



Inclusion and Engagement Support Team GEMs- Good Engagement Methods

GEM's has been put together to demonstrate good engagement methods and practise to support CYP with SEND.

As specialist teachers, we wanted to produce a package to address and support some of the core challenges that professionals will encounter within their classrooms from CYP with SEND.

Within this package, you will find advice which have been designed to increase knowledge of Autism and how you can support CYP who experience difficulties in the school environment as a result.

This package is versatile and offers advice to both primary and secondary settings that can be adapted to suit your school and pupil's needs.

Organisations such as **Autism Education trust, National Autistic Society and Autism Alliance** can support schools and families further.

Autism

What is Autism?

Autism it is a lifelong condition which impacts daily functioning and an individual's way of perceiving the world. It is a neurological difference in brain development, meaning the brain and central nervous system develop and function atypically. (*AET & NASEN*)

Autism is referred to as a spectrum. It varies widely and impacts each individual differently although there is a commonality of needs and difference.

There are 4 key areas of difference that CYP on the autism spectrum experience.

- Social Understanding/interacting
- Sensory processing
- Information processing and understanding
- Communication

Interests and flexibility often feature alongside these key areas.

Some CYP may have a good eye for detail but may find it difficult to see the bigger picture or generalising learning from one subject to another.

Autism is a spectrum condition and CYP on the Autism spectrum are affected differently. Therefore, learners with Autism may often have uneven/spiky education profiles.

It is important for school staff to understand that each CYP on the autism spectrum will have a range of abilities and needs in the above areas and require distinctive support and assistance to be successful. All school staff should avoid making assumptions and challenge stereotypes. Time should be devoted to understanding the CYP as an individual learner. The All Party Parliamentary Group for Autism (APPGA) found that 60% of young autistic people said that having a teacher who understands autism is the main thing that would improve their experience of school.

CYP on the Autism spectrum are likely to experience high levels of anxiety and stress which will impact on their well-being and mental health, their learning, ability to solve problems and levels of interaction and communication. (Good Autism practice- AET)

Key facts:

- There are approximately 1 in 100 people with autism in the UK.
- There is a pronounced gender difference of people diagnosed with Autism, as an average the female to male ratio is 1:4 but among intellectually able individuals with Autism the ratio is significantly lower at 1:10.
- In 55% of cases Autism co-occurs with conditions such as ADHD, dyslexia, and learning difficulties.
- 70% of pupils on the spectrum are educated in mainstream schools.

Below are some terms you may hear/use related to CYP on the autism spectrum.

Meltdown: (can be) a loud and physical response to a situation that the CYP finds overwhelming

Shutdown: when a CYP responds to a situation they find overwhelming by going quiet and withdrawing. This may look like a 'freeze' response.

Masking: when a CYP hides behaviours that are viewed as socially unacceptable and mimics the behaviour of others that they perceive as acceptable.

Stimming: a repetitive movement or noise that the CYP uses as a 'self-stimulatory' behaviour to help them self-regulate or manage a situation they find difficult.

Special interests: can be an intense and passionate focus on a specific subject. A CYP may change these or remain focused on one subject for years.

Some of the suggestions below can be used to help support CYP with Autism in your setting. They are not a definitive guide but areas that if adjusted can make a positive difference to CYP on the autism spectrum and their engagement in school. CYP on the autism spectrum are all unique and the starting point for support MUST begin with establishing a trusted relationship, listening to the CYP and family views and joint working.

Activity	Resources
<p>Build a profile of the CYP</p> <p>Understand individual needs and how to support these. <i>* Ensure the CYP has a voice throughout this process.</i></p> <p>To be able to identify the CYP strengths and needs consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication; both expressive language and receptive social interaction - Behaviours - Interests and motivators - Academic skills - Sensory Needs - Independence skills - Unstructured times; what skills or support needs observed <p>Observe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the CYP communicates - Did the CYP start the communication or did they respond to others? - How was the CYP supported by adults? What did the adult do directly and indirectly? - What was successful in gaining the CYP attention in lessons <p>Top Tips from AET:</p>	<p>Pupil profile and may more templates to use and adapt; http://www.autismtoolbox.co.uk/templates-and-resources</p> <p>girl with autism personal perspective: https://youtu.be/KSKvazfTLv8 Walk in My Shoes - The Donaldson Trust (donaldsons.org.uk)</p> <p>Videos - Awtistiaeth Cymru Autism Wales National Autism Team</p> <p>The Girl With the Curly Hair - Autism Training, Animations, Books</p> <p>https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources/autism-resource-suite Resource 4 'What is Autism' PowerPoint</p>

<p>Identify optimum learning conditions.</p> <p>Focus on securing learning goals that are meaningful to the CYP that support positive life outcomes in the future.</p> <p>Recognise the barriers so you can reduce the anxiety and promote well-being.</p> <p>Consider co-occurring conditions such as sleep, eating, learning, toileting.</p> <p>Ongoing assessment using observations and formal assessments.</p> <p>All strategies to be agreed and communicated to all.</p> <p>Ensure collaborative working with CYP, family and school staff. A</p> <p>The team around the pupil could include an EP, GP, OT, SALT, LA, Social worker, other pupils.</p>	<p>www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/employment-toolkit/</p>
<p>Developing good practice:</p> <p>The Autism Education Trust's (AET) Good Autism Practice report (2019) suggests four key themes that are important for good quality autism provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the individual. • Learning and development. • Providing an enabling environment. • Nurturing positive and effective relationships. 	<p>https://nasen-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/A%20SENCO%27s%20guide%20to%20supporting%20learners%20with%20autism.pdf</p> <p>https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources/autism-resource-suite</p> <p>https://nasen-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/include-autism-toolkit-support.pdf</p> <p>https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/kids-zone/</p>
<p>How to help individuals with learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual sensory audit • Interest based learning • Ensure the learner has a voice and can express this in a way accessible to them • Create a learner profile 	<p>https://nasen-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Co-production%20Infographic.pdf</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of a separate workstation • Homework expectations/tasks • adopt evidence-based learning, social and environmental support strategies. • have systems to identify, monitor, build and maintain the mental and emotional well-being of CYP on the autism spectrum <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working with family- provide networks of support and signpost to local support groups • Peer support network within school • How TA's are deployed to support but allow the CYP to develop independence • Identify staff knowledge and needs which will inform regular CPD for all staff • Identify a staff lead on autism • Remove barriers to participation at break and lunchtimes, extra-curricular activities, residential trips, work experience or exams. • Make learning environments structured, understandable and predictable. • Provide a clearly organised environment. • Ensure a variety of means to communicate with CYP on the autism spectrum. • Facilitate an environment that encourages communication. • Provide supported to develop positive relationships with peers. 	<p>Strategies and interventions - TEACCH (autism.org.uk)</p> <p>https://nasen.org.uk/resources/effective-adult-support-inclusive-practice</p> <p>www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/teacher-learning-assistant/toolkit/</p>
--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the accessibility of the learning environment; take into account potential physical barriers and sensory processing difficulties as well as social demands of working with or being with their peers. • Consider how to reduce the academic pressures when needed, but especially around tests examinations. • Consider how the curriculum offer addresses life skills. • Consider a consistent approach between all lessons 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Transitions</p> <p>Dealing with change is always likely to be difficult for a pupil on the autism spectrum and require carefully planned support using the principles of person-centred planning.</p> <p>Transition is not just about major changes that occur in phases of education. Many transitions occur during a typical day, e.g. from one task to another; moving from one room to another; from home to school/ college; inside to outside; class time to breaktime.</p> <p>Transition between phases support pack/materials could include information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new environment i.e. maps photographs videos. • Where can they go for quiet/ to regulate? • Timetable- colour code/ add images related to subject. Possibly create packet sized and laminated. CYP may need to be shown how to use a timetable 1:1. 	<p>Transition Information Network (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)</p> <p>Autism-Education-Trust-Transition-Toolkit.pdf (learningsupportcentre.com)</p> <p>Board game by Routledge- Moving on Up!: Surviving School Transition for 10- to 12-Year-Olds</p> <p>Inclusion Development Programme materials National Strategies website – Inclusion development programme: supporting pupils on the autism spectrum - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>www.autismtoolkit.com/Transition%20Workbook.doc</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key staff- create mini profiles/information-presented in a variety of forms accessible. Who can they go to for support? How will they find them? • New vocabulary used in the new setting i.e. 'tutor/form group,' 'head of year' 'pastoral support' etc... • New expectations at unstructured times and with homework • Systems for organisation. Both current and receiving school can support 1:1 with this prior to moving settings. Check lists, use of diary, voice recording and photographing homework tasks. <p>Parents should be supported to use the transition materials at home over the holidays.</p> <p>Transitions within the day.</p> <p>Consider: Once you know CYP specific anxieties devise and provide prompt cards created along with the CYP and family. e.g. If I can't find my way to lesson I will;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get out my map from my bag and try to work it out. 2. I will try to ask someone in my class. 3. I will ask a teacher. <p>Key questions to support structure and predictability can significantly reduce anxiety and increase focus for a CYP:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What am I doing? 2. How long am I doing it for? 3. What will I be doing next? 	<p>Many resources however particularly useful are the picture cards. Do2Learn: Educational Resources for Special Needs</p> <p>Executive functions by thomas brown - [PDF Document] (vdocuments.net)</p>
---	---

<p>4. When will I get to do the things that I really want to do?</p> <p>It is also worth noting a CYP may benefit from asking; How do I know I have started and finished?</p>	
<p>Know what works for the individual pupil can make a positive difference</p> <p>'Quick wins' to provide general support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use language that is clear, precise and concrete. Reduce unnecessary speech/ keep sentences short. • Allow processing time. • Identify where they will sit. • Ensure the CYP has understood the information given (* their answer of 'yes' is not sufficient) • Engage the CYP by 'cuing them in' using their name. • Use 'Visual Cues' e.g. objects, symbols pictures or written words to alongside spoken language. Adjust to match CYP level of understanding. • Use timetables to enable CYP to predict what is happening next and inform of any changes. • Carefully prepare the CYP for known changes. Provide extra support. • Provide a safe space • Reduce unpredictability at unstructured times by offering activities the CYP enjoys. • Allow CYP to identify when need to take a break 	<p>https://www.callscotland.org.uk/common-assets/cm-files/posters/ipad-apps-for-learners-with-complex-additional-support-needs.pdf</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide object to support sensory needs/ reduce stress. • Consider clutter free low - arousal area • Have a clear start and end to tasks and activities. 	
<p>Behaviours that cause concern.</p> <p>View the behaviours through an 'Autism lens.' Behaviour is communication and might be the only way the CYP can communicate their needs.</p> <p>They might be trying to tell you;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't understand • I am confused • I can't do this • I don't like this • I am struggling with the environment • I am scared/ anxious • I don't feel like you are hearing what I am telling you • I need secure attention • I have health issues <p>Complete the stress bucket activity with staff to model the effects of autism difficulties have on CYP throughout the demands of a school day.</p> <p>Social Stories and comic strip conversations were developed by Carol Gray. They can be used help CYP on the autism spectrum to develop social judgement and social understanding. They intervene directly to help the young person see things from another's</p>	<p>AET TeachersTools The-Stress-bucket1.pdf (twtt.org.uk)</p> <p>My Stress Bucket Worksheet and Lesson Pack - KS2 Resources (twinkl.co.uk)</p> <p>What Is A Social Story? - Carol Gray - Social Stories (carolgraysocialstories.com)</p> <p>Social stories and comic strip conversations (autism.org.uk)</p>

point of view and explain/illustrate social rules or concepts.

Using social stories and comic strip conversations ask:

What is happening?

What people are doing?

Why it is happening?

Why people are doing things in that way?

What would be appropriate for the CYP to do?

How something should be done?

Social stories and comic strip conversations are to be explored as an intervention with CYP directly so the CYP develops a better understanding of social situations that could cause incidents. Discussions from the intervention can be used by adults supporting the CYP through 'in the moment' coaching throughout the day.

They can then be re visited to be able to explore any incidents once the CYP has regulated.

[social stories autism - Bing video](#)

[100 printable autism social stories for helping children with autism overcome social deficits](#)

Recommended Reads

Autism in the primary classroom by Joy Beaney and Penny Kershaw published by the National Autistic Society.

When my Autism gets too big: A relaxation book for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders- by Kari Dunn Buron

Comic Strip conversations by Carol Gray

Language for thinking by Stephen Parsons and Anna Branagan