



Parenting Apart & Autism: How we can help you?

Splitting up? Living Apart? Divorcing? Separating?

Autism NI often receives requests for support in relation to these very sensitive issues. We understand that it can cause a great amount of stress and worry for both parents and the entire family circle during such difficult times, especially when you have a child with Autism. Therefore we would like to offer a number of practical ways to support and help those adjusting to change:

1. Parenting Apart Autism training course for parents and carers

Separation can be very stressful for any family but if you have a child with Autism

you may have additional pressures in relation to explaining 'separation' to your child and how to ensure consistency when 'parenting apart'. This course will explore how to use Autism strategies and techniques to help your child adapt to their new situation as well as minimising the impact of separation on the family.

The course will explore:

- How to explain to your child what separation is and the changes that will occur
- How to promote a consistent routine and structure
- How to help your child cope with their worries and anxieties about parental separation.

2. Support

The Autism NI Helpline can provide details on relevant services locally, what

resources have been useful to other parents, who the local professionals are, what they do and how to access further information or services. In addition a general letter of support for parents who are participating in a parental separation legal case in relation to their child with Autism. The letter of support will outline the general characteristics of Autism and how these impact on the understanding of a child with ASD and their emotional wellbeing during stressful times such as a separation or divorce.

We will not however be able to make personal judgements on individual cases but we will be able to state that whoever is making professional recommendations in relation to the child's welfare, should have an understanding of Autism and be qualified to do so.

3. Autism Awareness training for legal representatives.

As there are over 30,000 families affected by Autism in Northern Ireland, there are increasingly more legal cases being brought forward within family law that require legal teams to understand Autism. We have therefore designed a training course specifically for legal representatives in Autism awareness.

The course will explore:

- Understanding of the main features of Autism.
- What strategies or adjustments may need to be considered to ensure the provision of a high quality service for someone with Autism.
- Understanding of the difficulties that an individual may encounter using legal services
- Identification of practical strategies that will improve legal support and services.

To find out more about our training courses please contact our Training Department on 02890401729 (option 4) or email christine.english@autismni.org.

To speak to someone about receiving a letter of support or general information about any of the above issues, please contact our Helpline on 02890401729 (option 1).