

Supporting Children with Additional Learning needs

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What is autism? The National Autistic Society (2021) Leo Kanner first described his classic autistic syndrome in 1943. According to the National Autistic Society autism is a lifelong condition that effects individuals to communicate and interact with the world. Autistic individuals may struggle with

- Repetitive and restrictive behaviour
- Being-sensitivity to light, sound, taste, or touch
- Highly focused interests or hobbies and struggling with change
- Delays in communication
- Responding

Autism can affect your ability to communicate and can be very difficult for others to understand. The National autistic society (2019) explains how everyone with autism have their own strength and weaknesses

Symptoms of autism? - Some children can show symptoms of autism early on in their development around the age of 12 to 18 months. However, it can be difficult to know if they have autism and need diagnosing or whether they are slightly delayed and will catch up in their own time. NIH (2017) look at the early signs of autism, these are;

- Not being able to make eye contact
- Not responding to his or her name
- Problems concentrating on set things
- Poor skills in pretend play and imitation
- Poor communication

How to diagnose autism? - Hopebridge Autism Therapy Centers (2018) discuss the process of diagnosing a child with autism, they begin by screening the child and asking the parents questions regarding their child’s behaviour and development. A structured observation of the child is then carried out. To diagnose a child, the individual in question needs to hit certain criteria’s.

Priory (2021) explain the benefits of diagnosing Autism early which are that is can prevent a child from distress, as strategies can be put in place to support them. Diagnosing a child allows them to understand and learn how to live with autism and help them get the support and guidance they need. Raising children.net.au (2021) agree with Priory and explains how autism can be diagnosed from 12-18 months, but it’s usually from around 2 years of age.

Conclusion - There is a long waiting list to be seen for a diagnosis. Early interventions are the best option for parents who suspect their child may have autism. Research shows that if early interventions are put in place, children are more likely to need less intensive support in elementary school and will understand their disability better showing them how to live with the lifelong condition as many successful people have, and it should not be a condition that holds individuals back.

Introduction:

What are Additional learning needs? - Dewis Cymru (2020) describe ALN as when individuals struggle with learning, physical or sensory making it harder to learn than most children of the same age. SEND England (2020) use the term SEND rather than ANL, however it has recently been replaced with ANL.

Identifying Autism - There are different ways to identify autism, the most common way to identify autism is by screening the individual and then making an assessment, According to NICE (2021) an autism assessment is when a professional assesses the child by talking to the child and their family about their concerns. If you are referred for an assessment, it should start within 3 months of referral and be done by a team of people who are specialists in autism. The NHS website (2019) suggests if you are a parent with concerns you should get in touch with a GP, health visitor, doctor, therapist, or a special educational needs staff at your child's school. You should ask one of the professionals listed to refer your child to an autism specialist

Autism Research Institute (2021) explains that when screening a potential autistic child, a pediatrician or doctor will observe the child and ask the parents questions, they will be looking out for early signs of autism. However, identifying autism can be difficult, as it is not clear if the child has autism or whether they are delayed in their development. Virtua Health (2017) states that it is difficult to diagnose autism as there are no medical tests.

Support strategies- In a video by Play2Talk Bluesky (2017) a parent discusses her experience of getting support and the importance of early diagnosis. The concerned parent addressed her worries early on and was told if she was still seeing no progression by the time her son was 2 to get back in touch, which she did, after doing so she was referred to Bluesky and was then contacted within 2 days’ time. Bluesky made a difference by helping her son learn how to communicate, the parent saw a massive turnaround and could see that her son was happier and progressing nicely. Bluesky (2021) is a specialist Autism Therapy company available across the UK and Europe to young children aged from 6 months old who are experiencing developmental delays. They focus on getting autistic children the early intervention needed to help support their development.

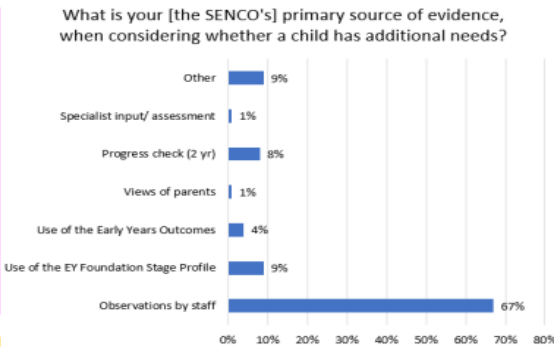
The Three Functional Levels of Autism

ASD Level 1 Requiring Support	ASD Level 2 Requiring Substantial Support	ASD Level 3 Requiring Very Substantial Support
		
difficulty initiating social interactions	social interactions limited to narrow special interests	severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills
organization and planning problems can hamper independence	frequent restricted/ repetitive behaviors	great distress/difficulty changing actions or focus

very well health: Rudy, (2021) {image}
[Understanding the Three Levels of Autism \(verywellhealth.com\)](https://www.verywellhealth.com/understanding-the-three-levels-of-autism/)

Barrier 1- The environment can be a barrier for autistic children, according to the Equality Act 2010 (section 6) which protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination and disadvantages a ‘Mental impairments’ includes autism. And no child with Autism should suffer from missed opportunities and advantages because they have a disability. The National Autistic Society (2020) states that schools must not discriminate against a disabled pupil in relation to: admissions, education, exclusion, disadvantage, opportunity, or choice. And should consider their limitations with school activities, such as extra-curricular and leisure activities, afterschool and homework clubs, sports activities, and school trips. Reasonable adjustments should be made to accommodate those who have a disability.

Barrier 2 - In a video, by Channel 4 News (2017) they look Inside the UK’s only school for autistic girls and how girls are diagnosed with autism less than boys and if diagnosed, tend to be diagnosed at a later stage. Children have negative thoughts and breakdowns as they struggle to see why people do not understand them. Being diagnosed later means they get less help and struggle more. Young girls struggle to get a diagnosis. The national autistic society agree with their studies showing that the ratio of males to females with autism range from 2:1 to 16:1 with the most up-to-date estimate being 3:1. In Leo Kanner’s 1943 study of a small group of autistic children, there were four times as many boys as girls. The most common reason behind it being female characteristics, females can easily camouflage their traits, making it hard to diagnose.



Nasen: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS COORDINATORS. (2020) {image}
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