

**Hounslow Local Authority Guidance
Ordinarily Available Provision**

**Social Communication and Autism Spectrum
Conditions**

September 2021

What does this guidance document do? This guidance document describes the [provision](#) for Social Communication and Autism Spectrum conditions that should be [ordinarily available](#) in education settings in Hounslow.

What does this description of ordinarily or normally available educational provision for SEN provide? This guidance aims to provide consistency and a common set of expectations about what provision for [Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Conditions](#) should be made for the majority of children and young people with SEN, within the structure of core & delegated funding (notional budgets) in state schools, academies & free schools.

Who should read this document? Schools and education settings should read this in the context of their responsibility to operate a [graduated response](#) to assessing, planning for, reviewing and providing for the majority of pupil and student needs in their settings. The education setting should always consider their graduated response to meeting additional needs and show clear evidence of interventions over time.

How will this document help?

This guidance will help schools and Local Authority officers to be clear about the expectations for provision at Universal and SEN Support. This document will help guide schools & education settings on implementing the graduated approach. This is not a tick list and must be read in the context of the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

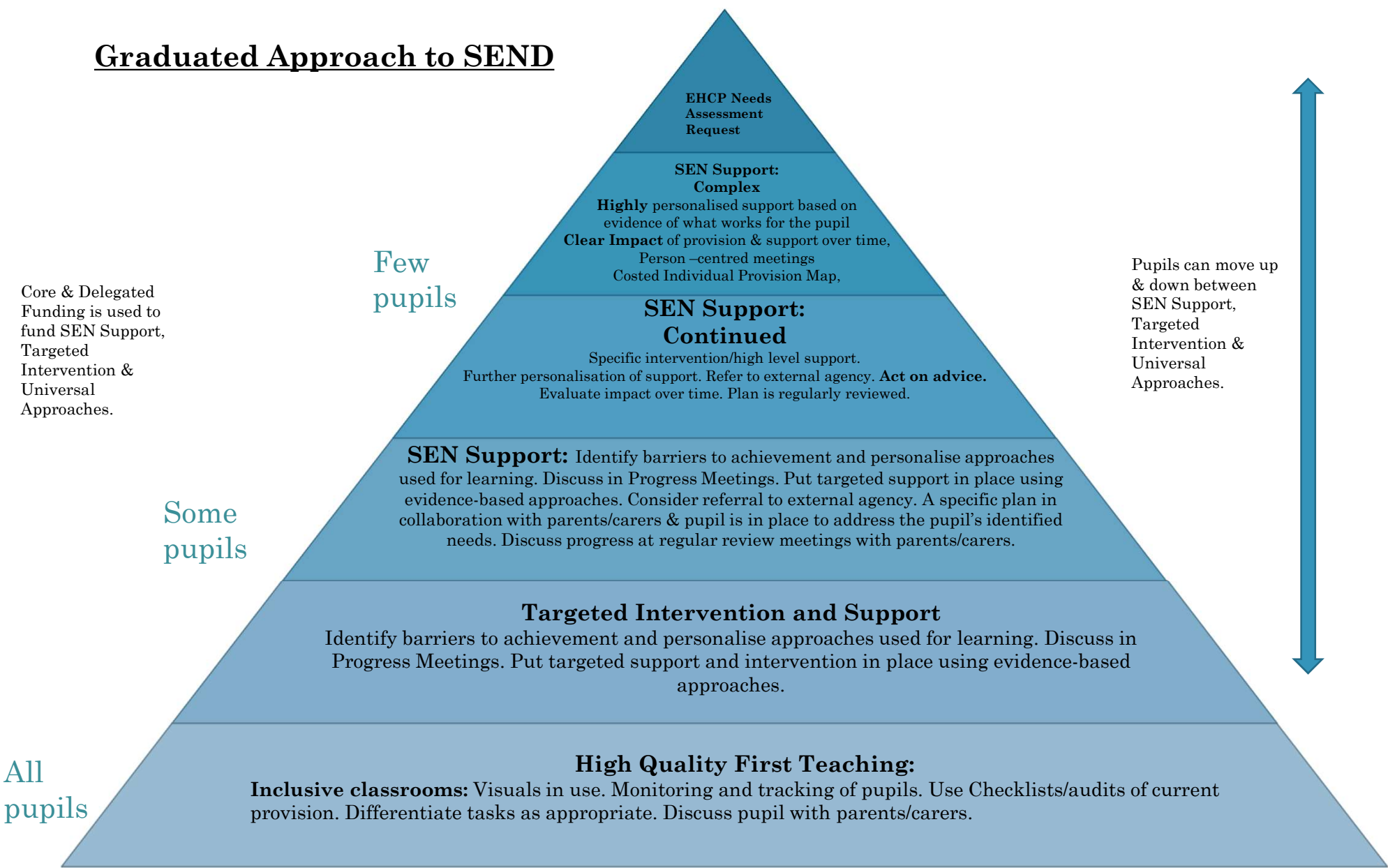
Social Communication & Autism Spectrum Conditions



The SEND Code of Practice 2015, Para 6.29 states :

Children and young people with ASC, including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, are likely to have particular difficulties with social interaction. They may also experience difficulties with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

Graduated Approach to SEND



Expectations for all settings in Hounslow

The following is expected within all educational settings to be provided as standard inclusive practice. This should be a universal offer for supporting children and young people with SEND to access their education.

All children including those with SEND:

- Should have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the individual needs of children to ensure they learn and develop well.
- Should be offered different (differentiated) opportunities or alternative approaches to learning to meet a range of learning needs.
- Should be offered an individualised approach to learning by practitioners identifying and meeting individual needs.
- Should have resources available to meet the ages and stages of their individual development.
- Should have appropriate plans in place as part of any identified SEN Support coordinated with support from the SENCO.
- Should be monitored to regularly review the effectiveness of the support and the monitoring of the child's' progress.
- Should have access to high quality teaching (HQT).

All education settings will:

- Have clear arrangements in place to support children with SEND.
- Offer a graduated approach in accordance with the SEND code of practice 0-25 (April 2015) - assess, plan, do & review.
- Have a named setting SENCO in line with the SEND code of practice 0-25 (April 2015)
- Ensure all staff have access to training which will upskill practitioners to be confident in managing a range of learning needs.
- Be aware of the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments for children covered under the protected characteristics.
- Have a clear policy to enhance positive behaviour within the setting and ensure that it is applied consistently by all practitioners.
- Have support plans in place for those children identified with SEND which are monitored and evaluated regularly.
- Have and maintain a culture of high expectations for all children including children with SEND.
- Have good and effective working partnerships with parents, offering clear and transparent information.
- Have arrangements in place to work collaboratively with other professionals i.e. health, social care, etc., to ensure children benefit from an integrated approach.

Ordinarily Available Provision Expected at: Universal Provision:

High Quality Teaching:

Hounslow Local Authority expects all settings to provide high quality teaching as part of their Core Offer:

The needs of children and young people at Universal Provision level are supported by their class teacher in a primary school, and by form tutors & subject teachers in secondary school. Whole school approaches for Social Communication and Sensory friendly classrooms will support individual teachers to make reasonable adjustments for the pupils they are responsible for.

At this level, individual teachers and classroom staff are responsible for carrying out, for example, audits of their classroom as well as enabling the necessary adjustments to support the child to be included and successful in school. Advice and guidance can be provided from your school SENCO.

Communication & Interaction – Social Communication and Autism

SEND Support:

When considering children and young people in need of SEN support schools are expected to operate a Graduated Response resulting from careful identification, assessment, planning and reviewing. It is expected that this approach will provide for most learners needs in their settings. It will include the use of evidence-based interventions and proven strategies to promote positive development over time.

SEND Support :

Children and young people at SEN Support have needs that are not being met by Universal Level, High Quality Teaching. They will need a more bespoke plan focussing on specific support areas.

This is co-ordinated by the school SENCo: class and subject teachers have responsibility for implementing the plan. This may be through classroom and other approaches (e.g. at break times) and may be supported through intervention groups.

Ordinarily Available Provision- Social Communication & Autism Spectrum Conditions

Description of Need: There are several key areas in which children and young people with Autism can experience differences including:

Social Communication differences in understanding and using communication and language, e.g. listening to and understanding instructions, processing verbal information, expressing themselves, making choices, taking part in conversations, understanding and use of tone of voice, facial expression, gestures and body language.

Social Understanding and Interaction differences in understanding typical social behaviour, understanding the impact of their own actions and interpreting the feelings of others, playing with others in social or group situations and forming friendships.

Differences in social imagination, information processing and interests can lead to a strict adherence to routines and rules and/or difficulties in following a sequence within a task or dividing their attention. Children and young people on the autism spectrum have difficulties in predicting what will happen when a familiar timetable or activity is changed. Conversely, such styles of processing can lead to strengths and abilities in a number of areas (often related to factual memory or areas of interest and motivation) .

Sensory processing differences in the way sensory information is processed i.e. touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, vestibular (inner ear) proprioception (understanding where your body is in relation to other objects) can lead to over-sensitivities or under-sensitivities. These can be internal, such as pain, body awareness and hunger or external such as lighting, smells or sounds. It should be noted that sensory sensitivities can lead to extreme levels of stress and anxiety in unfamiliar or over-stimulating environments.

Emotional regulation differences in the ability to regulate emotional arousal in order to achieve a goal (e.g. to be in a calm, alert state for learning) . This includes recognising, expressing and managing one' s own emotions alongside recognising the emotions of others and adapting responses accordingly.

Ordinarily Available Provision in Schools: Social Communication & Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

Identified Need	Assessment	High Quality Teaching Expectations	Targeted & SEN Support
<p>Concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties maintaining attention • Listening to and understanding instructions, processing verbal information,. • Difficulties maintaining conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is collected from parents/carers, previous settings and other agencies to inform understanding of the pupil's needs. • Staff use pupil voice to gain insight: talk to the child/young person about what they would like support with/how they would like to be supported in an age/stage appropriate way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning addresses social and emotional needs as well as academic subjects. The school are aware how to collect data relating to social understanding and monitor progress. • Group work is facilitated where necessary. Reasonable adjustments should be in place for paired and group work, for example defining group roles.(see: https://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/28.2-Group-roles.pdf for an example) • Opportunities to access a quiet area within the classroom: structure may need to be increased and distractions decreased. • Reasonable adjustments to school uniform should be considered. • Settings demonstrate flexibility, making adjustments to activities lessons and timetables where possible to meet the needs of pupils with autism. Consideration should be made when lining up and moving around school of possible difficulties in particular in secondary schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual visual timetable • Scheduled movement breaks • PECS • TEACCH • Structured Tasks • Attention Autism • Intensive Interaction • Makaton • SCERTS Approach • Personalised visuals (e.g. photos, objects, pictures, symbols) used to support understanding.

Ordinarily Available Provision in Schools: Social Communication & Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

Identified Need	Assessment	High Quality Teaching Expectations	Targeted & SEN Support
<p>Concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed interests • Inability to pick up on social cues • Difficulties understanding different points of view or perspectives • Difficulties navigating social situations or resolving peer disagreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use discreet in class observations in a range of curricular subjects, during whole school activities, (e.g. assembly) during unstructured time (e.g. outside area/playground and dining hall), to highlight areas of need. • Staff should explore challenging behaviour using ABC/STAR or the “Iceberg” approach to try to understand the reasons why the behaviour may occur. (e.g. https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2017/11/20/intervention-1/) Sensory needs are considered when analysing behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The setting has activities that are well organised, structured and planned for. Work is well differentiated and personalised to individual needs. Teachers use the pupils’ interests to motivate and engage them. • Staff are aware that pupils may need additional time to process instructions and information. • Staff adjust the complexity of language to suit the individual pupil. • The classroom is sensory friendly with, for example, simple adaptations to seating for those who need it. Simple examples can be found on https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childschool/instructional-strategies/at-a-glance-classroom-accommodations-for-sensoryprocessing-issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to sensory equipment such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • headphones, • peanut balls, • water bottles/straws to suck. • Wedge cushions. • Bubbles, • Lava lamps. • Sensory boxes • Sensory circuits/diet programme

Ordinarily Available Provision in Schools: Social Communication & Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

Identified Need	Assessment	High Quality Teaching Expectations	Targeted & SEN Support
<p>Concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties making or sustaining eye-contact • Difficulties understanding idioms, jokes, sarcasm • Sensitivity- for example to touch, noise or textures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A communication friendly environment should be in place to promote communication and interaction skills for all children/young people, including specific consideration and differentiation for children/young people with social communication needs. See materials from the Communication Trust https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/communication-friendly-checklists.aspx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school demonstrates equality of access to activities for pupils with social communication needs, including the extended curriculum and exam concessions where appropriate. • Staff are aware that eye contact may be very difficult for some young people: they respect this and do not force eye contact. • Time is taken to ensure visuals used are meaningful to the pupil. Instructions are chunked and supported with visuals. • The setting provides individualised visual supports to ensure that the sequence of activities during the day is understandable and predictable, i.e: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Visual timetables <input type="checkbox"/> Task checklists <input type="checkbox"/> Timers <input type="checkbox"/> Now and Next boards <input type="checkbox"/> Choice boards <input type="checkbox"/> Key communication symbols on lanyards <input type="checkbox"/> Object cues and objects of reference <input type="checkbox"/> Widgit and symbols in classrooms and around the school.: <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals to support secondary timetables <input type="checkbox"/> Visuals to support homework expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Stories (Carol Gray) • Comic Strip Conversations (Carol Gray) • Lego-based Therapy/Bricks for Autism • Hanen – R.O.C.K • Circle of Friends • Timers • Access to Widgit/symbol software-Communication in Print

Ordinarily Available Provision in Schools: Social Communication & Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC)

Identified Need	Assessment	High Quality Teaching Expectations	Targeted & SEN Support
<p>Concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly chewing or mouthing objects • Overly boisterous towards others • Easily overwhelmed by large groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sensory environmental audit should be undertaken on a regular basis, e.g. https://www.aetraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/37.1-Sensory-audit-tool-for-environments.pdf • Teaching plans should take account of the fact that children/young people may have diagnosed/undiagnosed/unidentified Social Communication difficulties using, for example: National Autistic Society's guidance for schools https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/classroom.aspx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour policies are flexible enough to enable staff to consider the needs of pupils with social communication needs. Responses to behaviours that challenge are proportionate, and meaningful interventions are used rather than “a one size fits all” approach. • Pupils sensory needs are considered when planning class lessons, lunch times, transitions and breaks, and leisure activities. Staff recognise and support pupils' own strategies to regulate their arousal level (e.g.: allowing child to flap, pace, sing, rote count, sort etc if it is helping them to stay regulated). • Alternative activities should be offered and taught at unstructured times- e.g. breaks, lunch times. In addition, the school make use of peer support e.g. playground buddies, peer mediators & peer mentors. • There should be strategies (including visual strategies) in place to lessen anxiety at key times such as transitions, (around school, between classes and phases of education). Pupils (and their families) are warned about upcoming changes in routines supported by visuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to tablets, access to laptops • Calming activities such as sensory activities (e.g. tactile items, chewables, music, soft play) • The Big Book of Blob Feelings • Strategies should be used from: Promoting Emotional Wellbeing in Pupils on the Autism Spectrum, https://www.aetraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/6.5-Emotional-Well-Being-Pack-Y.pdf • Staff recognise emotional needs and provide support for emotional regulation e.g. using The Zones of Regulation or The Incredible 5 Point Scale.

Hounslow Guidance- Ordinarily Available Provision for Social Communication and Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

Training Expectations

- There is a named and experienced/ trained member of staff (lead practitioner/SENCO/ASC champion) with general knowledge about communication and interaction needs and specific information about the individual child or young person.
- There are staff who have participated in Autism Awareness training and who disseminate information throughout the school. They are aware that Autism is a spectrum condition, with each child presenting differently.
- Training about social communication awareness & ASC at different levels is provided in-house or accessed through external agencies for all teaching and support staff (including office staff, facilities staff and lunch-time supervisors).
- Supply staff and new staff are informed about the needs of pupils with communication and ASC needs through an induction programme ensuring that these staff know where to access support.
- There are staff in school trained on specialist approaches and evidenced based interventions to support specialist needs such as: PECS, Attention Autism, Structured Teaching, Makaton, Intensive Interaction, Zones of Regulation.
- Staff are aware of the vulnerability of pupils with social communication needs to bullying including cyber bullying. Staff know how to recognise, record and report bullying. <https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/bullying.aspx>
- Staff should be aware that other factors may have an influence on children/young people's presentation e.g. family, cultural or community factors and medical needs. This includes conditions such as ADHD, Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (dyspraxia), mental health needs (e.g. anxiety, phobias) speech and language needs, general or specific learning difficulties etc. which may exist alongside social communication needs.
- Staff understand that listening behaviour may look different in a child with autism. Staff and children work together to identify their listening profile (see <https://www.awekids.com.au/products/my-way-of-listening-autism-neurodivergent-disabled>)

- Staff should have a strong understanding of how to support pupils with social communication difficulties. They are aware of how ASC can present differently in boys and girls.
- Staff have an awareness of how to support pupils displaying demand avoidant behaviours.
- Staff should have a strong understanding of how to support CYP with sensory processing issues.
- Staff are trained to be aware of the vulnerability of pupils with social communication needs to stress and anxiety. Approaches and interventions are used with confidence to reduce stress and anxiety such as an adult meeting a pupil at the start of the school day or mapping anxiety triggers within a school timetable with a pupil.
- Staff prioritise de-escalation and positive strategies to prevent the need for physical intervention. Reference should be made to Hounslow LA guidance on **Ordinarily Available Provision for Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs**, with an emphasis on analysing behaviour for its communicative function.
- Staff are trained to pre-empt what pupils with social communication needs may require:
 - Places of safety/withdrawal are identified and available for pupils with social communication needs.
 - Behaviour triggers are mapped, planned for and staff are full aware of how to support pupils and reduce behaviours that challenge.
- Teaching plans should take account of the fact that children/young people may have diagnosed/undiagnosed/unidentified Social Communication difficulties using, for example: National Autistic Society's guidance for schools <https://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/teachers/classroom.aspx>

Questions to Consider:

Have the learner's needs been considered to ensure that assessments are appropriate, accurate and informative?

Is the pupil's work in class personalised to his/her needs?

Have you audited your environment? What stimulus is there that may distress a learner with social communication needs or Autism Spectrum conditions?

How can you ensure the setting's cycle of support (assess, plan, do, review) continues while specialist advice is sought?

How is work/progress in interventions generalised so the child can transfer skills gained to classwork?

How are subject teachers/cover teachers made aware of a pupil's social and communication needs?

Glossary and Links

Name	Links
PECS	https://pecs-unitedkingdom.com/pecs/
TEACCH	https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/strategies-and-interventions/strategies-and-interventions/teach
Attention Autism	https://ginadavies.co.uk/parents-services/professional-shop/
Intensive Interaction	https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/
Makaton	https://www.makaton.org/
SCERTS Approach	https://scerts.com/
Sensory circuits/diet programme	https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/docs/default-source/leaflets---sensory-strategy-leaflets---april-2015/0218---sensory-circuits---info-for-teachers---april-2018.pdf?sfvrsn=8
Social Stories & Comic Strip Conversations (Carol Gray)	https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/social-story-sampler/ https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations
Lego-based Therapy/	https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/professional-practice/lego-pilot
Bricks for Autism	https://playincluded.com/training
Hanen – R.O.C.K	http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/R-O-C-K--in-People-Games--For-Children-with-ASD-or.aspx
Circle of Friends	https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/WCFEducationServices/info/39/autism-complex-communication-needs-ccn-resources/104/circle-friends
Widgit/symbol software-Communication in Print	https://www.widgit.com/products/inprint/index.htm
The Zones of Regulation	https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html