

WHY SKATEBOARDING IS A PERFECT SPORT FOR SOMEONE WITH NEURODIVERSITY

A Comprehensive Guide for Schools, Parents & Funding Applications

Hi, I'm Rebecca Aimee Davies from Radex Coaching.

As a child, I was diagnosed with dyslexia, speech and language needs, and anxiety. Later in adulthood, after experiencing multiple burnouts, the NHS mental health team identified traits of ADHD and autism and referred me for formal assessments. School was an absolute battleground for me. But skateboarding didn't just give me a hobby it saved me, changed my life, and became my professional career well into my mid-thirties. This guide outlines the science and real-world impact of why skateboarding works so brilliantly for neurodivergent minds, paired directly with my personal story.

 **GREEN HIGHLIGHT: Facts & Clinical Context**

 **RED HIGHLIGHT: Personal Lived Experience**

1. AUTISM, STIMMING & NAVIGATING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

THE FACT: Skateboarding works as physical stimming to regulate the sensory nervous system.

Clinical Context: Autistic individuals often utilize "stimming" (self-stimulatory repetitive movements or tactile sensations) to process heavy sensory environments, reduce anxiety, and safely release stored physical tension or frustration. Skateboarding offers continuous, high-input vestibular and proprioceptive feedback that naturally grounds the body and restores balance to the nervous system.



How it helped me:

Growing up, I constantly felt a bit "weird" and overwhelmed with all this intense, extra energy pent up inside me. To fit in at school, I forced myself to mask (hiding my true neurodivergent traits), but holding that in every single day created massive internal anxiety. Looking at my life through the lens of my current autism referral, everything makes total sense: skateboarding was my ultimate form of physical stimming! The rhythmic feeling of rolling on a board, the vibration under my feet, and the physical momentum completely calms my whole nervous system down while releasing built-up stress and anger. Even today, when I can't get outside to skate, I find it really tricky to settle down I end up pulling out a loose hair and rolling it into a ball between my fingers just to self-soothe. Skateboarding remains the healthiest, most grounding output I have ever found.

THE FACT: Skateparks offer zero-pressure social freedom: quiet solo focus or lifelong community.

Clinical Context:Traditional team sports demand rapid verbal communication,complex social hierarchies,and forced group dynamics environments where autistic youth frequently feel overwhelmed. Skateboarding removes these artificial barriers. Young people retain total autonomy to practice quietly alone or engage organically with a welcoming, non-judgmental subculture built around mutual respect.



How it helped me:

I really struggled to make and keep friends when I was younger, which left me feeling isolated. What is so liberating about skateboarding is that there is zero pressure to socialize if you aren't feeling up to it. You can choose to keep yourself to yourself, pop your headphones in, and just do your own thing at your own pace without anyone judging you or forcing you to talk. At the same time, you'd be amazed at how many incredible friends you can make simply by sharing the space! Because everyone at the park is united by the same passion, conversation happens naturally without social awkwardness. Through skateboarding, I have made lifelong friends all across the UK people who accept me authentically for exactly who I am.

2. READING, SPEECH, MEDIA & REBUILDING SELF-BELIEF

THE FACT: Low-pressure performance reframes communication errors into positive learning curves.

Clinical Context:Children with speech,language,and dyslexia difficulties often associate verbal communication with classroom shame or failure. When sports environments celebrate authentic self-expression without grading or penalties, neurodivergent individuals develop resilience, overcoming public-speaking anxiety through positive reinforcement.



How it helped me:

Because of my childhood dyslexia and speech challenges, school was terrifying. I lived in constant fear of being put on the spot and asked to stand up and read out loud in front of the whole class. In skating, nobody asks you to read or speak you just watch, learn through movement, and try! Later on, as I began competing at higher levels, I was thrust into doing media interviews. At first, it was nerve wracking. If I paused, stuttered, or stumbled over my words, I would feel deeply embarrassed and frustrated, convinced I had done a terrible interview. But as I kept doing them, a huge realisation hit me: the people interviewing me in the skate world weren't putting pressure on me like the teachers at school did. They weren't judging my speech they just saw me for who I was! I started viewing every single interview not as a test to fail, but as a valuable learning curve. That mental shift built my confidence to speak far beyond everyday small talk. Eventually, I went from being terrified to speak in class to comfortably giving interviews to journalists on TV and for national magazines!

3. DYSPRAXIA, MOTOR PLANNING & THE SCIENCE OF FALLING SAFELY

THE FACT: Skateboarding trains fine motor control, spatial awareness, and core balance.

Clinical Context: Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder) affects physical motor planning, balance, and fine motor tasks. Skateboarding breaks complex movement down into micro-adjustments, allowing dyspraxic individuals to develop muscle memory, core stabilization, and spatial orientation in a non-academic setting.



How it helped me:

Skateboarding is fundamental to developing balance and coordination. When I was young, dyspraxia made everyday physical tasks confusing and exhausting. I vividly remember sitting at the dinner table trying to pick up a knife and fork, constantly struggling because I couldn't understand which hand felt comfortable or natural. Simple things like that became a daily source of frustration. Skateboarding gave me a fun, low-pressure playground

where I could figure out my body's coordination on my own terms. Over time, riding a board built real physical balance, core strength, and fine motor awareness that bled into every area of my daily life.

THE FACT: Learning to fall safely builds profound psychological resilience and risk management.

Clinical Context: Physical fear and fear of failure often paralyze neurodivergent youth who have experienced academic setbacks. Skateboarding teaches a crucial physical skill: learning how to roll out of falls safely to prevent injury. Translating physical fall-recovery into cognitive resilience teaches the brain that mistakes are not dangerous end-points, but necessary steps toward mastery.



How it helped me:

In skateboarding, falling isn't a sign of failure it's a guaranteed part of the process! One of the most important things skating teaches you is how to fall safely: how to bend your knees, roll with the momentum, protect your limbs, and get back up unharmed. Mastering how to fall on a skateboard completely rewired how I handled difficulty in life. It taught me that hitting the ground isn't the end of the world; it's just feedback. Learning to dust myself off on a board gave me the courage to tackle hard tasks in school, navigate setbacks in my personal life, and keep pushing forward when things felt completely overwhelming.

4. ADHD, DOPAMINE & TURNING NEGATIVITY INTO FUEL

THE FACT: Infinite variation provides ADHD brains with sustainable focus and dopamine.

Clinical Context: ADHD brains experience chronic dopamine deficits, leading to restlessness and difficulty focusing on repetitive or unstimulating tasks. Skateboarding offers endless creative freedom and progressive challenge, delivering immediate neurological rewards that convert hyperactive energy into intense, productive focus.



How it helped me:

Understanding my ADHD traits through this ongoing assessment process has made my entire relationship with skateboarding make sense. In traditional sports, routines get repetitive quickly and my brain would check out. But in skating, the progression is infinite! There is always a new trick, a different ramp, or a creative line to try. The feeling of trying a trick a hundred times, failing over and over, staying consistent, and finally **LANDING IT...** that gives your brain a rush of dopamine and a sense of earned accomplishment like nothing else on earth. It taught my brain how to harness hyperfocus and stay dedicated to long-term goals.

WHY SUPPORT SKATEBOARDING THROUGH RADEX COACHING?

For a long time, I didn't think I could do well in life because I was put into a box and made to feel like I was completely unable to achieve many things. But skateboarding changed everything. Finding this sport and this community transformed my personality, unlocked my natural talent, and built an unshakeable confidence within me. It gave me true self-belief and showed me how to turn every piece of negativity I had ever experienced into fuel for success. That transformative power is exactly what I now pass on to every young person I coach through **Radex Coaching**.