

Children and
young people
who have
differences and
difficulties without
a specific
neurodevelopmental
diagnosis

Advice and
support pack

This guide is intended as an introduction for parents whose child is either undergoing assessment for autism or has been assessed for autism and not received a diagnosis.

Family, friends and anyone working alongside your child may find this guide useful.

It identifies and explains some of the areas where your child may have differences and provides some strategies that can be used at home to help you and your child.

We recognise, as with all children, your child will have individual strengths and challenges.

Your child may need adaptations to their environment or processes to help them overcome their particular challenges or highlight their strengths.

The following pages are designed to help you identify your child's strengths and abilities and their individual areas of difficulties and needs.

It is important to remember that everyone is different. Some of the following sections may be relevant and appropriate, while other sections may not.

This is ok.

Please ignore the sections that are not relevant to your child.

The information in this guide should be used alongside information from any healthcare professionals involved in your child's care.

It can be helpful to gather information to describe your child effectively - keep notes on their specific difficulties and use ABC charts for evidence. This information can be used if you are referred back to our service again in the future.

For more information about ABC charts please see page 9 of our 'helpful approaches and information' booklet which can be found on our website.

Please visit: www.uhd.nhs.uk then click on the following links: your visit, patient leaflets, find your leaflet here, child development centre, psychology resources.

Then select - helpful approaches and information during a neurodevelopmental assessment.

This advice and support pack has been created by professionals working in the Child Development Centre (CDC) with the collaboration of professionals working in the paediatric department of Dorset County Hospital, psychologists, carer forums, and the 'development and behaviour' pathway group.

We felt it important to collaborate with adults and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This was achieved by consulting with Parent Carers Together and Dorset Parent Carer Council, the official parent and carer forums, to gain access to SEND voices and to ensure the pack includes the important information local families need to know.

Many forum members' children have been assessed by the CDC, making their experiences, advice, and contributions valuable.

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Communication

We communicate in many different ways and people have their own preferences. Some people prefer communicating in online spaces. Some people prefer written communication such as instant messaging, texting, or emails over a phone call or face-to-face conversation. That's because nonverbal communication - such as eye contact, facial expressions and body language - doesn't have to be a part of online interaction or written communication.

Some children need more time to make sense of things that are said to them and need longer to organise their own thoughts and ideas. To help support your child, give them the time and tools they need to communicate in ways that help them.

For example, give clear instructions.

The order you expect the actions to occur in should be the order that you mention them in the instruction.

You might say, "Put your book away and then wash your hands" rather than "Before you go and wash your hands, put your book away".

How does your child prefer to communicate?

What changes can you make to daily life to play to their strengths and help overcome difficulties with communication? For example: whiteboard with a written plan for the day? Text reminders? Changing how you word requests and how much time you give your child to process them and respond?

1.

2.

3.

Social

Some people have difficulties with certain social situations. This might mean difficulty with understanding sarcasm or jokes, finding eye contact difficult, taking longer to work out what people mean, or finding it hard to explain how they feel. They also might have difficulty making and keeping friends. It can help to explain to your child they do not have to make eye contact with people.

There are also things your child might be good at in social situations, such as being honest, taking on a specific role e.g. handing things out, or being direct with communication and talking about their interests.

There are lots of different skills that link to being social - have a think about your child's social skills and use the space below to make a note of your ideas:

Now, have a think about what other people can do to help your child feel happy and comfortable in social situations:

Due to the levels of effort sometimes required for young people to interact with others in their day-to-day life, it is important to recognise that they may need 'winding down' time following an activity, towards the end of the day or at weekends. This may involve some time watching TV, streaming videos, or time engaged in a favourite activity.

Some children do not respond to social initiation. This is not necessarily a sign of rudeness but is more likely to reflect their own uncertainty regarding how to respond and/or their difficulty in attending to others when they are engaged in a particular task.

Sensory differences

Some people find they experience differences with their senses. This can be over or under sensitivity to things they hear, see, smell, taste, or touch. It may be important to ask your child specifically if there is anything in their environment they find overwhelming and prompt them for things such as noise, smells, or lights and make the necessary adjustments. Take some time to think about the different senses and whether your child is over or under sensitive to anything:

Can you identify any strategies which help when your child is feeling overwhelmed by their senses? Or things others can do to help?

Please see the below link to our website for sensory handouts such as alerting and calming strategies.

www.uhd.nhs.uk/visit/patient-information-leaflets/childrens-therapy

Thinking differently

Some people's brains work differently - this means they might have some differences in the way they think and process the world around them. There are some examples below which you might recognise in your child and a space to make notes of your own ideas.

Need longer to process information

Lots of creative ideas

Attention to detail but struggle with bigger picture

Struggle to problem-solve

Good memory for specific things

Struggle to remember instructions

Have you noticed anything about their way of thinking?

Is there anything you think other people should know about this? Can they help in any way?

Supporting your child to cope with demands

Some children find it particularly difficult to cope when demands are made of them. This can be difficult for the individual, and those around them, as demands are a huge part of everyday life.

Demands in everyday life can come in many forms, including:

- verbal instructions
- expectations
- social rules
- responsibilities
- timetables
- laws
- visual instructions
- prompts
- safety instructions
- questions

One useful way of understanding an adverse reaction to demands is thinking about the threat response. Children who find demands extremely difficult are often responding as a result of anxiety or an automatic threat response. This is typically related to feelings of not being in control of a situation.

Anxiety

What is happening when a threat response is triggered?

When we perceive a threat, our body has an automatic response in order to try and keep us safe. This involves hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, being sent out into our body.

This response leads to a combination of different physical changes in our body, including muscles tensing, heart rate changes, feeling shaky, sweating, feeling sick, breathing changes, and difficulty thinking clearly.



Fight, flight, or freeze

Fight, flight, or freeze is a way of explaining the human response to threat, controlled by the physical changes described above.

Each of these reactions have a function in keeping us safe when there is real danger, but in some individuals, the threat response is over sensitive and is triggered without any real danger being present. Unfortunately, as this is an automatic response, it can be really difficult for individuals to gain control.



Helpful approaches

- Reducing demands where possible. Take time to consider when you must place a demand and where there might be a different way of approaching a situation
- Support and enable young people to be successful
- Allow some control, particularly in situations where a specific outcome is not crucial

- Spend time explaining why things are done in a certain way, without the expectation that the child will do them there and then
- Learn about your child's anxiety response, spend time understanding triggers, 'warning signs' and helpful techniques for calming/soothing
- Reducing uncertainty
- Remaining calm and using a neutral voice
- Collaborate with your child when navigating challenges thinking 'how can we work this out together?'
- Give them chances to offer alternative solutions
- When you do have to make requests/demands, do so indirectly and consider the wording used for the request. Perhaps make it optional or just plant an idea.

For example:

- 'Here is a drink' rather than 'please drink this'
- 'It looks like everyone is getting ready to go' rather than 'we need to leave now'
- Pretending to forget how to do things to encourage them to show you
- Shall we have a bath before or after dinner do you think?
- I wonder...
- You will learn the signs that your child is more or less tolerant throughout the day or week. Adjust the level of demands to match this

- Try using play, fun, games to get things done
- Allow time to get things done
- To support your own management of day-to-day tasks, have a plan B
- If your child shows high levels of anxiety, give frequent, positive feedback so they learn what they are doing well which can increase confidence and reduce anxiety.

Emotional regulation

Some children and young people find it difficult to manage their emotions. They may not have developed the ability to monitor and modulate their emotions and express them.

Self-regulation is a skill children learn. Their ability to regulate their emotional state and emotional reactions affects their family, peers, academic performance and ability to thrive in a complex world.

Your child may have difficulty controlling big feelings, experience tantrums and anger or aggression, have difficulty making and keeping friends, or become withdrawn.

You can help your child learn to self-regulate by modelling how you manage your emotions and by being accepting and responsive to your child's emotional needs.

Notice their emotions and talk about emotions. Accept, empathise with and validate their negative feelings. This teaches them emotional awareness. Comfort them and do not dismiss, punish or ignore their emotions. Be patient, this takes time (it's a marathon not a sprint).

When your child is experiencing big emotions it can be really difficult for them to regain control.

Their adrenaline is very high. Do not try and talk about the problem at this stage.

Instead you could try any of the following:

Distract and redirect Remain calm

Give plenty of space Do not stare

You can help your child calm down and give them time to fully recover.

Think of things you could do to help soothe and relax your child.

Here are some examples:

Give more space

Move them to a different environment

Make no demands

Check their wellbeing

Offer a relaxing activity

Mindful activities that involve using our body and focusing our attention at the same time can help us feel calm. For example: colouring, painting, building Lego, dribbling a football, or juggling.

Breathing exercises

When we feel stressed, anxious, or upset, we take quick, short and shallow breaths. To help us clam down and feel more relaxed we need to slow down our breathing by taking long, slow, deep breaths.

Breathing exercises are good coping strategies because:

- they work quickly so they can see they are helping
- they can be done anywhere and others cannot tell
- they help them regain control over the fight or flight response

5/8 breathing:

In this breathing exercise the 'out' breath is longer than the 'in' breath, which helps restore the balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the body and reduces the feelings of the threat response.

Exercise:

- Breathing from your belly, inhale slowly for a count of seven (count slowly one... two... three... four... five as you inhale)
- Pause and hold your breath for a few counts
- Exhale slowly, through your nose or mouth, to a count of eight (or more if it takes you longer). Make sure you exhale fully.

- You may find that that breathing in for 5 and out for 8 is too long. You can try breathing in for 4 and out for 7. It doesn't matter what numbers you use, as long as the 'out' breath is longer than the 'in' breath.
- Practice this exercise for five minutes
- If you start to feel light headed, stop for thirty seconds and then start again

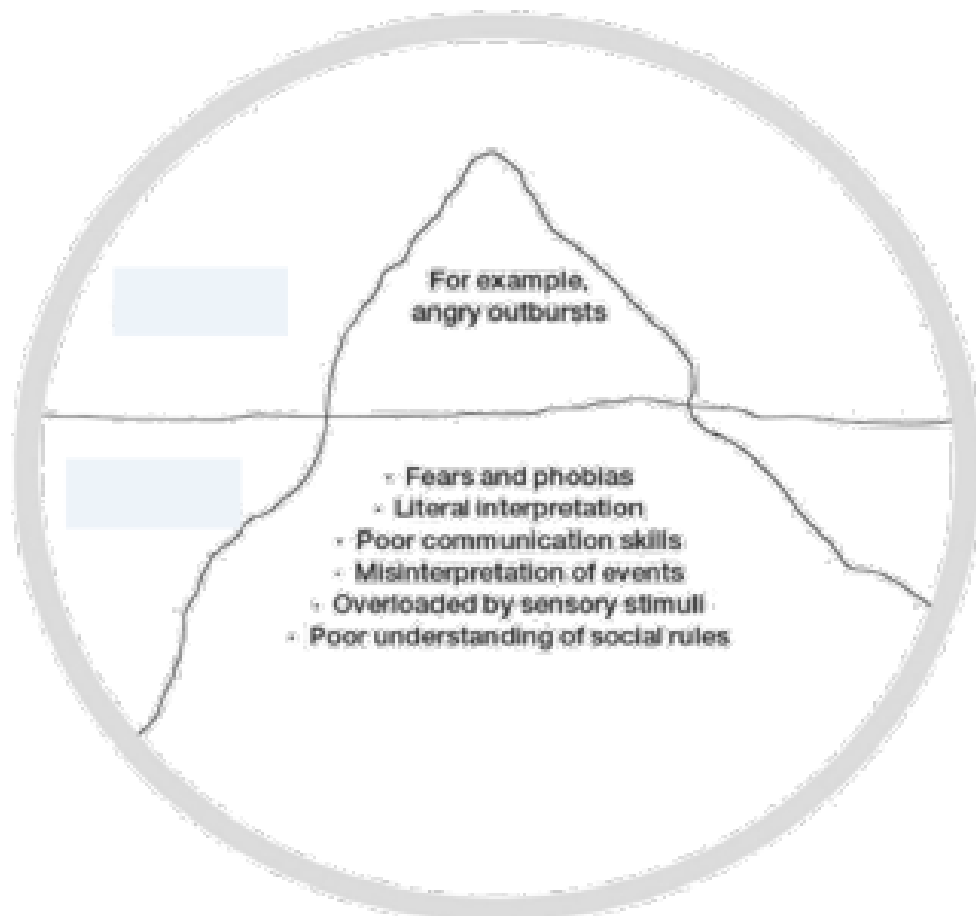
It is important to practise breathing exercises regularly and when your child is feeling ok to start with. This means it will be easier for them to remember them when they are starting to feel distress or big emotions.

Alternatively, see 4 -7-8 Breathing Exercise by GoZen on You Tube www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxbdX-Se00o

This space is for you to write any notes, thoughts or ideas you have about your child. This might be things you want to remember, or things you think other people should know:

Behaviour that challenges / when they need help

Some children might display behaviours that can put themselves and others at risk. This is often known as behaviour that challenges. Some children find it more challenging to communicate their frustrations. The iceberg metaphor below illustrates how all behaviours have triggers and functions - however this can sometimes be difficult to spot. It is important to try and see the challenges from your child's perspective and in the context of the difficulties they experience every day.



See the Challenging Behaviour Foundation for further advice and resources: www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk

Parenting courses

Parenting courses offer support to help address behaviours that challenge and to support your child to succeed at school, at home and in relationships. Recommending parent courses does not imply bad parenting. The aim is to help parents optimise their skills to meet the increased parenting needs of their child. Parents/carers can learn techniques to help improve their child's self-control, behaviour and self-esteem which can have lasting benefits for the child and family. Many parents benefit from the support they get from meeting other parents. Some children may have difficulty making friends and maintaining friendships. Parenting courses can help you learn how to assist your child to work cooperatively with others and make friends.

Linwood Training, Support and Advice run 'An introduction to autism and neurodiversity for parents'. This session provides parents in BCP with a basic overview of how autism and neurodiversity may present in children and young people. Your child does not need a diagnosis to attend this session. Please email jackiehorne@linwood.bournemouth.sch.uk for session details/availability.

Dorset Council is setting up a similar session for parents in this area. Please see Dorset Council's website for further details.

Please note that the following general parenting courses are designed for neurotypical children and feedback suggests that some elements may not be relevant or appropriate for some children with autistic traits.

Action for Children - Dorset Services run 'The Incredible Years' group programme for parents of children aged up to 12. Please see their website for more details and if you are interested in attending a parenting programme, please complete their referral form.

<https://services.actionforchildren.org.uk/dorset-services/referrals/parenting-support>

For information on a range of general parenting courses for parents of children aged 0-16 please see

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/get-help-for-your-family/parenting-support-courses

Triple P is a parenting programme that can be done online. It provides a toolbox of ideas and strategies to help support your child.

www.triplep-parenting.uk.net/uk/get-started/online-parenting-course-pre-teens-and-teens

How can I help my child?

There are strategies you can implement at home that can have a positive impact on your child's development.

This section will briefly describe: visual supports, visual timetables, contingency maps and first/then boards.

Visual supports

Visual supports can be used in most situations and can make communication physical and consistent, rather than fleeting and inconsistent like spoken words can be.

Visual supports can help to:

- Provide structure and routine
- Encourage independence
- Build confidence
- Improve understanding
- Avoid frustration and anxiety
- Provide opportunities to interact with others.

Visual timetables

Visual timetables are a really helpful way to provide routines for your child in a visual and accessible format. Below is an example of a morning schedule from the 'do2learn' website.



If your child is struggling with a particular aspect, you can break it down even further:



How can I make them myself?

See the 'websites and resources' section for websites you can use to make your own visual supports or find existing resources.

Backward chaining

Backward chaining is a technique for teaching useful skills to your child when multi-step tasks are too difficult to master all at once. The steps of a task are broken down and taught in reverse order. This gives the child an experience of accomplishment and completion with every attempt and instant success. This feeling of success will often increase their confidence and keep them motivated to learn and complete the entire sequence of steps.

With backward chaining you start with teaching your child the last step of the task. Then you teach the second to last step, and then the third to last step, and so on until they have mastered that task.

General procedure for backward chaining

1. Complete all the steps in the procedure except for the last one.
2. Teach the last step. Use appropriate and/or necessary prompts.
3. Repeat numbers 1 and 2 until they have mastered the last step in the procedure.
4. Complete all but the last two steps of the task.
5. Teach the second-to-last step in the task. Use prompts as needed.
6. Allow your child to complete the last step on their own.

7. Repeat 4, 5, and 6 until they have mastered the second-to-last step of the procedure.
8. Continue in this manner until they have mastered all the steps of the task.

Example: Putting a t-shirt on using backward chaining

First you break the task down into steps.

Steps for putting on a t-shirt

- Lay the t-shirt front side down on the bed/floor/table with the lower edge nearest to your child.
- Pick the back of the t-shirt up and place it over your head.
- Push one arm through the sleeve.
- Push the other arm through the sleeve.
- Pull the t-shirt down.

Now follow this process for backward chaining.

First time:

1. You lay the t-shirt down.
2. You pick up the t-shirt and place it over your child's head.
3. You hold out the first sleeve and put their arm through the sleeve opening.
4. You do the same with the other arm and the second opening
6. Teach your child to pull down the t-shirt.

Second time:

1. You lay the t-shirt down.
2. You pick up the t-shirt and place it over your child's head.
3. You hold out the first sleeve and put their arm through the sleeve opening.
4. Teach your child to push their second arm through the sleeve opening.
5. Your child pulls down the t-shirt.

Third time:

1. You lay the t-shirt down.
2. You pick up the t-shirt and place it over your child's head.
3. Teach your child to hold the first sleeve and put their arm through the sleeve opening.
4. Your child pushes their second arm through the sleeve opening and pulls down the t-shirt.

Fourth Time:

1. You lay the t-shirt down.
2. Teach your child to pick up the t-shirt and place it over their head.
3. Your child pushes both arms through the sleeve openings and pulls down the t-shirt.

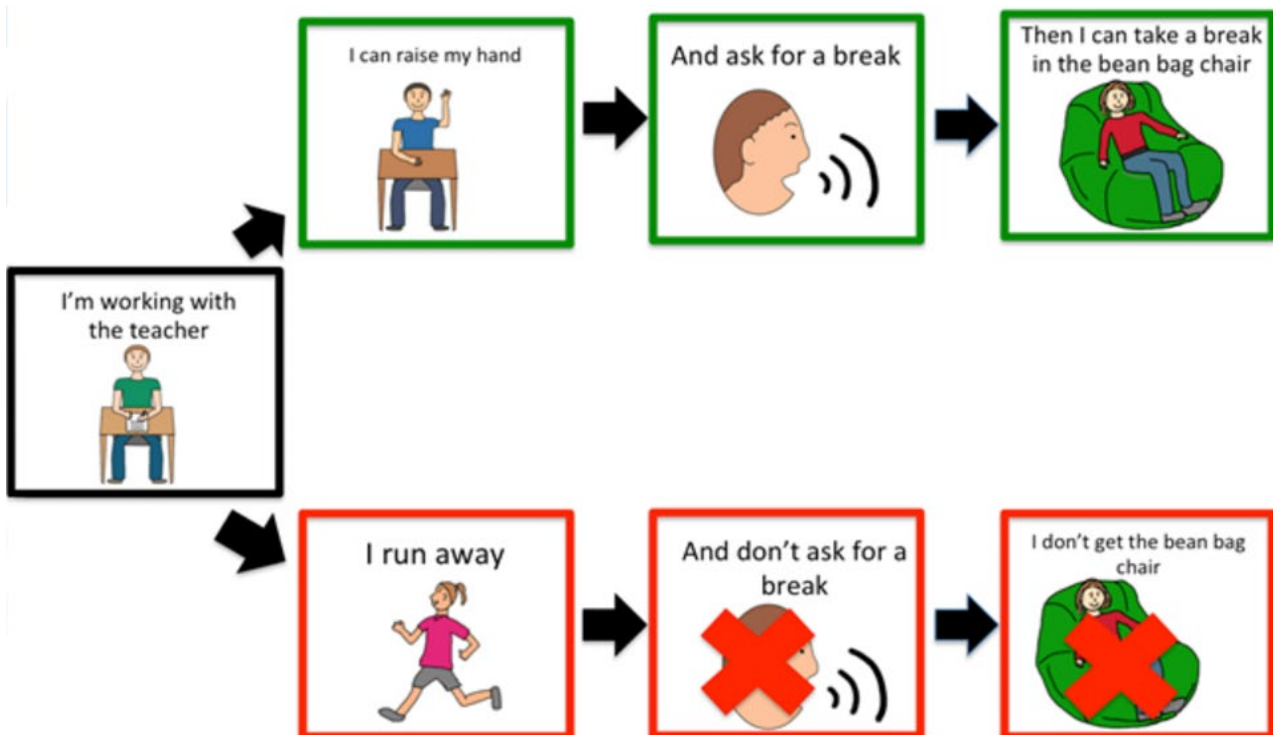
Fifth Time:

1. Teach your child to lay the t-shirt front side down on the bed/ floor/table with the lower edge nearest to them.
2. Your child picks up the t-shirt and places it over their head, pushes both arms through the sleeve openings and pulls down the t-shirt.

Your child can now put their t-shirt on independently

Contingency map

Contingency maps are a method for helping an individual to understand the outcomes or consequences of behaviour choices. They are particularly useful for teaching individuals alternatives to the unhelpful behaviour they may typically use.

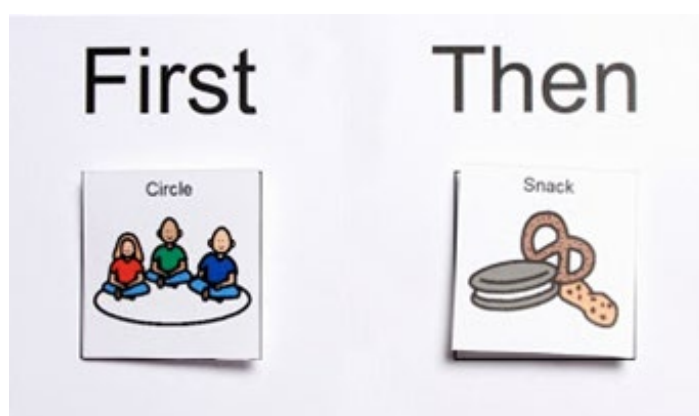


Make sure you go through the map with your child. Explain why and when you will use the map and answer any questions they may have. You may want to only have the desired (the green) outcome visible.

It is important to note that each child is different and you should use visual support that works best for your child. The techniques described in this advice pack may not be appropriate for every child.

First/then Boards

First-then (also known as now-next) sequences present what we need to do now (first) and what we will do next (then). These boards are used for individuals who need a greater level of breakdown, so that they can focus on one task at a time without being overwhelmed.



First/then boards are also useful in teaching your child the concept of 'first' and 'then'.

A whiteboard is a useful tool for first/then boards as you can draw what is coming up next.

Daily special time

Your child may find parts of day-to-day life more challenging than their peers. It is important to acknowledge their difficulties and let them know you love and support them unconditionally. Your child's self-esteem can be eroded by constant negative feedback. Remember your child is not behaving badly on purpose. Setting aside daily special time for you and your child can help improve their self-worth. This could be playing a game, having an outing or just a positive interaction together.

See Five Minute Mum for ideas of fun activities to do with 1 - 7 year olds. Includes tips, tricks and advice:

<https://fiveminutemum.com>

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is how we value and perceive ourselves and how confident we feel in who we are. Having negative perceptions of ourselves can lead to low self-esteem. Many children and young people with special educational needs suffer from low self-esteem for a variety of reasons. To help build self-esteem, give positive feedback regularly (three positives to every one negative). It takes at least three positive interactions to outweigh one negative interaction.

Parents can help to strengthen a child's self-esteem using the 5C's of parenting:

- **Self-control:** learn to manage your own feelings first so you can act effectively and teach your child to do the same.
- **Compassion:** meet your child where they are, not where you expect them to be.
- **Collaboration:** work together with your child and co-parent to find solutions to daily challenges instead of imposing your rules on them.
- **Consistency:** do what you say you will do - over and over and over again.
- **Celebration:** acknowledge and validate their successes and efforts and do more of what's working. Create opportunities for success!

It is important to help your child recognise their strengths and value their skills. You are their advocate - recognise their strengths, be willing to listen to them, let them know you hear them and respect them and their choices. Create a supportive environment for them. When trying to change a particular behaviour or develop skills, it may be more useful to give ideas about what your child can do in the future rather than focus on what was done wrong in the past as this can be seen as criticism and lead to distress or upset.

Children learn how to behave by watching their parents. You can teach your child skills such as resilience and improve their self-esteem through behaviour modelling. For example, when things don't go the way you wanted, model being kind to yourself, explain you made a mistake, or the wrong choice, and that you will do it differently next time. Show your child that you can have a positive attitude when faced with challenges

Support at school

Your child can still receive help and support without a formal Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis.

Your child may get additional support at their school. If your child has difficulties with their learning in school, they may be under the care of the school special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The SENCO co-ordinates additional support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). This person liaises with parents, teachers and other professionals involved in caring for/educating your child. School nurses work with children, families, school staff and other agencies to support the health and development of school-age children across Dorset.

Talk to their teacher or the SENCO if you think your child needs:

- a special learning programme
- extra help from a teacher or assistant
- to work in a smaller group
- observation in class or at break
- help taking part in class activities
- extra encouragement in their learning, for example to ask questions or to try something they find difficult
- help communicating with other children

- support with physical or personal care difficulties, for example eating, getting around school safely or using the toilet

Your child may benefit from an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) at school. You can speak to the school SENCo about this.

For techniques and strategies to support your child's individual needs see the graduated response under the SEND local offer page of your council's website. This has a comprehensive list of strategies school can put in place to support your child.

Outreach teams may be able to assist the school if necessary. A teacher from a Dorset special school may be able to visit your child's school or setting, observe, advise and work with the school to produce an action plan for your child. This should be reviewed at a follow on meeting and further meetings can be arranged if appropriate.

If your child needs more support than the graduated response, the school may request an Education Health Care needs assessment.

For more details see www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help or www.ipsea.org.uk contact Sendiass. See the 'websites and resources' section for their details.

Techniques and strategies

Each child is individual, but some other techniques and strategies which may be helpful at home and at school include:

1. providing frequent positive feedback to boost self-confidence and motivate them.
2. using tangible and non-tangible rewards, for example praise.
3. consistently praising or rewarding positive/appropriate behaviour.
4. setting consistent boundaries with a clear explanation.
5. being consistent, planning, preparing, and having set routines.
6. using lists and pictures to help your child manage tasks at home e.g. a visual timetable of getting ready for school in the morning and the order of tasks which they can tick off once done. Reward them immediately upon completion.
7. avoiding confrontations - learn what triggers difficult behaviour and plan to avoid these situations.
8. finding activities your child can succeed in so they can feel good about themselves
9. identifying your child's strengths and building on these.
10. ignoring unwanted behaviour or removing your child from the situation or use distraction techniques. Discuss their behaviour at another time when you are both calm.

Staying healthy

Like everyone else, your child needs to look after their general wellbeing and mental wellbeing. This includes:

- having a balanced diet with healthy foods
- maintaining a healthy weight
- engaging in 60 minutes of physical activity every day - this does not need to be all at once
- getting enough quality sleep as lack of sleep can affect mood and behaviour
- connecting with others, such as spending quality time with friends or family
- doing things that make them happy such as enjoying a favourite hobby or learning a new skill
- recognising unhelpful thoughts and taking steps to think about things differently

Self-care

Living with someone who experiences difficulties and challenges can be exhausting. It is important to look after yourself. Having a break from caring for your child is not an admission of failure, or saying that you don't care. Without any breaks, you risk becoming unwell or exhausted. When you make time for yourself, rest and exercise, you will be able to do more for yourself and others around you. Self-care doesn't need to take up a huge chunk of your day. Make sure you still make time for things you enjoy doing. If you notice your own mental health deteriorating seek support from your GP.

Self-care myths

Self-care is an indulgence



Self-care contributes to personal growth. Self-indulgence is often spontaneous and doesn't have long term benefits

Self-care is selfish



When you make time for yourself, rest and exercise you will be able to do more for yourself and those around you

Self-care is a one-time experience



Looking after yourself is an on-going practice in building resilience and preventing burnout

Self-care is time consuming



Self-care doesn't need to take up a huge chunk of your day

Here are a few self-care ideas you could try:

Go on a walk

Do some sport

Do an activity you enjoy

Chat to a friend

Do some breathing exercises

Websites and resources

Creating visual supports

Widget online: <https://widgitonline.com>

Easy on the i: www.learningdisabilityservice-leeds.nhs.uk/easy-on-the-i

Do2Learn: <https://do2learn.com>

Makaton: www.makaton.org

SEND local offer

In the SEND local offer you can find information and signposting to help children, young people and their parents and carers get the right help and support to meet their needs. For example, you can find details of parent support groups, youth groups and activities through the SEND local offer websites.

The send local offer has details of family hubs, early help and outreach centres which can provide support when facing challenges.

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council SEND local offer provides information, advice and support for children and young people living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole aged 0-25 years with SEND and their families.

<https://fid.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/send-local-offer>

Dorset Council SEND local offer provides information, advice and support for children and young people living in the rest of Dorset aged 0-25 years with SEND and their families.

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/dorsets-local-offer>

SENDIASS – Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service

SENDIASS offers free, confidential, accurate and impartial advice, guidance and information to children and young people (up to the age of 25) with SEND, and their parents/carers.

SENDIASS provide information, advice and support with relation to education, social and healthcare matters.

BCP Sendiass:

Phone: 01202 128181 Email: help@sendiass4bcp.org

www.sendiass4bcp.org

Dorset Sendiass:

Phone: **01305 595477** Email: **dorset.sendiass@family-action.org.uk**

www.dorsetsendiass.co.uk

Family Information Service

The Family Information Service can help you with a range of matters relating to family life. The service is free, confidential and impartial. The team helps families with children and young people aged 0 to 19 or 0 to 25 for children and young people with SEND. The team and the Family Information Directory can provide information on local childcare, services and activities, and much more!

For example: **Dorset Youth:** **<https://dorsetyouth.com>**

For more youth groups and activities visit:

BCP:

<https://fid.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/welcome-to-the-fis>

<https://fid.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/family-information-directory/directory>

Phone: **01202 093131**

Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and 9am to 4.30pm on Fridays

Email: **familyinformation@bcpcouncil.gov.uk**

Dorset:

www.dorsetCouncil.gov.uk/children-families/get-help-for-your-family/family-information-service

<https://familyinformationdirectory.dorsetCouncil.gov.uk/kb5/dorset/fsd/home.page>

Phone: **01305 221066** Email: **familyinfo@dorsetCouncil.gov.uk**

Here you can find details of your local Early Help team who can provide support to families.

“Contact”

<https://contact.org.uk/about-contact/contact-us>

parents can access the helpline for emotional support without a diagnosis

0808 808 3555

ELSA support

www.elsa-support.co.uk

“All emotions are OK” book by Dr Sarah Temple

Mental health charities and organisations

Dorset Mind: <https://dorsetmind.uk>

Samaritans: www.samaritans.org/branches/bournemouth

SHOUT: <https://giveusashout.org>

The Dorset Mental Health Forum:
www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk/index.html

Steps to Wellbeing Southampton and Dorset: www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk

Sleep Advice Service - cerebra.org

Parent carer forums

The following parent carer forums were set up to represent the voices of parents/ carers of children and young people (0-25 years) with SEND. By working together, their aim is to improve services for, and make sure the services meet the needs of, children and young people with SEND in Dorset. Please see their websites for further details.

Parent Carers Together - BCP: www.parentcarerstogether.org.uk

Dorset Parent Carer Council: www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk

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