

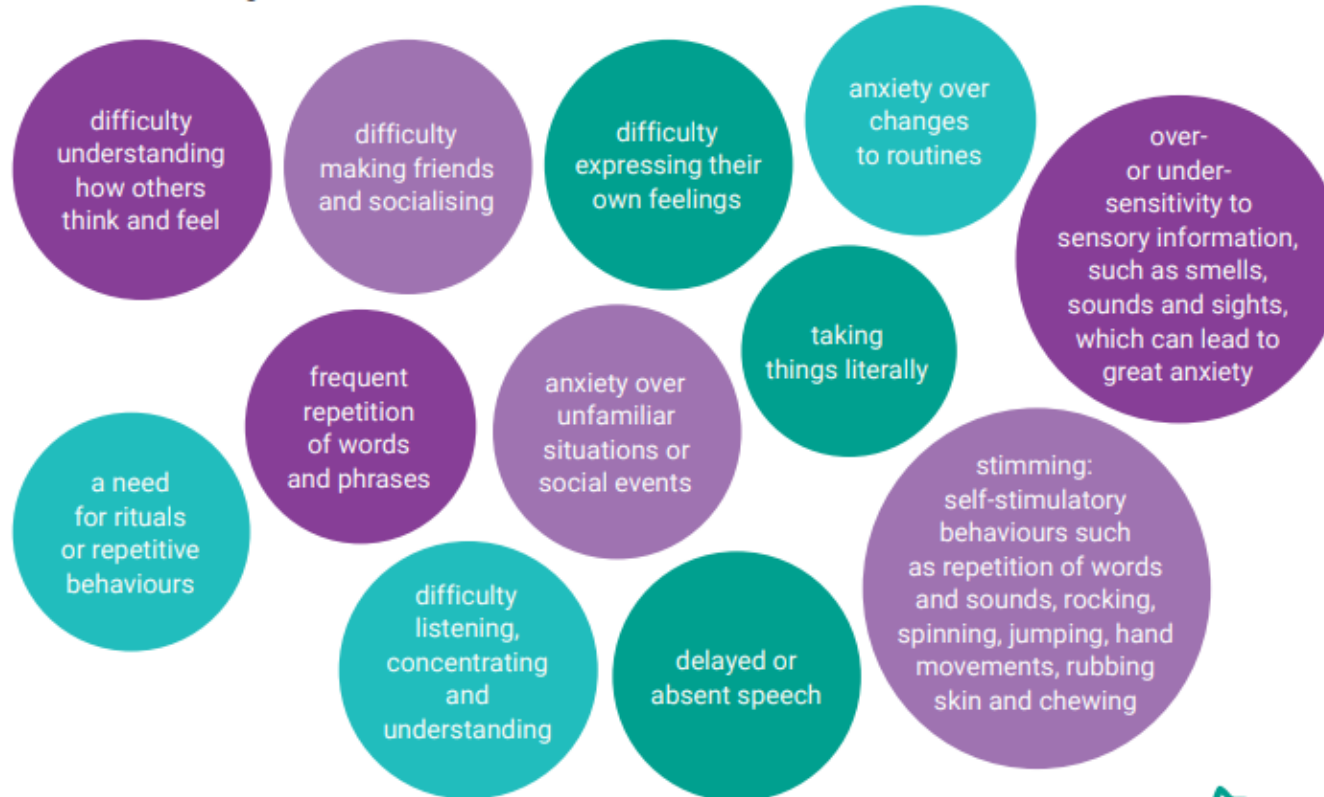
# **Supporting Children with a Diagnosis of Autism**

## What is Autism?

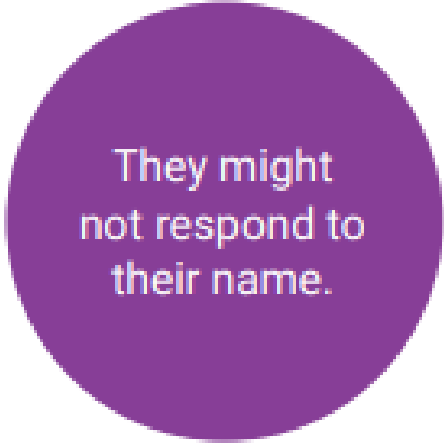
Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a lifelong spectrum of developmental conditions that affect how people communicate and experience the world around them. It is not an illness to be cured; instead it means that your brain works in a different way to other people.

### Signs


Autistic people may share some characteristics and they might have strengths and weaknesses in different areas. Common signs include:




If you have a young child, you might also notice some of these:



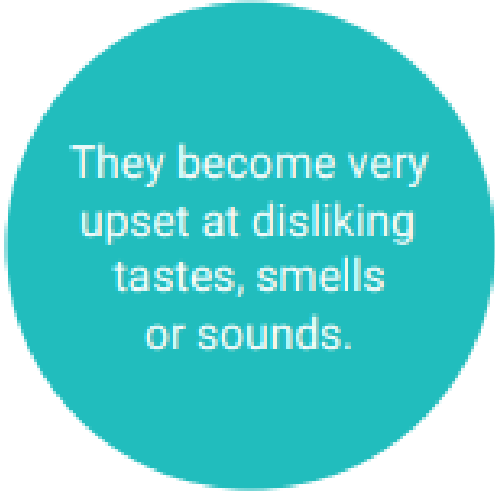
They might not respond to their name.



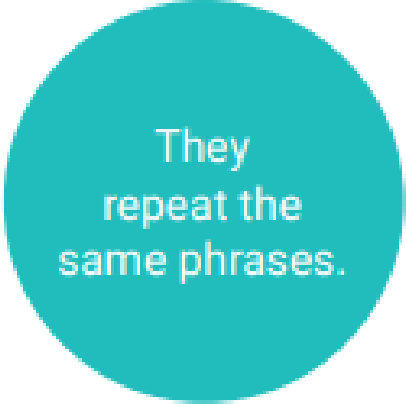
They may avoid direct eye contact.




When you smile at them, they don't smile back.




They become very upset at disliking tastes, smells or sounds.



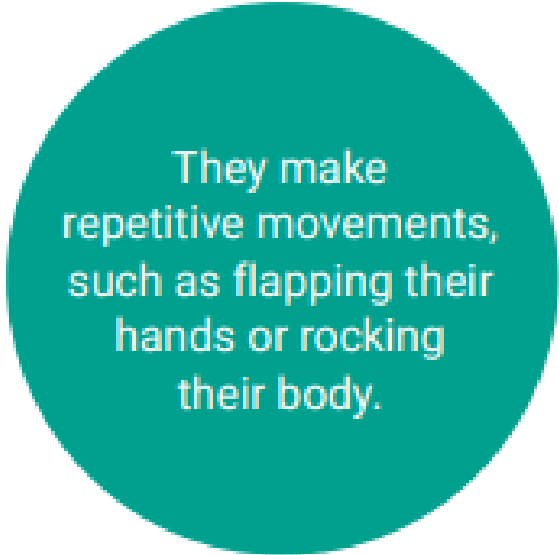
They repeat the same phrases.



They don't talk as much as other children of a similar age.



They don't understand jokes.



They make repetitive movements, such as flapping their hands or rocking their body.

If you have an older child, you might notice:

They have a very keen interest in a certain subject or activity.

They happily spend time alone because they find it hard to make friends.

They have a very literal understanding of language.

They may get very upset when asked to do something unexpected.

They like a regular daily routine and become anxious when the normality is disrupted.

They might need people to play by their rules in a game and get very upset if others don't follow the rules.

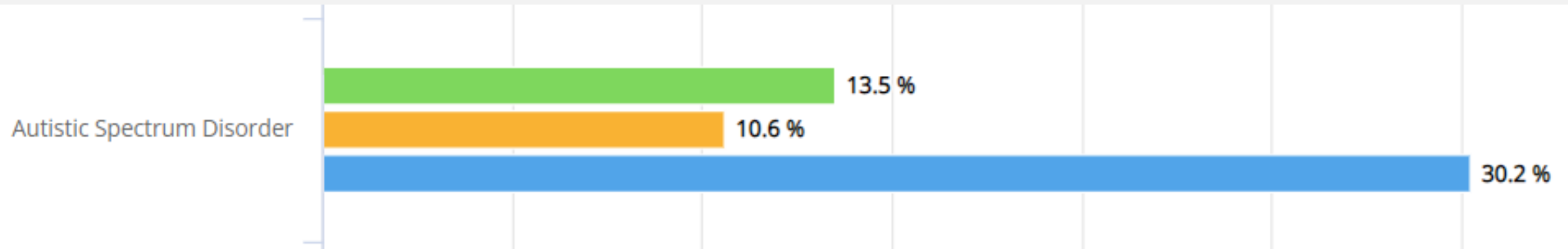
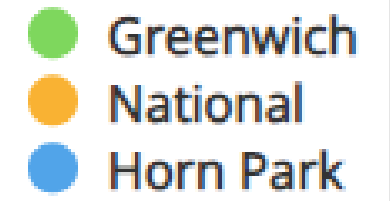
They find it hard to relate to children their own age and therefore prefer playing with younger children or adults.

They have difficulty adjusting their behaviour to different social contexts.

They find it hard to follow simple instructions.



# Horn Park



Sycamores

Millennium

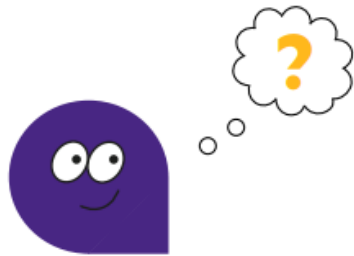
Mainstream

# Five rules for autism-friendly schools

A few small adjustments can make a big difference for everyone.

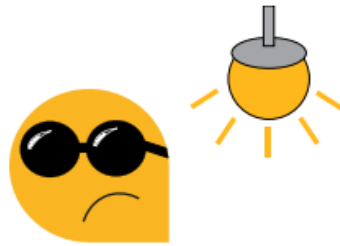
## Rule 1

Give people time to think and answer questions.



## Rule 3

Help keep lights low and the sound down.



## Rule 5

And, if someone is having a really hard time ...



... give them a smile and help them feel fine.



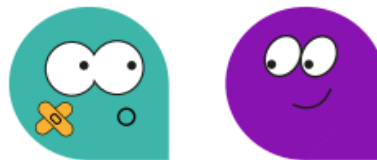
## Rule 2

Support people who find change difficult.



## Rule 4

Understand people get anxious about new places and faces.



# How we support ...



TIMETABLES  
AND ROUTINES



EAR  
DEFENDERS



SOCIAL STORIES



SENSORY  
CIRCUITS



LEGO THERAPY



VISUALS

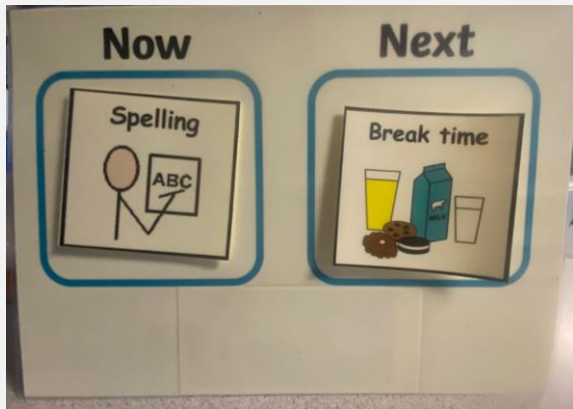


PECS



ATTENTION  
AUTISM

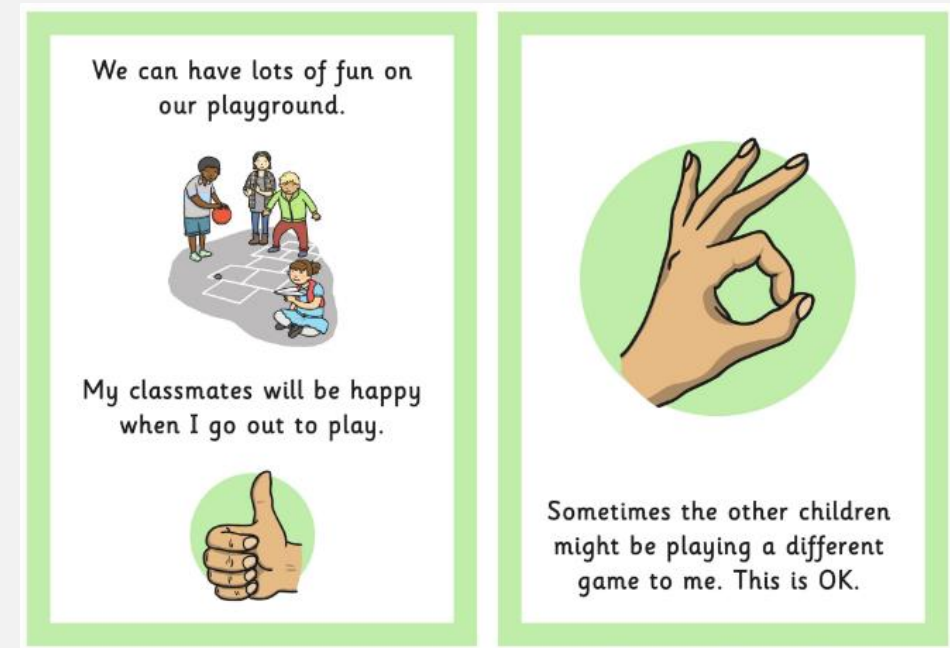
# Visuals ...



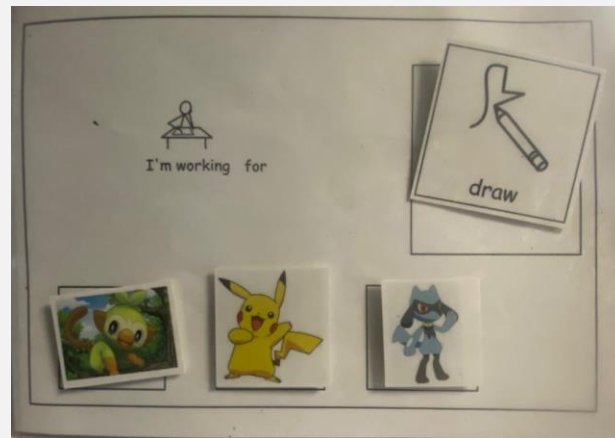
now and next boards



lanyard visuals



Social stories



Working towards charts



visual timetables

# Visuals ...



- VISUALS PREPARE STUDENTS FOR TRANSITIONS



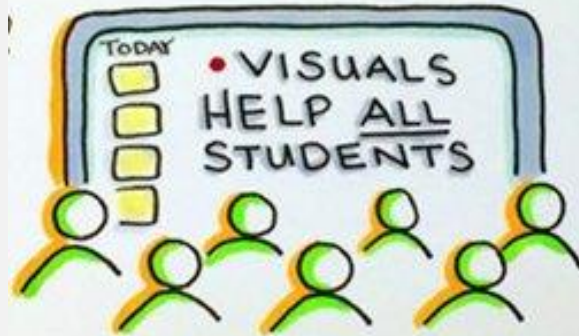
- VISUALS ALLOW TIME FOR LANGUAGE PROCESSING



- VISUALS ARE PERMANENT (SPOKEN WORDS DISAPPEAR)



- VISUALS HELP BUILD INDEPENDENCE



- VISUALS HELP ALL STUDENTS



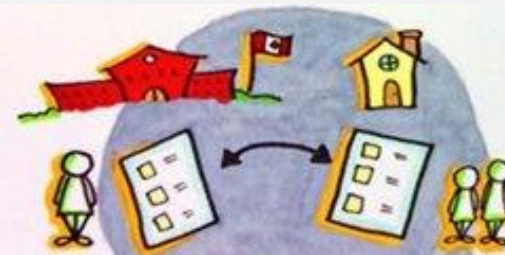
- VISUALS HELP KIDS SEE WHAT YOU MEAN



- VISUALS HELP REDUCE ANXIETY



- VISUALS HAVE NO ATTITUDE
  - NO TONE
  - NO FRUSTRATION
  - NO DISAPPROVAL



- VISUALS ARE TRANSFERABLE BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTS AND PEOPLE

**Promoting  
awareness ...**

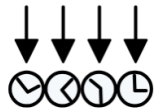
**class discussions**

**assemblies**

**forest school buddies**

**Provisions - Mainstream**

# Ways to support at home ...



routine

Try to keep routines consistent and **let your child know** if there is going to be a **change**.

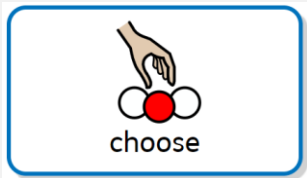


calm

Allowing home to be a **calm, relaxing space** where children can shelter from the difficult world outside - this will mean different things for different children. Some might like access to run, climb, let off steam etc, others might like darkness and calming music etc.

# Ways to support at home ...

## Younger children



- Give your child opportunities to **choose throughout the day** e.g. clothes, snacks, etc.



- **Toileting** – It's all about repetition and routine (more info at the end).

# Ways to support at home ...

## Questioning:

- **Avoid open-ended questions**
- Keep questions **short**
- **Structure** your questions, e.g. you could offer options or choices
- **Be specific**. For example, ask “Did you enjoy your lunch?” and “Did you enjoy maths?” rather than “How was your day?”.

# Ways to support at home ...

## Getting and keeping their attention

- **Always use their name** at the beginning so that they know you are talking to them.
- **Make sure they are paying attention** before you ask a question or give an instruction. The signs that someone is paying attention will be different for different people.
- **Use their hobbies and interests**, or the activity they are currently doing, to engage them.

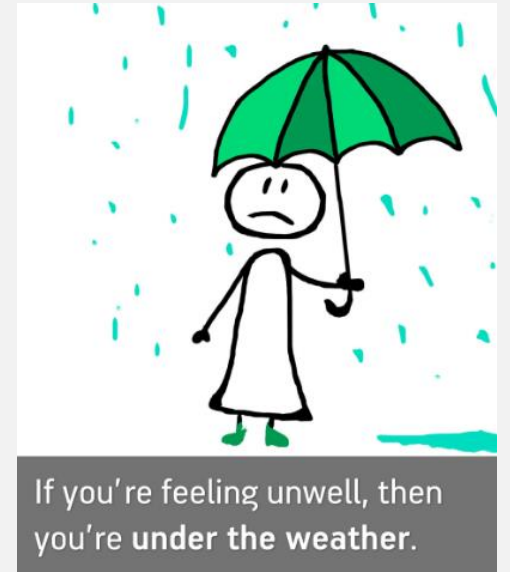
# Ways to support at home ...

## Processing information

An autistic person can find it difficult to filter out the less important information. If there is too much information, it can lead to 'overload', where no further information can be processed. To help:

- say less and say it **slowly**
- give them a **chance to think** of a response
- use **less non-verbal communication** (e.g. eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body language)
- Use **visual support** / objects of reference when you can
- be aware of the environment (noisy/crowded) that you are in.

## Ways to support at home ...



### Being clear

Avoid using irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions or exaggeration as autistic people can take these literally. If you do use these, explain what you have said and be clear about what you really mean to say.

**Idioms** can be used if you explain what you mean.

## Ways to support at home ...

### Communication

It is important to communicate with us.

It will help support your child receives.



## Seek support ...

**ASD outreach** - a team of teachers and specialist advisors offering support and advice to children with an ASD diagnosis in **Greenwich**.

**Drumbeat Outreach** is a team of teachers and specialist advisers offering support, advice and training to children, families and professionals in **Lewisham**.

For **anxious eaters/restricted eating** free parent course: <https://course.getpermissioninstitute.com/order?ct:9c3058-0ff4-4d73-a3dd-b98bad87c623>



Introduction to **sensory processing** free parent course: <https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/course/s/understanding-sensory-processing-and-integration-in-children-a-guide-for-parents-and-carers>



**Toileting support** (OT recommendation): <https://eric.org.uk/children-with-additional-needs/toileting-support-for-autistic-children/>





For developing inferencing and social understanding I'd recommend talking about tv shows e.g. what's going on between characters, pausing, why is that person stood outside the hospital, maybe they hurt themselves etc.

For developing problem-solving I might pause and say what could they do next, how do you think they might get help/help themselves.

For developing verbal reasoning I might have debates over dinner e.g. would you rather questions such as would you rather bathe in custard or beans.