

# Working together with your child's school.

An AET autism guide for parents and carers





This guide is to help parents and carers identify what is important in the education of their child with autism or Asperger syndrome. Parents and carers can use this guide to talk to staff in schools about how best they can work together.

How to use the guide:



There are four main sections in the guide. Each section has a number of statements which you can rate to identify what is most important for your child at school.

There is a 4 point rating scale

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

You may rate a number of the statements as essential or important for your child. We recommend that you choose between 1-3 of these as priorities to work on with school staff. The next steps form at the end can be used to share this information with staff to identify ways of working effectively together.

Many of the areas of practice listed in this guide are important to ALL children on the autism spectrum in schools and some parents and carers in the consultation survey said they would put **essential** next to most of these. However, as it is hard to work on several areas at once, it is useful to try to prioritise what is absolutely essential for your child and to discuss how this might be acted upon with the staff. This does not mean that other areas need to be left out with nothing being done.





## Resources

---

Resources and further reading for each statement can be found at the end of the guide. When you are online, you can click on the link and the resource will open. These include published papers, photographs, accounts from pupils and short video clips. The resources can be used by you and school staff to help meet the needs of your child.

## When to use the guide

---

You may want to use the guide to review priorities on an annual basis to review them more regularly to reflect the changing needs of your child. The guide can be used to support your child at their current school or setting and also to support transition to a new school.

## Working with the school

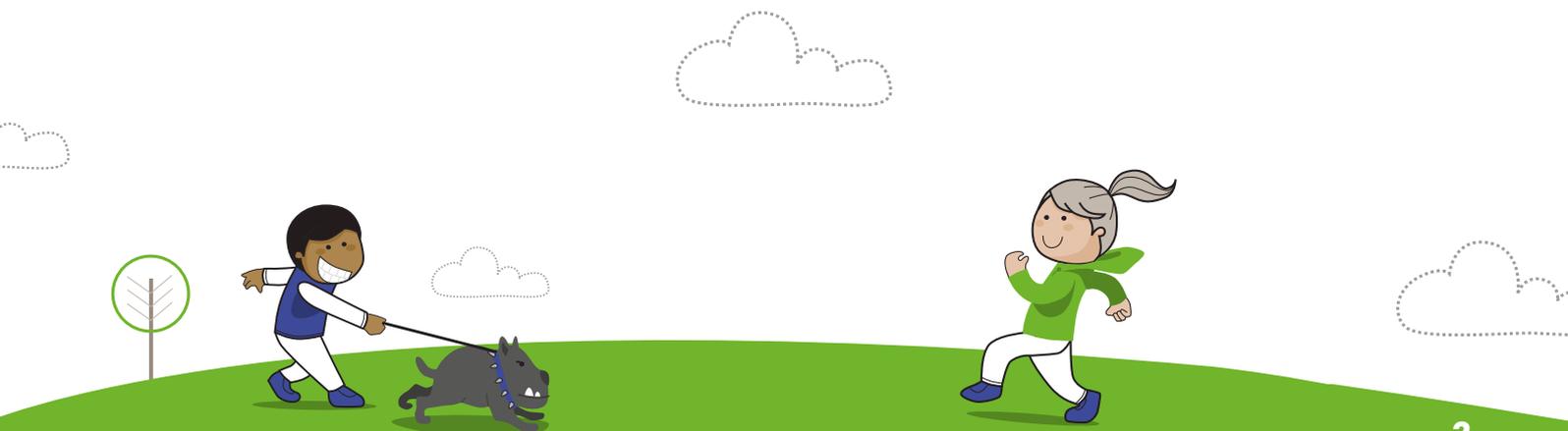
---

The guide should enable you to work with school staff to identify and meet the needs of your child. We have included three resources in the guide to support this process.

**Information for schools** – this has information about the guide and how schools can use this with parents and carers. It can be given to key school staff e.g. Class Teacher, SENCO, or Head of Year

**Top tips in working with the school** – this has information for parents and carers about how to communicate and work effectively with the school.

**Children and Families Act (2014)** - this has information about the new SEND Code of Practice for children and young people with special needs and disabilities.



# Top tips

## in working with the school

---

### 1. Identify the Key People in the school

Establish with the school which staff are the best people to contact if you have any information or concerns to share. This may be the class teacher, the SENCo, support staff or the Headteacher.

---

### 2. Make contact with staff early and make it positive

Contact key people before your child starts school and meet them regularly, as and when needed. Do not wait until your child has a problem. Parents who share relevant information help school staff to prevent problems occurring. Try to stay positive and calm as discussions are easier and more fruitful when staff and parents are in this state.

---

### 3. Use an agreed method to communicate with staff

Agree with the staff the best method for contacting staff and for them to contact you. This may be by email, by phone, by letter, by text or a combination of these. Before meetings it is helpful to write down a list of things you would like to discuss.

---

### 4. Keep your messages short and focused

Keep your written comments, e-mails or voicemail messages short and state your main issue clearly. Follow up with information about how and when staff can best reply to your message. If you think a short message will not work, ask for a meeting with staff to discuss your concerns in more detail.



# Top tips

## in working with your school

---

### 5. Be clear about dates, actions and responsibilities

Parent-staff discussions often result in an action plan. You need to clarify who (teacher, child, parent, other professional) will do what (make an assessment, help develop friendships, check the arrangements for the school trip) and when (every day, weekly, monthly). At the end of a meeting or discussion, it is helpful to confirm the list of actions and the date of the next review.

---

### 6. Be patient, but be persistent

Most school staff will try to acknowledge contact from parents within 48 hours or sooner if the issue is urgent. If you do not get a reply, send a brief follow-up e-mail or call the school secretary to ask to have a message delivered to the staff member. If you feel there is a lack of response from staff then you can discuss this with the head teacher or principal of the school.

---

### 7. Ask staff to explain the reasons behind their actions and decisions

Allow staff the opportunity to explain the circumstances and reasons for their decisions about your child. If necessary, take time to think over the explanation and your response. If the explanation does not satisfy you, explain your reasons for this. Agree next steps for resolving any issues with the school.

---

### 8. Ask a friend, relative or a professional to attend meetings at the school

It is often useful to ask another person to come along to meetings at the school as it can be difficult to listen to what is being said as well as to think of the questions you might want to ask. Another person can remind you of what you wanted to get from the meeting.



# Your child

Please rate the following statements:

1. Staff find out from your child on a regular basis, which aspects of school s/he enjoys and finds challenging.

Essential  
 Important  
 Not very important  
 Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

2. Information about your child's strengths, interests, needs, emotional well-being and learning is obtained from your child, from yourselves and others involved with your child.

Essential  
 Important  
 Not very important  
 Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

3. Your child is motivated to engage in activities by the use of their strengths, special interests and favourite activities.

Essential  
 Important  
 Not very important  
 Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

4. Staff assess your child's ability to engage socially with other children and how s/he feels about work and play with other children.

Essential  
 Important  
 Not very important  
 Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

5. Staff assess your child's sensory needs and how these might be addressed.

Essential  
 Important  
 Not very important  
 Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

6. Staff assess your child's ability to communicate effectively and how these skills might be enhanced.

Essential  
 Important  
 Not very important  
 Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

# Your child

7. The staff take steps to safeguard your child from teasing and bullying.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

8. Staff understand and take account of your child's issues with eating, drinking and toileting.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

9. Your child's actions and behaviour are understood and managed from their perspective, as a child with autism.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

10. Staff know how your child feels about being touched (eg physically prompted) or others getting too close and respect this.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

11. Staff teach your child a communication system and this is shared with you.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

12. Your child is carefully prepared for all transitions from one activity to another and when moving classes or schools.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*



# Working together with the school

Please rate the following statements:

**14.** The school allocates a named professional to work with you on shared goals and priorities for your child.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

**15.** The school has a named person (autism lead or specialist) with general information on autism and specific information about your child.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

**16.** The school provides training on autism for all staff, including support staff and non-contact staff.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

**17.** There is good and open communication between all the staff that work with your child and with yourselves, as parents

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

**18.** The school has a number of ways of informing you about your child (eg reports, training, email, DVD, photos)

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

**19.** Your child is given opportunities and support to develop relationships with other children in a way that suits them

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

# Working together with the school

**20.** Supply staff and new staff are informed about the needs of your child.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

Resources

*Additional notes:*

**21.** Parents/carers have a dedicated time and space to meet as a group.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

Resources

*Additional notes:*



# Adapting the learning for your child

Please rate the following statements:

**22.** Your child has a safe and quiet place to go to within the classroom or school when needed.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

**23.** Objects, pictures, photos, symbols, written lists are used with your child to ensure that the sequence of activities during the day is predictable.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

**24.** The school has clearly defined and safe spaces/areas for your child's personal possessions.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

**25.** Staff have a calm, quiet, empathic and consistent manner with your child.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:

**26.** Staff give your child time to process and respond to instructions.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

Resources

Additional notes:



# Supporting your child at school

Please rate the following statements:

27. Your child is given advanced warning of any changes to staffing, the timetable or familiar routines.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

28. Your child's engagement and enjoyment of activities and lessons is observed and action taken, where needed.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

29. Staff are flexible and will make adjustments to activities, lessons and homework, as necessary, for your child.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

30. Your child is supported to know what to do in free time such as break and lunch times both within the building and outdoors.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

31. Your child is taught strategies to reduce stress and anxiety (eg to go to a quiet area; to do a self-calming activity)

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

32. Staff work to include your child in all activities offered to other children, within and after school, which your child would like to join

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

# Supporting your child at school

Please rate the following statements:

**33.** Staff work on helping your child to understand and manage his/her emotions

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

**34.** Your child is taught daily living skills to promote independence (eg cooking; shopping; clothes washing; use of public transport).

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*

**35.** Your child is helped to understand autism and how this affects them and to have a positive view of autism and themselves.

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

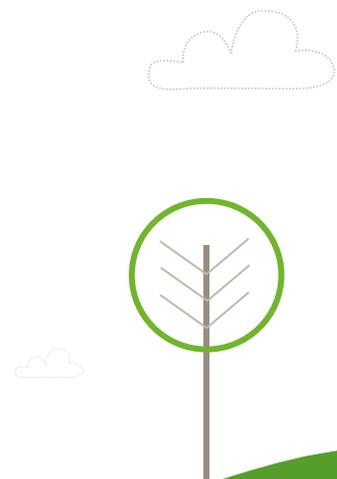
*Additional notes:*

**36.** Your child is helped to understand what s/he reads and concessions for tests and exams are given or applied for, where necessary

- Essential
- Important
- Not very important
- Not necessary

[Resources](#)

*Additional notes:*



# Next steps

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Top 3 essential standards

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>1.</b> | Statement number <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> | <b>Actions to be taken together with the school.</b> |
|           |   |  |

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>2.</b> | Statement number <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> | <b>Actions to be taken together with the school.</b> |
|           |   |  |

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>3.</b> | Statement number <input style="width: 40px; height: 25px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> | <b>Actions to be taken together with the school.</b> |
|           |   |  |

# Your child

## Additional resources and further reading

- 1** [Ideal school](#)  
[Ideal self](#)  
[Pupils views on school](#)  
[Christie paper](#)  
[John Simpson clip](#)

---

- 2** [Passport Joe](#)  
[Passport Matthew](#)  
[AET person centred planning](#)

---

- 3** [John Simpson audio transcript](#)  
[Temple Grandin Youtube clip](#)

---

- 4** [Badge system](#)

---

- 5** [Sensory checklist](#)  
[John Simpson clip on sensory issues](#)

---

- 6** [Adding meaning to communication](#)

---

- 7** [Bullying and teasing](#)  
[B is for bullied](#)

---

- 8** [ERIC for parents on toileting](#)  
[Gillian Harris - selective eating](#)  
[www.attentionautism.com](http://www.attentionautism.com)

---

- 9** [Autistic lens](#)  
[Autistic view resource bank](#)  
[Dean Beadle video](#)

---

- 10** [Ros Blackburn - Within and without autism](#)  
[Low arousal](#)

---

- 12** [AET transition toolkit](#)  
[Moving class](#)  
[Effects of change](#)



# Working together with the school

## Additional resources and further reading

- 14** [How helping works](#)  
[Home-school doc](#)  
[Parents views on what makes a good school](#)  
[Parent survey summary](#)

- 15** [Lead practitioner](#)  
[Mainstream autism: making it work](#)

- 16** [www.aet-idp.org.uk](http://www.aet-idp.org.uk)

- 19** [Awesomes](#)  
[Circle of friends](#)  
[Friendship Programme for Secondary schools](#)  
[Group working Miranda Lego paper](#)

- 20** [www.aet-idp.org.uk](http://www.aet-idp.org.uk)



# Adapting the learning for your child

## Additional resources and further reading

**22** [Sensory checklist for school environment](#)  
[Sensory checklist for pupils](#)

**24** [Designing learning spaces for children on the autism spectrum](#)

**25** [Adult style](#)  
[Practitioner views](#)  
[Understanding the actions of other pupils and staff not on the autism spectrum towards someone who is](#)  
[Professional views on staff qualities](#)  
[What makes a 'good' practitioner in the field of autism?](#)



# Supporting your child at school

## Additional resources and further reading

**27** [Outcomes report](#)  
[Puberty and sexual health](#)

---

**29** [Objects of reference list](#)  
[Washing hands schedule](#)  
[www.do2learn.com](http://www.do2learn.com)  
[Swimming toolkit](#)

---

**31** [A Guide to Primary Differentiation](#)  
[A Guide to Secondary Differentiation](#)

---

**32** [Pupils views on breaktimes](#)

**33** [Emotions keyring](#)  
[The use of cognitive behavioural strategies in the management of anger in a child with an autistic spectrum disorder](#)  
[Emotional well being booklet](#)

---

**35** [Personal statements to aid transition to further and higher education and employment](#)  
[Jonathan Diagnostic DVD](#)  
[Helen from Diagnostic DVD](#)

---

**36** [QCA exam concessions](#)





# Working together with your child's school.

---

An AET autism guide for parents and carers

---

Developed by Genium for the AET in consultation with children and young people with autism, parents, carers and practitioners: Project Manager - Martin Kerem, Authors - Dr Glenys Jones, Damian Milton, Ryan Bradley.

Bradley, R., Jones, G., Milton, D. and Kerem, M. (2014) Working together with your child's school: An AET autism guide for parents and carers: London: Autism Education Trust.

## **Autism Education Trust**

393 City Road, London  
EC1V 9NG, UK

E / [info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk)

T / 020 7903 3650

[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk)