. Accept that for some children, no matter how low keyed the day will be, it will still be full of anxiety for them. Take that into consideration, and don't expect something from them that they are not capable of.

May you all have as good a festive season as your family can manage.

Jennifer Skillen



Would Cordelia Have Cancelled Christmas?



Once again I won't be doing Christmas. My son Theo will spend the day with his dad and I will have blissful solitude. In fact, I'll be doing EO work. I don't give Theo any presents. The last time I did presents was to give things from jumble sales around 8 years ago mainly so that anyone watching would think I was a nice person. (I find that consideration less important now) I might send half a dozen Xmas cards but then again I might not. I will see if I can pick up the odd thing in a charity shop for my brother's family. For my mum, I think she has everything she needs except my time. I already ask my brother to make a donation to Shelter on my behalf for Xmas and birthday if he wants to mark the occasion.

I have always found Christmas and special occasions very stressful. I don't like the open-ended commitment. I find small talk excruciatingly difficult. Being with a lot of people gives me a headache. You can cut the tension with a knife and I tune in to everyone's wretched awkwardness and lie and pretend I can't experience it. It's fine when I have to be in a group for work because there is a purpose and I don't have to look as if I am enjoying myself but with family, the worst part is that you are supposed to look like you are enjoying yourself otherwise it risks making others uncomfortable or upset.

On another note, I hate going into town to do Christmas shopping. The prospect of it makes me feel sick. I would rather stay at home and work or see one or two close friends or spend time with Theo on his own. I also have a big problem waiting in for parcels to be delivered because it is too suspenseful. Additionally, frankly I don't like parting with money. If someone is going to quantify how much I love them by the size of the gift or how "thoughtful" it is, then that's their stuff, not mine. And with my family now, I think I am incredibly lucky because they accept me as I am and accept my son Theo as he is and I don't have to prove I love them. I used to get extremely anxious about letting people down or not living up to their expectations, but once I stopped being so anxious I started to think that a lot of it was my projecting my insecurities on to them or just believing what I had been told about "how people felt".

So where does Cordelia come in? When King Lear asks Cordelia to prove how much she loves him she says:

"Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave/
My heart into my mouth/
I love your majesty/
According to my bond/
No more, no less. "

King Lear Act 1 Scene 1

<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/lear/lear.1.1.html>

I think that Cordelia would have cancelled Christmas.

Fiona Nicholson



Can Christmas Be Too Exciting?

As a family we have always loved Christmas, the preparation, choosing and making presents, decorating the house, creating a festive atmosphere. We discovered, though, that not all children can handle that excitement, that anticipation can become too much, tired bad tempered children can be stroppy throughout the day, that presents get lost and broken in the excitement, dinner gets spoiled by trying to keep chocolate filled children at the table, older relatives object to noisy computer games, and somehow the magic vanishes.

I'm a "go with the flow" type of person. I don't take naturally to being organised, and I really hate telling others what to do, but I found that Christmas went better if I took charge, planned a structure to the day and organised other people just a little bit.

We've nearly always done Christmas at our house, as it is so much easier to cater for a child's special needs in our own home - to cook what they will eat when they will eat it, for them to have their familiar things around them, and

for it to be only my stuff that ends up broken. From experience I know that having a tired, hungry overwrought child waiting up past their natural bedtime for a meal that seems to be taking for ever to be ready is no fun, so I prefer to do things in a way that works for us. I've learned to speak up for my child and make the day go better for everyone.

These are things that have worked for us, and may help others with over excited children.

Create your own traditions and rituals

Christmas is all about traditions and when families get together there is often difficulty in blending different ideas of how Christmas should be. It really helps if people are open about what Christmas means to them and what parts of their rituals are special. Then you can develop a new plan that can work for everyone, and fit in something that each person will enjoy.

My Christmas memories are of the little things we always used to do (even if we only did them a couple of times) and of the special decorations

that appeared each year. These little rituals help make the time special, and you can set up ones that help you meet the needs of the family.

We had a Christmas Eve ritual with candles and music and mulled apple juice that helped give Christmas Eve its own magic and created a calm time before bed. It also gave a feeling that Christmas had started and took the edge off the anxious anticipation.

Even getting out for a walk can be part of your Christmas routine. It helps the kids let off steam, lets everyone spread out a bit and the change is refreshing. Being cooped up with a bunch of people can be exhausting for a child with special needs, who may have been too excited to sleep and has since become overstimulated by all the bustle, and be struggling to filter out all of the noise and activity. Using new books or DVDs to get a quiet time for everyone is also good - but some adult guests may need to have it explained that the children need this time to be peaceful and undisturbed. It can really help to give someone a suitable DVD or a book that's good for dipping into. We like things like the Guinness book of records, which can be read quietly, or shared as a talking point for a group.

Games can become part of your family tradition too and they can help all ages have an activity in those lower points of the day. They take the focus off the presents as the centre of Christmas, and can be silly, competitive, team based, or as serious as you want. We tend to take the scoring and competitive bits out and just play for fun if someone struggles with losing, or do things that feel like a team solving a puzzle. I've seen this work well with traditional party games, commercial board games, slightly more physical games like table football, and even computer games that everyone can join in, even if it is only to cheer the others on. They are often more fun with all the extra people that you may have visiting at Christmas and even the person who keeps getting it wrong can add to the laughter. When my son got older we wrapped up and hid a new

board game to be opened at some point when the day needed a lift.

Choose presents with care

In modern day commercial Christmases there is such a glut of presents, many go hardly noticed and are broken quickly. It does seem that less can be more. If your children aren't already expecting mountains of tat, it is a great idea not to start that, and even to put some presents back for another day when they are noticed and enjoyed more, especially if they require a lot of setting up, or quiet concentration.

I found my son was so excited by the many presents that friends and family gave him, that he had little concentration and couldn't settle to play and he got very caught up in opening things, rushing through it and feeling flat when all was open, despite having the new toys around. It definitely helped to have activities that introduced a break in the day and to build in rituals that made the day about more than presents. But the right present could really help make the day a success. It worked for us not to do one huge gift, but to have a number of small things. There are toys that have instant appeal, but often don't last long as a play thing once their novelty value has worn off. There are also toys that have a lasting appeal and play value but are not instantly exciting or require a lot of setting up. We found that one of the first kind - known in our family as a Christmas day present - can keep the child busy and happy for a big section of the day. It may need planning in terms of the noise levels and the space it would need, and which relatives it would drive crazy, but our happiest Christmases have been when our son has been cheerfully whizzing cars all over a track that has captured his imagination for the day. These toys are often not expensive (in fact one big hit was a pop up toy that only cost 50p!) and they often don't last but they can be excellent value for one day of entertainment.

Talking to relatives and friends - especially the ones that you are going to see, can really help avoid the inappropriate Christmas present that your child is just never going to be able to use. It's good to think of some ideas long in advance.

I've also found it helpful to think about what adults will be there, and how they could help keep the children entertained, so maybe it's a good idea to suggest that they bring presents of things that they would enjoy playing with your children. My sister is great at outdoor stuff, so she is the perfect person to go to the park for a quick play with a new Frisbee, or stomp rocket. My mother was happy to play board games, and could often find something light-hearted that would be fun for the family whilst I sorted the dinner. It was great because she felt useful, I didn't have to worry about entertaining her or the children, and I got peace to get on with cooking.

Remember that celebration meals aren't always fun for children

Food can be a real hassle with children so full of chocolate that they don't eat any dinner and are bored and restless at the table. I don't want to get into whether or not to limit chocolate eating, but these are things that I've found help with mealtimes. Remember children can eat well other times than at the dinner table, and that for some children a few small meals are better than one big one.

Get a good breakfast in early before the chocolate eating starts. Making something seem special helps this feel part of the celebration. Children are less hungry for chocolate, and eating less at dinner won't matter so much.

Dips and healthy nibbles late morning instead of a starter means less time at the table, people don't get too hungry, and young children often eat quite healthily in this picky way.

Young children often get bored at the table whilst adults like to linger over a meal and drinks. Puzzles in crackers or as table gifts can make dinner less boring. Don't let fear of disapproval from your guests mean that you make children stay at the table longer than will work for them. It's better to let them go and play than to end up with dinner time battles.

Cater for younger tastes at the dinner table too. Dinner is often a big part of the day and yet a lot of children don't like roast or Christmas pudding and feel left out.

Don't worry about impressing your guests with elaborate home cooking. They've come for the company, so make the food easy.

Above all, don't take too much on yourself. It's your day too, and if you are too stressed or tired then it will affect everyone around you. Make sure there is a part of the day for you to look forward to - even if it is just dozing quietly in front of the latest Disney movie. Have fun.

Christine Waterman



Last newsletter I wrote about :

**WELFARE REFORM
CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION
ACCESS TO EXAM CENTRES
DCSF PARENTS PANEL AND TIME TO TALK
CONSULTATION EVENTS**

Here are some updates:

Welfare Reform

The latest news we have on this will be via the Education Otherwise campaign site
<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/update.php>

I am writing this on November 1st which is the deadline for the December newsletter. Social Security (Lone Parents and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations were laid before parliament on October 6th 2008. Education Otherwise will be attending an urgent Lone Parent Stakeholder meeting with the Department of Work and Pensions in London on November 13th.

By the end of the year, these measures will affect 100,000 lone parents throughout the whole of the United Kingdom. The regulations will come into effect on November 24th 2008 unless last minute representations to Ministers are successful or unless a backbench revolt halts Ministers in their tracks. At the time of writing I don't know whether the regulations will have been introduced as we are going right up to the wire with this one.

EO has been operating on different levels with regard to these proposed Government measures. In the first place we keep pointing out all the reasons why the measures should not go ahead at all. We do this via responses to official consultations and also in letters to Ministers, conversations with civil servants and personal meetings with constituency MPs. We also insist that home educating lone parents have additional caring responsibilities and will have particular challenges associated with finding appropriate affordable childcare and we are adamant that this must be formally acknowledged at policy level so that there is not a postcode lottery

when individuals speak to Lone Parent Advisors at local JobCentres.

The changes will be phased in over 2 years. Lone parents making a new claim for benefit will not be eligible for Income Support after November 24th 2008 if their child is aged 12 or above. Instead they will be directed to claim for Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance. The only parents permitted to remain on Income Support will be those who receive Carer's Allowance. Entitlement to CA is only triggered by being the official carer for someone entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at medium or high rate.

Lone parents will only be required to take employment if "appropriate affordable" childcare is available. A huge amount of discretion will be in the hands of Lone Parent Advisors in JobCentres who have not received the relevant training. Education Otherwise had a last minute opportunity to review the guidance which the Department of Work and Pensions will be sending out to all JobCentres.

New Claimants no longer entitled to Income Support

Date	Age of youngest child	How many lone parents?
24.11.08	12	100,000
26.10.09	10	68,000
25.10.10	7	121,000

There are slightly different timescales for existing lone parent claimants with a child aged between 12 and 16.

Special commencement provisions for certain existing claimants

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/draft/ukdsi_9780110843285_en_2

2.3.09	14 -16
6.7.09	12

October 2010	end Income Support for existing claimants with child over 9
January 2011	end Income Support for existing claimants with child over 7

Income Support is paid weekly and JSA 2-weekly. At the start of the JSA claim, lone parents will be expected to take out a repayable loan until they receive their first JSA payment. This is attracting considerable criticism from child poverty and lone parent stakeholders.

Normally, JSA claimants are expected to sign on 2-weekly and have an Action Plan for seeking employment of at least 16 hours. This is called the "fortnightly job review" or FJR. Education Otherwise is making the case to the Department of Work and Pensions that home educating lone parents should be able to sign on by post in a comparable way with parents of excluded children and parents in the school holidays who can't get short term childcare.

Education Otherwise had a last minute opportunity to review the JobCentre training material to see how home educating lone parents could be "treated as available for work" in order to meet the criteria for JSA and not lose benefits.

Education Otherwise has lobbied the Department of Work and Pensions, the Social Security Advisory Committee and Members of Parliament and Ministers continuously on this issue. We remain adamantly opposed to the introduction of these measures.

In addition, we are currently talking to the Department of Work and Pensions and to other stakeholder groups about how we can possibly limit the damage of these measures on home educating lone parents and their families. The DWP has agreed that this is a policy issue and that home educating lone parents should be treated sensitively.

The longer lone parents are on JSA, the more the employment services will step up attempts to get claimants to consider different jobs outside their preferred or specialist field and to

investigate other childcare options etc. The first year will be in-house at the JobCentre but the second year will be with privatised employment services.

We will continue to work tirelessly on behalf of home educating lone parents. News will be available within 24 hours of any significant policy development via the Education Otherwise Campaign website so it is well worth signing up for email notification of updates if you have access to the internet. You just have to type your email address in the box here <http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/subs.cribe.php>

Children Missing Education

Over a thousand submissions were sent to the DCSF with regard to the "suitable education" consultation. Education Otherwise sent in a variety of materials which you can find on the consultations page of our new website. This is an extract from the beginning of our overview.

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/pconsultations.htm>

Position Statement from Education Otherwise

Draft Guidance is fundamentally flawed with respect to "suitable education"

Education Otherwise believes that the draft revised guidance is fundamentally flawed because it rests on a misunderstanding about the law. Section 436A of the 1996 Education Act is headed "Duty to make arrangements to identify children not receiving education". It is not headed "duty to identify children not receiving a suitable education." There is no legal duty to "identify children not receiving a suitable education."

Impossibility of limiting a "duty to identify children not receiving a suitable education" to children outside school

There could never be a "duty to identify children not receiving a suitable education" because the duty would apply equally to children in school as to children out of school and it would require primary legislation to be radically

re-framed. This was categorically rejected by the Law Lords during the final debates in the Lords on the Bill which gave us the "children missing education" duty in 2006. We give more information about this in our paragraph entitled Law Lords verdict on "the child's right to education" and we are also enclosing the full text of the letter sent by Lord Adonis to Lord Judd in October 2006.

Education by regular attendance at school or otherwise

The majority of children and young people in this country are registered pupils at maintained schools and attend those schools regularly. A minority of children are home educated. Some children are registered pupils at a school but do not always attend school regularly. Some children have been in school the previous year but do not turn up at the start of the new school year. Some children are registered with other forms of alternative provision which they may attend more or less regularly. Some children are educated in the private sector.

Parents' duty

The law says that it is a parent's duty to cause the child to receive education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Education is defined as efficient full time education suitable to age aptitude ability and special educational needs.

Home education is personalised education

Home education is suitable to the child's age ability aptitude and special needs. It is not one-size-fits-all. The education which is suitable for one child will not be suitable for another. It may bear little resemblance to the education given to children in schools. An overwhelming reason for the draft guidance to be drastically amended, apart from the reason that it is legally inaccurate, is that in placing the emphasis on the word "suitable" it risks the local authority intervening wrongly in cases where education at home looks nothing like education at school.

Education at home is the responsibility of the parent. Parents who remove their children from

school in order to educate them at home have to follow the correct de-registration procedures and if the school acts in accordance with the law [Pupil Registration Regulations England 2006] these children will not simply disappear off the radar.

Celebrating diversity

An article was published in the Independent recently entitled Big Sky Thinking: Why home-schooling must be saved from the bureaucrats.

Two home educated young teenagers were profiled. At sixteen Louis is now a successful entrepreneur and Alex is a student at Oxford who won a place to read law. Neither has GCSEs. "It is clear that Louis has turned his life around since the days when he believed he was "stupid" in school. However, what is unclear is whether spending so much time cooking would be deemed a "suitable" education under revised guidelines to local authorities being issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families."

"University is a shock to everyone, but being home educated probably helped me settle in more quickly than some people, who felt uncomfortable initially with the change from more directed learning," he [Alex] says. "Every week we attend a tutorial. At the end, we are given a list of 20 books to read for the next week, which you have to get on with. It's great, like home education but with tutorials."

Government Consultations

Education Otherwise Government Policy Group and EO Disability Group continue to send written submissions to Government consultations which cover areas of policy likely to have an impact on home educating families. In addition to the "suitable education/children missing education" consultation we have also responded to the Department of Work and Pensions consultation on abolishing Income Support and we will also be sending our views about privatised employment services and the impact on home educators claiming benefit to the Social Security Advisory Committee who have asked recently for our views.

Access to Exam Centres

EO Government Policy Group and Disability Group had a very productive meeting with the Independent Schools Council in September. The ISC board is very much in favour of extending their schools' facilities to home educated private candidates as a way of extending and promoting the public benefit of their establishments. This will apply primarily to GCSEs and IGCSEs for England and Wales in the first instance though ISC are also going to talk to SISC, the Scottish Independent Schools Council. This would mean that home educated private candidates would be able to sit exams in private schools, using the schools as exam centres for turning up to take the exams. Finding an exam centre is a perennial problem for home educators. We also covered Access Arrangements for private candidates with disabilities, SEN and extra requirements (eg dyslexia for scribe, PC, extra time etc).

Controlled Assessments

There are also difficulties to be sorted around the internally assessed component of the exams. At the moment it's coursework but that will change to controlled assessments. With coursework, the family has to find an approved independent person who can attest that this is all the candidate's own work. This is a role teachers perform in schools and it's what tutors will do in private correspondence courses / distance learning. The tutors might mark half a dozen assignments (not marking the coursework itself) and have some sort of dialogue with the student. Then when they get a piece of coursework they can say "this is the same standard and I think he/she did it unaided." The problem for home educators in future is the element of controlled assessment about being physically supervised, ie someone has to watch the candidate writing up the project. So this was another area we talked about at the meeting with ISC and we continue to talk to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority about it. Annette from EO Government Policy Group should be able to raise this issue when she attends the next QCA conference in London in mid November.

The ISC took everything on board and they are following it all up with their schools at managerial/executive level, not just with the exam officers. During October they sent out questionnaires to around a hundred schools who had expressed a willingness to accommodate private candidates. We should be collating the feedback from these during November and might have information we can put on the EO website by December. ISC and EO have been keeping DCSF up to speed with these developments and DCSF has said that they will ensure the information is circulated to LA officers as soon as we have definite news. ISC is giving EO and HEAS contact details to their schools so that we are able to act as an intermediary if there is a problem or query.

We asked about IGCSEs again as well. At our meeting in January the ISC said it was one in six schools, but at the September meeting ISC said they'd seen an increase and they'd now say one in four or one in three of their schools did some IGCSEs. The majority of independent schools continue to offer GCSEs and EO's position is that home educators are entitled to a choice.

We will report to members via the newsletter as soon as we have any concrete information.

DCSF Parents Panel and Time to Talk consultation events:

EO Meeting with Baroness Delyth Morgan, Minister at DCSF

Education Otherwise regularly sends representatives to Government consultation events and focus groups. You can read more here

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/meetings.htm>

In the last newsletter I mentioned the Time to Talk Events and the Parents Panel. Both these events went extremely well. In September Annette Taberner went to Time to Talk in Leeds, had a conversation with Secretary of State Ed Balls and secured the promise of a meeting at Ministerial level. Annette was extremely diligent following this up and by the time you read this, EO Government Policy Group

and EO Disability Group will have met Baroness Delyth Morgan the new Minister at the DCSF. We will report back in the next newsletter. This is the first time a Minister has agreed to meet officially with EO, largely because we have been very persistent during the past year getting ourselves invited to consultation events where we can chat informally to Ministers and top civil servants. Annette and Julie Bunker from EO have both met Baroness Morgan recently, Annette at the first annual conference of the Department of Universities Innovations and Skills in Manchester and Julie at the latest Parents Panel event held in London in October. We are very pleased to have a home educator represented on the national Parents Panel since there are only 30 parents chosen from throughout the country and it is a good opportunity to meet policy makers and find out their agenda.

OTHER EVENTS

In addition to the Parents Panel, Time to Talk, Ministerial meetings and meetings with civil servants and policy makers, EO also recently sent two representatives to the Westminster Forum Seminar on Respect and Young People which was addressed by the Children's Commissioner for England, Al Aynsley Green. One of the Trustees, Vicki has volunteered on behalf of Education Otherwise Disability Group to attend a training session organised by Benefits and Work concerning the new Employment and Support Allowance. We have Annette going to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Conference in mid November to find out more about 14-19 reforms. We will also have a delegate at the Annual Conference of Child Poverty Action Group in London at the beginning of December to represent home educators and to find out more from other stakeholders about the new welfare reforms.

Is There Anyone Who Can Attend Meetings on Behalf of EO?

Which brings me to my last point: we would very much like to hear from you if you could attend consultation events on behalf of Education Otherwise, possibly at quite short notice and

probably taking place in London. EO Government Policy Group and EO Disability Group would brief you before you went and travel expenses are refundable. If you would be interested in putting your name down please contact:
Fiona Nicholson, Tel: 08445 868831
governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org
disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org
or write to me c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Some news for our Welsh members

EO's Government Policy Group recently became aware of the Welsh Assembly Government's National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR) and in my capacity as Welsh Government Liaison for the Group I investigated the Review's report to see if and how it relates to home-educators and their children.

Within the report I found some potentially disturbing wording with regard to home education, and followed this up with several e-mails and a telephone call to Jo Richards of the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS). I was pleased by what she had to say; she is sympathetic to home education and herself agreed that the wording of the report (carried out by an independent body) was less than ideal and indeed unnecessarily concerning. What was meant is not what was said, as is often the way with documents!

She assured me that if and when the DCELLS decide to move forward with any of the recommendations made in the report- which should not be before the end of the year at any rate - they will consult closely with interested and relevant groups. It appears that she and the DCELLS actively want to co-operate with home educators on the NBAR, and I will let you all know more on the matter as and when I know more myself.

Kira Patefield-Smith, Tel: 08445 884589 or
governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org



It's coming up to Trustee voting time, to help you with your choice, here are the people who will be standing for (re)election this time around:

Statement by Leslie Barson

My name is Leslie Safran Barson. I am putting myself forward for election as a trustee. I have been a co-opted trustee since August 2007 helping the present trustees begin the transformation and modernisation of EO. My home education background is that I am a mother of two children who never went to school now aged 25 and 19, both wonderful and capable young people. I have been a member of EO for at least 20 years. I also founded and run since 1993, The Otherwise Club, a community centre for home educating families. In August 2008 I graduated with a PhD about home education and how it affects parents.



I would like to be elected as a trustee in order to continue with the progress the trustees have made in the past 15 months with, for example, writing policies and procedures for all areas of EO's activities, complying with data protection and changes in company law and beginning to train our volunteers to name a few of the areas where change has begun. I feel strongly that EO is an important historical name for home education in England and Wales. The organisation needs to be clear about what it wants to do in what seem to be more and more difficult times ahead. EO is defining a clear focus for its future and now has a determined and visionary team of people at the helm as the present trustees have shown themselves to be. I am very excited about the changes that are happening and would like to continue with the work.



Statement by Adele Fraser

I live in North Wales with my husband, our two home educated daughters, and our two dogs. I suppose I am now expected to talk about my relevant experience and my professional and educational background, however, in all honesty, there is very little to say on any of these subjects, and I don't mind admitting it. I am fortunate enough to be talking to a group of people who are likely to understand what I mean when I say to you that I consider myself to be a highly educated autodidact! I have always had a great love of learning, particularly about people and society. Throughout my life I have made it a priority to keep myself well-informed on as many subjects as I can that could influence or impact upon my own life or those of the people around me. I have a particular interest in, and awareness of law, and I recently decided that I have reached a point in my life where formal recognition of my learning might be useful to me and have enrolled in a law degree with the Open University.

So, why do I want to stand for election as a trustee?

Firstly, because I believe in Education Otherwise and wish to support and uphold its ethos and its aims. Secondly, because I think I would be good at it. Until recently I was a moderator on the EO Yahoo lists. During this time I learnt a lot about EO and also about myself. I resigned my position as a moderator as I didn't feel it was the job for me; I discovered that I was more interested in the internal workings and politics of the organisation, and I would now like to be involved with EO at trustee level.

Thirdly, because I believe that problems should be solved by those who both see them and are in position to be able to work towards addressing them. And, unfortunately, I do believe that EO has problems at the moment mostly pertaining to internal public relations and communication. There are a number of people amongst the membership who feel that EO is not listening to them and taking on-board their opinions and concerns. Most of all I wish to become a trustee so I can play a part in trying to change that situation, working alongside those who share this aim and are already giving their time and energy to this end.

I believe in honest and open communication and accountability. I may be idealistic in these beliefs, but I am not holding them naively. I understand that trustees are bound by the constraints of the Data Protection Act and that this may sometimes present an obstacle to open communication between the EO council and the membership; it is my intention to undertake further research on the Data Protection Act and any surrounding issues before the next AGM, with the aim of finding ways to ensure that these do not prevent Education Otherwise from being able to engage openly with its members and volunteers.

I believe that I would make a good trustee, however the only way of knowing this for sure is to try it. I hope you will give me that opportunity.

Statement by Fiona Nicholson

Why I will be standing for election as Trustee in February

I will be standing for election as Trustee in February because I think that I can make a valid contribution and I have some useful experience. I am 47 years old. I have a 15 year old son Theo who has never been to school. I live in Sheffield and have been EO local contact in Sheffield since 2005 (now a jobshare)

I have been a member of EO on and off since 1998 but had no idea how the organisation was run until I volunteered for the Government Policy Group in 2006 and then went to my first Council Meeting in

Okehampton in February 2007. For most of the past year I have been a co-opted Trustee. I didn't stand for election last year because I promised my son Theo that I would not take on any extra work, though I later agreed to be co-opted. I hope Theo will forgive me for standing in February.

As someone who used to have to scabble for loose change to pay her subs, I believe that EO membership should offer value for money with discounts and additional resources for members. I also believe that all home educators have benefited from EO having a "fighting fund" to stave off threats to our freedoms and protect our rights. Volunteers have been able to travel to meetings and attend important conferences. In the coming year I want EO to organise more regional workshops where we can all meet up and find out what is happening with home education and with EO.



Statement by Alexander Roarke:

Alexander Roarke, known by everyone simply as Roarke (long story!). I have been a home-educating Dad for just over 3 years. Living on the Kent/London borders with Ann, my wife of 15 years and my 4 sons, the whole family live a fairly autonomous life.

We chose to educate our children at home after DS2 and DS3 were diagnosed with Aspergers. It seemed to us that the school system found this diagnosis a problem and we didn't. Not surprising really as I scored higher on the test than they did!

I am a Life Coach, Motivational Speaker working with both companies and corporate organisations and a course facilitator at 2 local colleges helping SEN children to read and use computers. Ann is the National Media Spokesperson for EO, a member of GPG and in her spare time, local contact for N. Kent.

I was co-opted onto the council after last year's AGM and have thoroughly enjoyed my last 6 months as a trustee. I believe that I have been able to bring a necessary skillset to the council and am pleased that I have been able to develop new skills in return.

I am standing for election this year as I would like to be able to continue serving the organisation that I think is vital to the longterm wellbeing of Elective Home Education; an organisation that is an invaluable resource centre for the home ed community at large; and an organisation that is fun to be a part of.

I am currently the Executive Chair of the trustees. The tenure of this role lasts until the AGM. After this, if I am re-elected and the other trustees wish me to continue, I will gladly retain this post. It is my belief that 2008/2009 are going to be pivotal development years for EO, I have been proud to serve thus far and hope that you will allow me to continue.



Statement by Annette Taberner

I am forwarding my name for consideration for the post of Education Otherwise trustee.

Biographical outline

I began my working life as a teacher and taught in primary and secondary settings. In addition I have worked in the civil service. Since my twenties I have always worked in the voluntary or third sector, throughout this time in a voluntary capacity and later additionally as a paid worker.

I have experience of campaign and lobbying work, of working alongside welfare rights workers, examining and explaining legislation and using case

studies to inform proactive intervention to challenge and improve the situation for people. I have worked at a national and international level around the issue of unemployment. I was a long term trustee and chair of our local citizen's advice bureau and an activist in many campaigns.

Our two children have never been to school, they are now 12 and 15 years of age. What began as a short term decision has become a way of life. As our home education journey has unfolded we have encountered the problems and advantages and accumulated more and more reasons for continuing along the path we began.

We have used a variety of approaches through our journey. In early months I tried to replicate school at home. It didn't work for us. People think a teaching qualification will help with home education - I had to unlearn much that I had been taught in teacher training.

We do not have a personal relationship with our local authority. I do, however, meet with our local authority on a regular basis as chair and co-founder of Sheffield Home Educators' Network.

Sheffield Home Educators' Network began as a small group of families and has grown to a thriving community with a variety of weekly activity sessions. I have experience of fundraising, organising activities, running stalls to publicise home education, liaising with parents and working with children and young people.

Within Education Otherwise

I have been an active member of the Education Otherwise Government Policy Group since December 2006. I helped organise and run workshops around England in 2007 and have contributed to many consultation exercises.

I have attended a number of meetings at which I have represented Education Otherwise and I have raised issues of concern with Government Departments and Ministers.

Since becoming a member of GPG I have been a regular attender at Open Council meetings and in October was co-opted as a trustee.

Why be a trustee?

Education Otherwise is in a process of transition. I am aware and supportive of the work being undertaken to make the charity compliant with our legal responsibilities. I believe I have experience and knowledge from working in the voluntary sector which EO can benefit from.



Statement by Vicki Skinner

My name is Vicki, I am a single parent with two sons aged 11 and 15. I began home educating in September 2005 because my youngest son was not coping at school and my eldest was being bullied. Because I have ME, social services put my children on the at risk register and with the LEA they tried to force me to send my children back to school. It was a very difficult time and no one seemed to want to help me but then I phoned the EO helpline. They were amazing, they really supported me and gave me all the advice I needed to get social services and the LEA to leave us in peace. Without that support and advice I don't know what would have happened. I agreed to be co-opted onto the council of trustees at the 2008 AGM and would like to stand for election at the 2009 AGM.

New LCs

joint Gwynedd, Julie Maurice 08445 008547 gwnedd-lc2@education-otherwise.org

joint Sheffield, Alison Bain 08445 008458 sheffield-lc1@education-otherwise.org

Norfolk Breckland, Hannah Sturt 08445 003998 norfolkbreckland-lc@education-otherwise.org

Birmingham Stuart Marshall 08445 003967, birmingham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Surrey, Claire Madgwick 08445 003964. surrey-lc@education-otherwise.org

Latest Vacancies

Swansea and Carmarthenshire.

Buckinghamshire South

Europe

England

Cambridgeshire

Channel Islands

Cheshire, Crewe and Nantwich

Cleveland

Essex: Barking and Dagenham

Essex: South East

South Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire

Hampshire

Herefordshire

Kent South East

Lancs: Bolton

Lancs: Blackpool

London: Enfield.

London: North West

London West, Richmond and

Kingston

Manchester: South

Merseyside

Shropshire

Staffordshire

Sussex, West.

West Midlands: Dudley

Yorkshire West: Leeds

Yorkshire West: Calderdale and Kirklees

Yorkshire East: Hull

Hull

Scotland

Perth and Kinross

Argyll and Bute

Edinburgh and Lothians

Inverclyde and the Ayrshires

Glasgow

Fife

Wales

Ceredigion

Glamorgan

Intro from School Anxiety Support

"Hi, my name is Jayne. I have one daughter (our only child, now aged 13) whom we have been home educating since December 2007. We removed her from the school system after battling for almost a year with severe school anxieties, which appear to have been triggered by the move to secondary school. I feel it is very important for us to realise that the school environment just isn't right for some children, for whatever reason, and that there can be a better alternative to the system. If only we had known about this years ago - not just so that we could have spared our daughter (and ourselves) a year of unnecessary suffering, but because we feel it would have been a lifestyle choice which, as a family, would have suited our needs far better anyway. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those from the home educating community for the invaluable support that they offered during our difficult time. I just hope that I can go some way to repaying that kindness by offering my support to anyone who feels I could be of use."

Jayne Owen, Tel: 08445 008469, Email: anxiety-support@education-otherwise.org

Education Otherwise Annual General Meeting

11am - 4pm, Saturday February 21st 2009

Shard End Community Centre
170 Packington Avenue,
Shard End,
Birmingham
B34 7RD

Exit J5 off the M6 Castle Bromwich

Car parking available.

For information on local bus routes and fares, call the Centro hotline

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Please confirm attendance by January 31st 2009 to:

agmnotification@education-otherwise.org

Tel: 08445 868813

c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

Local co-ordinator Julie Bunker julie.bunker@zen.co.uk 07976 710629

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A VOTE AT EO GENERAL MEETINGS

At present only Signed Up Members are entitled to vote at EO General Meetings. These include Annual General Meetings or AGMs where Trustees are elected and Extraordinary General Meetings or EGMs which may take place between AGMs.

Please note that you can now appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf at meetings which means you still have a vote even if you are unable to attend yourself.

By completing and returning the Signed Up Member form to PO Box 325, King Lynn PE34 3XW you are ensuring your right to cast a vote. There will shortly be an Extraordinary General Meeting to vote on the revised Articles and Memoranda of Association.

Fiona Nicholson
on behalf of the Trustees

SIGNED-UP MEMBERS (EO Membership Declaration)

I (Print Name)
wish to become a Signed up Member of Education Otherwise Association Limited.

In the event of the Association being wound up I agree to contribute up to £10 in payment of any debts and liabilities it may have incurred.

Signature of Member:

Date :

EO Membership Number if known:

Address (print in full)

This form may be completed by current members of Education Otherwise who have paid their annual subscription, and should be returned to:

EO Company Secretary c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Please note that Education Otherwise will post any correspondence related to Signed up Members to the member's address as listed on EO's membership database and it is the member's responsibility to keep the Database Administrator informed of any change of address via the PO Box listed above or by emailing: database@education-otherwise.org

In any correspondence accompanying the SUM form please enclose an SAE if you require confirmation of receipt.

Flexi School Support

We have had several volunteers for this post which is great. If you would also like to add your name to the jobshare list please get in touch.

Do you have current or past experience of flexi-school or part-time attendance at school either at primary or secondary level? Education Otherwise is often asked about contacts who are willing to discuss experiences of flexi-schooling. EO Government Policy Group provides the legal backup information but direct personal experience would be most welcome either via phone or email. We are also interested in finding volunteers who could give further information about flexi-school arrangements for children with Special Educational Needs.

Volunteers are allocated an EO Flextel phone number and EO email address and personal details are not in the public domain. From the point of view of the volunteer if you have Caller Display you also know when you are getting a "work call". This job can be shared.

Please contact Fiona Nicholson of EO Government Policy Group for more information.

fnicholson@education-otherwise.org 08445 868831 or Email: enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org Tel: Jo, 08445 883539

Single Parent Family Contacts

Do you have experience of home educating as a single parent? Could you be available to provide information and/or support? Education Otherwise Government Policy Group provides additional legal backup information about welfare rights legislation and the EO Helpline also takes general calls and email enquiries and could refer individual queries to the Single Parent Contact. In addition the volunteer for this post could get queries from members who see the contact details in the Newsletter.

Volunteers are allocated an EO Flextel phone number and EO email address and personal details are not in the public domain. From the point of view of the volunteer if you have Caller Display you also know when you are getting a "work call". This job can be shared.

Please contact Jo: Email: enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org or Tel: 08445 883539 for more information

Research Contacts

We now have a volunteer for this post which is great. If you would also like to add your name to the jobshare list please get in touch.

Would you enjoy investigating and organising research into home education methods and achievements. Education Otherwise is often asked for this information by the media and we need contributors to keep our research bank up to date on the website and in our printed materials. For this post it would also be useful to liaise with EO Government Policy Group and EO Disability Group.

Volunteers are allocated an EO Flextel phone number and EO email address and personal details are not in the public domain. From the point of view of the volunteer if you have Caller Display you also know when you are getting a "work call". This job can be shared.

For more information please contact Fiona Nicholson of EO Government Policy Group and EO Disability Group:

fnicholson@education-otherwise.org tel. 08445 868831 or Email: enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org Tel: Jo: 08445 883539

Anti-Bullying Support

We now have a volunteer for this post which is great. If you would also like to add your name to the jobshare list please get in touch.

Education Otherwise Helpline and enquiry team receive a number of calls about bullying. We are very aware that bullying in schools is one reason why families decide to home educate. Bullying can have a traumatic impact for years after the event. Could you be available to offer support and information to members. EO Helpline take

Volunteers Needed

general calls and would refer specific queries to Anti Bullying Support. In addition members might get in touch directly from seeing your contact details in the Newsletter.

Volunteers are allocated an EO Flextel phone number and EO email address and personal details are not in the public domain. From the point of view of the volunteer if you have Caller Display you also know when you are getting a "work call". This job can be shared.

For more information please contact:
enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org
08445 883539

Book and Software Reviews

We already have a volunteer to co-ordinate the Book and Software reviews. If you would like to add your name to the jobshare list please get in touch.

The Education Otherwise Newsletter includes a review section for new and existing educational material which we feel will be of interest to our members. Volunteers are allocated an EO Flextel phone number and EO email address and personal details are not in the public domain. From the point of view of the volunteer if you have Caller Display you also know when you are getting a "work call". This job can be shared.

For more information please contact:
nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org tel.
01302 863195 or enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org tel. 08445 883539

Team to Help Co-ordinate AGM Event February 2009

Volunteers are needed to form a team to help organise the February 2009 Annual General Meeting at Shard End Community Centre Birmingham February 21st 2009. We want the AGM Event to be a day of interest for home educators with stalls, workshops, activities and guest speakers as well as conducting the business of EO. The AGM is where Trustees are elected and is a chance for members to meet the people who work in EO and to find out more about what the organisation is doing. There are a number of short term volunteer roles available

running till February 2009 including on the day itself. You can arrange to make a shorter or longer time commitment based round your family's needs.

To make the most of our AGM Event we'll need people who can cover the areas of event planning, networking, catering, administration etc. We also need people to help on the day. You might have the skills yourself or be good at finding the right person to do the job. You might not be sure precisely what you can offer, but just want to help.

Some team members will need to live locally, but there will be other ways to make a contribution if you live further afield, so if in doubt please contact the co-ordinators for a chat.

Co-ordinators:
Julie in Birmingham area julie.bunker@zen.co.uk
07976 710 629

Fiona fiona_j_nicholson@yahoo.co.uk
08445 868831

TEEN TEAM Editors for EO Newsletter

Would you like to be one of a team of teenage editors to help create Teen Pages for the EO Newsletter?

There's been a lot of interest expressed by EO teens to have their own pages in the EO Newsletter, so we would really like to get this off the ground. If you think you might like to be part of this new idea for EO Newsletter, please contact me with your name, address, telephone number, email address and age.

Contact Gail Borrows at: gborrows@education-otherwise.org, or PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, PE34 3XW.

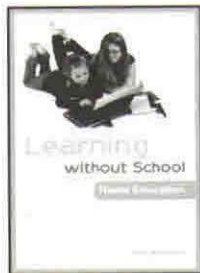
Regional Diary Co-ordinator

Person needed to co-ordinate the Regional Diary, contact Nikki Haxell (Newsletter Co-ordinator) for details: 01302 863195 or nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

Learning without School

Ross Mountney

Learning without School is a practical handbook for parents who want to educate their children at home. This book explains the advantages and disadvantages of choosing home education; how to begin home educating; what you need to do and how to help your child adjust; and how home education affects children's social skills and friendships.



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- 2) Go to the EO website
- 3) Phone 0845 458 9000

Remember to quote the affinity number 017

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Learnpremium

This is an online educational service owned by the Guardian newspaper. EO pays Learnpremium a lump sum and is making a small charge to each family to cover this cost. Subscription: £30 until 19th October 2009.

There are around 130,000 pages of online lessons and resources on a wide range of subjects including English to Design & Technology or Physical Education.

It offers interactive lessons, Guardian lesson packs, whiteboard activities, randomly generated tests, a daily news service for 9 - 14 year old and covers the primary and secondary curriculum.

For more info or a free trial to see if it will suit you and your family, contact Lynda.

Email: learnpremium@education-otherwise.org or Tel: 08445 867541

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or Tel: 01720422457 or via ODLQC website

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Friendly, approachable distance learning course written by home-educator who is also a professional writer, English tutor and AQA examiner.

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Phone: Catherine Mooney on (01952) 605865

Education Otherwise does not endorse or recommend services or products advertised in this newsletter. Use of tutors remains the responsibility of the parent.

Advertisements must be pre-paid by the 1st of the preceding month that the Newsletter is published. The deadline for February 2009 issue is January 1st. Please send your advertisements in either text or jpg format to: advertising@education-otherwise.org

Flyers must be with the printers for the 1st of the preceding month. The deadline for February 2009 issue is January 1st.

To Group Organisers: please remember when giving details of events that the EO newsletter can be read by people who are not EO members. If you would like your group to have a listing or if you have any changes to make to your existing entry you will need to complete and return a permission form (included after the Regional Diary). You can also obtain a permission form by sending an sae to Education Otherwise Regional Diary, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW or by downloading one from the Official EO Forms board of the members forum on the new EO website.

Each adult whose contact details are listed for your group needs to complete a permission form before we can add their details to your entry, so if someone new wants to be added to your groups listing as contact, they will need to ask us for one of these forms before we can add their name and number or email address to the Regional Diary. Can group organisers please let the RD organiser know of any changes to venues, days and times or contact details for the group. Email: regionaldiary@education-otherwise.org

Please call the group before attending to make sure it is happening, and if not please let me know. Not all groups listed are EO groups.

England

AVON

Bath Home Education Group, a new group still in it's early stages consisting of children ages 3-7 years and a couple of 2 year olds. Maria, 01761 420771 : yoga.maria@yahoo.co.uk

BEDFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Pauline, 08445 868894 : beds-lc@education-otherwise.org
Bedfordshire Christian Home Ed : scottandrachel@ntlworld.com

BERKSHIRE

EOLC: Lynn, 08445 868842 : berkshire-lc@education-otherwise.org
Berkshire Home Educators, email list for home educators in Berkshire and surrounding areas: <http://groups.yahoo.com/BerkshireHomeEducators>
Heroes Education Centre, support group for young people who are home-educated, 4 days/wk, workshops, lessons, activities. Dawn, 01628 783107: www.homeeducators.co.uk

BRISTOL

EOLC: Ian, Tel: 08445 003756 : bristol-lc@education-otherwise.org
Bristol Home Education Learn Place (HELP), meeting Monday & Friday, Carla: 0117 9354389 : carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk
Festivals and Photos SW. A contacts and events list for HEs to promote existing HE

options, help make new meet up options and the choice to share your HE moments with our photography section. Contact andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

EOLC: Georgeanna, 08445 003763 : bucks-lc@education-otherwise.org
MKHEN, Milton Keynes Home Educators Network extends a warm welcome to all. Activities, social events and support. Also has an excellent relationship with LA. www.mkhen.org.uk : Georgeanne : sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk : www.mkhen.org.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - SOUTH

EOLC: Sandi, 08445 003859 : southbucks-lc@education-otherwise.org

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 003769 : cambs-lc@education-otherwise.org
Peterborough Home Educators, friendly group meeting twice weekly for activities including art, crafts, science, ice skating, bowling, cooking and lots more, Sarah : sarah.lambert7@ntlworld.com : 07784 169260

CHESHIRE

Cheshire-South EOLC: Carrie, 08445 003781 : cheshire-lc1@education-otherwise.org

Cheshire-East EOLC: Gillian, 08445 853874 :
cheshire-lc2@education-otherwise.org

Cheshire-Macclesfield EOLC: Debbie, 08445
003832 : macclesfield-lc@education-
otherwise.org

Mid Cheshire Home Educators, bi-monthly
meetings and regular outings, Ange :
che@talktalk.net :

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mche>

SCANS-HEAG, Regular activities, meetings and
trips for all ages. Separate teen activities.
Carrie, 01782 786720 : scans.heag@yahoo.co.uk

CLEVELAND EOLC: Pauline, 08445 868897 :
cleveland-lc@education-otherwise.org

CORNWALL

EOLC: Natasha, 08445 868849 : cornwall-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Festivals and Photos SW. A contacts and
events list for HEs to promote existing HE
options, help make new meet up options and the
choice to share your HE moments with our
photography section. Contact
andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Cornwall Home Educators meet every Thursday.
For a copy of local newsletter contact Michelle.
Newsletter also covers other home ed events in
Cornwall: micha.dickson@virgin.net : 01326
250298

Menheniot nr Liskeard, Small School, Mondays
term-times. Activities aimed at 5-11
years, 10.30am-1.30pm followed by time for
playing, Tania, 01822 835902

Penzance, PZ Home Ed, Monday pm for
workshop during term-time, Ruth, 01736
350887

Pentiddy Woods, family group get-together in
the woods with games and woodland skills
activities. Ele, 01579 363775 :
ele@pentiddy.co.uk or Ruth, 0845 4560247

CUMBRIA EOLC: Jayne, 08445 003793 :
cumbria-lc@education-otherwise.org

South Cumbria Home Educators Yahoo Group,
we have a yahoo group to keep in touch and meet
up in various places in the area, to find out more
please email Jayne : jaynewoodbank@yahoo.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE - DERBY CITY EOLC: Karen,
08445 003796 : derby-lc@education-
otherwise.org
Derby Group, AHEAD :
ahead.derbygroup@yahoo.com

DEVON

All Devon details available from :
southdevongroup@googlemail.com

East Devon & Exeter EOLC : Kate 08445
003798 : eastdevon-lc@education-otherwise.org

Festivals and Photos SW. See Cornwall entry
for details. Contact:
andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Exeter, Free Range Learning, Pottery sessions
weekly in well equipped studio. Neil, 01363
82314

Exeter Free Range Learning, meets
Wednesdays, social group for all ages, Annie,
01392 434167

Exeter Free Range Learning Youth, Youth and
Social group every Tuesday, Erinn, 01392
434167

DEVON-NORTH EOLC: Jo, 08445 868843 :
northdevon-lc@education-otherwise.org

North Devon, Home Grown Kids, Twice weekly
meetings and events. **Swimbridge**, Weds 1.30-
4.30pm **Barnstaple**, Fridays, Funderzone Term
time only, Jo, EO Local Contact North Devon
: 08445 868843

DEVON-SOUTH EOLC: Bridget, 08445 003804
: devons-lc@education-otherwise.org

South Devon Home Education Group meets;
Monday + Friday for swimming; Wednesday,
Social and Educational meeting; Thursday for
workshops. For all these meetings, Bridget,
08445 003804 : devons-lc@education-
otherwise.org

South Devon Home Education Group, meet at
Harberton Parish Hall, near Totnes. Lucinda :
southdevongroup@googlemail.com

Dart Valley Home Ed Network, Out and about
visits: Natural History, History and Photography
and more. Members only internet group. Hannah
& Gordon, 01803 762788 : lindnich@tesco.net

DEVON/DORSET/SOMERSET BORDERS

Home Education Centre, 2 days/week.
Workshops, sports, activities and support.
www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk : Karen, 01460
30461 : karen@homeeducationcentre.org.uk : or
Louise, 01460 61325

DORSET

Dorset-North EOLC: Sharon, 08445 003807 :
ndorset-1c@education-otherwise.org

Dorset-East (Bournemouth) EOLC: Vicki,
08445 003726 : Bournemouth-1c@education-
otherwise.org

Dorset-East (Poole) EOLC: Carol, 08445
003848 :

poole-1c@education-otherwise.org

Festivals and Photos SW. See Cornwall entry
for more details. Contact
andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

**North Dorset, HEOND (Home Educators of
North Dorset),** Friendly group, meeting weekly
in Sturminster Newton, June, 01258 471949 :
bugchick@mac.com

Bournemouth, HEED, weekly Monday meetings,
Carol, 01202 677066 :
carolstonehe@yahoo.co.uk : www.he-ed.org.uk

DURHAM

EOLC: Karen, 08445 868841 : durham-
1c@education-otherwise.org

ESSEX

EOLC: Corinne, 08445 003808 : essex-
1c@education-otherwise.org

Chelmsford, monthly meetings, 3rd Thursday, 2
- 4pm. Sarah, tower@tesco.net: Lena,
choccyfudge-go@yahoo.co.uk

Leigh on Sea, Thames Kids Club, meetings held
Fridays from 11am to 3pm in Leigh on Sea. £3
per family. thameskidsclub@googlemail.com :
Roxy, 01702 334521: Raquel, 07958 045885 :
Thea, 01702 309869

Essex Home Educators, meetings monthly in
Chelmsford, Colchester and Tiptree, and weekly
in Southend. There are also regular meetings
for swimming, bowling and ice skating, etc., and
at least two trips out around the county each
month. Details of all these in Essex Epicycle
Newsletter available by email, Corinne :
epicycle@wavy.org

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Cirencester and Cotswold Meetings. Will
answer queries about home education in general
and offer information about local groups and
activities. Pam: pjp@ragingbull.com : 01285
721008

Stroud, email group keeps families in touch,
anyone can arrange an activity or get together.
Nick, 01453 840036 : nick.weir@localfood.org.uk

Forest of Dean, meet monthly on a Thursday,
12.15 - 16.00, for bridge and damn building, river
clearance, fire building, woodland walks, indoor
and outdoor games, raft building. Roxy :
cdsnhf@googlemail.com

Gloucestershire, Beverley, 01242 524091

HAMPSHIRE

Southampton and area, SEEDS, for children
age 3+, home educators in Southampton and
area, Lyn: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1

Havant area, ActiveEO, meetings most weekdays
: www.activeo.org.uk : Julie, 01243 552472

North Hampshire, NHEO. Open to all home
educators in North Hants & surrounding areas.
Regular meetings in Basingstoke, ice skating &
other activities.

http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NHEO/: Jaki,
07731 805323 : jakiparsons@yahoo.co.uk

Hampshire, FRHEBEEs, Friendly informative
group covering the New Forest, West
Hampshire, South Wiltshire area, Karen, 01425
656856 : karence@btinternet.com

**Hampshire West, Fordingbridge and Ringwood
Home Educators,** FRHEBees-
owner@yahooogroups.com

**Hampshire & Surrey Farnham Home Ed
Group,** friendly social group, meeting fortnightly
on Thursdays. Serving Farnham, Aldershot and
surrounding areas. Paul, 01252 316497 :
paula.oakley@talk21.com

HEREFORDSHIRE (+ Monmouthshire)

Monmouth Home Educators, meetings on
Tuesdays at Rockfield Community Centre for fun
and friendship, arts, crafts, games and sports -
football, hockey, rounders, cricket. All ages
welcome. Check for dates and times. Roxy,
01989 768128 : cdsnhf@googlemail.com

HERTFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Maya, 08445 003816 : herts-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Herts Home Educators Yahoo Group for events and friendship. To join please email Karen:
karenbartlett@btinternet.com

ISLE OF MAN

EOLC: Anthony & Leandra, 08445 003949 :
isleofman-lc@education-otherwise.org

ISLE OF WIGHT

EOLC: Shara, 08445 003819 : iow-
lc@education-otherwise.org

KENT

North West, EOLC: Ann, 08445 868839 : kent-
lc@education-otherwise.org

UK Home Educators, fortnightly meetings in Chatham, regular park days and monthly activities. Ann: kent-lc@education-otherwise.org: 08445 868839

Hayes Group, meet alternate Fridays, 11am to 2pm, Debbie, 07730 955395

Kent, Sussex & Surrey (on the border of all 3 counties) F.L.A.G.S, active group meeting weekly during termtime for hall activities, sports and outings. Karen, 01732 864524 :

karenlow@uwclub.net : www.flags-education.org

Kent, Sussex, Surrey, www.southeast-home-educators.co.uk

South East Home Educators and Wealden Home Education Network

We are a group of home educators who try to meet regularly for trips out. Bowling, swimming, workshops and museums. We also meet once a fortnight in Tonbridge Wells in a hall for adults and children to get together. Lizelle, 01732 883850 : lizelle@lizellefdb.com or Bo, 07853 945206

LANCASHIRE

Joint EOLC: Pam, 08445 868908 : lancs-
lc1@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Kath, 08445 868829 : lancs-
lc2@education-otherwise.org

LEICESTERSHIRE

EOLC: Sharan, 08445 868847 : leics-
lc1@education-otherwise.org

Syston HE. A fun and lively group for the under 10s. We meet twice a month and each session has a theme - with art and science activities to help explore the topic. Tammy, mathamsam@btinternet.com : Vikki, martinvikki@aol.com : Christine, christine_wells@yahoo.com
Leicestershire, HE-AL, <http://www.he-al.org.uk/index.html>

LINCOLNSHIRE

EOLC: Janet, 08445 868862 : lincs-
lc@education-otherwise.org

LINCOLNSHIRE SOUTH

EOLC: Susanna, 08445 003861 : southlincs-
lc@education-otherwise.org

LONDON

London, Brandram Roaders, Meet 11-1pm Thursdays during term time at Brandram Road Community Centre, SE13 5RT (off Lee High Road) Then to nearby park. Ages mostly 0-12 yrs. All welcome. Subs £2 per family. Joolz, 020 8289 5026 : teachyourown@hotmail.com

London, Fulham HE. Fridays from 11am, age 5+ (siblings welcome). Tennis, basketball lessons. Open house, play in park and some field trips. Kellan, 020 7384 3332 or 07796 687029

East London, Forest Group, meets on alternating fortnightly Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1-4pm at Quaker Meeting House, Bush Road, Leytonstone, London E11: Helen, 020 8553 0015 : h_long@sky.com : Ola Gasson 020 8520 0648 : olaglasson@googlemail.com

UK Home Educators, London/Kent, meetings in Bromley and Orpington. Outings and group events monthly. Ann: kent-lc@education-otherwise.org : 08445 868839

London-NW, The Otherwise Club. A community centre for families choosing to educate their children out of school, Leslie, 020 8969 0893
Dulwich, Woodland Club, age 8-teen. Science, Maths, various speakers, social afternoon. Idyllic venue. Gina, 020 8299 1135

Woodlands Study Group, 11yr old and over; English, Maths and Science classes every Monday, term time in Dulwich SE22 : deniseriddy@aol.com

East London, Maggie Home Educators. Meet every Friday, 1-3pm for social activities. All ages welcome. Corner Forest Lane and Maggie Close, Forest Gate. Annalise, 020 8500 1053 : annalise@tesco.net

Haringey Home Education Club. Group meets alternate Weds 12-4pm. See www.hhec.org.uk for details. Gaby, 020 8881 9463 : contact@hhec.org.uk

Hackney, Adventures with Education. Hackney group meets weekly in term time, Tuesdays 11am-3pm, Chris Swift 020 7254 4988

London Local Contacts

East EOLC: Stephen, 08445 003821 : londoneast-lc@education-otherwise.org

Enfield EOLC: Tina, 08445 868836 : enfield-lc@education-otherwise.org

North, EOLC: Tina, Tel: 08445 003823 Email: londonnorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

North West EOLC: Tina, 08445 003826 : londonnw-lc@education-otherwise.org

S. E. EOLC: Keith & Chrystia, 08445 003827 : londonse-lc@education-otherwise.org

SW Joint EOLC: Rehena, 08445 003828 : londonsw-lc@education-otherwise.org

SW Joint EOLC: Lei, 08445 003829 : londonsw-lc@education-otherwise.org

Waltham Forest EOLC: Jo & Jerry, 08445 003867 : walthamforest-lc@education-otherwise.org

West EOLC: Betsy, 08445 003831 : londonwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

Middlesex EOLC: Betsy, 08445 003834 : middlesex-lc@education-otherwise.org

Central EOLC: Tina, 08445 853876 : londoncentral-lc@education-otherwise.org

N. IRELAND

EOLC: Shevaun, 08445 003842 : nireland-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORFOLK

EOLC: 08445 003836 : norfolk-lc@education-otherwise.org

Thetford, swimming and indoor sports/play. Waterworld Leisure Centre, Thetford, Term-time Thurs 2.30-4.30pm, but weeks can vary so please ring first. Faye, 01953 681785

NORFOLK-WEST

EOLC: Desiree, 08445 853878 : norfolkwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

West Norfolk Home Educators, email list for home educators in West Norfolk: <http://groups.yahoo.com/WestNorfolkHomeEducators>

NORFOLK-SOUTH

EOLC: Anne, 08445 868904 : norfolksouth-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORFOLK-BRECKLAND

EOLC: Hannah, Tel: 08445 003998 : norfolkbreckland-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

EOLC: Imogen, 08445 003841 : northants-lc@education-otherwise.org

Northants HE. Informal Group that meets regularly for various activities www.northantshe.org.uk : info@northantshe.org.uk

NORTHUMBERLAND-North

EOLC: Mink, 08445 003843 : northumberlandnorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORTHUMBERLAND-West

EOLC: Liz, 08445 003844 : northumberlandwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

NOTTINGHAM CITY

EOLC: Damian, 08445 003846 : nottinghamcity-lc@education-otherwise.org

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

EOLC: Jenifer, 08445 003961 : notts-lc@education-otherwise.org

OXFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Louisa, 08445 868873 : oxfordshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

RUTLAND

EOLC: Iain & Jacqueline, 08445 003853 : rutland-lc@education-otherwise.org

SHROPSHIRE

Newport, Nr Telford, Newport Home Education Group, meetings 1st and 3rd Friday every month. Outings on other Fridays, from 12.30pm, for all ages. Julieann, 01952 401571, weshalllook@aol.com

SOMERSET

EOLC: Vivian, 08445 003858 : somerset-lc@education-otherwise.org

Festivals and Photos SW. A contacts and events list for HEs to promote existing HE options, help make new meet up options and the choice to share your HE moments with our photography section. Contact andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Wells Swimming Group, meets weekly for swimming at Wells Leisure Centre - term time only. Lesley, 01749 689241 : mumfordturner@hotmail.com

FAB Times (local Somerset email newsletter), to subscribe for this free monthly e-newsletter, email Nicola: fab@phonecoop.coop

Wiveliscombe/Taunton area group, monthly meetings on 1st Tuesday of month at Oake Village Hall, & regular outings. Maggie, 01984 624651

Somerset/Dorset/Devon borders, Home Education Centre, 2 days/week. Workshops, sports, activities and support.
www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk : Karen, 01460 30461 : karen@homeeducationcentre.org.uk : or Louise, 01460 61325

North Somerset Home Education Group, weekly childrens gym, walks, outings etc, Vicky, 01275 848425 : victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk
Shepton Mallet, FAB Home Education Group Social Meeting - Fortnightly on Tuesdays from 1.30-3.30pm at Shepton Mallet Scout Hut, Old Wells Road. £2.50 per family to cover refreshments and hire of hall. Mandy 01749 347799 : Jojo 01458 443674

Bath Home Education Group, a new group still in it's early stages consisting of children ages 3-7 years and a couple of 2 year olds. Maria, 01761 420771 : yoga.maria@yahoo.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Carrie, 08445 003862 : staffordshirenorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

SCANS-HEAG. Regular activities, meetings and trips for all ages. Separate teen activities. Carrie, 01782 786720 : scans.heag@yahoo.co.uk
Stafford HESEO (Home Educators Supporting Each Other) Meeting 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month, 12-3pm, bring lunch. Karen, 01543 422577 : karen@karisto.co.uk

SUFFOLK

EOLC: Sue, 08445 868913 : suffolk-lc@education-otherwise.org
Wetherden, meetings, 3rd Friday of the month 10.30am till 3pm, Wendy, 01449 614772 : welyn@talktalk.net

SURREY

EOLC: Claire, Tel: 08445 003964 : surrey-lc@education-otherwise.org
Godalming Group, meets alternate Mondays. Serves South West Surrey and surrounding area. Ruth: www.swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk

SUSSEX & SURREY & KENT (on the border of all 3 counties)

F.L.A.G.S. active group meeting weekly during term time for hall activities, sports and outings. Karen, 01732 864524 : karenlow@uwclub.net : www.flags-education.org

SUSSEX-EAST

EOLC: Winnie, 08445 003863 : sussexeast-lc@education-otherwise.org
HEDGE based in Hastings, meet every Friday : www.hedge-education-org: Catherine, 01424 812213
Forest Row, regular social gatherings and tutorial groups. Winnie, 01342 826087 : artofchange@msn.com
Brighton EOLC: Karen, 08445 868914 : brighton-lc@education-otherwise.org

SUSSEX-WEST

Chichester area, ActiveEO, meetings most weekdays : www.activeo.org.uk : Julie 01243 552472
Sussex - Home Educating in West Sussex Facebook Group. A group for home educators and the home educated in West Sussex. Events most weeks all organised on Facebook. Look up

Katie Pybus on Facebook or
roger.katie@virgin.net or Tel: 01798 875071

TYNE & WEAR(NEWCASTLE):

EOLC: Rosemary, 08445 003866 : tynewear-
lc@education-otherwise.org

WARWICKSHIRE EOLC: June, 08445 003869 :
warks-lc@education-otherwise.org

WARWICKSHIRE - COVENTRY

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 003792 : coventry-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Coventry and Warwickshire Home Educators,
monthly meetings held at various locations, plus
monthly outings and activities. Full details in
HELM (West Midlands)

Coventry meetings 4th Tuesday 1pm to 4pm :
sarah@nellyb.co.uk **Wolston meetings** 2nd
Thursday : lloyd@dash20.fsnet.co.uk

WARWICKSHIRE - RUGBY

EOLC: Fay, 08445 003852 : rugby-
lc@education-otherwise.org

WEST MIDLANDS

Wolverhampton & Walsall EOLC: Debbie,
08445 003871 : wolverhampton-lc@education-
otherwise.org

Sandwell EOLC: Andrea, 08445 003856 :
sandwell-lc@education-otherwise.org

Birmingham EOLC: Stuart, 08445 003967 :
Birmingham-lc@education-otherwise.org

HELM Newsletter, HE related articles and
events throughout the West Midlands and
surrounding areas.

helmeditor2112@blueyonder.co.uk : Jane, 01562
720046 : Andrew, 07709 468140

WILTSHIRE

EOLC: Shena, 08445 868907 : wilts-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Salisbury, social group meets Monday,
fortnightly, 1-4pm. Large hall, skate park, play
park, football pitch, basketball. Inside we have
games, pool and table-tennis. We have a real
mix of ages including teenagers. Very friendly
and new faces welcome. Ally, 01722 710525

WORCESTERSHIRE

EOLC: Sue, 08445 868846 : worcs-
lc@education-otherwise.org

North Worcestershire/Kidderminster meetings,
please see Worcs newsletter or contact Gail,
01562 822034 : gail@1921.net

YORKSHIRE EAST

EOLC: Alison, 08445 003874 : yorkshireeast-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Withernsea LC: Linda, 08445 003873 :
withernsea-lc@education-otherwise.org

YORKSHIRE NORTH + EAST

near Malton, meets weekly, Mondays, 12-4pm,
viv@flamangoes.co.uk : 01904 788374 (York and
surrounding area) or tess@chrisgeall.com: 01947
825772 (East N Yorks)

YORKSHIRE NORTH

EOLC: Denise, 08445 868852 : yorkshirenorth-
lc@education-otherwise.org

Harrogate Home Ed Group. Meetings held on
1st and 3rd Thursday each month, 13.30 to 15.30
Great Ouseburn Village Hall, between York and
Harrogate. Kate: eldiva1@googlemail.com :
07724 065091

YORKSHIRE NORTH+WEST

N/W Home Ed Group, meets Skipton monthly
and Bradford Gym Club - Meets weekly. Regular
meetings and outings. Judith, 01756 791356

YORKSHIRE SOUTH

Barnsley EOLC: Amanda, 08445 868854 :
barnsley-lc@education-otherwise.org

Doncaster EOLC: Nicola, 08445 003806 :
doncaster-lc@education-otherwise.org

Rotherham EOLC: Jayne, 08445 003851 :
rotherham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Sheffield EOLC: Fiona, 08445 003857 or
Alison, 08445 008458 : sheffield-lc@education-
otherwise.org

YORKSHIRE WEST

Bradford EOLC: Gillian, 08445 853891 :
bradford-lc@education-otherwise.org

Wakefield EOLC: Nicole, 08445 868874 :
wakefield-lc@education-otherwise.org

Huddersfield, Book Group, Monday, monthly, 2-3pm. Marsden Library - age range 6-12 yrs.
Jane, 01484 645034

Huddersfield, Art Workshops, Thursday, monthly, 10-11am, ages up to 8yrs. £1.30-3.30pm, ages 8+.
Huddersfield Art Gallery. Mandy, 01484 460026; Jane, 01484 645034

Huddersfield Group - Lunch and Chat, Thursday, monthly, 11.30 to 1.30pm, Mandy, 01484 460026

Wales

ANGLESEY

EOLC: Nick, 08445 003713 : anglesey-lc@education-otherwise.org

CONWY

EOLC: Dawn, 08445 003791 : conwy-lc@education-otherwise.org

DENBIGHSHIRE

Joint EOLC: Sam, 08445 003794 : denbighshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Julie, 08445 868916 : denbighshire-lc1@education-otherwise.org

FLINTSHIRE

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 868851 : flintshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Cardiff Home Ed Group, we meet every Wednesday from 12noon to
efa.rosina@yahoo.co.uk

GWENT EOLC: Bronwen, 08445 003812 : gwent-lc@education-otherwise.org

GWYNEDD

Joint EOLC: Nick, 08445 003813 : Gwynedd-lc@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Judy, 08445 853879 : gwynedd-lc1@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Julie, 08445 008547 : Gwynedd-lc2@education-otherwise.org

Tregarth, Creative Learning and Support, meet every Wednesday 12 - 5pm. Free weekly newsletter of events via email. Active website at: www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk
Nick - 01407 811049 ; Julie, 01286 678181 :
jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com

North West Wales. CLAS - Creative Learning and Support. CLAS was born during 2005 and is the name of a group collective of like-minded parents and children living predominantly in North West Wales who believe in the ethos of home learning and education.
www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk

MONMOUTHSHIRE (+ HEREFORDSHIRE)

Monmouth Home Educators, meetings on Tuesdays at Rockfield Community Centre for fun and friendship, arts, crafts, games and sports - football, hockey, rounders, cricket. Check for dates and times. Roxy: cdsnhf@googlemail.com : 01989 768128

PEMBS EOLC: Yvette, 08445 003847 : pembrookshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

POWYS EOLC: David, 08445 003849 : powys-lc@education-otherwise.org

Newtown, New Leaf Group. Fortnightly meetings for all ages, for activities, socialisation and play : siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk

Powys Yahoogroup, advertising home-ed activities in Powys for home educating families : siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk

NE WALES/BORDERS,

WREXHAM EOLC: Sam, 08445 003872 : wrexham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Froncsyllte, HENWOS, fortnightly group meets 10-4pm. Social play and chat. Monthly newsletter for NE Wales area activities and events: kruger37@tiscali.co.uk

Scotland

Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross EOLC: Marley, 08445 868896 : dundee-lc@education-otherwise.org

Borders EOLC: Jane, 08445 003716 : borders-lc@education-otherwise.org

Aberdeenshire EOLC: Fiona, 08445 003712 : aberdeenshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Highland & Isles EOLC: Lesley, 08445 003817 : highlandislands-lc@education-otherwise.org

Clacks, Falkirk, N Lanarks & Stirling EOLC: Janice, 08445 003789 : stirling-lc@education-otherwise.org

Other Areas: scotlandenquiry@education-otherwise.org

Overseas

Australasia: Nicky, Email: australasia-lc@education-otherwise.org

Europe: Diana, 08445 003809 : europe-lc@education-otherwise.org

Americas: Sandy, 08445 853873 : americas-lc@education-otherwise.org

Permission Form for inclusion in EO newsletter or website

Area(s) or County(s) entry is to be placed in:

Name of your group:

Details About your Group:

Contact Details to be included in Newsletter:

Contact Details if you wish to be listed on website under local groups:

I/We confirm that I am/ (we are) the contact/(s) for this group and agree to my/our details being included in the EO Newsletter and/or on EO's website. I/we understand the newsletter is distributed to EO members, and is sold to, or may be seen by other third parties.

EO Enquiry Volunteers often get asked about local groups in their area by families new to home educating. My/our contact details may be given to these callers by EO volunteers. YES / NO (delete where appropriate).

(Needs to be signed by ALL people whose contact details will be included in the entry)

Signed:

Date Signed:

Please return completed form to:

Education Otherwise Regional Diary, c/o PO Box 325, King Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3FB

New volunteers for any of the groups most welcome, with expertise or just an interest. For more information email the group, write to EO's PO Box address or contact one of the Trustees listed (in italics). If you would prefer to volunteer for infrequent or small tasks please contact Lynda: database@education-otherwise.org

Small Groups:

- **Finance Group** Tel: 08445 003986
(financegroup@education-otherwise.org):
Fiona Nicholson, Roarke Newstead,
Lynda Hitchman
- **Govt. Policy Group** Tel: 08445 003987
(governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org):
Fiona Nicholson, Annette Taberner, Ann Newstead, Jo Berry, Kira Patefield-Smith, Janet Wilkinson
- **Disability Group:** Tel: 08445 003984
(disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org)
Fiona Nicholson, Vicki Skinner, Christine Waterman, Celia McDonagh
- **Scotland Group:** Tel: 08445 003989
(scotlandenquiry@education-otherwise.org)
Fiona Chaff, Rebecca Kail, Jane Bathgate, Jan Atkinson
- **Website and Publications Editorial Committee (WPEC):** (wpec@education-otherwise.org) Tel: 08445 003991
Fiona Nicholson, Joss Nowell,
Lynda Hitchman

Grievances and Complaints:

Email: complaints@education-otherwise.org Write:

PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

- *Jo Berry* ~ 08445 884596
- *Pauline Butterworth* ~ 08445 884597
- Lynda Hitchman ~ 08445 884598

EO Yahooogroups:

EO runs a general list and single parent list with Yahooogroups. They're open to all, members and non-members. To join the general list go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eo>

To join the single parent list, go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-SingleParent/>

Media Contacts:

Please contact one of the following people if you would like to volunteer to be interviewed or are contacted by the media and would like help/advice/support on giving an interview:

Media Spokesperson: Ann Newstead, 08445 867548
media-spokesperson@education-otherwise.org

Northern Ireland: Marion Kenny, 08445 884528
ni@education-otherwise.org

North East: Eva O'Rourke, Wilsden 08445 884529
northeast@education-otherwise.org

Wales (S): Celia McDonagh, Cardiff, 08445 884531
wales1@education-otherwise.org

Wales(N): Edwina Theunissen, Wrexham, 08445 884532
wales2@education-otherwise.org

South West (Acting): Kay & Simon Smith, 08445 884533
southwest@education-otherwise.org

South East: Ann Newstead, Kent 08445 003978
southeast@education-otherwise.org

London: Winnie Durdant-Hollamby, 08445 884534
london2@education-otherwise.org

Isle of Wight: Shara Ouston, Ryde, 08445 884569
iow@education-otherwise.org

EO E-mail Lists & Forums

There is a Members Forum on the EO website, with discussion and support forums for members to chat and get information about home education etc., as well as EO business, and lots of other info (eg past NL articles, minutes of OTMs, etc). There are separate forums for EO Volunteers and Local Contacts and a new forum where EO children can chat together. To join the member's forum, register using the form at this url on EO's site: <http://forum.education-otherwise.org/index.php>

To join the children's forum, both you and your child need to register from the above link and you need to complete the permission form that will be emailed to your child's email address and return it to us at: childrenforum@education-otherwise.org Do email if you have problems joining and we'll try and help.

Who Does What in EO

Trustees – Email: trustees@education-otherwise.org
Letters to: PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

Leslie Barson (London) ~ 08445 868817
lbarson@education-otherwise.org

Jo Berry, (Cheshire) ~ 08445 868821
jberry@education-otherwise.org (Enquiries Secretary)

Gail Borrows (Bucks) ~ 08445 868824
gborrows@education-otherwise.org (Membership Secretary)

Pauline Butterworth (Cleveland) ~ 08445 868826
pbutterworth@education-otherwise.org (Treasurer)

Carla MacGregor (Bristol) ~ 08445 868827
cmacgregor@education-otherwise.org (Local Contacts Coordinator)

Celia McDonagh (Glamorganshire) ~ 08445 883514 ~
cmcdonagh@education-otherwise.org

Roarke Newstead (Kent) ~ 08445 868813
rroarke@education-otherwise.org

Fiona Nicholson (S Yorks) ~ 08445 868831
fnicholson@education-otherwise.org

Joss Nowell (Staffordshire) ~ 08445 853896
jnowell@education-otherwise.org (Publications & DPO)

Vicki Skinner (Dorset) ~ 08445 883513
vskinner@education-otherwise.org

Annette Taberner (S Yorks) ~ 08445 003992
ataberner@education-otherwise.org

Janet Wilkinson (Cambridgeshire) ~ 08445 868812
jwilkinson@education-otherwise.org (Co Sec)

Judi Wilson (London) ~ 08445 853897
jwilson@education-otherwise.org

Memberships

Membership and newsletter subscription enquiries, address changes, membership cards, new member admin, other queries or missing newsletters contact: ~ Lynda Hitchman ~ Education Otherwise, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW ~ 08445 867541 database@education-otherwise.org

Stationery

Leaflets, posters, compliment slips, membership forms, car stickers etc: free (donations toward postage welcome).
08445 867549 ~ c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW ~ stationery@education-otherwise.org

Data Protection, Confidentiality & Privacy

Data Protection Officer ~ Joss Nowell ~ 08445 003706
dataprotectionofficer@education-otherwise.org

Lynda Hitchman ~ 08445 867541
database@education-otherwise.org

Useful Contacts

If you need help in dealing with your LA/EA please ring your Local Contact or any Council Member. If you have a query not covered below please contact your nearest Council Member.

Anti Bullying Support ~ Juno Charlett ~ 08445 003692
anti-bullying@education-otherwise.org

Autonomous Education Support: Maya Lucas ~ 08445 003697
autonomoussupport@education-otherwise.org

Campaign Team Contact: Fiona Nicholson ~ 08445 884593
c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW
governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org

College Contact: (Acting) Roger Scaife ~ 08445 868918
~ collegecontact@education-otherwise.org

Concessions: Lucinda Smart ~ 08445 003698
concessions@education-otherwise.org

Designated Person: Jim Clossick ~ 08445 869091 ~ For EO members to call if they have concerns about a home educated child and are unsure about phoning the NSPCC.

Enquiries Secretary: Jo Berry ~ 08445 883539
enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org

GCSE Contacts: ~ 08445 003708
gcsecontact@education-otherwise.org

LA Liaison Volunteer: Julie Beviss ~ 08445 003709
laliaison@education-otherwise.org

LearnPremium & EO Members Forum Admin: Lynda Hitchman
08445 867541 learnpremium@education-otherwise.org or
forums@education-otherwise.org

Local Contacts Co-ordinator: Carla MacGregor ~ 08445
003876 lcco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

Membership Secretary: Gail Borrows ~ 08445 003879
membershipsecretary@education-otherwise.org

Newsletter Coordinator: Nicola Haxell ~ 08445 883532
nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

Publications Secretary: Joss Nowell ~ 08445 003886
pubssecretary@education-otherwise.org

Research Contact: ~ 08445 884519

School Anxiety Support: Jayne Owen ~ 08445 008469
anxiety-support@education-otherwise.org

Single Parent Family Contact: ~ 08445 884527

Special Needs: Christine Waterman ~ 08445 003887
c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

Structured Support: Jennifer Simmons ~ 08445 003996
structured-ed@education-otherwise.org

Treasurer: Pauline Butterworth ~ 08445 003889
treasurer@education-otherwise.org

education otherwise

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation that provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are to:

- encourage learning outside the school system;
- reaffirm that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school;
- establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education;
- promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of education otherwise than at school in the world at large.

For further information send an A5 sae to:

Education Otherwise, PO Box 325
Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Helpline 0845 478 6345

Information can also be found on the Education Otherwise website:

<http://www.education-otherwise.org>

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