

# Ways to help your child at home

Acacias Community Primary School



## What are some of the characteristics of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder?

Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder might have difficulties:

- understanding what other people feel, think or say
- expressing their own thoughts and feelings
- joining in with games or activities with other people
- meeting people and making new friends
- telling people what they need
- adapting to changes in routines

They might:

- copy what other people say to help them work out the meaning of the words or reduce their anxiety
- take what people say literally, for example your child may just answer "Yes" if asked, "Can you get your coat?"
- talk repeatedly about their favourite subject

- like to play the same game or do the same thing repeatedly, for example watching moving toys for long periods of time
- be overly sensitive to certain sounds, sights, smells, textures and tastes
- not understand and know how to respond to particular situations; their response to the situation may be viewed as lazy or naughty by others

Their strengths might include:

- concentrating for long periods on a single task
- focusing on the detail of a task and achieving a high degree of accuracy in that task
- achieving a high level of skill in an area of interest
- effective processing of visual information
- succeeding in specialised areas that use technical or mathematical language

## How can you help your child?

As a parent or carer of a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder you will want to provide the best possible support for them.

Your child will feel most relaxed in a calm, structured environment, with clear routines throughout the day. Pictures, charts or lists showing the events of the day will reassure them about what is going to happen. When there is a change in routine or it is time for a new event, try to give them a reminder in advance about what is about to happen and demonstrate an appropriate response to this change.

Social stories are a good way of talking through new, difficult or challenging situations with your child. A few examples are included in the pack provided.

Enjoy times playing with your child and demonstrating how to play and co-operate with other children and adults. It is important to value your child's particular interests and strengths. Most importantly try to 'get into your child's shoes' and see situations from their point of view. This will add to your understanding and make your child more relaxed.

When talking with your child, it is helpful to:

- have a calm, quiet manner to reduce anxiety
- say your child's name first before you give instructions

- speak in short phrases using keywords, for example "Get your coat"
- use pictures, photos or gestures to give clues as to what you want
- make any questions specific, for example, ask "How was the maths lesson?" not "How was today?"
- give them enough time to respond in conversations
- offer fixed choices to avoid confrontation, for example "Do you want the train or the book?"

To encourage appropriate behaviour, give instructions or prompts that demonstrate what to do rather than what not to do.

Incentives will encourage your child to do what you want, but try to make these natural consequences, for example, "If you put on your coat, we will go to the swings". When he/she is upset, use another activity as a distraction.

The following website may be helpful for further advice:

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

If you have any further queries, please contact Paul Sanchez, the Special Needs Co-ordinator, Rebecca Riley, the Inclusion Manager or Susan Whittaker, the Specific Learning Difficulty teacher.