



# Basic strategies to support children with Autism and other social communication difficulties

## For Educational Settings

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Rotherham Autism Communication Team

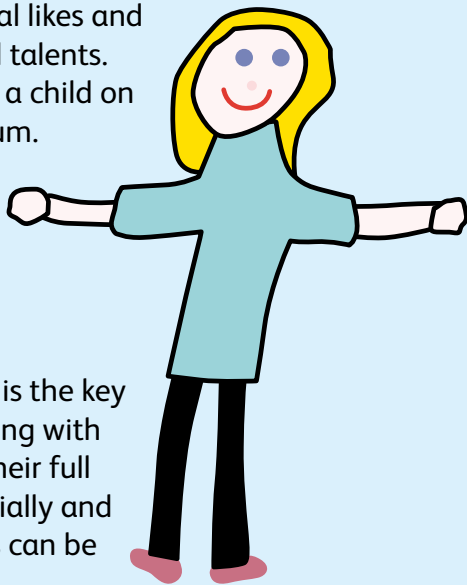


**In this book:**

- Know your child
- Communication
- Behaviour
- Sensory issues
- Social interaction
- Strategies

# Know your child!

Every child is unique and have their own individual likes and dislikes, needs and talents. This is also true of a child on the autism spectrum.



Knowing the child is the key to success in working with them to achieve their full potential both socially and academically. This can be achieved through:

- observation
- spending time talking and listening to them
- understanding them
- valuing them
- developing a relationship with them based on mutual trust and respect
- recognising the need for and providing the appropriate form of support
- moving them towards independence by reducing support when appropriate
- helping build independence by knowing when to support and when to step back
- celebrating their strengths and successes however big or small
- sharing information and good practice amongst colleagues
- maintaining a good relationship with parents/carers
- ongoing training and personal research to improve knowledge and understanding of autism
- involving the child in making a pen portrait or personal profile to share with others.

The following strategies are intended to be a basic starting point in helping to support a child on the autism spectrum. The majority can be implemented immediately and need little more than a change of approach. Some require the production of specific resources or a period of observation and others may require the child's involvement in setting them up to give them understanding and ownership of the strategy. Some of the strategies can be generalised for use with the whole class and may be of benefit to both the child on the autism spectrum and other children in the class.

As every child on the autism spectrum is unique there is no single strategy or set of strategies that will work with every child - choose the strategies you think will be helpful for the child you are working with.

It would be beneficial for information about interventions and strategies to be shared with all staff to help provide consistency of approach. This may be particularly relevant for lunchtime staff as some children on the autism spectrum can struggle to cope with unstructured times. They may also experience difficulties in understanding the social situations they find themselves in at break or lunchtime.

The impact of the suggested interventions should be monitored over a period of time and evaluated.

If you would like further advice, support or information about the strategies please contact Rotherham Inclusion Support Services.



# Communication



**Message  
sent =  
Message  
received**

**...or does it?**

- Be clear about the message you want to give - use clear, simple, unambiguous language.
- Reduce the amount of language used – many children on the autism spectrum may appear to understand more than they actually do, particularly if their spoken language is good e.g. 'Coat off, sit down' rather than 'Can you hurry up and take your coat off now then go and sit down for me please'.
- Use the child's name to gain their attention when speaking to them – giving instructions; asking a direct question; giving praise.
- Break down instructions into smaller parts.
- Allow processing time.
- Repeat the same clear instruction if the child has not understood or responded appropriately – consider the possibility of fragmented hearing; other distractions in the environment; sensory overload.
- Recognise that some children may need to know 'why?' and will require more detailed explanations, information or instructions and may need to see the bigger picture.
- Remember that sarcasm or humour may not be understood and could cause confusion. Jokes may need to be explained especially if they are a 'play on words' (puns). Avoid using sarcasm, irony and banter unless you are able to develop the child's understanding – explain exactly what you mean in an age appropriate way.
- Consider what may be taken literally or misinterpreted – is there a clearer way to say it?
- Do not promise what you can not deliver – consider the time available and the appropriateness of the activity when offering a reward e.g. it may be unrealistic to offer painting five minutes before the end of a session or time spent in another room if others may be working there.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Follow through with any 'promises' made – comments like 'if there's time; at the end of the lesson; in a minute; tomorrow' may be interpreted as something that will definitely happen and could cause problems if the thing that is promised does not actually happen.
- Make your expectations clear, realistic and achievable.
- Body language, facial expressions and subtle gestures are not always interpreted correctly or picked up on at all – don't rely on them to get your message across, but support the child in understanding their meaning.
- Eye contact is not a guarantee that a child is listening or paying attention. Insisting on eye contact may impact on the sensory processing system and actually prevent effective listening.
- Use visual supports whenever possible to provide a constant, concrete reminder – timetable; work schedule; class/school/ playground rules; label areas of the room/equipment; a timer to show time available/ left for an activity; use lists/ photographs/ drawings/prepared items to show what is expected for specific tasks.

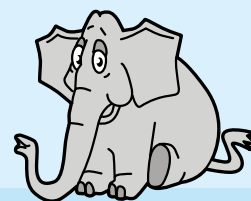


# Behaviour



**...distracting? ...disruptive?  
...harmful to self or others?  
...irritating?  
...for no apparent reason?**

All behaviour has a purpose and is usually an attempt by the child to communicate something. Often the behaviour can be caused by stress, anxiety, lack of understanding, communication difficulties or sensory issues. Sometimes the purpose of the behaviour is obvious but there are often times when we can not immediately identify the cause of the behaviour or understand the message that is being communicated by it. Time spent observing the child is well invested as it can help to establish whether there are patterns to the behaviour or highlight possible triggers to behaviour.



## Eat the elephant in small bites!

- There can often appear to be several different behavioural issues that need to be addressed. It is not reasonable or realistic to address all of them at once.
- Identify the behaviours that seem to be an issue then prioritise them. Use the iceberg (page 14-15).
- Determine whether the behaviour is a problem for you or for the child. It may be that it is more appropriate to change your attitude or approach to the behaviour rather than the behaviour itself.
- Record the behaviours for a period of time to get as much information as possible. Undertake observations of the child at times when the problem behaviour is known or is likely to occur e.g. at playtimes, in specific lessons, on certain days.
- Once a specific behaviour has been identified as a priority consider the possible strategies that could be used to address it.
- Sometimes you may need to “think outside the box” when developing strategies.
- Write a behaviour plan to identify the behaviour that is to be changed, how it will be changed and how the changes will be measured. Share the plan with all staff working with the child.
- Use personalised Social Stories to address specific behaviours by helping the child to understand how to behave in specific situations. Use the ABC record (page 12-13)
- Use the sensory checklist (page 16-18) to identify any sensory issues the child may be experiencing which could be causing the behaviour.

Whilst some behaviour may be changed reasonably quickly or even instantaneously most will take a longer period before any significant change is seen. In some cases behaviour may become worse before it gets better – do not be deterred. It is the consistent response to the behaviour that will ultimately lead to a change. The key is to continue with any strategies for a time limited period then evaluate their impact.



# Sensory issues

Many children on the autism spectrum experience sensory difficulties. Some of these difficulties are immediately apparent but others can be less obvious. These can result in an unexpected or inappropriate response to sensory stimuli with children being over or under sensitive to sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. Some children may also have difficulty with motor co-ordination which can make them appear unco-ordinated and affect their ability and performance in PE lessons, sports activities or general movement around the classroom.



- Complete the sensory checklist to identify any sensory issues. Ideally there should be discussion between home and school about the completed checklist and the appropriate strategies that could be used.
- Additional information is available from the Autism Education Trust and the National Autistic Society.
- Reduce the sensory stimulation in the environment in general and to match the identified needs of specific pupils.

# Social interaction

Children on the autism spectrum may find it difficult to work alongside other children and this could result in an increase in stress levels or inappropriate behaviour. A lack of empathy means that some children are unaware of other peoples' feelings or perspectives. They may also have difficulty reading facial expressions and body language.

Playtimes and lunchtimes can be stressful for some children. This can be due to the lack of structure and routine or because they have difficulty interpreting and using the unwritten rules of social interaction. Team games and sports can also be challenging for a child who has difficulty with social interaction.



- **Provide support for playtimes and lunchtimes** – share appropriate strategies with lunchtime staff. Teach the rules of simple games to all the children so the child on the autism spectrum knows what is expected.
- **Teach appropriate social skills** either as part of the curriculum or through specific social skills programmes e.g. Socially Speaking, Time to Talk.
- **Give support to help understand friendship** – what a friend is, how to make and keep friends.
- **Decide on the purpose of a task** – is it intended to develop the child's academic skills or social skills? Focusing on either the learning demands or the social demands rather than on both will help to reduce the child's anxiety. Limit the number of children they are expected to work with – start with working in a pair then build up to a small group when appropriate.

# Strategies



- 1) **Use of a personalised visual timetable** to make the day predictable. Remove each picture in the sequence when the activity has been completed and place in a 'finished' box. Include a 'change' option on the timetable to show a change in the daily routine when appropriate e.g. lessons missing or in a different order; trips; Christmas activities; concerts; visitors to class or school. Try to give as much advance warning as possible and prepare them for the change. Make sure the timetable is clearly visible either for the individual child or for the whole class – consider height and location.

Visual timetables can be made using symbols, photographs or a written list and can be used with the whole class as part of their daily routine or as a smaller discreet individual timetable. Try a timetable strip on the wall with a plastic pocket underneath to hold each picture symbol when 'finished' or an A4 envelope folder with Velcro strips on the flap and place the symbols inside the folder when 'finished'.

- 2) **Break down instructions for a task & present them visually** so they are clear what they need to do e.g. listen to story, write 3 sentences, draw picture. Use a whiteboard so they can cross or rub each part off as they complete it. This will also help them see that there is an end to the task. Use a timer to visually show how much time is left for the lesson or to finish a task. Visually organise the materials that are needed for a task. Whenever possible give visual supports to reinforce auditory information.



- 3) **Build up a routine of tasks followed by a rewarding activity** to develop and extend attention span and promote independence e.g. register, trace letters, count then choice (offer a limited choice of activities that the child will find motivating).

- 4) **Be clear about your expectations and how you pass on this information** to them, or to other staff, so they know where they are expected



to be and what they should be doing e.g. task to be completed and consequence or reward,

what will happen next. This can be particularly important at transition times and between activities when there is less structure/routine to follow.

- 5) **Offer choices when appropriate. Specify choices of activities available at appropriate times such as:** free choice sessions; short periods of time available between activities, prior to playtime, at the end of the day; equipment available on the playground (include any rules about class rotas or designated areas for equipment use). Present the options visually e.g. on a small strip or board.

- 6) **Give a rewarding activity when a required task has been completed or use a sticker chart.** Find out what motivates them – your idea of a reward may not be theirs!



- 7) **Involve them in making and personalising things** such as 'finished' boxes, timetables or sticker charts – this will help to give them involvement in, and ownership of, strategies to manage their behaviour.



- 8) **Use any special interest the child may have as a motivator** e.g. a child who likes dinosaurs may respond well to writing on paper with a dinosaur border or engage in numeracy tasks if they can be related to dinosaurs.

- 9) **Use of an individual workstation/ area** may help them to focus on and complete tasks without becoming distracted. Having a work tray of differentiated activities and a finished tray may also help them to complete tasks.



**10) Give positive instructions**

**rather than saying what not to do**

and repeat instructions using the same clear, simple language. Telling a child what not to do will leave them not knowing what they should do instead e.g. say 'hands down' rather than 'no scratching'.



**11) Reduce the language used** as many children on the autism spectrum may appear to understand more than they actually do, particularly if their expressive language is good.

**12) Use the child's name** at the beginning of instructions, when asking a direct question and when giving praise to gain their attention. They may not realise they are included in any general class / group / school instructions.

**13) Give specific praise**

e.g. good sitting / waiting / number work to label and reinforce positive behaviours. They need to know what they are doing well so that they can repeat it.



**14) Give warnings for finishing activities**

and include instructions for tidying up if appropriate e.g. allocate a specific job such as collecting pencils, putting bricks in the box or cleaning tables. Warnings for the end of playtime and lunchtime may help prepare them for coming back into school.



**15) Record any angry or aggressive outbursts**

using a structured recording method such as an ABC chart (page 12-13) to establish any triggers or patterns to behaviour.



**16) Complete a sensory checklist (page 16-18) to identify any sensory issues.**

Ideally there should be discussion between home and school about the completed checklist and the appropriate strategies that could be used. For further support contact Rotherham Inclusion Support Services.

**17) Develop an A4 Pen Portrait**

to create a profile of strengths, interests and needs and to share information with other staff. Update on a regular basis during the year and prior to transition times between classes or schools.



**18) Provide consistency** – of routine, approach and language used and amongst staff.

**19) Use a small toy/twiddler/koosh ball**

when appropriate e.g. to aid concentration, relieve anxiety, or provide a positive activity to replace any negative behaviour such as touching other children or equipment.

**20) Allow access to a quiet, safe area for 'time out'**

to calm down when stressed, anxious or angry. This could be in another part of school, a separate area of the classroom or a small tent within the classroom.



**21) Use a home/school diary**

to help to maintain communication between home and school. It can include sharing useful strategies for supporting them; recording details of any tasks to be completed at home; discussing any changes that may be affecting them; addressing difficulties and concerns; celebrating successes and achievements.



**22) Plan and implement a comprehensive, personalised transition package** to prepare them for changes between classes and school settings.

**23) Write a personalised Social Story**

to help them understand what is expected of them in specific situations where they may currently be experiencing difficulties.



**24) Refer to and use** the Autism Education Trust's Professional Competency Framework and National Autism Standards.



**“Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand.”**



# Autism Strategy Checklist

Name of pupil:

Date of Birth:

Strategy	In Place	Introduce	Help Information Support Needed	Not Required
1) Personalised visual timetable				
2) Break down instructions for task Present visually				
3) Build up a routine of tasks followed by a rewarding activity				
4) Pass on clear expectations				
5) Offer choices when appropriate				
6) Rewarding activity or use of a sticker chart on completion of task				
7) Involve the child in making and personalising resources				
8) Special interest used as a motivator				
9) Individual workstation / area				
10) Give positive instructions				
11) Reduce the language used				
12) Use the child's name				
13) Give specific praise				
14) Give warnings for finishing activities				
15) Record angry or aggressive outbursts				
16) Complete a sensory checklist				
17) Develop an A4 Pen Portrait				
18) Provide consistency – routine; approach; language; amongst staff				
19) Use a small toy/twiddler/koosh ball				
20) Allow access to a quiet, safe area for 'time out'				
21) Use a home / school diary				
22) Plan and implement a personalised transition package				
23) Use personalised Social Stories				



# Evaluation of Autism Strategies

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# Visual Supports

## What does it look like?

### Use simple visual supports to:

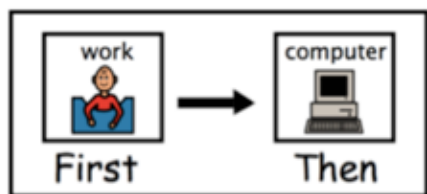
- give simple instructions
- label drawers, equipment, rooms or areas of school
- provide boundaries around safety or privacy e.g. stop/go for playing on the grass; a cross, hand or no entry on the door to show there's someone using the room or area
- give warning of a change



Support everyday routines  
Sequencing  
Independence  
Organisation



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
				Last day of school		
24	25 Shopping	26	27 Discovery Place	28 library	29	30
31	1 Camp	2 Camp	3 Camp	4 Camp	5 Camp	6



### Planning and preparation

- 'first/then' approach
- calendars
- timetables
- schedules



### Get it right

- ✓ Choose what works best for the child
- ✓ Make it age appropriate
- ✓ Practise – give it time
- ✓ Involve the child in making them
- ✓ Personalise them to include the child's special interests or motivators



Schedule



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00	Swimmer	Swimmer	Swimmer	Swimmer	Swimmer
8:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
8:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
8:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
9:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
9:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
9:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
9:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
10:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
10:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
10:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
10:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
11:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
11:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
11:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
11:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
12:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
12:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
12:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
12:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
13:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
13:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
13:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
13:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
14:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
14:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
14:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
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15:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
15:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
16:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
16:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
16:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
16:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
17:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
17:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
17:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
17:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
18:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
18:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
18:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
18:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
19:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
19:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
19:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
19:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
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39:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
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40:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
40:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
41:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
41:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
41:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
41:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
42:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
42:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
42:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
42:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
43:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
43:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
43:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
43:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
44:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
44:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
44:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
44:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
45:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
45:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
45:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
45:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
46:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
46:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
46:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
46:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
47:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
47:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
47:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
47:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
48:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
48:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
48:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
48:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
49:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
49:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
49:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
49:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
50:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
50:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
50:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
50:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
51:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
51:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
51:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
51:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
52:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
52:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
52:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
52:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
53:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
53:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
53:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
53:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
54:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Swim
54:15	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
54:30	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Math, Science, English	Swim
54:45	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim	Swim
55:00	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Reading, Writing, Spelling	Sw

Name:

Birthday:

Picture of me

I am good at:



Things I like to eat or drink:



My favourite things are:



I want to be better at...



Things I like to do:



I will understand you better if you...



Things I don't like to do:



If I get worried or upset I might show it by...



Medical information:



Things that help me calm:



# Formal approaches to identifying a problem behaviour

## **ABC Approach**

This approach has been used for many years by professionals and needs to involve all people who have contact with the child. Record all your results as it helps to see how you are progressing.

### **ABC stands for:**

**A** = antecedents

What is happening prior to the problem behaviour? Who is present and how near? What background stimulation is present (noises, smells, visual stimuli)? What demands have been made of the child? What mood is the child in?

**B** = behaviour

Who is the behaviour directed at? What exactly does the child do – use explicit description e.g. screams once and bites back of hand? How often does the behaviour occur? A chart may help. When does the behaviour occur? How long does the behaviour last? Does the behaviour include any attention seeking acts e.g. looking at you?

**C** = consequences

What follows the behaviour? Is something removed from the situation? Have you gone red with rage and started shouting? Remember; behaviours followed by pleasant consequences are likely to happen again. (Be careful – a child with autism may find shouting and anger stimulating, even ‘pleasant’!)

It is often difficult to observe what is happening when you are in the middle of it all so it would help to have someone else to watch and record for you.

# ABC Record

Name of pupil:

Date of Birth:

Date/Time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence

# Behaviour

1) **WHAT** is the behaviour you see?  
Describe it so everyone can agree what it is, when it has happened and when it has not.

2) **WHY** has the behaviour happened? Think about what could have caused it – has something changed; did something happen first?

## Aggressive Iceberg

**WHAT?**

Pushing  
Spitting  
Throwing  
Hitting  
Biting

**WHY?**

Unaware of social rules  
Unaware of other people's feelings  
Sensory overload  
Frustration over inability to communicate appropriately  
Inappropriate reaction to others

## Passive Iceberg

**WHAT?**

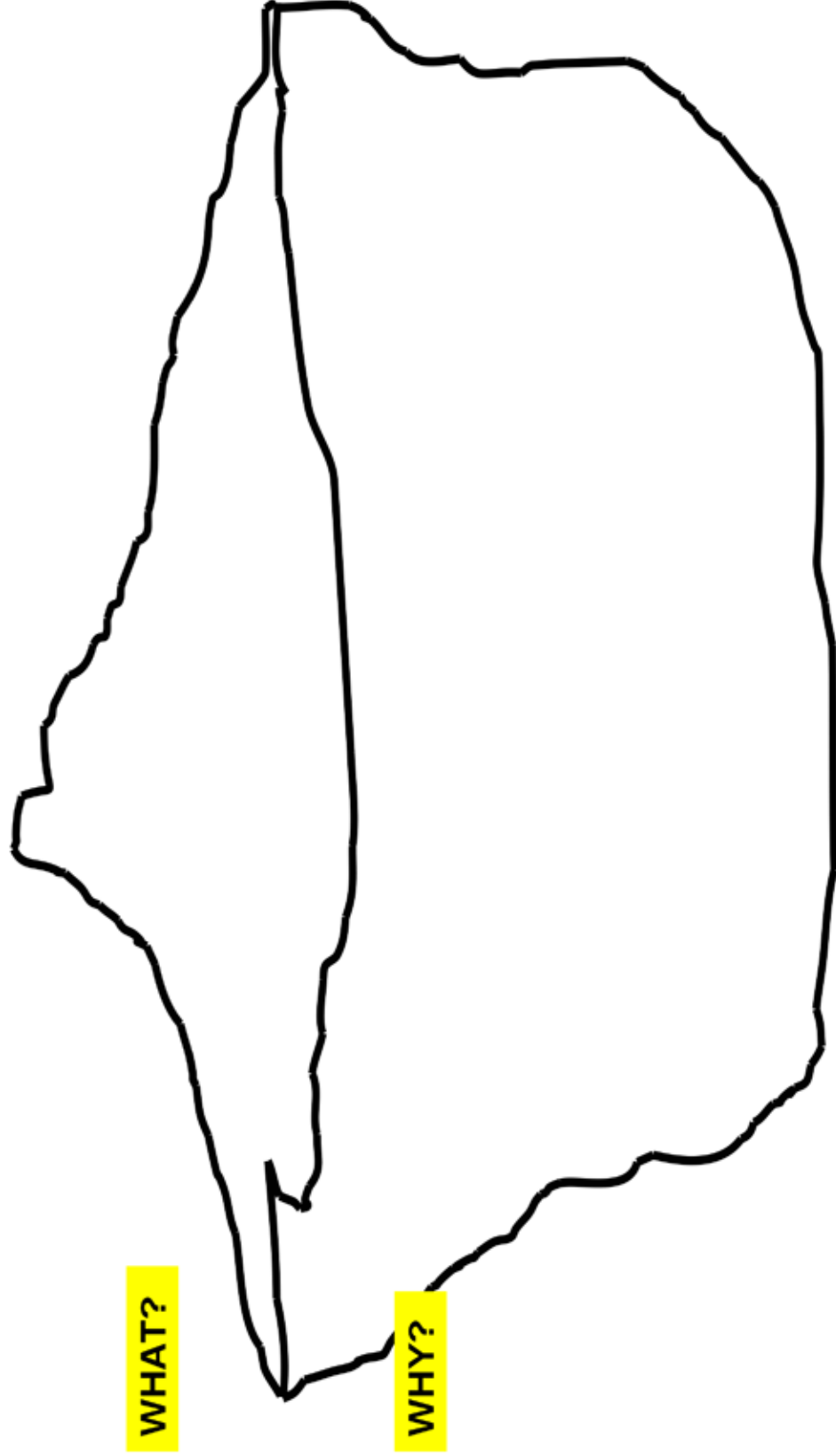
Appears lazy  
Over- dependent  
Unmotivated  
Waits for prompts

**WHY?**

Unaware of other people  
Poor concept of time  
Does not understand future rewards  
Unmotivated by usual rewards  
Does not understand expectations



# Practise using the Iceberg



1) **WHAT** is the behaviour you see? Describe it so everyone can agree what it is, when it has happened and when it has not.

2) **WHY** has the behaviour happened? Think about what could have caused it – has something changed; did something happen first?

## Sensory assessment checklist

(based on the sensory profile checklist from Bogdashina, 2003 and included in the IDP autism spectrum)

Tick which apply and then consider which teaching staff need to know this information.

Where possible, complete this in discussion with the parents or carers and the pupil.

No.	Item	Yes	No	Don't know	Action required
1	Resists changes to familiar routines				
2	Does not recognise familiar people in unfamiliar clothes				
3	Dislikes bright lights				
4	Dislikes fluorescent lights				
5	Is frightened by flashes of light				
6	Puts hands over eyes or closes eyes in bright light				
7	Is attracted to lights				
8	Is fascinated by shiny objects and bright colours				
9	Touches the walls of rooms				
10	Enjoys certain patterns (e.g. brickwork, stripes)				
11	Gets lost easily				
12	Has a fear of heights, lifts, escalators				
13	Has difficulty catching balls				
14	Is startled when approached by others				
15	Smells, licks, taps objects and people				
16	Appears not to see certain colours				
17	Uses peripheral vision when doing a task				

No.	Item	Yes	No	Don't know	Action required
18	Finds it easier to listen when not looking at person				
19	Remembers routes and places extremely well				
20	Can memorise large amounts of information on certain topics				
21	Finds crowded areas very difficult				
22	Prefers to sit at back of group or front of group				
23	Covers ears when hears certain sounds				
24	Can hear sounds which others do not hear				
25	Is very distressed by certain sounds				
26	Bangs objects and doors				
27	Is attracted by sounds and noises				
28	Does not like shaking hands or being hugged				
29	Likes a hug if chosen to do this				
30	Only seems to hear the first words of a sentence				
31	Repeats exactly what others have said				
32	Very good auditory memory for songs and rhymes				
33	Dislikes the feel of certain fabrics and substances				
34	Seems unaware of pain and temperature				
35	Dislikes certain foods and drinks				
36	Seeks pressure by crawling under heavy objects				
37	Hugs very tightly				
38	Enjoys feeling certain materials				



No.	Item	Yes	No	Don't know	Action required
39	Dislikes certain everyday smells				
40	Eats materials which are not edible				
41	Likes to have food presented in a certain way on the plate				
42	Dislikes crunchy or chewy food				
43	Quite clumsy and bumps into objects and people				
44	Finds fine motor movements hard				
45	Has difficulty running and climbing				
46	Finds it hard to ride a bike				
47	Does not seem to know where body is in space				
48	Has poor balance				
49	Afraid of everyday movement activities such as swings, slides, trampoline				
50	Has extremely good balance				

## Acknowledgements

This booklet has been produced to provide educational settings with information and strategies to help support children on the autism spectrum. The contents of the booklet are based on the questions frequently asked by staff and the strategies most commonly recommended for use in schools.

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- The Autism Education Trust (AET) – Sensory assessment checklist
- Presland (1989) – ABC Approach to behaviour

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## Notes

