

# Autism Initiatives NI

Autism Initiatives NI have recently launched Balanceability – the innovative and accredited ‘Learn to Cycle’ programme.

The two 6-week programmes take place in Lagan Valley Leisureplex, Lisburn and Lough Moss Centre, Carryduff and are open to children aged 3 – 15yrs with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).

Health & Activity Coordinator, Pauline Graham, explains “The two 6 week programmes, here in Lisburn and continuing in Carryduff, have provided the opportunity for 60 children and their families to enjoy the excitement of cycling. Children with a diagnosis of an ASC can have difficulty with balance and coordination and this programme helps develop these skills on and off the bike.

This inspires confidence and provides the skills to achieve an important developmental milestone of childhood’.



**Date: June 2014**

MLA Jonathan Craig, Vice-Chair of the All-Party Group on Autism, visited the programme and commented “This is a fantastic programme and it is great to see the children and their parents having such a fun time together. Improving access to quality services for families affected by ASC is a cornerstone of the Autism Strategy (2013 – 2020) launched earlier this year.

Autism Initiatives NI and their cycling programme are providing exactly the type of service which families always seem to embrace.”

Autism Initiatives NI hope that their autism specific cycling programme will continue to expand in other areas and anyone looking to enquire about future programmes should contact Pauline Graham on 02890 699130 or email [pauline.graham@ai-ni.co.uk](mailto:pauline.graham@ai-ni.co.uk)

**For more information:**

**Call: 0845 303 8385**

**Email: [info@balanceability.com](mailto:info@balanceability.com)**

# Course Feedback

Siobhan Slavin from the South Eastern HSCT says, “When we were approached by parents to explore the possibility of delivering a ‘learn to cycle’ programme we immediately recognised the key importance of a programme such as this. Individuals and their families affected by ASC can miss out on activities which other families take for granted. The progression for all the children has been wonderful to see, the health benefits as well as the individual confidence building, is something we always try to promote.”

Each child is currently assessed on the following aspects of physical literacy:

- 1. Static Balance:** able to stand with control and minimal postural sway
- 2. Dynamic Balance:** measured by walking on the river stones and seeing how many times the child put either foot on the ground when they should have been on the river stone obstacle.
- 3. Listening to Instructor:** attentiveness to instruction and able to implement

## People say the nicest things...

*...“Parents that had almost given up on their child cycling were totally amazed at the progress. The children that were not able to cycle had still developed immensely in their balance and control.”...*

*...“The activity booklet was made into a story board so that children were able to see in pictures what was expected of them”...*



## Balanceability

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