

# PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK

2019 EDITION



SUPPORTED BY:



DEVELOPED BY:



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## Introduction

In 2015 the Autism Education Trust (AET), with funding from the Department of Education, commissioned a research and development project with the aim of developing a Progression Framework specific to the needs of young people on the autism spectrum. The project involved a [literature review](#) and a wide-ranging consultation with education practitioners, parents, pupils and adults on the autism spectrum. The findings of the research were used to develop a Progression Framework that was made available to schools via the AET website. It was supported by a training module delivered via AET partners across England.

An [evaluation of the Progression Framework](#) and its use was carried out in 2017/18.

The findings of the evaluation were used to inform this revised Progression Framework (2019 version) and its accompanying resources.

**"I think the framework is a really good way to show parents how their children are making progress in school. It's very visual, easy to understand and allows us to pinpoint areas where we feel the child needs to develop particular skills"**

**Survey respondent, 2017/8 Review**



## Who is the 2019 AET Progression Framework for?

The Progression Framework has been designed to be accessible to practitioners in a range of education settings working with children and young people across the autism spectrum, some of whom may have additional learning needs or disabilities. The 2019 version of the Framework has been revised to include children and young people from Early Years and post 16 settings as well as schools.

**Relevant to:** Schools, Early Years, Post 16



## Why do we need a Progression Framework for young people on the autism spectrum?

[Feedback from the consultation](#) which informed the 2016 AET Progression Framework indicated **“a lack of suitable tools to measure progress in areas considered important to learners with autism”** and the development of such a tool was welcomed. Previous research commissioned by the AET had identified the need for schools to look beyond National Curriculum level descriptors and collect data in areas of priority when considering educational provision and outcomes for people on the autism spectrum (eg social-communication; independent living skills; sensory sensitivities). [Click here to download the AET Outcomes Report.](#)

In addition, recent education reforms and reports (see reference links below) have provided a suitable context for education settings to review their systems of assessment to ensure they meet the needs of children and young people, are closely linked to planning and teaching and take into account the views of learners and their parents.

- **2015 SEND Code of Practice**

The SEND Code of Practice places a focus on the wider long-term outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs such as employment, independent living, community participation and health. It stresses the importance of involving both parents and the young person in agreeing outcomes, and of striking a balance between what is 'important to' and 'important for' the young person. [Read more.](#)

- **Preparing for Adulthood programme**

This programme provides support to local authorities to ensure that young people with SEND achieve the long-term outcomes identified in the Code of Practice. The emphasis is on working towards these outcomes from the earliest years. [Read more.](#)

- **Commission on Assessment without Levels (2015)**

In response to the introduction of a new National Curriculum in 2014 and changes to its assessment ('Life after Levels') the Commission for Assessment without Levels produced a report to offer guidance and support to help schools review their assessment policies. [Read more.](#)  
For pupils with SEND, the wider long-term outcomes cited above are again a key focus:

**"Schools should consider meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress including communication, social skills, physical development and independence. Assessment should reflect the extent to which a pupil can apply their learning in a wider range of contexts and enable teachers to determine what they need to do to ensure that the intervention and support provided enable children to progress in all areas of their learning and development."**

- **The Rochford Review (2016)**

Although its focus was on statutory assessment at the end of key stages 1 and 2, the Rochford Review made a number of recommendations relating to assessment for pupils with SEND. These recommendations included the need to ensure that assessment be tailored to the child or young person's individual needs and unique profile and that it should be aligned to a curriculum appropriate to needs. There was also an acknowledgement that, for young people not engaged in subject-specific learning, an alternative, non-linear approach to assessment was needed that emphasised the importance of engagement as essential to learning.

[Rochford Review: final report](#)

[Primary school pupil assessment: Rochford Review recommendations Government consultation response](#)

- **2017 All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA) report on Autism and Education in England**

This report included within its recommendations that schools should measure the progress of all pupils on the autism spectrum across the four areas of need set out in the SEND Code of Practice and record where young people go after they leave school to help assure themselves that they are equipping pupils on the autism spectrum as effectively as possible for adult life. [Find out more.](#)

- **OFSTED Framework 2019**

The 2019 OFSTED Framework proposes a new 'quality of education' judgement which promotes a closer relationship between the curriculum - how it is designed, taught and assessed (intent and implementation)- and the impact this has on the outcomes that learners achieve in order to prepare them for life beyond school. [Read more.](#)

## What is the AET Progression Framework?

The AET Progression Framework is designed to support staff in identifying learning priorities and measuring progress in areas which relate closely to autism 'differences' as identified within other AET materials and the impact of these differences on the young person's social, emotional, independence and learning needs.

**The main areas of learning in the 2019 Progression Framework are:**



The content of the Progression Framework aims to address skills and understanding that children and young people may find difficult as a consequence of their autism but also strives to recognise and build on strengths and interests and to improve overall well-being. Most importantly, it aims to alert the practitioner to the fact that children and young people may need support in these areas and that their progress is dependent on this support. Where possible, the content of the Framework lays emphasis on supporting the child or young person to understand both their own and others' behaviour, what might be expected within certain situations and how this might be of benefit. It encourages practitioners to support the young person's independence through the development of skills such as self-regulation, self-expression and problem-solving.

Each sub-section within the Framework contains some introductory guidance for the practitioner. It is recommended that this is referred to when setting priorities.

## Format

### **The 2019 Progression Framework is available in the following formats:**

- PDF (free download)

This document provides the content of the Progression Framework in a format that can be either viewed online or printed. It can be used as a reference document to support practitioners to identify content for individual learning plans or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. A simple format for recording progress towards learning intentions is included as Appendix 1 or services can use their own templates.

- [EXCEL interactive tool](#) (free download from AET website)

A spreadsheet version of the Progression Framework which brings together learning intentions for an individual and allows progress to be tracked over a three term period. An accompanying guidance document is available or training is available through AET hubs.

- Progression Framework within online progress tracking software.

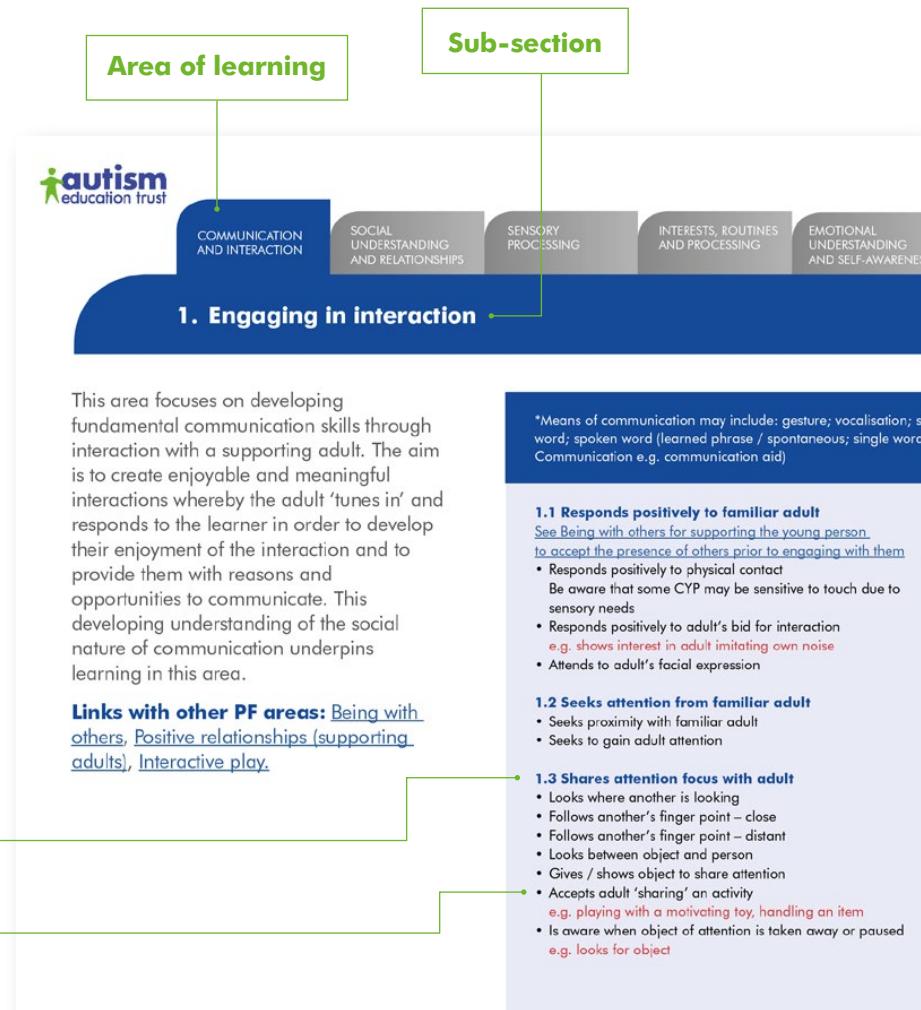
See AET website for links to recommended online progress tracking software for use with the Progression Framework. Additional features include: evidence collection facility, tablet compatibility and progress recording over increased time period.

## Structure

The structure of the Progression Framework has been grouped into a number of 'layers' in order to facilitate navigation of the content:

- **8 areas of learning**  
eg *Communication and interaction*
- Numbered **sub-sections** within each area  
eg *1. Engaging in interaction*
- Numbered **learning outcomes** within each sub-section  
eg *1.3 Shares attention focus with adult*
- Examples of **learning intentions** related to learning outcomes  
eg *Accepts adult 'sharing' an activity*

**Notes and examples** (highlighted in red) are included alongside learning intentions in order to provide more information for users where appropriate.



## Structure

**As stated elsewhere, children and young people on the autism spectrum are unique and will have individual priorities for learning.**

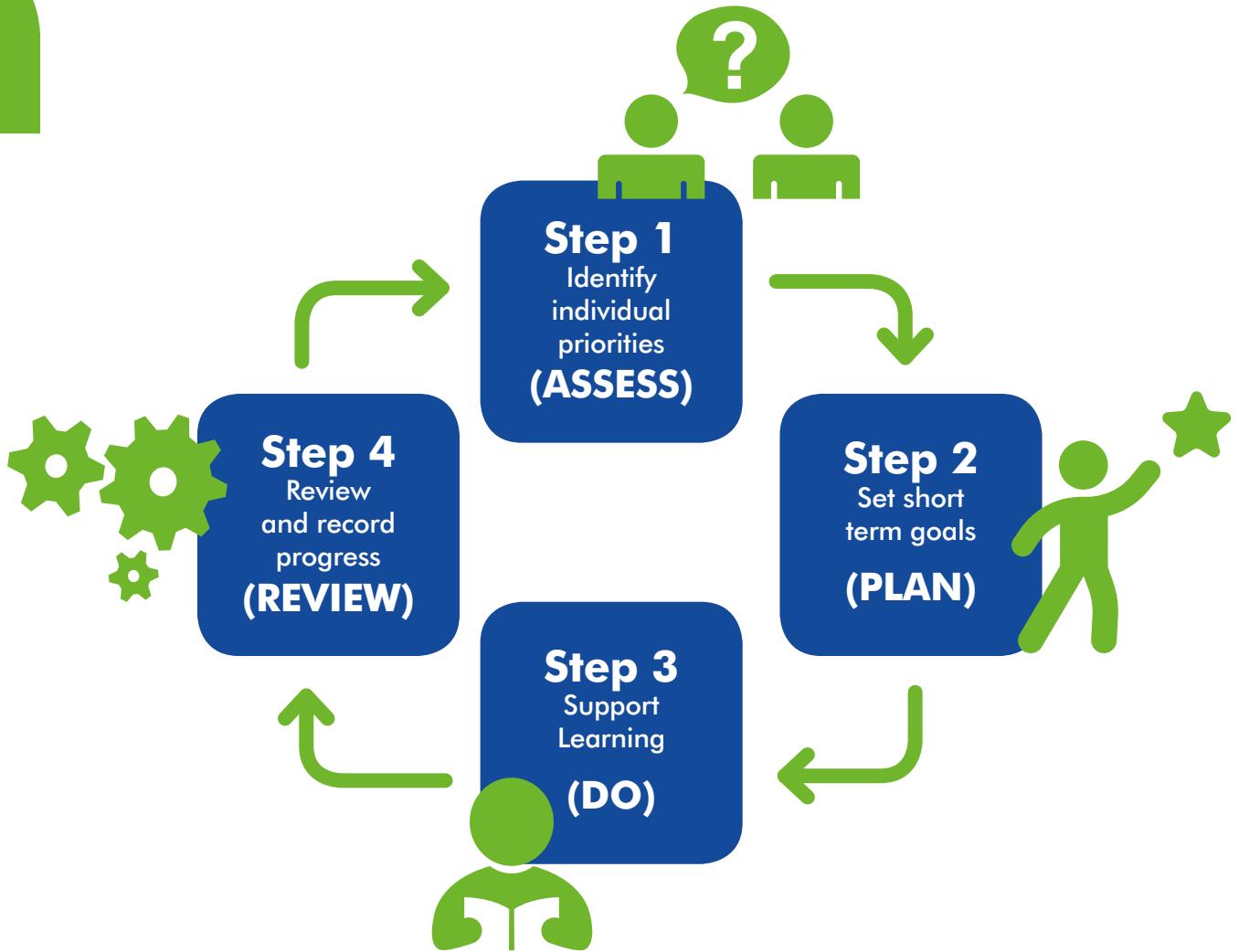
They will also learn at their own rates and in their own ways. The order of sections, learning outcomes and learning intentions within the Progression Framework should not be taken as hierarchical (although in some areas some degree of progression will be apparent), nor should all the steps be taken as necessary for all children or young people. They should not be used as checklists.



## How do I use the AET Progression Framework?

The Progression Framework provides an extensive 'bank' of learning intentions based on an understanding of autism and the challenges that young people may face within education settings. It is by no means exhaustive and practitioners are encouraged to tailor learning intentions according to each individual's needs. It can be used in any of the formats described above.

The following key steps and associated resources will assist practitioners in using the Progression Framework effectively:



[Download 'How do I use the AET Progression Framework?' summary](#)

## Step 1

### Identify individual priorities

**What are the most important learning priorities for the child or young person at this point in time? What will make a difference?**

Children and young people on the autism spectrum have a range of educational needs and attend many different types of educational establishment. They may have uneven or 'spiky' profiles with varying abilities across areas. Throughout its materials the AET stresses the uniqueness of each learner with autism and one of the aims of the Framework is to provide a starting point for identifying **INDIVIDUAL** priorities based on an assessment of need.

**It is very important that the Framework is NOT seen as a checklist of skills to be worked through.**

When identifying priorities it can be helpful to consider the following areas:

- **Focus on outcomes**

What outcomes are you aiming for? Short term? Long term? Would the young person agree with these? How do you listen to their views? What are their aspirations? Is there a balance between what might be 'important to' and 'important for' the child or young person? What steps are required to reach these outcomes? If the young person has an EHCP what are the outcomes that have been identified?

- **Consider strengths and interests**

What are the young person's strengths/skills? What are their interests? How can you build on these or use them to help support learning?

- **Identify barriers to learning**

What are the main barriers or difficulties affecting learning? Is appropriate support in place to reduce these barriers (eg visual supports; environmental changes; structure and routine)? What further supports could be put in place to reduce barriers?

- **Consult with others**

**(including parents and the child/young person where possible)**

Have you included the child or young person in identifying priorities? How can you ensure their views are heard? Have parents been consulted? How will you consult and share information with other staff?

When considering the above it may be helpful to observe and / or interact with the child or young person in a range of contexts, activities and situations so as to assess needs, strengths and areas for development.



## Step 1

### Identify individual priorities

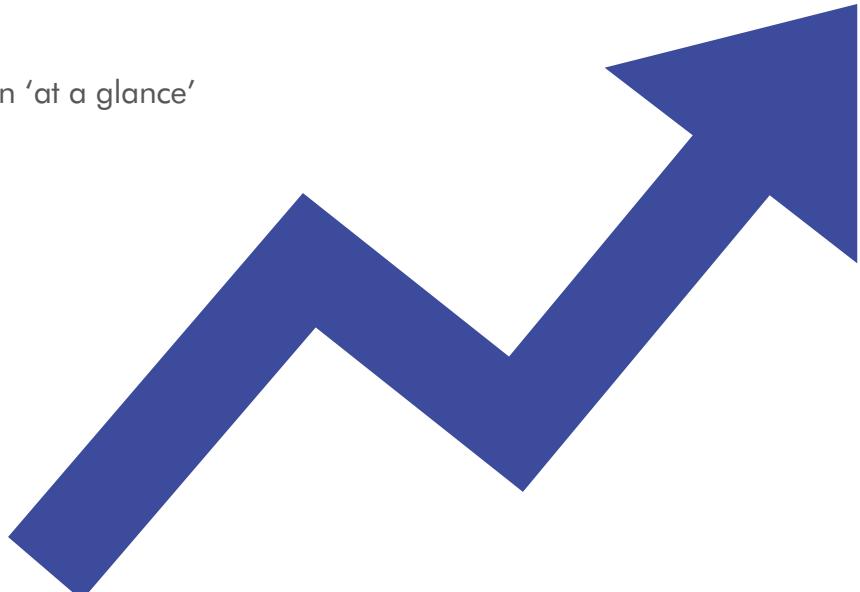
**It may also be helpful to use the following AET resources to support you in preparing to identify priorities:**

#### **Priorities Questionnaire - Download here**

Designed for use with young people (but can also be used by practitioners and with parents). Provides a focus for profiling the young person and a list of priority areas linked to the main Progression Framework. The colour coded areas link directly to the Progression Framework overview page (see below) which can then be used to identify more detailed areas of focus.

#### **Progression Framework overview**

An overview of all the main learning outcomes in the Progression Framework. Provides an 'at a glance' view to allow users to identify areas of focus.



## Step 2

### Set short term goals (learning intentions)

Having identified the main areas of priority for the individual child or young person the next step is to set a small number of short term goals or learning intentions. The Progression Framework provides a detailed bank of examples relating to each of the main learning outcomes. The aim of these examples is to assist practitioners in drawing up learning intentions that are appropriate to an individual. Where appropriate, practitioners may wish to draw on these examples directly or they may wish to write their own learning intentions (using the examples as support). The EXCEL and online formats also support this process.

Once a learning intention has been set it is important to record the baseline 'level' using the Progress Scale provided or the setting's own measure (see Step 4 below).

For example:

- **Area of learning:**

Social Understanding and relationships

- **Sub-section:**

4. Positive relationships and friendships (peers)

- **Learning outcome:**

4.2 Engages positively in interaction with peer/s

- **Learning intention:**

- Shares leisure activity with a peer (Progression Framework wording) or
  - Callum will share the class Lego bricks with another classmate during 'choose' time session (personalised wording) or
    - I can share the Lego with Kyle during 'choose' time (personalised wording)



Note: The learning intention examples relating to each learning outcome are not prescriptive, exhaustive or intended to be used in isolation. It may be appropriate to identify a number of learning intention components for a learner to work on simultaneously or in close succession so that learning does not become fragmented and outcomes are achieved in full.

## Step 2

### Set short term goals (learning intentions)

#### Number of learning intentions

It is important that the number of learning intentions set for each assessment period is kept manageable and realistic with an emphasis on the quality of provision planned in order to support young people to make progress.

#### Timescales

It is for settings to decide how often they set and review learning intentions.

The Progression Framework allows for flexibility in the amount of time required for learning intentions to be achieved and to which point on the Progress Scale. In some cases, progress in an area may extend over several terms whereas in others a shorter period may be sufficient.



## Step 3

### Support learning

Once learning intentions have been drawn up it is important that planning is in place to support the young person to make progress. Strategies and resources to support this process will need to be specific to the individual.

[The AET provides training and materials that support the development of practitioner knowledge and skills in autism](#). Settings are also encouraged to develop their own systems for sharing good practice and useful resources.

Examples of good practice include: developing positive relationships; using strengths and interests; providing structure and routine; using visual supports; ensuring that activities are purposeful.

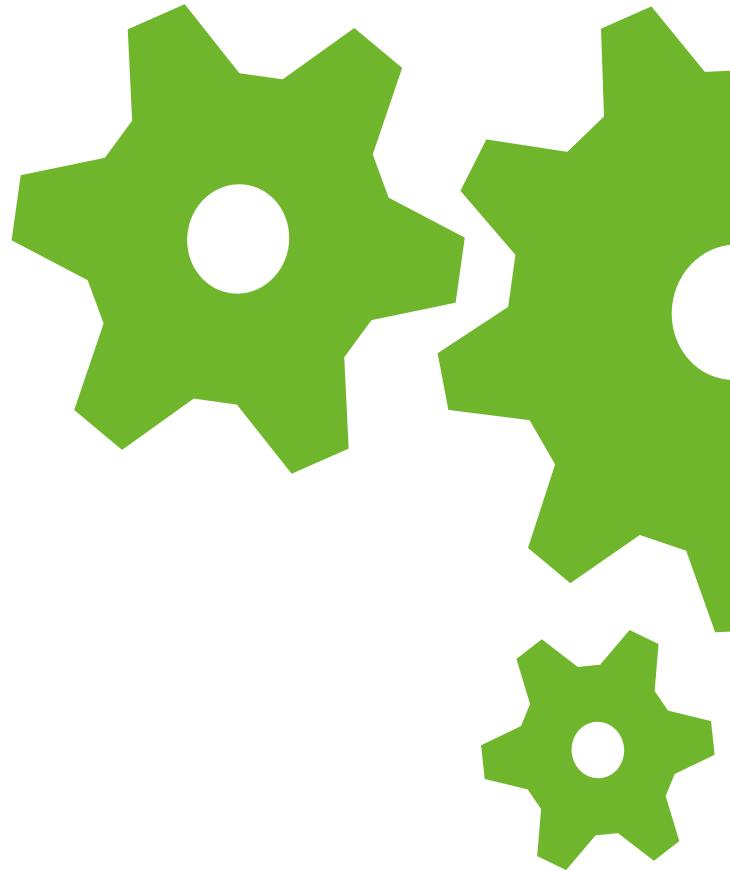
Each section of the Progression Framework includes introductory notes and many of the learning intentions are supported by examples. At the end of each main section reference has been made to relevant AET resources (eg from Tools for Teachers).



## Step 4

### Review and record progress

Progress towards the achievement of learning intentions should be reviewed and recorded at agreed points. A **Progress Scale** has been developed to support practitioners in making judgements about progress (see below and [Appendix 2](#)) and it is good practice for practitioners to discuss and compare judgements within their settings and, where possible, with colleagues in other settings (moderation).



<b>Not yet developed (NYD)</b>	Not present or only beginning to emerge. High level of prompt or support.
<b>Developing (Dev)</b>	Evidence of progress, lower level of prompt or support. Sometimes spontaneous.
<b>Established (Est)</b>	Is used frequently and maintained over time. Mostly independent / spontaneous, only occasional reminders.
<b>Generalised (Gen)</b>	Consistently used and applied within range of settings/contexts and with a range of people. Independent and unprompted.

## Step 4

### Review and record progress

#### Evidence

Essential to the recording of progress is ensuring that **evidence** is available which may be in the form of photos, written statements or examples of work. It is recommended that systems for storing evidence are established and excessive evidence collection should be avoided eg using an online tool. This provides the facility to collect and store evidence which can be 'published' once a final judgement on progress is reached. Evidence collection in this form provides information on progress even if the child or young person has not moved up the progress scale. In this way small steps of progress towards the learning intention can be recorded and celebrated.

#### Training and support

The AET offers a [training module](#) which introduces the main features of the AET Progression Framework and supports staff with the process of identifying priorities and setting learning intentions.



## Mapping

Links to the following related frameworks have been mapped:

[EYFS Areas of Learning](#)

[Preparing for Adulthood outcomes](#)

[Code of Practice areas](#)

[AET schools autism standards](#)

[AET early years autism standards](#)

[AET post 16 autism standards](#)



# AET Progression Framework overview



## Communication and interaction

### 1. Engaging in interaction

- 1.1 Responds positively to familiar adult
- 1.2 Seeks attention from familiar adult
- 1.3 Shares attention focus with adult
- 1.4 Engages in interactive exchange with adult

### 2. Making requests

- 2.1 Makes request for an item
- 2.2 Refuses an item / activity
- 2.3 Makes request for interaction to continue / stop
- 2.4 Requests help
- 2.5 Requests information / asks a question

### 3. Communicating information / commenting on events

- 3.1 Answers a question
- 3.2 Communicates information about the past and future
- 3.3 Expresses opinions / thoughts / feelings
- 3.4 Gives instructions / explanations
- 3.5 Gives recounts and explanations
- 3.6 Comments/draws attention to item/event

### 4. Listening and understanding

- 4.1 Responds to sounds
- 4.2 Understands single spoken word
- 4.3 Understands simple statement
- 4.4 Understands instructions
- 4.5 Understands questions
- 4.6 Extracts relevant meaning / information
- 4.7 Understands humour and figurative speech
- 4.8 Understands informal speech / slang

### 5. Greetings

- 5.1 Responds to greetings / being addressed
- 5.2 Greets others

### 6. Conversations

- 6.1 Gains another's attention
- 6.2 Takes lead in conversation
- 6.3 Responds to conversation partner
- 6.4 Maintains flow of conversation

## 7. Non-verbal communication

- 7.1 Adapts communication / behaviour to suit situation
- 7.2 Shows evidence of 'active listening'
- 7.3 Understands non-verbal communication



## Social understanding and relationships

### 1. Being with others

- 1.1 Accepts the presence of others in familiar environment
- 1.2 Engages in shared activity
- 1.3 Copes with proximity of others in public space

### 2. Interactive play

- 2.1 Accepts presence of adult in play environment
- 2.2 Engages in interactive play with an adult
- 2.3 Engages in object play with adult
- 2.4 Engages in play with peers

### 3. Positive relationships (supporting adults)

- 3.1 Engages positively with supporting adult
- 3.2 Accepts help from an adult
- 3.3 Accesses activities / situations with adult support
- 3.4 Seeks advice and support from adult

### 4. Positive relationships and friendships (peers)

- 4.1 Initiates interaction with peer/s
- 4.2 Engages positively in interaction with peer/s
- 4.3 Takes account of others' interests / needs / feelings within interactions
- 4.4 Takes action to sustain positive relationship
- 4.5 Recognises negative or bullying behaviour towards self or others

### 5. Group activities

- 5.1 Attends to focus of group
- 5.2 Participates in group activity
- 5.3 Is aware of self as part of group
- 5.4 Understands and conforms to expectations of working in a group
- 5.5 Participates in group discussion



## Sensory processing

### 1. Understanding and expressing own sensory needs

- 1.1 Expresses sensory likes / dislikes
- 1.2 Understands own sensory needs

### 2. Responding to sensory interventions

- 2.1 Responds to sensory adaptations to the environment
- 2.2 Responds to sensory input from supporting adult
- 2.3 Responds to input using sensory 'equipment'
- 2.4 Responds to regular sensory programmes

### 3. Increasing tolerance of sensory input

- 3.1 Shows increased tolerance of sensory input

### 4. Managing own sensory needs

- 4.1 Accepts support to manage own behaviour in relation to sensory needs
- 4.2 Requests others' help to manage sensory needs
- 4.3 Takes action to manage own sensory needs
- 4.4 Reflects on sensory needs and behaviour



## Interests, routines and processing

### 1. Coping with change

- 1.1 Accepts change within familiar situations
- 1.2 Takes action to cope with change

### 2. Transitions

- 2.1 Makes successful transition in 'everyday' situation
- 2.2 Engages with preparation for transition to new setting

### 3. Special interests

- 3.1 Uses special interests to engage positively in activities / exchanges
- 3.2 Engages with a range of activities unrelated to special interests

### 4. Problem solving and thinking skills

- 4.1 Makes a choice
- 4.2 Uses information available to make an appropriate choice
- 4.3 Sorts items into categories
- 4.4 Uses information to plan and predict
- 4.5 Makes deductions based on information available
- 4.6 Recognises and takes action to solve problems
- 4.7 Reflects on problems encountered and strategies used





## Emotional understanding and self-awareness

### 1. Understanding and expressing own emotions

1.1 Expresses a range of emotions

1.2 Identifies own emotions

1.3 Identifies cause of emotion

### 2. Managing emotions and behaviour

2.1 Responds to calming strategies of others

2.2 Uses own strategies to manage stress

2.3 Takes part in planning and preparing strategies to manage own emotions and behaviour

2.4 Uses taught strategies to manage emotions and behaviour

2.5 Reflects on behaviour

### 3. Understanding others' emotions/intentions

3.1 Recognises and responds to emotions in others

3.2 Identifies cause of emotions in others

3.3 Makes judgements relating to other's behaviour

3.4 Identifies potential or actual risk within situations

3.5 Is aware of difficulties with 'reading' others emotions/intentions

### 4. Self-awareness

4.1 Identifies own characteristics

4.2 Identifies interests and strengths

4.3 Understands own diagnosis

4.4 Identifies difficulties

4.5 Is aware of change in relation to self

4.6 Participates in planning for own future

### 5. Developing confidence and self-esteem

5.1 Expresses preferences

5.2 Expresses opinions / ideas

5.3 Shows confidence within activities

5.4 Responds to negative behaviour



## Learning and engagement

### 1. Learning through play

1.1 Explores toys / objects / materials

1.2 Shows understanding of the purpose of toys / play items

1.3 Engages in cause and effect play

1.4 Engages in pretend / symbolic play

1.5 Enacts story routine /play scenario

### 2. Motivation and engagement

2.1 Responds to sensory features of items, activities

2.2 Responds to environment

2.3 Responds to interaction from supporting adult or peer

2.4 Anticipates / predicts what will happen

2.5 Shows interest in items/activity/topic

2.6 Explores /investigates items, activities

2.7 Discovers new knowledge and understanding

2.8 Attends to task, activity

2.9 Persists with activity

2.10 Shifts attention to another task /activity / request

2.11 Initiates / makes request for activity

2.12 Engages in negotiated tasks

### 3. Organisation and independent learning

3.1 Organises own belongings / resources

3.2 Makes effective use of timetables / planners

3.3 Shows awareness of time management

3.4 Works independently

3.5 Participates in planning own learning

3.6 Plans work

3.7 Carries out research into a topic

3.8 Asks for help

### 4. Understanding and following rules, routines and expectations

4.1 Finds way around learning environment

4.2 Copes with queueing / lining up

4.3 Attracts attention in an appropriate manner

4.4 Follows agreed strategies for movement within learning area

4.5 Follows playtime/break time routines

4.6 Shows increased tolerance in relation to expectations

### 5. Evaluating own learning

5.1 Evaluates own learning

5.2 Applies understanding of own learning

5.3 Knows and applies own strengths

5.4 Recognises own difficulties

5.5 Sets own learning goals

5.6 Understands the consequences of own choices and actions

5.7 Recognises own achievements



## Healthy living

### 1. Keeping healthy

1.1 Identifies own health needs

1.2 Copes with medical appointments

1.3 Understands benefits and risks of medicines

1.4 Knows how to limit spread of infection (coughs and colds)

1.5 Makes healthy choices in relation to food / drink

1.6 Tolerates an increasing range of foods

1.7 Makes healthy choices in relation to exercise

1.8 Makes healthy choices in relation to sleep

1.9 Understands the health risks associated with smoking and alcohol

1.10 Understands the law in relation to drugs, alcohol and smoking

### 2. Personal care

2.1 Use toilet independently in familiar setting

2.2 Uses public toilet

2.3 Maintains good hand hygiene

2.4 Maintains good bodily hygiene

2.5 Takes interest in own appearance

2.6 Identifies and manages sensory needs in relation to hygiene and clothing

2.7 Dresses self effectively

### 3. Relationships and sex education

3.1 Identifies personal characteristics

3.2 Recognises and accepts differences between people

3.3 Understands and accepts changes that occur at puberty

3.4 Understands personal space

3.5 Distinguishes between 'public' and 'private'

3.6 Understands different types of relationships

3.7 Uses behaviour appropriate to relationship

3.8 Understands laws relating to consent in relationships

3.9 Keeps safe within relationships

3.10 Knows where to seek advice or help



## Independence and community participation

### 1. Independent living

1.1 Manages own time / routines

1.2 Prepares a simple snack

1.3 Makes a drink for self and/or others

1.4 Prepares to make a meal

1.5 Prepares a meal

1.6 Participates in mealtime with others

1.7 Orders a meal

1.8 Prepares to go shopping

1.9 Shops for items

1.10 Pays for items in shop

1.11 Carries out household tasks

1.12 Manages own money

1.13 Uses a phone

1.14 Plans for the future

### 2. Personal safety

2.1 Keeps safe in the home

2.2 Keeps safe at school

2.3 Keeps safe when out in the community

2.4 Knows how to get help in the community

2.5 Keeps safe on-line (e-safety)

### 3. Road safety and travel

3.1 Walks safely by the side of road

3.2 Crosses road safely

3.3 Finds way / follows directions

3.4 Plans a journey / trip out

3.5 Prepares to use public transport

3.6 Uses public transport

3.7 Solves problems that may occur when travelling

### 4. Leisure

4.1 Shows preference for particular leisure activities

4.2 Plans own leisure activity

4.3 Engages in social exchange within leisure activity

4.4 Takes account of others within leisure activities

4.5 Accepts and applies guidance within leisure activities

## The main areas of learning in the 2019 Progression Framework are:



**Communication  
and Interaction**



**Social  
Understanding  
and Relationships**



**Sensory  
processing**



**Interests, routines  
and processing**



**Emotional  
understanding and  
self-awareness**



**Learning and  
engagement**



**Healthy  
living**



**Independence  
and community  
participation**

## 1. Engaging in interaction

This area focuses on developing fundamental communication skills through interaction with a supporting adult. The aim is to create enjoyable and meaningful interactions whereby the adult 'tunes in' and responds to the learner in order to develop their enjoyment of the interaction and to provide them with reasons and opportunities to communicate. This developing understanding of the social nature of communication underpins learning in this area.

**Links with other PF areas:** Being with others, Positive relationships (supporting adults), Interactive play.

### 1.1 Responds positively to familiar adult

See Being with others for supporting the young person to accept the presence of others prior to engaging with them

- Responds positively to physical contact  
*Be aware that some children / young people may be sensitive to touch due to sensory needs*
- Responds positively to adult's bid for interaction  
*e.g. shows interest in adult imitating own noise*
- Attends to adult's facial expression

### 1.2 Seeks attention from familiar adult

- Seeks proximity with familiar adult
- Seeks to gain adult attention

### 1.3 Shares attention focus with adult

- Looks where another is looking
- Follows another's finger point – close
- Follows another's finger point – distant
- Looks between object and person
- Gives / shows object to share attention
- Accepts adult 'sharing' an activity  
*e.g. playing with a motivating toy, handling an item*
- Is aware when object of attention is taken away or paused  
*e.g. looks for object*

### 1.4 Engages in interactive exchange with adult

- Anticipates familiar actions / activities in an exchange
- Takes turns within interactive exchange or play routine
- Demonstrates shared enjoyment within interactive exchange  
*e.g. interactive 'game', play routine, shared humour or 'joke'*
- Indicates they would like to continue / repeat interaction  
*e.g. gestures, signs or vocalises 'more' during pause in activity (see also 2.3)*
- Initiates / requests interaction  
*e.g. by bringing or taking adult to item or place associated with familiar game, making movements associated with familiar interaction*
- Regulates interaction using non-verbal communication  
*e.g. eye contact, facial expression, gesture, body movement, touch, sounds*
- Responds to adult's non-verbal communication  
*e.g. engages with eye contact, smiles back, gives a 'high 5'*
- Imitates adult's actions  
*e.g. during turn taking and copying game*
- Makes connection between their actions and the behaviour of an adult  
*e.g. if I do this, they'll do that*
- Engages in extended interactive exchange or 'game'  
*e.g. 'chase' game*
- Indicates when ready to end interaction  
*e.g. signs 'finish'*

## 2. Making requests

Young people should be provided with means, reasons and opportunities to communicate and to be supported to make their needs, thoughts and feelings known. Some learners may benefit from alternative systems of communication which should be chosen to suit individual needs and levels of development and used consistently across contexts. Children and young people may move from one means of communication to another as their communication develops. They may also progress in relation to systems of communication used e.g. moving from using a symbol strip to a communication book and then to an electronic (AAC) communication aid. The means of communication should be portable and 'make sense' to others e.g. learned phrases that relate to context rather than those based on own interests or echoing another's words. Providing an effective means of communication can lead to increased autonomy and independence for the young person. Practitioners should ensure that responses to communication are immediate and rewarding so that learners make the link between their actions and the responses of others.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Engaging in interaction](#)

\*Means of communication may include: gesture; vocalisation; signing; object of reference; photo; picture; symbol; written word; spoken word (learned phrase / spontaneous; single word, 2 / 3 word, sentence); AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication e.g. communication aid).

### 2.1 Makes request for an item (food, drink, object)

- Requests item by 'taking' adult to object or place or visual representation of item  
*May put adult's hand on the object*
- Looks at item and back at person to make request
- Touches item to make request
- Points at item or its visual representation to make request
- Communicates request using behaviour, gesture, facial expression, vocalisation
- Communicates request using sign or visual system (Photo, picture, symbol)
- Communicates request using learned phrase
- Communicates request using spontaneous speech

### 2.2 Refuses an item / activity / interaction

- Communicates refusal using behaviour, gesture, facial expression, vocalisation
- Communicates refusal using sign or visual system (Photo, picture, symbol)
- Communicates refusal using learned phrase
- Communicates refusal using spontaneous speech

### 2.3 Makes request for interaction to continue or stop\*

*e.g. interactive game or song*

- Communicates for adult to continue or stop interaction using behaviour, gesture, facial expression, vocalisation
- Communicates for adult to continue interaction or stop using sign or visual system (Photo, picture, symbol)
- Communicates for adult to continue or stop interaction using learned phrase

- Communicates for adult to continue interaction using spontaneous speech

### 2.4 Requests help

- Requests help by 'taking' adult to object or place where help is required  
*May put adult's hand on the object*
- Looks at item and back at person to ask for help
- Touches item to ask for help
- Points at item or its visual representation to ask for help
- Communicates request for help using behaviour, gesture, facial expression, vocalisation
- Communicates request for help using sign or visual system (Photo, picture, symbol)
- Communicates request for help using learned phrase
- Communicates request for help using spontaneous speech

### 2.5 Requests information / asks a question

- Asks question to seek information
- Asks question to solve problem
- Uses correct question word
- Uses correct pronoun within question  
*e.g. where's my bag?*

### 3. Communicating information / commenting on events

The ability of children and young people on the autism spectrum will vary widely and range from those who are very articulate to those who may be non-verbal. Ways in which communication can be supported should therefore be made available and matched to needs.\* Some young people may learn communicative responses appropriate to certain situations and use them without fully understanding their meaning and opportunities should be provided to ensure that contexts for communication are meaningful. Young people on the autism spectrum may not be aware that other people do not have the same information as they do and therefore may not understand the need to comment on events or volunteer information (or understand why they are being asked a question). They may also need support to understand that in certain situations it may not be appropriate or polite to express some feelings and thoughts.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Listening and understanding](#), [Developing confidence and self-esteem](#), [Understanding others' emotions / intentions](#).

\*Means of communication may include: gesture; vocalisation; signing; object of reference; photo; picture; symbol; written word; spoken word (learned phrase / spontaneous; single word, 2 / 3 word, sentence); AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication e.g. communication aid)

#### 3.1 Answers a question\*

- Answers familiar question within routine context  
e.g. as part of morning register. Be aware that this may be a learned phrase
- Answers unanticipated question
- Responds appropriately to different question words / phrases

#### 3.2 Communicates information about the past and future\*

- Uses correct tense for past / future
- Recalls information that relates to self
- Recalls information that does not relate directly to self
- Sequences information correctly when giving information
- Talks about planned future events

#### 3.3 Expresses opinions / thoughts / feelings

See also section on Understanding and Expressing own Emotions

- Volunteers information about what they are thinking / feeling  
Encouraging an awareness that others do not know this  
May need support to recognise that it is inappropriate to share some thoughts
- Gives opinions about a topic / event  
e.g. as part of a structured 'debate'
- Gives reasons for opinions  
e.g. Supports opinions with relevant examples or facts
- Accepts that others may agree / disagree with opinions

#### 3.4 Gives instructions / explanations

- Gives instructions / explanations relating to activities / events in context  
e.g. during this activity – we will need.....
- Gives instructions / explanations outside the context of an activity (abstract)  
e.g. before an activity has begun – what would happen if...?
- Understands that other people may not have the same information or understanding about an event  
e.g. where or when a meeting will take place

#### 3.5 Gives recounts and explanations

- Retells an event or explains a piece of information repeating what they have heard
- Retells an event or explains a piece of information using own words and details
- Recalls important / key information when giving account or explanation  
Be aware that perceptions of what is 'important' may differ

#### 3.6 Comments on/draws attention to an item/event

- Comments using learned phrases in relevant contexts
- Comments spontaneously using preferred means of communication
- Comments on item / event and looks back at adult / peer to comment
- Comments on what another has said to extend or maintain conversation / discussion
- Comments on items or events that are not present

## 4. Listening and understanding

Practitioners should ensure that individual levels of understanding are accurately assessed and that children and young people are supported in this area using appropriate strategies. Young people may not respond in conventional ways when listening and processing information and practitioners should be aware that looking away or being engaged in another activity may not indicate a lack of attention. Young people on the autism spectrum may find spoken language difficult to follow and their understanding can be supported by using clear and uncomplicated language and by supporting speech with additional communication strategies such as signing or visual clarification. Learners may interpret language literally or have difficulty understanding the speaker's intended meaning if this is not explicit. They may tend not to seek help either due to not recognising or not wanting to reveal difficulties. Figures of speech such as idioms can also be bewildering and support may be needed to help learners recognise this 'type' of language and how to seek help. Practitioners should also be aware that sensory processing issues may have an impact on the young person's ability to attend to and understand information in certain situations and measures should be taken to ensure that the environment is as conducive to learning as possible. Young people may also need support to pick up on contextual clues to aid their understanding.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Communicating information / commenting on events](#), [Greetings](#), [Non-verbal communication](#), [Conversations](#), [Motivation and Engagement](#).

\*Means of communication may include: gesture; vocalisation; signing; object of reference; photo; picture; symbol; written word; spoken word (learned phrase / spontaneous; single word, 2 / 3 word, sentence); AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication e.g. communication aid)

### 4.1 Responds to sounds

- Recognises and responds to familiar sounds in the environment  
e.g. smiles when hears familiar theme tune
- Responds to unfamiliar sounds.  
e.g. shows interest / looks worried
- Attends to person who is making sounds  
e.g. talking, singing, using objects to make sounds

### 4.2 Understands single spoken word\*

Building up a personal vocabulary of spoken words

- Understands and responds to familiar single words in context

### 4.3 Understands simple statements\*

- Understands and responds to simple statements in context  
e.g. Snack time has finished; First it's work, then it's computer

### 4.4 Understands instructions\*

- Responds to simple instructions within familiar context  
e.g. 'Give me your book', 'sit down'
- Responds to direction to stop / finish what they are doing With prior warning e.g. 2 more minutes / visual support
- Understands instruction with more than one element  
e.g. sit on the blue chair
- Carries out a sequence of instructions  
e.g. go to the office to get the money then meet me at the door

- Responds to instruction to fetch an item from another location on request (and bring it back) e.g. Fetch the water
- Delivers a message as instructed  
e.g. take the register to the office
- Delivers a message in question form and recounts the answer
- Asks for help / clarification when doesn't understand instruction

### 4.5 Understands questions\*

- Understands and responds to simple questions in a familiar context.  
e.g. what's the weather like today? Differentiate between learned and spontaneous response
- Understands and responds to simple 'who, what, where' questions  
e.g. Who's / what's this? Where is the train? Within real context or picture
- Understands and responds to 'why', 'how', 'when' questions
- Understands and responds to questions about past, present and future events
- Indicates 'I don't know' or 'I don't understand the question' if unsure

## 4. Listening and understanding • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** Communicating information / commenting on events, Greetings, Non-verbal communication, Conversations, Motivation and Engagement.

\*Means of communication may include: gesture; vocalisation; signing; object of reference; photo; picture; symbol; written word; spoken word (learned phrase / spontaneous; single word, 2 / 3 word, sentence); AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication e.g. communication aid)

### 4.6 Extracts relevant meaning / information

- Understands overall / main topic being discussed i.e. gets the gist rather than focussing on minor details
- Is able to extract information relevant to purpose from spoken information
- Is able to deduce meaning from information e.g. hears someone say they need to fetch their umbrella so deduces it is raining outside
- Is able to distinguish factual / fictional information (reality / fantasy)

### 4.7 Understands humour and figurative speech

Emphasis may be on recognising that they may need support to understand

- Recognises jokes
- Recognises and understands verbal jokes / puns
- Enjoys jokes

Relevant and appropriate to age and learning level

- Recognises and understands common idioms
- Recognises and understands metaphors
- Recognises and understands irony / sarcasm
- Seeks help to understand figurative speech

e.g. asks what is meant by 'grabbing the bull by the horns'

### 4.8 Understands informal speech / slang

- Understands commonly used expressions appropriate to age e.g. teen slang
- Recognises when slang is being used and seeks advice as needed

e.g. records words to ask a trusted friend or adult about later



## 5. Greetings

Greetings are a social skill and some young people on the autism spectrum may need support to recognise when, how and why greetings should be used. Since this behaviour relates closely to context it is important that teaching takes place in real situations with opportunities to learn that different types of greeting behaviour are appropriate to different social situations.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Listening and understanding](#), [Non-verbal communication](#), [Conversations](#), [Positive relationships and friendships \(peers\)](#), [Understanding others' emotions / intentions](#).

\*Means of communication may include: gesture; signing; object of reference; photo; picture; symbol; written word; spoken word; AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication e.g. communication aid)

### 5.1 Responds to greetings / being addressed\*

- Recognises and responds to familiar voice  
e.g. parent / carer coming to collect
- Responds to greeting from familiar person
- Responds to own name
- Responds to greeting from unfamiliar person
- Responds to group instruction where not named individually  
e.g. 'Everyone put their coats on...'

### 5.2 Greets others\*

- Uses appropriate greeting word for situation  
e.g. 'Hi' to peer, 'Good morning' when register called
- Greets familiar person using name
- Uses appropriate non-verbal greeting  
e.g. wave, nod, smile, eye contact, signing
- Uses physical contact / proximity appropriate to situation  
e.g. hug, handshake (taking into account own preferences)
- Takes lead from another as to appropriate greeting to use  
This might range from clear guidance to subtle cues e.g. responds to peer's 'High 5' or grandad's handshake



## 6. Conversations

Having a conversation requires a number of skills relating to communication and interaction and children and young people on the autism spectrum may need support to understand what might be required to be successful. Difficulties in 'reading' others' intentions and feelings may also make this an area requiring support.

Although the teaching of conversational skills is not straightforward, providing opportunities to practice skills in structured situations with positive support should allow young people to gain confidence, identify where they may need help and know how to access it.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Engaging in interaction](#), [Communicating information / commenting on events](#), [Listening and understanding](#), [Greetings](#), [Non-verbal communication](#), [Positive relationships and friendships \(peers\)](#).

### 6.1 Gains another's attention

- Gains attention before attempting communication  
e.g. through eye contact, positioning
- Gains attention by using name of communicative partner
- Gains attention using appropriate phrase or convention  
e.g. 'Excuse me', raising hand
- Uses greeting to gain attention

### 6.2 Takes lead in conversation

- Checks they have another's attention before talking to them
- Initiates conversation using appropriate conversation 'opener'  
e.g. asking an appropriate question, topic of interest to another
- Asks relevant questions  
e.g. to clarify, maintain or repair conversation
- Ends conversation using conventional strategies  
e.g. gives reason for need to move on, excuses self politely

### 6.3 Responds to conversation partner

- Actively listens to other person in conversation  
See also 'active listening' in Non-verbal communication
- Takes turns within conversation  
e.g. pauses to allow another to speak
- Answers questions to maintain conversation  
e.g. to provide more information or clarify
- Interrupts politely at an appropriate point within conversation
- Monitors listener's response and changes behaviour accordingly within conversation  
e.g. 'reads' body language, posture, facial expression, eye contact, tone as indicators of boredom, disapproval etc
- Adapts information according to listener's knowledge within conversation

### 6.4 Maintains flow of conversation

- Keeps to topic of conversation  
Even if topic is chosen by someone else
- Keeps topic of conversation relevant and appropriate  
e.g. knows what to keep private
- Switches to a different topic within conversation  
But may then return to main topic if appropriate
- Expresses opinions, feelings, thoughts related to topic
- Acknowledges others' feelings, thoughts related to topic

## 7. Non-verbal communication

Young people on the autism spectrum may have difficulties understanding the social conventions and behaviour which form a substantial part of everyday communicative exchanges. Since non-verbal behaviour relates closely to context it is important that teaching in this area takes place in real situations and, where appropriate, provides an explanation as to why certain behaviours are suited to particular situations.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Listening and understanding](#), [Conversations](#), [Positive relationships and friendships \(peers\)](#).

### 7.1 Adapts communication / behaviour to suit situation

- Uses / adapts communicative style appropriate to the situation / relationship  
e.g. differentiates between peer / adult / familiar / unfamiliar
- Uses voice appropriate to the interaction  
e.g. to allow speech to be clearly heard
- Uses gesture to support meaning
- Maintains social distance appropriate to the situation

### 7.2 Shows evidence of 'active listening'

- Looks / turns towards person who is communicating  
Be aware that looking directly at faces can be difficult due to issues with visual processing so eye contact may not be appropriate
- Indicates engagement through facial expression / body language  
e.g. smiles, turns towards 'speaker'
- Indicates interest or agreement using gesture / vocalisation  
e.g. Nods, says 'Hmmm...', 'yes', 'Really?' etc
- Indicates when they do not understand something they have heard  
Be aware that they may be nervous about revealing this
- Makes relevant comments in response to what they have heard  
e.g. in a group discussion

### 7.3 Understands non-verbal communication

- Understands familiar gesture in context  
e.g. outstretched hand, beckoning
- Understands head shaking / nodding
- Understands common social gestures  
e.g. finger to lips indicating 'Quiet'
- Responds to facial expression as part of communication  
e.g. looks worried if adult is frowning, concerned if peer is crying
- Recognises and responds to tone of voice  
e.g. understand difference between a serious and 'jokey' tone



## Resources and links (including AET Tools for teachers)

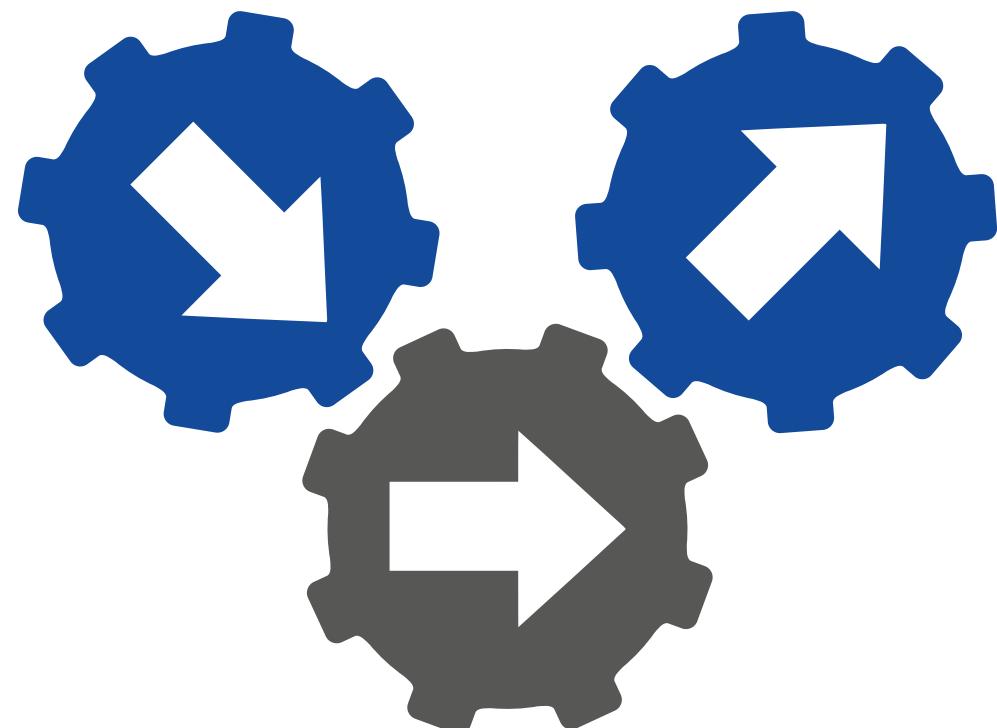
### Tools for teachers

Tool 4 - Conversation Starters

Tool 8 - Communication cards

Tool 13 - Appropriate Voice Level cards

Tool 30 - Guidance for using visual strategies



## 1. Being with others

The focus in this section is on the child or young person's ability to tolerate and accept the presence of others (supporting adults and / or peers) and to work towards a shared interest or enjoyment of activities. The context is likely to be less structured than the 'Group activities' section and should allow for a gradual increase in tolerance and careful consideration of support needed. Contexts will need to be motivating and activities pitched at the correct level of social understanding e.g. interactive play in short bursts. Staff should be sensitive to the fact that 'being with others' may be a source of anxiety for the young person and that significant support and preparation may be required. It should also be acknowledged that some young people may choose and / or benefit from time spent alone and be able to exercise this choice as appropriate.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Engaging in interaction](#), [Interactive play](#), [Positive relationships \(supporting adults / peers\)](#), [Group activities](#), [Motivation and engagement](#).

### 1.1 Accepts the presence of others in familiar environment

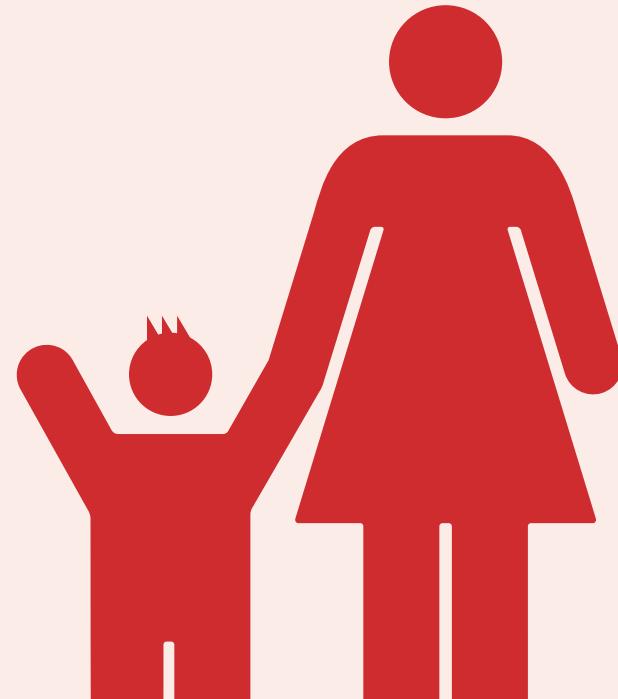
- Shows awareness of the presence of others
- Accepts others in same space / area  
*Specify the location. Tolerance may differ for supporting adults / peers / familiar / unfamiliar*
- Uses resources in same area as others  
*Differentiate between whether resources are their own or shared and whether 'others' are supporting adults / peers*
- Accepts others having access to same resources
- Shows enjoyment of being alongside others (not necessarily engaged in same activity)

### 1.2 Engages in shared activity

- Takes turns with shared resources  
*e.g. Waits, anticipates turn*
- Shows interest in what others are doing
- Maintains interest in same activity as another
- Actively seeks out another to share activity  
*Specify supporting adult or peer*
- Initiates showing others what they are doing / have done

### 1.3 Copes with proximity of others in public space

- Accepts the presence of others in a public space – within learning setting (shared space)  
*e.g. library area, playground, canteen*
- Accepts the presence of others in a public space – community
- Uses agreed strategies to manage potential overload in a public space  
*e.g. listening to music; carrying a familiar object as needed*



## 2. Interactive play

Play has a broad range of benefits in relation to learning and interactive play relates closely to the development of communication ([see also section on Engaging in interaction](#)). Children on the autism spectrum may play differently to other children and may need to be taught how to play interactively. This may involve creating opportunities to engage with the child at their level and finding out what motivates them. Adults should take their lead from the child and ensure that play experiences are enjoyable and fun. For object play and pretend or symbolic play see section on Learning through play.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Engaging in interaction](#), [Being with others](#), [Positive relationships and friendships \(peers\)](#), [Learning through play](#), [Making requests](#), [Special interests](#), [Motivation and engagement](#).

### 2.1 Accepts presence of adult in play environment

[See also Being with others](#)

- Accepts an adult playing alongside them
- Enjoys unstructured play alongside an adult  
e.g. sprinkling sand whilst an adult does the same
- Shows interest in adult's play  
e.g. noise produced by an object or by the adult
- Allows adult to join in with their play

### 2.2 Engages in interactive play with an adult

[See also Engaging in Interaction](#)

- Enjoys interactive play routines with a familiar person  
e.g. chasing, peek-a-boo, rough and tumble
- Anticipates action in play routine  
e.g. tickling games, action songs, ready steady, go...
- Initiates play routine
- Indicates they want play routine to continue  
e.g. by gesture, touch, vocalisation, eye contact

### 2.3 Engages in object play with adult

[See also Engaging in Interaction](#)

- Gives object to adult during play  
e.g. to produce an effect such as blowing more bubbles
- Shows adult an item they are playing with
- Shows an adult what s / he wants  
e.g. points, gestures, uses symbol
- Shares an item with an adult
- Takes turns within play  
e.g. my turn, your turn
- Maintains attention when not their turn within play

### 2.4 Engages in play with peers

[See also Positive relationships and friendships \(peers\)](#)

- Watches peers playing with interest
- Engages in play activities alongside peers
- Engages in play activities interacting with peers  
Amount of interaction time may vary

### 3. Positive Relationships (supporting adults)

This area focuses on developing the child or young person's relationship with the adults who support them. This relationship is often essential in reducing anxiety and providing the support the young person requires in order to be able to access the curriculum and the learning environment. Young people should be encouraged to become as independent as possible in their learning but will benefit from knowing that they can call on help and support if needed.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Engaging in interaction](#), [Conversations](#), [Being with others](#), [Interactive play](#), [Special interests](#), [Managing emotions and behaviour](#), [Organisation and independent learning](#).

#### 3.1 Engages positively with supporting adult

- Responds positively to adult's attempt to engage  
e.g. sharing information on interests in one page profile
- Initiates interaction about interests / experiences with an adult
- Shows interest in activity introduced by an adult
- Responds positively to praise from an adult

#### 3.2 Accepts help from an adult

- Accepts help, support or reassurance from trusted adult when offered
- Communicates need for adult to help or support within an activity
- Responds to adult's suggestion to tackle a task differently  
*Important to understand the individual and ensure sensitive presentation of suggestions*
- Accepts support from trusted adult to regulate behaviour
- Works through possible explanations of situations / behaviour of others with a trusted adult  
e.g. what makes a good friend

#### 3.3 Accesses activities / situations with adult support

- Accesses everyday activities / situations with full support from familiar adult
- Accesses everyday activities / situations with reduced support from familiar adult  
*With awareness that the amount of support required may vary at different times (e.g. if anxious, tired etc)*
- Accesses new activities / situations with full support from familiar adult
- Accesses new activities / situations with reduced support from familiar adult

#### 3.4 Seeks advice and support from adult

- Shares concerns / problems with a trusted adult
- Seeks advice from adult on social behaviour in specific situations
- Shows understanding of outcomes of different behaviour in social situations  
e.g. uses flowcharts to explore alternatives
- Seeks support from adult to regulate behaviour  
*Using strategies that have been discussed with young person and agreed*
- Reflects on situations / behaviour with support from adult

## 4. Positive relationships and friendships (peers)

Social interaction between peers is a complex area for all young people and may present particular challenges for those on the autism spectrum. Young people may experience difficulties in 'reading' others intentions and behaviour and in understanding social contexts within which interactions occur. Strengths and interests may provide opportunities to build relationships with others but support may be required to ensure that experiences are positive. In addition, direct teaching to support understanding of social situations may help some children and young people to develop and practice skills and gain confidence.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Understanding others' emotions / intentions](#), [Developing confidence and self-esteem](#), [Interactive play](#), [Relationships and sex education](#).

### 4.1 Initiates interaction with peer / s

- Joins others already involved in activity / play
- Asks to join others already involved in activity / play
- Uses shared interest as point of contact with a peer
- Uses greeting behaviour with peers appropriate to situation / relationship e.g. [physical contact](#), [social distance](#)
- Invites another to join in an activity
- Greets peer by name

### 4.2 Engages positively in interaction with peer / s

- Responds to peer who initiates interaction  
e.g. [acknowledges peer](#), [accepts toy](#) etc
- Shares leisure activity alongside a peer  
e.g. [a lunch club activity](#)
- Shares leisure activity with a peer  
e.g. [plays a board game](#)
- Shares items or equipment with others
- Accepts help from peer
- Offers help to a peer  
*And waits for response rather than 'taking over'*
- Shares humour / joke with a peer
- Asks permission to look at / handle another's belongings  
*And waits for response before going ahead*
- Compliments a peer spontaneously
- Accepts praise / compliment from a peer
- Recognises what makes a 'good' friend

### 4.3 Takes account of others' interests / needs / feelings within interactions

- Accepts change of conversational topic
- Accommodates others' interests / ideas within a conversation / activity

[See also Conversations section](#)

- Stays engaged with activity / conversation when on another's agenda / topic
- Asks rather than tells when planning what they are going to do e.g. ["shall we play ....?"](#) rather than ["We're playing ...."](#)
- Accepts if peer declines, rejects interaction or terminates the interaction
- Accepts that people may have more than one friend
- Accepts that peers may vary who they play / spend time with e.g. [may play with different people during some break times](#)
- Negotiates change of activity

### 4.4 Takes action to sustain positive relationship

- Recognises when own behaviour has offended or hurt another
- Adapts behaviour according to familiarity of peer
- Adapts behaviour to sustain positive relationship  
e.g. [refrains from a behaviour that upsets another](#); [attempts to compromise](#)
- Apologises / repairs the interaction if own behaviour offends or hurts another
- Seeks help / advice on friendships / relationships
- Recognises when support is required eg understanding 'teen speak'

### 4.5 Recognises negative or bullying behaviour towards self or others

- Knows how to respond when others show hurtful, inappropriate or bullying behaviour  
e.g. [remain calm, tell an adult](#)

[See also section on Understanding emotions / intentions of others](#)

## 5. Group activities

Activities referred to in this section are likely to be structured and adult-led. Planning, recording and evidence should specify the size of the group (eg small group, whole class, assembly etc). Group situations can be a potential source of overload or anxiety for children and young people on the autism spectrum and practitioners need to be alert to signs of stress. For many young people, a balance needs to be struck between group work and providing opportunities for individual or independent work which may be beneficial (or indeed preferable) and allows learners to focus on the subject being taught without the demands and expectations of group learning

**Links with other PF areas:** Being with others, Understanding and following rules, routines and expectations, Communicating information / commenting on events, Listening and understanding.

### 5.1 Attends to focus of group

- Demonstrates interest in activity of group from a distance  
e.g. when seated at work station across the room
- Attends to focus of group activity (adult-led)
- Attends to peer who is focus of structured activity  
e.g. as peer takes turn with object of interest, as peer answers question; does not 'switch off' when not their turn
- Maintains attention within group for specified period
- Shifts attention to relevant focus within group  
e.g. from adult speaking to presentation on white board or to a peer contributing

### 5.2 Participates in group activity

- Joins structured group activity for a short period  
Specify proximity eg at own table. Specify level of adult support. Specify time or particular part of session- gradually increase expectation / decrease support
- Passes / receives object from another within group activity  
Specify whether adult or peer
- Carries out requested action in group  
e.g. in group game or Whiteboard activity
- Takes turn within structured group activity  
eg Waits, anticipates turn, refrains from dominating when not their turn
- Recalls responses of others in group
- Chooses 'partner' for an activity or who should have the next turn

### 5.3 Is aware of self as part of group

- Identifies group / groups they belong to  
e.g. I'm in 4S / Mrs Smith's class / chess club
- Identifies other members of group by name  
e.g. aware that the ability to do this may differ when out of context
- Responds to information or instructions directed to the group

### 5.4 Understands and conforms to expectations of working in a group

- Sits in allocated place within group
- Remains seated within group for specified time
- Accepts not being first, winning, being chosen etc
- Recognises when they have got something wrong and accepts correction  
May need to have strategies to cope with this
- Co-operates within group or 'team' activity  
e.g. takes account of others' ideas / suggestions
- Collaborates with peers to complete a task
- Follows clearly defined group rules  
e.g. putting hand up, joining a line, standing up at the right time
- Asks for help within a group activity  
Specify adult or peer

### 5.5 Participates in group discussion

- Communicates confidently within small group
- Communicates confidently within large group
- Contributes to small group discussion / debate about a given topic
- Presents work to familiar group
- Participates in role play in familiar context

## Resources and links (including AET Tools for teachers)

### Tools for teachers

#### **Being with others**

##### **AET Tools for Teachers 40-44 Supporting sensory sensitivities**

Tool 40 - Observing behaviour to identify sensitivities

Tool 41 - Strategies to address need

Tool 42 - Sensory profile

Tool 43 - Low arousal environments

Tool 44 - Environmental checklist

#### **Interactive Play**

[Autism West Midlands fact sheet on play](#)

#### **Positive relationships and friendships**

##### **(supporting adults / peers), Group activities**

##### **AET Tools for Teachers 4-8 Teaching social and communication skills**

Tool - 4 Friendship circles

Tool - 5 The indices of friendship

Tool - 6 Conversation Starters

Tool - 7 SOCCSS

Tool - 8 Communication cards

##### **AET Tools for Teachers 9-13 Teaching social rules explicitly**

Tool 9- Power cards

Tool 10 - Social Stories

Tool 11- Comic Strip Conversations

Tool 12 - Prompt cards

Tool 13 - Appropriate voice level boards

[Lego therapy article in GAP \(Good Autism Practice\) journal](#)

## 1. Understanding and expressing own sensory needs

It is important that practitioners build up a sensory profile of the young person in order to inform provision. As part of this process learners can be supported to understand and express their preferences and needs in relation to sensory experiences in preparation for being able to manage them independently.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Managing own sensory needs](#), [Communicating information/ commenting on events](#).

### 1.1 Expresses sensory likes / dislikes

- Expresses likes / dislikes of sensory experiences / stimuli encountered by body language, facial expression, movement or vocalisation
- Intentionally communicates likes / dislikes of familiar sensory experiences / stimuli  
e.g. in response to questioning; by showing a 'green or red light' symbol
- Communicates likes / dislikes of new sensory experiences  
e.g. items in a feely bag; sensory room experiences; messy play materials
- Indicates "more" or "again" in relation to a sensory experience
- Indicates "enough" or "finished" in response to a sensory experience
- Selects preferred sensory items from a range presented  
e.g. to use as a fidget toy or stress release object

### 1.2 Understands own sensory needs

- Identifies own sensory needs  
e.g. is able to articulate sensory stimuli they may crave; knows that background noise helps them; know that they prefer strong tastes
- Communicates sensitivity to a feature of the environment  
e.g. shields eyes from light source; puts hands on ears in response to a specific noise
- Expresses feelings in relation to sensory experiences  
e.g. "it makes me feel...." Or using symbols to indicate feelings
- Identifies sensory experiences that cause them anxiety or discomfort
- Identifies sensory experiences that are beneficial to them  
e.g. calming or alerting
- Understands that differences in sensory processing are common in people on the autism spectrum

## 2. Responding to sensory interventions

This area focuses on the child or young person's response to intervention in the area of sensory needs. Interventions should be regularly reviewed and their effectiveness evaluated. Progress recorded in this area can contribute to evaluations and discussions about next steps.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Motivation and engagement](#).

### 2.1 Responds to sensory adaptation to the environment

- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to environmental adaptation being made  
e.g. when buzzing light is switched off; partition to separate work space

### 2.2 Responds to sensory input from supporting adult

- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to physical contact (touch)  
e.g. deep pressure, squeezes
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to adult's voice (sound)  
e.g. singing, 'funny' voices, reassurance
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to movement input from adult (proprioceptive)  
e.g. rocking, chasing, 'Tug of War'

### 2.3 Responds to input using sensory 'equipment'

- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to tactile item  
e.g. stress ball, fidget toy, Blu-Tack
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to auditory (sound) input  
e.g. ear defenders, MP3 player with preferred music
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to olfactory input (smell) e.g. aromatherapy oils
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to visual input e.g. change of lighting
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to gustatory (taste) input  
e.g. a 'chew' or mouth fidget
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to vestibular (movement and balance) input  
e.g. bouncing on trampette, sitting on wobble cushion
- Calms / alerts / regulates behaviour in response to proprioceptive (positioning) input  
e.g. weighted blanket or vest; gym ball

### 2.4 Responds to regular sensory programmes

- Calms / increases alertness in response to movement break
- Calms / increases alertness in response to sensory 'circuit'  
i.e. a planned series of activities designed to promote sensory regulation

### 3. Increasing tolerance of sensory input

This area requires sensitive planning, where possible under specialist guidance, since it relates to differences in sensory processing that may cause the learner to be hyper-sensitive to certain stimuli or input. Such hyper-sensitivities may cause pain, confusion, anxiety or other emotions for children or young people on the autism spectrum and any programmes to increase tolerance must take account of their reactions and respond accordingly. The purpose for increasing tolerance must be clear and in the best interests of the child or young person e.g. to reduce stress caused by sensitivities; to increase their access to experiences or places; to improve their health e.g. through a more varied diet.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Understanding and expressing own sensory needs](#).

#### 3.1 Shows increased tolerance of sensory input

- Shows increased tolerance of specified touch

This will be specific to the individual and will require a carefully planned programme aimed at building up tolerance over time. 'Touch' might include sensitivity to being touched by other people as well as sensitivity to different textures, materials, foods that they have contact with

- Shows increased tolerance of specified sounds / noise

Specific to the individual as above. Sensitivity may be to particular sounds e.g. baby crying, to the amount of noise in a particular environment or to 'background' noise that they find it difficult to filter out

- Shows increased tolerance of specified visual input

Specific to the individual as above. May require professional assessment  
e.g. for coloured lenses

- Shows increased tolerance of specified smells

Specific to the individual as above. It is important to be aware of the impact of certain smells which may need to be avoided  
e.g. asking staff to refrain from wearing perfume

- Shows increased tolerance of specified tastes

Specific to the individual as above. A need for awareness that taste (and texture of food) sensitivities can lead to restricted diet which can be a particular cause of concern for families. Needs to be addressed with great sensitivity and may require consultation with a dietician

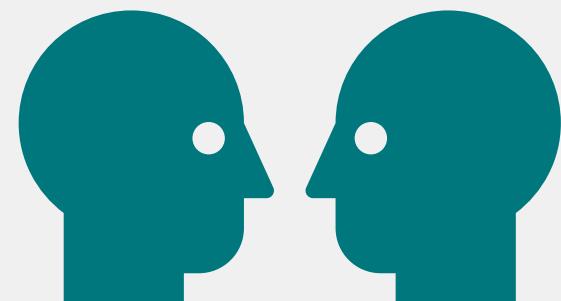
- Shows increased tolerance of movement

Sensitivities within the vestibular system can cause balance and co-ordination difficulties and new movements should be introduced slowly and at the learner's own pace

- Shows increased awareness and control of their own body

Poor proprioception can affect co-ordination, sense of position and ability to control own body movements.

Activities to stimulate this sense can be beneficial



## 4. Managing own sensory needs

Supporting children and young people to manage their own sensory needs has the aim of increasing their independence and providing them with access to a wider variety of choices, both in relation to their existing experiences and with a view to future opportunities.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Managing emotions and behavior](#), [Understanding and expressing own sensory needs](#).

### 4.1 Accepts support to manage own behaviour in relation to sensory needs

- Responds to prompt to use equipment / aid to alleviate sensory input  
e.g. "put on your ear defenders"; "get your 'chewy'"
- Accepts alternatives to sensory seeking routines or behaviour that may be harmful or intrusive to self, others or the environment  
e.g. has own supply of fabric to stroke instead of approaching others and touching clothes; has a chew as alternative to biting self
- Understands and observes 'time and place' rules in relation to specified sensory stimulation  
e.g. ok to hum at break time but not in assembly – may require visual support to make this clear

### 4.2 Requests others' help to manage sensory needs

- Requests reasonable change to environment  
e.g. asks for light to be switched off
- Requests help from a supporting adult in order to modulate sensory input  
e.g. asks for a 'squeeze'

### 4.3 Takes action to manage own sensory needs

- Makes agreed changes to environment as required to alleviate sensory sensitivities  
e.g. changes position of chair; closes blinds - if previously agreed that they should take responsibility for this
- Independently makes use of equipment / aid to alleviate sensory input  
e.g. puts on ear defenders when entering a noisy room

- Uses sensory modulation strategies appropriate to context  
e.g. has a pocket-size fidget toy for community visits

- Takes agreed action to remove self from situation to avoid sensory sensitivities / overload  
e.g. shows a card to indicate they need to leave the room as agreed; leaves class early to make transition before corridors get busy

- Rejoins activity once sensory needs are regulated
- Identifies 'early warning' signs of sensory 'overload' and takes appropriate action  
e.g. is aware of becoming anxious due to rise in noise level

- Actively participates in activities that assist with sensory modulation in a preventative way  
e.g. chooses to use gym equipment at break time as knows this will help them feel calm for next lesson

### 4.4 Reflects on sensory needs and behaviour

- Makes link between sensory sensitivities and behaviour i.e. is able to link sensory cause and effect on behaviour
- Reflects on response to sensory sensitivities and suggests adaptations / interventions for future use

## Resources and links (including AET Tools for teachers)

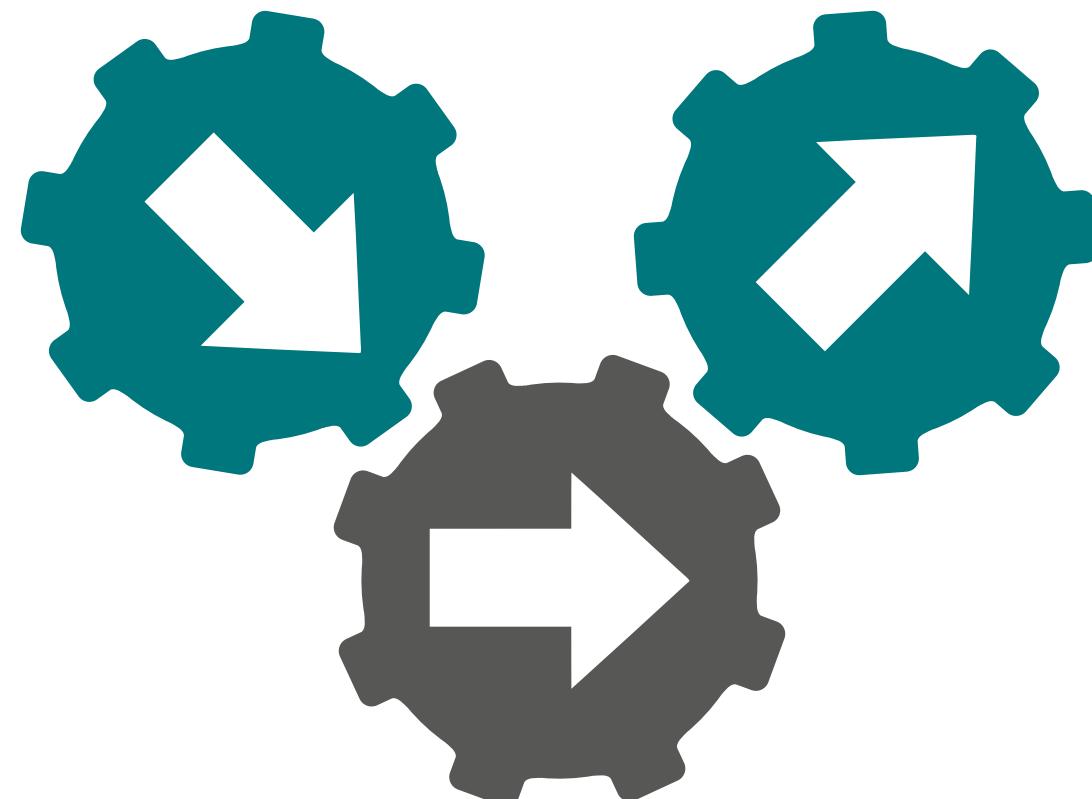
### Tools for teachers

#### **AET Tools for Teachers 40-44 Supporting sensory sensitivities**

- Tool 40 - Observing behaviour to identify sensitivities
- Tool 41 - Strategies to address need
- Tool 42 - Sensory profile
- Tool 43 - Low arousal environments
- Tool 44 - Environmental checklist

#### **Further reading**

Laurie, C. (2013) Sensory Strategies: Practical ways to help children and young people with autism learn and achieve. London: NAS



## 1. Coping with change

Change on any level can be difficult for children and young people on the autism spectrum and where possible learning experiences should be structured and supports put in place so as to reduce anxieties caused by unpredictability and change. However, changes will inevitably occur within the course of daily life and young people should have opportunities to get used to this happening in situations where they can be supported to manage their feelings and behaviour.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Managing emotions and behaviour](#).

### 1.1 Accepts change within familiar situations

- With preparation accepts small changes within a familiar activity  
*e.g. visual schedule highlights changes*
- With preparation accepts familiar activity taking place in a different environment  
*e.g. room change*
- With preparation accepts change of person within a familiar activity  
*e.g. change of staff member, change of peer*
- With preparation understands and accepts change to timetable
- With preparation understands and accepts non specified event in timetable  
*e.g. 'wait and see', 'surprise!'*
- With preparation accepts changes to physical environment  
*e.g. furniture being moved*
- With preparation accepts when it is time to finish  
*e.g. using timers, countdowns, '5 more minutes', at the end of this page*
- Tolerates unexpected change with support  
*e.g. visual support or verbal explanation*
- Understands and accepts reasons for changes to routines / events

### 1.2 Takes action to cope with change

- Makes adjustments to own visual schedule when informed of changes
- Seeks further information about a change  
*e.g. asks questions to clarify*
- Anticipates altered outcomes caused by changes
- Formulates new plan if initial plan cannot be applied due to changes
- Expresses emotions experienced as a result of change in a controlled way  
*See also Managing emotions and behaviour*
- Applies strategies to regulate emotions caused by changes  
*e.g. seeks help for concerns about changes*



## 2. Transitions

Transitions might include those which occur on a regular or frequent basis such as movement between rooms eg classroom to dining hall to outside area ('everyday' transitions) or those which involve a significant move such as moving groups or transitioning to a different provision. Children and young people will benefit from extended planned preparation for major transitions, including visits to new environments where possible and visual information about what to expect eg Transition books.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Coping with change](#), [Organisation and independent learning](#), [Communicating information / commenting on events](#), [Listening and understanding](#).

### 2.1 Makes successful transition in 'everyday' situation

- Makes successful transition to different environment with adult support and visual prompts  
Examples might include:-within same room -different room -different area of learning setting / different building -community
- Makes successful transition to different environment with visual prompts  
e.g. transition object, photos, symbols, schedule
- Makes successful transition to different environment independently
- Arrives independently at 'meeting' or waiting points for transitions  
e.g. lining up points
- Waits until it is time to make transition  
e.g. waiting for others to be ready or for teacher to give direction
- Organises own belongings to take to next activity
- Takes responsibility for transporting belongings between environments / activities

### 2.2 Engages with preparation for transition to new setting

- Identifies features of new setting in photos e.g. places, people, activities in transition book
- Identifies some aspects of new setting that they like e.g. computer facilities, access to clubs / courses they are interested in
- Identifies what they might find difficult in new setting e.g. finding way round, uniform, talking to other students
- Contributes to information about self for new setting e.g. personal profile or 'Passport'
- Understands timescales involved in transition arrangements  
e.g. using countdowns, calendars, schedules
- Understands and accepts reasons for rules / expectations in new setting  
e.g. using social stories, transition books
- Applies strategies to help with aspects of transition they might find difficult  
e.g. knows who to ask or where to go for help

### 3. Special interests

The importance of special interests\* to people on the autism spectrum should not be underestimated and children and young people should be provided with opportunities to pursue, develop and share their interests in positive ways, whilst being supported to access other activities as required. Young people should be reassured that time for special interests will be available at specific points and such opportunities should be clearly timetabled. As well as serving as motivators within learning activities, special interests can provide a means of engaging youngsters in order to build relationships eg through sharing an interest with a peer. Knowledge and skills related to special interests may also have the potential to lead to education or employment pathways for the young person. Most importantly, they are likely to provide a source of enjoyment, relaxation and stress release when other activities or situations are causing anxiety.

**Links with other PF areas:** Motivation and engagement, Managing emotions and behaviour, Positive relationships (supporting adults / peers).

#### 3.1 Uses special interests to engage positively in activities / exchanges

- Engages in interactive exchange with a supporting adult about special interest  
e.g. **answers specific questions**
- Engages in interactive exchange with peer about special interest
- Is motivated to engage in learning activities related to special interests  
e.g. **reading comprehension based on a subject of interest; supporting independence skill – use of public transport**
- Uses special interests to contribute positively to an activity with others  
e.g. **uses special subject knowledge to help others with a project, joins club associated with interest**
- Identifies skills and knowledge associated with special interest that might inform education or career choices
- Engages with special interest in order to manage own emotions / anxiety levels  
e.g. **distracts self with special interest when becoming anxious or upset**

#### 3.2 Engages with a range of activities unrelated to special interests

- Engages in activities unrelated to special interests  
**May find this easier if has regular access to interests between other activities**
- Accepts that specific times will be available to focus on special interests  
e.g. **break times, end of sessions**
- Moves from special interest to a new activity at agreed time  
**Reminders given eg time remaining, 'now' and 'next'**
- Chooses an activity different to special interest at specified times  
**Ensure that 'special interest' time is always also available**
- Is willing to try out activities / items introduced that are unfamiliar or different to special interest  
**With a view to extending range of interests eg an activity suggested by a peer**
- Recognises that special interests of others may be different from their own
- Uses special interests of self / others to support developing friendships

\*The term 'special interest' has been used to indicate the intense and highly focused interests that are common to people on the autism spectrum

## 4. Problem solving and thinking skills

Differences in the way information is processed by people on the autism spectrum can lead to difficulties with certain types of problem solving and thinking skills. Many situations within daily life require decisions to be made based on a range of factors and the development of skills in this area can lead to increased independence and autonomy. Fundamental to this area is the ability to recognise a problem and practitioners may need to provide opportunities for children and young people to encounter and respond to a range of situations which require them to both identify and solve problems in order to build confidence and ability in this area. The support provided should allow learners to be successful in their problem solving but should aim at increasing their level of independence as far as possible.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Communicating information / commenting on events](#), [Understanding others' emotions / intentions](#), [Developing confidence / self-esteem](#), [Organisation and independence](#), [Independent living](#).

### 4.1 Makes a choice

- Makes a choice from a given number of familiar alternatives  
*With real item or visual support as required*
- Makes a choice from a given number of unfamiliar alternatives  
*Able to use information available to make the most appropriate choice*
- Varies choice on different occasions in order to try out alternatives  
*Being sensitive to need for predictability and routine*
- Gives reason or explanation for a choice they make

### 4.2 Uses information available to make an appropriate choice

- Understands and is able to choose an alternative when an option is not available
- Understands the need to make choices realistic  
*e.g. affordable, accessible*
- Understands the consequences of making certain choices  
*e.g. that an alternative option is then no longer available*
- Gives reasons for categories suggested  
*i.e. makes links between items*

### 4.3 Sorts items into categories

- Sorts objects which are the same
- Sorts objects into given categories  
*e.g. colour, shape, type of transport*
- Rearranges items when category is changed  
*e.g. rearranges items from colour to type of transport*
- Gives category a label  
*e.g. animals, transport*
- Matches items by function

- Suggests possible categories for sorting  
*e.g. farm animals, zoo animals, number of legs*

### 4.4 Uses information to plan and predict

- Makes a plan for an activity based on information available
- Selects preferred option from available alternatives  
*e.g. what will we do if.....?*
- Predicts what might happen in a situation based on previous experience
- Predicts what might happen in a current situation based on information available

### 4.5 Makes deductions based on information available

- Deduces what something may be about by its appearance  
*e.g. book / DVD cover*
- Works out what needs to be done from items / equipment presented  
*e.g. make a sandwich*
- Takes account of behaviour / actions of others to deduce information about a situation
- Takes account of context 'clues' to deduce information about a situation
- Knows what information will be required for a given task  
*e.g. making a snack; going swimming*

## 4. Problem solving and thinking skills • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Communicating information / commenting on events](#), [Understanding others' emotions / intentions](#), [Developing confidence / self-esteem](#), [Organisation and independence](#), [Independent living](#).

### 4.6 Recognises and takes action to solve problems

- Recognises problem within a familiar situation  
e.g. indicate something missing, broken
- Recognises a problem within an unfamiliar situation
- Takes action to solve a familiar problem  
e.g. based on previous experience, gradually reducing prompt "what do you need?"
- Takes action to solve an unfamiliar problem  
e.g. looking at what others are doing
- Asks for help with a problem
- Requests information to solve a problem  
e.g. "Will X be going shopping later? They could get some more milk....."
- Uses information from the context to solve a problem  
e.g. there's a car parked on the bus stop. The bus will stop further down so I need to go there and wait instead
- Uses information from other situations to solve problems

### 4.7 Reflects on problems encountered and strategies used

- Reflects on problem solving strategies used within a previous situation  
What did I do? Did it work?
- Suggests alternative strategies that may have been effective or preferable in a previous situation  
What could I have done to make this better?



## Resources and links (including AET Tools for teachers)

### Tools for teachers

#### **Links to Tools for Teachers and other AET resources**

##### **AET Tools for Teachers 30-39 Structure and Supporting Transition**

- Tool 30 - Guidance for using visual strategies
- Tool 31 - Whole day timetables and schedules
- Tool 32 - Now / next or first / then
- Tool 33 - Key time routine timetables
- Tool 34 - Work station
- Tool 35 - Structured work activities and task boards
- Tool 36 - Structured leisure activities
- Tool 37 - Jigs
- Tool 38 - Pupil organisation
- Tool 39 - Supporting pupils with transition

#### **AET Transition Toolkit**

#### **Transition Booklet - Puzzle Centre**

#### **Finding a school guide and working together with your child's school**

## 1. Understanding and expressing own emotions

Emotions can be a complex area for people on the autism spectrum. Supporting children and young people to identify their emotions and their cause acts as a first step towards developing the ability to manage their own emotions and behaviour. It also allows those supporting the young person to identify ways in which they can reduce possible triggers or alleviate potentially stressful situations e.g. by adapting environments or providing support. In addition, identifying experiences that lead to positive emotions will help those who support the young person to provide activities that are motivating and which promote happiness and well-being.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Self-awareness](#), [Understanding and expressing own sensory needs](#).

### 1.1 Expresses a range of emotions

- Intentionally communicates their emotions to others  
e.g. shows an adult that they are excited by making eye contact whilst flapping hands, smiling
- Expresses emotions in keeping with the situation  
i.e. the type of emotion expressed is in keeping with others' experience of the situation eg shows concern when someone is hurt
- Expresses emotions in proportion to the situation  
e.g. shows disappointment rather than rage at having to finish an activity (with support to prepare for this)
- Adapts expression of emotions to suit situation / audience  
e.g. home / with peers / classroom

### 1.2 Identifies own emotions

- Identifies simple emotions in relation to self eg. sad / happy, angry / afraid  
e.g. selects appropriate symbol to indicate how they are feeling
- Identifies more complex emotions in relation to self eg. Nervous, excited, disappointed, proud
- Identifies physical feelings related to emotions
- Identifies degrees of feelings within an emotion  
e.g. is able to use emotions scale to show level of intensity, is able to use qualifiers eg a little, a lot; identifies how much of an emotion is manageable  
e.g. anxiety

### 1.3 Identifies cause of emotion

- Makes connection between an emotion and what has caused it  
e.g. is able to give a reason for an emotion
- Knows what usually / typically makes them feel positive emotions  
Active work on discovering activities that are pleasurable so that staff and young people can draw on these
- Knows what usually / typically makes them feel negative emotions  
e.g. anxiety, anger
- Predicts likely emotional responses to a given situation  
e.g. excitement or fear at the prospect of a visit to a theme park
- Reflects on previous experiences of emotions and can identify emotions linked to situations / events
- Knows that emotions can be linked to physical / hormonal changes  
e.g. puberty or illness
- Recognises when their emotional state is changing  
e.g. rising anxiety

## 2. Managing emotions and behaviour

Learning to regulate and control their emotions will allow children and young people to have increased access to a range of experiences and environments. Although it is vital that staff provide support in this area the aim should be for young people to work towards an increasing level of independence so that they are able to understand and manage their own needs in a range of contexts.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Self-awareness](#), [Understanding and expressing own sensory needs](#).

### 2.1 Responds to calming strategies of others

- Accepts and responds positively to calming / comforting strategies of others  
*Adult understands and has strategies that work well for the young person eg squeezes, singing*
- Seeks comfort from others when distressed or anxious

### 2.2 Uses own strategies to manage stress

- Is able to comfort self / self-soothe when experiencing mild distress *e.g. using a comfort object*
- Uses own strategies to self-regulate / distract self *e.g. using behaviour such as humming, spinning, rocking*
- Refrains from unhelpful or damaging ways of managing stress *e.g. self-harm; breaking objects*

### 2.3 Takes part in planning and preparing strategies to manage own emotions and behaviour

- Participates in identifying strategies to help self-regulate *e.g. using a stress release object, taking self to a safe place, time with special interest*
- Participates in adapting environment / taking preventative action to help themselves self-regulate  
*e.g. putting on ear defenders as noise level rises*
- Practices self-regulation strategies during calm periods *i.e. when regulated*
- Understands the benefits of strategies for reducing stress and anxiety in a preventative way  
*e.g. recognises benefits to self and chooses to take part in physical activity, yoga etc*
- Understands that different strategies help if applied to different emotions / situations  
*e.g. jogging on the spot helps frustration; deep pressure soothes sadness*

### 2.4 Uses taught strategies to manage emotions and behaviour

- Uses planned / taught / agreed strategies to self-regulate  
*e.g. follows visual cue to take a break, takes time out with preferred activity*
- Uses different self-regulation strategies according to context / venue  
*e.g. has a 'hidden' fidget object for assembly*
- Seeks out help to regulate behaviour / emotions  
*e.g. uses 'help' card to indicate need for support*
- Identifies stress signals and uses planned strategies  
*e.g. asks for a break, takes self to 'quiet' area*
- Knows when ready to rejoin activity and acts accordingly  
*e.g. checks it is an appropriate time to rejoin*
- Recognises the need to modify their behaviour in response to other people's reactions  
*e.g. stops laughing at someone who fell over when they are upset*

### 2.5 Reflects on behaviour

- Reflects on own behaviour  
*e.g. what caused it? Was the response helpful or not? What might be done differently?*
- Links behaviour to thoughts and feelings in self and others  
*e.g. when I get upset I pace; when mum gets upset she goes quiet*
- Recognises that behaviour choices can have good / bad consequences
- Recognises how their behaviour can affect others
- Evaluates effectiveness of self-regulation strategies

### 3. Understanding others' emotions / intentions

Difficulties in 'reading' the thoughts of others and using situational cues to assist with this understanding may result in challenges in this area for children and young people on the autism spectrum. This can lead to increased vulnerability and it is important that practitioners are vigilant with respect to potential bullying or young people becoming involved in situations where they may be at risk. Although the teaching of 'skills' in this area is not straightforward, young people should be supported to develop their social understanding as far as possible. In addition, they should be taught strategies for seeking advice and support if they feel unsure how to respond within a situation.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Positive relationships and friendships \(peers\)](#), [Personal safety](#).

#### 3.1 Recognises and responds to emotions in others

- Recognises emotions in others in teaching materials  
e.g. in books, pictures, role play, film etc
- Recognises emotions in others in real situations  
*May need support to reflect on situations to help them work towards an understanding 'in situ'*
- Relates non-verbal communication to the expression of emotions (body language, facial expression, tone of voice)  
e.g. makes deductions about emotions based on non-verbal communication
- Takes appropriate action in response to emotions in others  
e.g. knows to give space or fetch help, tries to give comfort
- Demonstrates understanding of the emotions of others in how they try to resolve conflict or negotiate

#### 3.2 Identifies cause of emotions in others

- Suggests reason for an emotion using situational cues within teaching materials  
e.g. in pictures, books, film, role plays
- Identifies cause of emotion in others in real situations
- Identifies possible cause of another's emotions towards themselves  
e.g. knows why someone is cross with them

#### 3.3 Makes judgements relating to others' behaviour

- Differentiates between friendly and unfriendly behaviour in others  
e.g. playful teasing as opposed to being victimised
- Identifies different forms of bullying  
e.g. verbal, physical, cyber
- Knows ways to get help when threatened by behaviour of others
- Seeks help when feels threatened by behaviour of others  
e.g. insults, threats, bullying

#### 3.4 Identifies potential or actual risk within situations

- Identifies risks involved in particular situations
- Takes action to avoid putting self in vulnerable situation  
e.g. keeps away from people who may pose a risk
- Identifies situations where they should resist pressure from others
- Knows how to seek help and advice when unsure of how to respond to pressure from others

#### 3.5 Is aware of difficulties with 'reading' others' emotions / intentions

- Tells others that 'reading' others' emotions or thoughts can be difficult
- Asks others to clarify / explain their emotions / intentions

## 4. Self-awareness

This area focuses on developing the young person's awareness of themselves both in relation to 'seen' and 'unseen' characteristics. Young people should be encouraged to recognise their strengths and talents and to develop awareness of how these might be developed. They should also be supported to identify any difficulties and how these might be overcome. Not all young people will be aware of their diagnosis and careful consideration will need to be given to work involving the understanding of their autism, ensuring close communication with the parents / carers as appropriate.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Special interests](#)

### 4.1 Identifies own characteristics

- Identifies features of own physical appearance
- Identifies preferences in relation to own appearance  
e.g. hairstyle, choice of clothes
- Identifies physical similarities and differences between self and others  
e.g. appearance
- Identifies features of own personality  
e.g. friendly, hard-working, quiet
- Identifies similarities and differences in character / personality between self and others
- Has a sense of belonging to different groups  
e.g. family, class, school, club, autism community

### 4.2 Identifies interests and strengths

- Identifies activities / interests they like / dislike
- Identifies own strengths / talents
- Identifies ways in which interests, strengths and talents might lead to opportunities in the future  
e.g. pathways in education or employment
- Seeks to extend areas of strength
- Recognises and expresses how they feel when they are doing something they enjoy / succeed at

### 4.3 Understands own diagnosis

- Understands diagnosis of autism and how this makes them different from non-autistic people  
Stressing that difference does not mean inferiority
- Understands the impact on them that can be caused by environments not being autism-friendly  
Including people's lack of awareness of the differences caused by autism

### 4.4 Identifies difficulties

- Identifies what they find difficult  
See also Learning section for expansion of this  
eg how to get help
- Recognises and expresses how finding things difficult makes them feel
- Makes use of own strategies to help overcome difficulties
- Makes use of strategies suggested by others to help overcome difficulties  
e.g. visual schedules, sensory input, asking for help

### 4.5 Is aware of change in relation to self

- Identifies ways they have changed and ways they have stayed the same over time  
e.g. what they can do now that couldn't before
- Identifies how they might change in the future
- Identifies when their feelings / behaviour are different from their 'normal'
- Seeks help in relation to changes in feelings / behaviour

### 4.6 Participates in planning for own future

- Contributes to setting own goals or targets
- Identifies realistic aspirations for the future  
e.g. career options

## 5. Developing confidence and self-esteem

Developing young people's confidence can lead to greater independence and contribute to increased self-esteem which in turn may contribute to improved emotional well-being. Some children and young people on the autism spectrum may be wary of new or unfamiliar activities and may need preparation and support to ensure that their experiences are positive and rewarding.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Self-awareness](#), [Communicating information / commenting on events](#).

### 5.1 Expresses preferences

- Recognises own preferences
- Expresses preferences
- Shares interests with others
- Expresses why they like some things more than others

### 5.2 Expresses opinions / ideas

- Expresses opinions / ideas with adult
- Expresses opinions / ideas with peer
- Expresses opinions / ideas in small group
- Expresses opinions / ideas in large group / meeting
- Maintains reasonable personal viewpoint after considering others' opinions
- Asserts self in a non-aggressive way  
*e.g. body language, tone of voice*
- Disagrees with someone without becoming personal or confrontational
- Understands that expressing some views may offend others
- Understands legal implications of holding and expressing certain views eg racism

### 5.3 Shows confidence within activities / learning

- Is willing to try out a new activity with support and preparation
- Shows confidence within a new activity or situation
- Is independent within activity  
*e.g. adult gradually withdraws support*
- Experiences a sense of achievement when carrying out tasks independently
- Identifies own achievements and skills
- Accepts and values praise or celebration of achievements

### 5.4 Responds to negative behaviour

See also understanding others' emotions / intentions above

- Is confident in saying No in situations that may pose a risk
- Seeks help in situations that may pose risk

## Resources and links (including AET Tools for teachers)

### Tools for teachers

#### **AET Tools for Teachers 14-29**

##### **Teaching pupils to manage emotions and self-regulate**

##### **1. Identifying the pupil is anxious and / or stressed and to what level**

Tool 14 Observation schedule for stress

##### **2. Teaching the individual to recognise their stress and giving them strategies which will enable them to communicate this to an appropriate individual**

Tool 15 Stress bucket (example and template, how to teach it)

Tool 16 Emotion thermometer

Tool 17 5 to 1 (example and template)

Tool 18 How do I feel? (example) (volcano)

Tool 19 How fast is your engine? (template and guidance)

##### **3. Working together to establish techniques for reducing stress**

Tool 20 Happy book

Tool 21 Relaxation book

Tool 22 Cognitive picture therapy

Tool 23 Visual imagery for relaxation

Tool 24 Turtle technique

##### **4. Supporting and managing behaviour**

Tool 25 Star chart

Tool 26 Skills and motivators

Tool 27 Star analysis

Tool 28 Reward charts

Tool 29 Motivator puzzles

### Know your normal toolkit

### An evidence based guide to anxiety in autism

## 1. Learning through play

A need for order and routine and the sensory needs of individual children may result in those on the autism spectrum playing differently to their neurotypical peers e.g. playing with the same toys or repeating play routines; focusing on a detail of the object rather than using it functionally or symbolically. Adults can support children by modelling play and providing opportunities to explore new ways to play that are fun, engaging and at the right level.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Interactive play](#)

### 1.1 Explores toys / objects / materials

- Explores objects / materials presented by adult  
Objects / materials with a range of sensory properties: mouth, grasp, squeeze, drop, bang, shake, roll, spin, pull etc
- Independently explores familiar objects / materials
- Varies objects / materials explored
- Explores toys / materials in more than one way
- Looks for objects when out of sight
- Organises toys / materials  
e.g. lines up cars

### 1.2 Shows understanding of the purpose of toys / play items

- Plays with / uses toys / materials functionally  
e.g. pushes cars along rather than lining them up
- Combines objects systematically  
e.g. stacks cups / rings, puts objects in and out of containers
- Fits objects together using trial and error  
e.g. toy bricks
- Completes simple puzzles

### 1.3 Engages in cause and effect play

- Makes a toy work  
e.g. winds up, presses button
- Performs action that produces an effect  
e.g. drops marble into marble run

### 1.4 Engages in pretend / symbolic play

- Imitates actions of adult using familiar object in pretend / symbolic play  
e.g. pretends to drink from empty cup

- Independently uses real objects in pretend / symbolic play  
i.e. shows they know what objects are used for

- Imitates adult using objects with toys  
e.g. gives teddy a drink
- Independently uses objects with toys
- Explores objects in ways other than their intended use  
e.g. bowl as a hat, banana as a telephone
- Attributes feelings to toys  
e.g. puppet is sad / crying
- Imitates sequence of pretend / symbolic play  
e.g. changes doll's clothes and puts to bed
- Independently carries out sequence of pretend / symbolic play  
e.g. pretends to play drum and marches

### 1.5 Enacts story routine / play scenario

- Enacts story routines / scenarios with toys (copied)  
e.g. from what an adult has said or from a known book, TV programme or film
- Enacts story routines / scenarios with toys (self-generated)  
i.e. using own words or ideas
- Acts out characters / stories / scenarios using role play  
e.g. pretending to be a superhero
- Invites adult into play scenario
- Engages with adult in play scenario  
e.g. places cars on paper while adult draws 'road', adult is 'customer' in their café
- Tolerates another bringing own variables to a play scenario  
e.g. choosing different dressing up clothes

## 2. Motivation and engagement

Ensuring effective motivation and engagement relies on practitioners building rapport and 'tuning in' to the needs, interests and learning style of the individual so that activities are meaningful, accessible and fun.

Attention should also be paid to the young person's anxiety levels and activities and demands adapted accordingly. The young person may benefit from regular breaks e.g. to move around or 'regroup'.

Knowledge of special interests may be useful in order to provide motivating topics. In addition, building up a positive relationship with key staff may reduce anxiety and enable the young person to access activities with increased confidence. For many learners, providing an element of choice or control within learning programmes may aid their ability to participate and practitioners should be prepared to make flexible adaptations in order to facilitate learning. It needs to be remembered that for some young people, working within group settings can be difficult (see Group Activities). In addition, sensitivities related to sensory input may result in distraction or anxiety and environmental adaptations may be needed.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Group activities](#), [Special interests](#), [Being with others](#), [Positive relationships \(supporting adults\)](#), [Developing confidence and self-esteem](#).

### 2.1 Responds to sensory features of items, activities

- Looks towards visually stimulating item / activity
- Turns towards / stills at sound
- Responds to feel of items e.g. smiles when touches item
- Responds to smell e.g. turns head away
- Responds to taste e.g. grimaces at sour taste
- Responds to movement  
e.g. swinging

### 2.2 Responds to environment

- Shows interest in surroundings
- Shows familiarity with environment  
e.g. knows where items are stored
- Shows awareness of changes in environment  
e.g. change of lighting
- Is calmed by surroundings  
e.g. sensory room
- Shows increased focus within given environment  
e.g. uncluttered, free of distractions

### 2.3 Responds to interaction from supporting adult or peer

*See also Positive relationships (adults/peers)*

- Responds positively to supporting adult's bid to engage
- Responds to peer's bid to engage

### 2.4 Anticipates / predicts what will happen

- Anticipates introduction of a preferred item / activity

### 2.5 Shows interest / curiosity in items, activity, topic

- Reaches out for items
- Looks with interest at item, activity
- Shows interest in having a turn
- Chooses item from a selection
- Asks questions about topic

### 2.6 Explores / investigates items, activities

*See also Learning through play*

- Explores items using senses
- Investigates how an item works
- Takes turns to explore items

### 2.7 Discovers new knowledge and understanding

- Makes connection between cause and effect
- Discovers how an item works
- Shows surprise or excitement at new knowledge, understanding
- Makes sense of information

### 2.8 Attends to task, activity

- Settles to task quickly  
e.g. following a task sheet
- Follows instructions about what they are required to do  
*This may need to be non-directive e.g. depersonalised visual instructions*
- Attends to others taking turn within activity
- Engages with task for agreed time period
- Uses strategies to prevent themselves becoming distracted
- Refocuses self if distracted

## 2. Motivation and engagement • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Group activities](#), [Special interests](#), [Being with others](#), [Positive relationships \(supporting adults\)](#), [Developing confidence and self-esteem](#).

### 2.9 Persists with task / activity

- Perseveres with task
- Asks for help as needed
- Completes task in given time period  
*May be in short bursts*

### 2.10 Shifts attention to another task / activity / request

- With preparation, transfers attention to a different task / activity
- Interrupts task to attend to instruction / question
- Responds to questions / requests when engaged in activity

### 2.11 Initiates / makes request for activity

- Requests a preferred item / activity

### 2.12 Engages in negotiated tasks

- Engages in negotiated non-chosen task followed by chosen task / motivator  
*'First this, then ....'*
- Engages in series of negotiated non-chosen tasks followed by chosen task / motivator
- Responds to suggestion to 'share' components of activity / task  
*e.g. I'll cut this out and you decide where it goes...*
- Chooses which task to complete  
*e.g. from a selection presented in a non-directive form*
- Engages in series of negotiated tasks in a sequence chosen by them
- Initiates negotiation about tasks to be undertaken  
*e.g. can we do this first...?*
- Honours the terms of a negotiation about learning tasks
- Makes realistic suggestions about ways to approach an activity  
*e.g. It's better if I sit over there to do it*



### 3. Organisation and independent learning

Children and young people on the autism spectrum may require support with tasks that require executive functioning skills ie the ability to plan, organise, remember instructions, prioritise, focus attention and get started on tasks.

Practitioners can provide support in this area through visual systems such as schedules, checklists, flowcharts, colour coding and labelling which can help lead to a much higher degree of independence. Ways in which young people can have a voice in planning their own learning should also be considered in order to maximise opportunities for engagement.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Listening and understanding](#), [Transitions](#), [Problem solving and thinking skills](#), [Special interests](#).

#### 3.1 Organises own belongings / resources

- Brings correct belongings to school / college
- Identifies own belongings
- Puts belongings in their place on arrival  
e.g. coat on peg, bag in locker, pencil case in tray
- Takes necessary equipment to lesson  
e.g. PE kit, art folder
- Prepares equipment needed for a task / subject  
e.g. sets out cooking utensils
- Puts equipment away when task / lesson is finished
- Collects belongings at end of day  
e.g. coat, bag etc

#### 3.2 Makes effective use of timetables / planners / schedules

- Shows understanding of activities represented on timetable
- Refers to timetable to check what is happening next / later
- Moves to next activity indicated on timetable
- Works through a series of tasks from a list or schedule
- Completes one task before moving on to next  
Or leaves previous task in a way that allows it to be completed later
- Records relevant information in planner
- Refers to planner to check information

#### 3.3 Shows awareness of time management

- Arrives at scheduled activities on time
- Completes task in given time  
*May need support*  
e.g. breaking work into chunks, timescale appropriate to needs
- Negotiates for more time to complete task if necessary
- Accepts that an activity will take place at a designated time and place
- Accepts that an activity will last for a designated amount of time  
e.g. using timers. Differentiate between preferred or non-preferred task

#### 3.4 Works independently

- Gets started on task unprompted
- Prioritises tasks / components of task
- Attempts a task independently before asking for help  
*Ensure that the task is clear*
- Works independently for given time period  
*Specific to individual and task*
- Uses available tools as support  
e.g. use of spell checkers, dictionaries, ICT
- Checks work before completion  
e.g. checks against a model of what is expected
- Refers to planner to check information

### 3. Organisation and independent learning • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Listening and understanding](#), [Transitions](#), [Problem solving and thinking skills](#), [Special interests](#).

#### 3.5 Participates in planning own learning

- Communicates interest about a topic  
*Relates to 'Special interests' section*
- Makes suggestions about content of learning programme
- Suggests ways to tackle a task / topic
- Suggests 'next steps' within learning task / topic
- Adapts / refines ideas / strategies based on what they have learnt

#### 3.6 Plans work

- Talks about / communicates what they will do
- Makes a plan within a given structure  
*e.g. writing frame*
- Makes a visual plan of what they will do  
*e.g. mind mapping*
- Sets out sequence of tasks
- Makes choices / decisions about what needs to be done  
*May need to provide alternatives*
- Negotiates ways of completing task
- Makes notes about what they will do to complete a task
- Makes links between different parts of a task
- Produces a draft  
*May find it difficult to see the purpose of this*
- Indicates that a task is finished

#### 3.7 Carries out research into a topic

- Understands what information is required
- Knows where to locate information
- Extracts relevant information  
*May find it difficult to select which information is relevant so may need guidance*
- Presents information according to task instructions

#### 3.8 Asks for help

- Recognises when help is required
- Asks for adult help using an accepted / agreed means
- Asks a peer for help
- Incorporates suggestions / help into ongoing work



## 4. Understanding and following rules, routines and expectations

Difficulties with social understanding may result in children and young people on the autism spectrum not 'picking up' on expectations relating to school (or other setting) conventions and routines. They may need explicit teaching and support to ensure that they understand both written and unwritten 'rules', the reasons behind them and that they apply to them. Unstructured times such as break or playtimes can be particularly challenging and may present situations where certain 'rules' appear not to apply. Support and understanding within these environments is important in ensuring that young people are not made vulnerable as a result of their differences. In addition, specific arrangements may be required for situations which cause anxiety and distress e.g. difficulties with attending assembly or wearing uniform due to sensory issues.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Listening and understanding](#), [Managing emotions and behaviour](#).

### 4.1 Finds way around learning environment

- Makes own way to different parts of learning environment
- Asks for directions if unsure of way

### 4.2 Copes with queueing / lining up

- Understands the reasons for queueing / lining up
- Takes place in line
- Is able to stand reasonably still and maintain place in a line
- Waits turn to be at front of queue
- Copes with some natural bustle of a queue
- Can be flexible about position in a line
- Can follow or lead a line

### 4.3 Attracts attention in an appropriate manner

- Waits for appropriate pause before addressing teacher
- Raises hand (or other agreed strategy) to indicate that they would like to ask / answer question  
*May need a visual cue*
- Waits turn to ask / answer question
- Attracts attention using a conventional phrase  
*e.g. Excuse me, Miss*

### 4.4 Follows agreed strategies for movement within learning area

- Remains in agreed seating place or area for specified activity  
*Ensure that sensory factors are taken into account when seating*
- Follows rules about movement within class or leaving class  
*e.g. making request to fetch items*
- Fetches / replaces equipment without causing disruption to others  
*i.e. is unobtrusive in moving around classroom*
- Follows agreed strategy for movement or 'overload' break away from learning area  
*e.g. shows card to indicate need to take self to agreed quiet area*
- Respects 'space' of others within learning environment  
*e.g. keeps belongings / work to own desk area*

### 4.5 Follows playtime / break time routines

- Stays within designated area at playtime / break time
- Shares equipment with others at play / break time
- Knows how to get help at play / break time  
*e.g. if peers are being unkind; if seeking equipment or to join a game*
- Asks adult for help at play / break time  
*May need separate arrangements – eating, sensory etc*
- Understands and accepts changes to break time routines  
*e.g. wet play, designated days to use play equipment*

## 4. Understanding and following rules, routines and expectations • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Listening and understanding](#), [Managing emotions and behaviour](#).

### 4.6 Shows increased tolerance in relation to expectations

- Accepts reasons given for certain procedures  
e.g. to keep learners safe
- Understands that expectations may be different in different situations  
e.g. behaviour in class and at break time (noise levels, running etc), action in an emergency, different teachers having different expectations
- Seeks help to understand expectations of others
- Articulates why they find certain expectations difficult  
e.g. sensory issues affecting ability to sit still
- Makes suggestions for how situations can be adapted to meet needs  
e.g. expectations in relation to assembly
- Shows increased tolerance of expectations / situations with agreed adaptations  
e.g. is able to tolerate assembly when allowed to sit at back and ask to leave if becoming unsettled



## 5. Evaluating own learning

Children and young people on the autism spectrum may need support to evaluate or reflect on their own learning (Assessment for learning) and strategies which support this (e.g. visual supports) may be required. Learners should be supported to recognise and develop their strengths and acknowledge their difficulties so that they can recognise their own support needs leading to increased control and independence.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Self-awareness](#), [Developing confidence and self esteem](#).

### 5.1 Evaluates own learning

- Identifies what they have done within an activity / lesson  
e.g. is able to recall sequence of steps to reach goal
- Identifies what they have learned within an activity / lesson  
e.g. can identify what they knew before and what they know now
- Identifies what they have done well within an activity
- Identifies what they have found difficult within an activity
- Identifies what they might do differently next time  
e.g. responds to suggestions to use strategies to help
- Accepts adult drawing attention to work they have completed  
e.g. to praise or to make suggestions

### 5.2 Applies understanding of own learning

- Applies what they have learned previously in order to achieve a task
- Uses agreed strategies to help them achieve task
- Knows when to ask for help  
e.g. to avoid becoming anxious or frustrated

### 5.3 Knows and applies own strengths

- Demonstrates awareness of own strengths
- Knows that different people are good at different things
- Applies strengths within a range of tasks / topics  
e.g. uses ability to retain facts to contribute to project work on a given subject

### 5.4 Recognises own difficulties

- Identifies what they find difficult
- Uses taught strategies to overcome difficulties
- Attempts to solve a problem using own initiative
- Asks for help to manage an area of difficulty

### 5.5 Sets own learning goals

- Identifies what they would like to achieve
- Sets realistic learning goals
- Understands what they need to do to achieve their goal

### 5.6 Understands the consequences of own choices and actions

- Identifies consequences of own actions / behaviour on achieving goals
- Chooses positive actions / behaviour based on understanding of consequences
- Understands consequences / impact of actions of others on themselves

### 5.7 Recognises own achievements

See also Confidence and self-esteem

- Identifies when they have reached their goal
- Shows pride in own achievement
- Copes with celebration of achievement  
e.g. praise – this may need to be indirectly or discretely given

## Resources and links (including AET Tools for teachers)

### Tools for teachers

#### **AET Tools for Teachers Tools 9-13 Teaching social rules explicitly**

- Tool 9 - Power cards
- Tool 10 - Social Stories
- Tool 11 - Comic Strip Conversations
- Tool 12 - Prompt cards
- Tool 13 - Appropriate voice level cards

#### **AET Tools for Teachers 30-39 Structure and Supporting Transition**

- Tool 30 - Guidance for using visual strategies
- Tool 31 - Whole day timetables and schedules
- Tool 32 - Now / next or first / then
- Tool 33 - Key time routine timetables
- Tool 34 - Work station
- Tool 35 - Structured work activities and task boards
- Tool 36 - Structured leisure activities
- Tool 37 - Jigs
- Tool 38 - Pupil organisation
- Tool 39 - Supporting pupils with transition

### Progression Framework Priorities Questionnaire

## 1. Keeping healthy

Children and young people on the autism spectrum may benefit from explicit teaching in the area of health education but practitioners should bear in mind that literal interpretation and difficulties in thinking flexibly may impact on pupils' ability to apply their learning within real contexts. For example, understanding of behaviours that are considered 'healthy' or 'unhealthy'. Ways in which a balanced view can be communicated will, therefore, need to be explored. As with other areas, differences in relation to sensory processing may impact on the ability to feel illness or pain or to tolerate a wide range of foods and practitioners should be sensitive to individual needs.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Sensory processing](#), [Communicating information](#), [Personal safety](#).

### 1.1 Identifies own health needs

- Indicates when they are unwell or in pain
- Identifies location of pain  
*e.g. using visual body map*
- Rates severity of pain
- Accepts help when unwell or in pain
- Knows what medication they take and how it helps them
- Identifies own allergies / intolerances
- Administers basic first aid to self  
*e.g. puts a sticking plaster on a cut finger*

### 1.2 Copes with medical appointments

- Can make a medical appointment
- Accepts reasons and need for routine appointments  
*e.g. dental / optical check – ups*
- Copes with waiting for an appointment  
*e.g. uses headphones or preferred reading material*
- Communicates symptoms / concerns to health professional  
*e.g. doctor or chemist*
- Co-operates during medical appointments with preparation  
*e.g. doctor, dentist, nurse, optician*
- Knows how and when to contact emergency services

### 1.3 Understands benefits and risks of medicines

- Takes agreed medication
- Knows that it is important to take correct dosage of medication
- Knows that it may be dangerous to take medicines belonging to others
- Knows that medicines must be kept safely
- Follows instruction labels on medicines

### 1.4 Knows how to limit spread of infection (coughs and colds)

- Covers nose when sneezing
- Covers mouth when coughing
- Washes hands after sneezing
- Uses and disposes of tissues appropriately

### 1.5 Makes healthy choices in relation to food / drink

- Distinguishes between edible / inedible foods
- Identifies healthy / less healthy foods
- Understands concept of 'balanced' diet
- Makes healthy choice of food or drink at designated times  
*e.g. chooses water to drink and fruit for pudding at lunchtime*
- Accepts that it is ok to have occasional 'treats'  
*e.g. cake for pudding sometimes*

### 1.6 Tolerates an increasing range of foods

- Accepts small amount of new or different food on plate  
*May need to begin with very tiny amount*
- Tastes small amount of new or different food
- Makes own choice from a range of new or different foods to try
- Expresses likes / dislikes of foods  
*e.g. dislikes certain textures or smells*

### 1.7 Makes healthy choices in relation to exercise

- Understands the importance of regular exercise
- Participates in regular exercise activities

## 1. Keeping healthy • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Sensory processing](#), [Communicating information](#), [Personal safety](#).

### 1.8 Makes healthy choices in relation to sleep

- Co-operates with a bedtime routine  
e.g. screens off at agreed time before bed
- Identifies when they are tired and accepts the need to go to bed
- Maintains healthy sleep pattern  
e.g. awake during daytime hours and sleep / resting during night

### 1.9 Understands the health risks associated with smoking and alcohol

- Knows the risks to health associated with smoking
- Knows the risks to health associated with drinking alcohol

### 1.10 Understands the law in relation to drugs, alcohol and smoking

- Identifies illegal drugs
- Understands the consequences of possessing or taking illegal drugs
- Knows the age limits in relation to smoking and alcohol



## 2. Personal care

Teaching children and young people to take charge of their own personal care can increase their independence and autonomy. Young people on the autism spectrum may require support to understand the reasons for good personal hygiene, particularly as they approach puberty. For example, they may not realise that poor personal hygiene can have an impact on their social relationships and how they are perceived by others. They may also benefit from support to establish routines and reminders for carrying out hygiene activities. Practitioners should also be aware that difficulties in this area may relate to sensory needs e.g. sensitivities to smell, taste, feel of personal hygiene products, clothing etc. and support to find alternatives or increase tolerance may be required.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Sensory processing](#)

### 2.1 Uses toilet independently in familiar setting

- Communicates that they need to use toilet as necessary  
e.g. using a symbol, sign or word / phrase
- Adjusts clothing to use toilet
- Maintains privacy when using toilet  
e.g. closes / locks door
- Uses toilet without help
- Cleans / wipes self after using toilet
- Adjusts clothing when finished using toilet
- Washes hands after using toilet

### 2.2 Uses public toilet

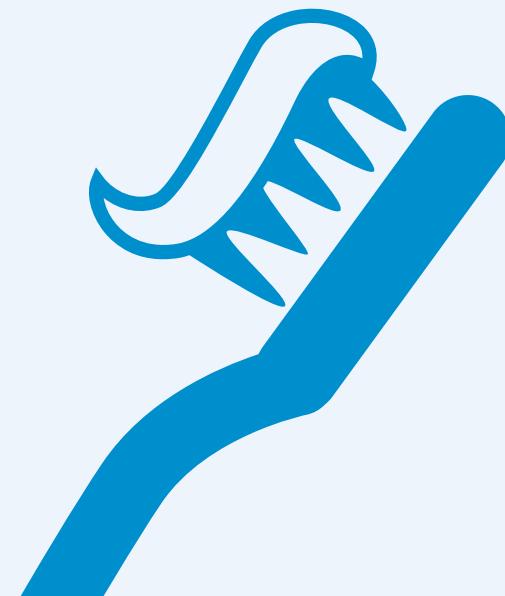
- Recognises sign for public toilet (Male / female)
- Waits turn / takes place in queue
- Tolerates public toilet environment
- Maintains privacy in public toilets  
e.g. closes / locks door
- Respects privacy of others in public toilets  
e.g. keeps social distance; urinal 'etiquette'

### 2.3 Maintains good hand hygiene

- Identifies reasons for hand washing  
e.g. passing on germs
- Identifies activities that require hand washing before / after  
e.g. using toilet, handling food, touching pets, gardening, sneezing
- Washes hands as necessary  
e.g. without reminder after using toilet; may benefit from visual prompts
- Washes hands effectively
- Dries hands effectively

### 2.4 Maintains good bodily hygiene

- Identifies reasons for good personal hygiene  
i.e. health, appearance, relationships, puberty
- Recognises good / bad hygiene in relation to self
- Takes regular baths / showers  
According to preference
- Washes self effectively
- Washes hair regularly
- Uses appropriate hygiene products
- Manages menstruation effectively  
e.g. changes and disposes of sanitary products appropriately
- Cleans teeth effectively
- Recognises when clothes need washing / changing



## 2. Personal care • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Sensory processing](#)

### 2.5 Takes interest in own appearance

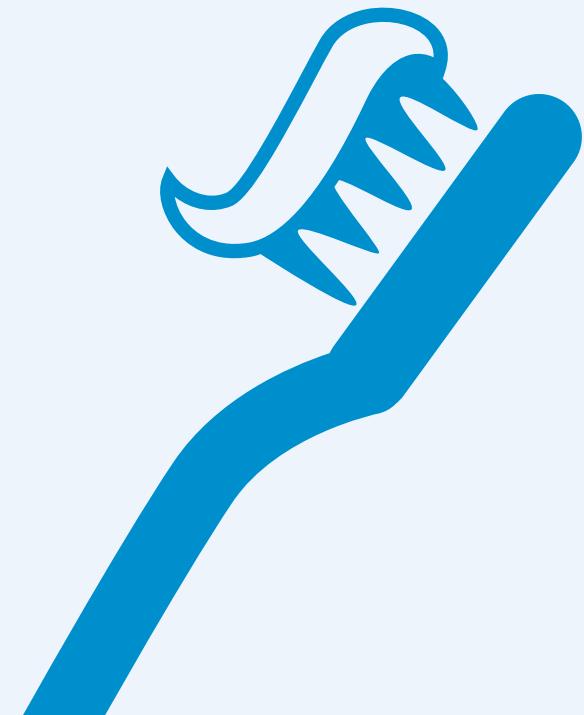
- Takes responsibility for own personal grooming  
e.g. hair styling, make up, shaving
- Checks own appearance / hygiene  
e.g. checking that clothes are clean, not inside out etc

### 2.6 Identifies and manages sensory needs in relation to hygiene and clothing

- Identifies own sensory sensitivities in relation to clothing
- Takes action to remedy sensory sensitivities  
e.g. suggests that labels are removed
- Identifies preferred hygiene products  
In accordance with sensory needs e.g. preferred smells or textures

### 2.7 Dresses self effectively

- Co-operates within dressing routine (help from another)  
e.g. lifts arms, puts out foot
- Matches clothing to body part
- Puts on clothing in correct sequence  
e.g. three items using visual sequence
- Asks for help with fastenings  
e.g. zips, buttons
- Uses a range of fastenings on clothing
- Ties shoelaces
- Checks that clothing is correctly worn / fastened  
e.g. inside out, labels showing, buttons / zips done up
- Is discreet when getting changed / dressed in public
- Chooses clothing appropriate to conditions  
e.g. weather, task
- Chooses clothing appropriate to social situation



### 3. Relationships and sex education

Relationships with others are a complex area for all young people and may present particular challenges for those on the autism spectrum. Young people may experience difficulties in "reading" other's intentions and behaviour and in understanding social contexts within which interactions occur. This section has close links with the section on Social Understanding and Relationships and will also overlap with schools / colleges' curriculum and assessment arrangements for Relationships and Sex Education. It should also be underpinned by safeguarding policy and procedures.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Personal safety](#), [Keeping healthy](#), [Personal care](#), [Positive relationships and friendships \(peers\)](#), [Emotional understanding and self-awareness](#)

#### 3.1 Identifies personal characteristics

- Knows personal information  
e.g. name, age, gender (but may identify with another gender)
- Identifies physical characteristics
- Identifies body parts and function
- Identifies interests
- Recognises strengths

#### 3.2 Recognises and accepts differences between people

- Recognises similarities and differences between self and others
- Accepts that there are a variety of different types of person  
e.g. sexuality; relationships; types of family; race; religion; disability
- Shows respect for others  
Including those who may be different from themselves

#### 3.3 Understands and accepts changes that occur at puberty

- Identifies changes that occur at puberty  
e.g. body changes; mood swings
- Accepts that changes will occur to themselves
- Manages own self-care in relation to changes at puberty  
e.g. managing menstrual hygiene; shaving

#### 3.4 Understands personal space

- Maintains social distance appropriate to situation  
And what they are comfortable with e.g. understands their right to move away if they feel their space is invaded by another

#### 3.5 Distinguishes between 'public' and 'private'

- Identifies situations that require privacy  
e.g. changing, using toilet, touching self
- Identifies 'public' and 'private' places in context
- Identifies 'private' body parts
- Carries out 'private' behaviour in an appropriate place  
e.g. changing clothes in cubicle; taking self to own room for private touching
- Differentiates between 'public' and 'private' conversational topics
- Allows others to have privacy
- Identifies 'private' situations that may be unsafe
- Identifies which type of personal information is appropriate to share in particular situations

#### 3.6 Understands different types of relationships

- Identifies relationship of self to others  
e.g. family, friend, acquaintance, stranger
- Identifies characteristics of friendships
- Identifies characteristics of 'girlfriend'/'boyfriend' relationships
- Understands and accepts that people may choose different types of relationships  
e.g. heterosexual and LGBT relationships

#### 3.7 Uses behaviour appropriate to relationship

- Uses behaviour appropriate to relationship  
e.g. greetings; touch
- Identifies behaviour that is ok / not ok in particular contexts / relationships  
e.g. topics appropriate to situation

### 3. Relationships and sex education • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** Personal safety, Keeping healthy, Personal care, Positive relationships and friendships (peers), Emotional understanding and self-awareness

#### 3.8 Understands laws relating to consent in relationships

- Understands that romantic / sexual relationships are a two way partnership that require both parties to agree to them
- Understands that some behaviours within relationships require consent from both parties
- Understands laws relating to consent in relationships  
*Including those relating to social media and the internet*
- Understands that reaching a certain age does not dictate expected behaviour  
*e.g. reaching the age of sexual consent does not mean that there is an expectation to have sex*

#### 3.9 Keeps safe within relationships

*See also Personal Safety section*

- Communicates 'No' assertively when uncomfortable within a situation
- Identifies appropriate / inappropriate touch
- Identifies characteristics of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' relationships
- Knows that keeping secrets might not always be the right thing to do
- Knows to seek advice and support about any aspect of relationships they are unsure or unhappy about

#### 3.10 Knows where to seek advice or help

- Identifies situations where they require advice or help  
*e.g. social rules; teenage 'banter'; slang and innuendo*
- Identifies trusted person to go to for advice and support
- Knows where to seek advice and support concerning sexual health



## Resources and links (including AET Tools for teachers)

### Tools for teachers

#### **AET Tools for Teachers 40-44 Supporting sensory sensitivities**

Tool 40 - Observing behaviour to identify sensitivities

Tool 41 - Strategies to address need

Tool 42 - Sensory profile

**Autism Education Trust 'The Den':** sections on Health and Wellbeing; Friends and Relationships

### **Further reading**

**National Autistic Society**

**Ambitious about Autism**

Hartman, D. (2014) Sexuality and Relationship Education for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders. London: JKP

**PSHE Association**

## 1. Independent living

Young people on the autism spectrum may need support in developing 'life' skills which will provide them with increased choice and control over their own lives in the future. Since many factors impact on the ability to acquire skills in this area (e.g. organisation, planning, social understanding, sensory issues) young people are likely to require support and regular opportunities to practise skills before they become confident in carrying out everyday tasks.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Organisation and independent learning](#), [Personal safety](#), [Sensory processing](#)

### 1.1 Manages own time / routines

See also section on using timetables, planners and schedules in Organisation and independent learning

- Understands and uses a visual system for managing routines
- Understands and uses a range of formats for telling time  
*e.g. analogue and digital*
- Understands and uses a range of formats for dates
- Records events / appointments / deadlines in diary / calendar / planner
- Refers to diary / calendar / planner to check events recorded
- Acts on information in diary / calendar / planner  
*e.g. prepares what they will need, informs others of what they will be doing*
- Sets reminders for self  
*e.g. using phone, making a visual reminder*
- Works out how long is needed to complete a task  
*e.g. to make a journey to get to an appointment*
- Completes tasks in a given time
- Is on time for scheduled events  
*e.g. classes, appointments, clubs etc*

### 1.2 Prepares a simple snack

- Chooses snack to prepare
- Makes preparations for making a snack  
*e.g. fetches ingredients, equipment*
- Makes snack using relevant skills  
*e.g. spreading, using microwave, cutting*
- Tidies away ingredients / equipment

### 1.3 Makes a drink for self and / or others

- Chooses own drink
- Asks others what they would like to drink
- Identifies what they will need
- Locates what they will need
- Makes a cold drink effectively  
*e.g. selecting appropriate cup, correctly filling to avoid spillage*
- Makes a hot drink effectively  
*e.g. safe use of kettle, correct proportions of milk etc*

### 1.4 Prepares to make a meal

- Chooses meal to prepare  
*Taking into account time, budget, skills*
- Identifies what is required to prepare meal
- Locates ingredients / utensils to prepare meal

### 1.5 Prepares a meal

- Opens containers / packaging
- Follows instructions on food labels
- Follows a recipe
- Handles utensils safely and effectively  
*e.g. holding knife safely, careful pouring*
- Uses appliances safely and effectively
- Monitors foods during cooking process and makes adjustments as needed  
*e.g. checks food is not burning, boiling over*
- Identifies when food is cooked

## 1. Independent living • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Organisation and independent learning](#), [Personal safety](#), [Sensory processing](#)

### 1.6 Participates in mealtime with others

Practitioners to be sensitive to the sensory and social demands of mealtimes for the young person and the need to make adjustments as required

- Lays table appropriately
- Sits at table for duration of meal
- Waits turn for food to be served
- Uses cutlery appropriately  
*As appropriate to culture*
- Differentiates between finger foods / need for cutlery
- Communicates needs at mealtime  
*e.g. asking for a food to be passed, declining a food they don't like*
- Serves others during meal
- Engages in communication during meal
- Helps to clear table
- Excuses self / asks to leave table

### 1.7 Orders a meal

- Chooses what they would like to eat
- Orders a takeaway meal by phone or online
- Orders a meal, snack and / or drink at the counter
- Orders a meal, snack or drink from waiter / waitress
- Pays for meal, snack or drink using appropriate payment

### 1.8 Prepares to go shopping

- Plans what they need to buy e.g. makes a list
- Identifies which shop / s they will need to visit
- Prepares what they will need to take to shops  
*e.g. money, shopping bag, list*

### 1.9 Shops for items

- Locates item / s in shop / online
- Asks for help in locating item / s
- Makes a choice between items
- Manages own sensory needs within shop  
*e.g. headphones to block out noise*
- Checks price of items  
*e.g. to check they have enough money*
- Takes account of budget when choosing items

### 1.10 Pays for items in shop

- Waits to pay for items
- Pays for items using appropriate means / amounts  
*e.g. card or cash, at till or self-service checkout*
- Waits for change / receipt
- Checks change / receipt
- Packs shopping

### 1.11 Carries out household tasks

- Identifies when household cleaning is required
- Understands why household cleaning is required
- Prepares equipment for household tasks
- Safely uses household appliances *e.g. vacuum cleaner*
- Safely uses household products
- Hygienically disposes of used / dirty cleaning items

## 1. Independent living • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Organisation and independent learning](#), [Personal safety](#), [Sensory processing](#)

### 1.12 Manages own money

- Identifies sources of income
- Identifies expenditure within a given period
- Plans budget according to income and expenditure
- Understands purpose of saving money
- Knows about different ways of saving money
- Understands the function of a bank account
- Knows about different types of bank account
- Knows how to use credit / debit cards
- Knows where to seek advice about money matters

### 1.13 Uses a phone

*See also* [Keeps safe on-line under Personal safety](#)

- Makes / receives calls using a landline phone
- Makes / receives calls using a mobile
- Sends text messages
- Leaves an answer phone message
- Responds to recorded options using telephone key pad
- Knows how to deal with unwanted phone calls / messages  
*e.g. sales calls*

### 1.14 Plans for the future

- Understands different types of living arrangements
- Contributes to decision making about living arrangements
- Identifies own support needs
- Makes choices / decisions about education / career / leisure pathways
- Identifies strengths / skills / interests
- Knows where to access advice and support about planning for the future



## 2. Personal safety

Ensuring a young person's personal safety is dependent on many factors and those on the autism spectrum may require additional support to ensure that they are not left vulnerable as their independence increases. In addition to difficulties experienced in making judgements based on social understanding (e.g. in order to identify that the intentions of others may pose a risk), factors such as sensory processing differences can result in increased physical risk (e.g. inability to identify when items are hot to the touch). Providing young people with 'rules' to help them make judgements can be beneficial as well as ensuring that they have clear systems for accessing help and support. Close liaison with parents / carers is important in ensuring that consistent messages are received about how to keep safe.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Road safety and travel](#), [Developing confidence and self- esteem](#), [Understanding others' emotions / intentions](#), [Keeping healthy](#).

### 2.1 Keeps safe in the home

*Aiming at increasing ability to carry out household tasks at home but may need to be taught and practised in the education setting*

- Follows 'rules' for keeping safe in the home  
*e.g. in relation to medicines*
- Pays attention to labels on household items  
*e.g. safety warnings on cleaning fluids*
- Is careful when handling kitchen utensils / materials  
*e.g. sharp knives, cleaning chemicals*
- Shows caution in relation to hot items  
*e.g. hot water*
- Recognises when food is not safe to eat  
*e.g. use by date has passed*
- Uses electrical / gas appliances safely
- Remembers to turn taps off
- Recognises tasks that may pose a risk in the home
- Asks for help with a task that may pose a risk in the home
- Knows how to get help in an emergency at home
- Takes responsibility for keeping home secure  
*e.g. locking front door*

### 2.2 Keeps safe at school / college (or other education setting)

- Follows procedures for keeping safe at school / college
- Recognises that some rules are present to keep themselves safe at school / college
- Follows safety instructions for using equipment  
*e.g. science materials*
- Co-operates with fire safety drills / procedures
- Recognises that others' proposals / suggestions may pose a risk

- Chooses to say 'No' to risks or suggestions proposed by others
- Knows how to get help in situations that are potentially unsafe at school / college

### 2.3 Keeps safe when out in the community

*See also Road safety and travel*

- Shows awareness of potential 'safe' / 'unsafe' places in the community  
*e.g. knows to avoid quiet, dark places at night*
- Recognises potentially unsafe situations and takes appropriate action  
*e.g. moves away or calls for help*
- Keeps belongings / personal information safe when out in the community  
*e.g. puts wallet away safely, hides PIN number*
- Is aware of potential 'stranger danger' and knows how to respond  
*e.g. saying 'No'*
- Makes informed judgement about giving out personal information  
*e.g. to set up bank / shop account*
- Understands and applies the need for self and others to have privacy in some community settings  
*e.g. in public toilets, changing rooms*
- Maintains social distance appropriate to the community situation  
*e.g. when queueing, on public transport etc*
- Recognises that others' proposals / suggestions may pose a risk
- Chooses to say 'No' to risks or suggestions proposed by others

## 2. Personal safety • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Road safety and travel](#), [Developing confidence and self- esteem](#), [Understanding others' emotions / intentions](#), [Keeping healthy](#).

### 2.4 Knows how to get help in the community

- Identifies potential 'safe' person to ask for help if needed  
e.g. **shop worker**
- Can use mobile phone to get help as needed  
e.g. **if lost, to get directions - from support 'app'**
- Identifies services who help keep us safe  
e.g. **police, fire service, paramedics etc**
- Knows how and when to contact emergency services



### 2.5 Keeps safe on-line (e-safety)

- Keeps personal information safe when using social media / gaming
- Uses privacy settings when using social media
- Understands consequences of sharing information on social media
- Makes decisions about 'friend' requests on social media
- Knows to inform adult if an online acquaintance asks to meet
- Applies safety rules when receives emails from unknown sender  
i.e. **not to open attachment, check with adult**
- Appraises authenticity of websites  
e.g. **when online shopping**
- Checks with an adult before making online purchase
- Observes age rating guidance when choosing games / films for own use
- Informs adult of anything they encounter online that makes them feel uncomfortable  
e.g. **website content; unkind or bullying comments**
- Knows how to block or report people or content
- Understands consequences of own actions when using social media or the Internet  
e.g. **in relation to comments made to others; hacking; sharing photos of others**

### 3. Road safety and travel

Road safety and travel require a number of skills which may be challenging for young people on the autism spectrum since the ability to organise, to make judgements within unfamiliar situations and to understand the intentions of others is required. In addition, sensory factors from the external environment can be unpredictable and situations may be subject to unexpected change. Young people will need plenty of opportunities to practice their road safety and travel skills with the appropriate amount of support to ensure that the right balance is struck between developing their independence and ensuring their safety.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Personal safety](#), [Problem solving and thinking skills](#).

#### 3.1 Walks safely by the side of road

- Walks safely with adult (holding hands / arm in arm) by the side of road  
*i.e. requires physical support for own safety but walks calmly with adult*
- Follows verbal prompts to stop or wait at roadside
- Walks safely beside adult (no contact) by the side of road  
*Adult alongside but no physical contact*
- Walks safely with group by side of road  
*Adult accompanying but not alongside*
- Walks safely by side of road without support  
*i.e. independent of adult*

#### 3.2 Crosses road safely

- Crosses road safely with adult
- Uses pelican crossing safely
- Uses zebra crossing safely
- Crosses road safely in familiar environment  
*i.e. applies understanding of road safety guidance*  
*e.g. Green Cross code*
- Crosses road safely in unfamiliar environment

#### 3.3 Finds way / follows directions

- Finds way to a familiar location
- Identifies common signs  
*e.g. toilet, exit*
- Uses signs to find way
- Follows directions to reach a location  
*e.g. using visual instructions*
- Uses a map to find a location
- Asks for directions from a safe person if unsure / lost

[Link to Personal safety](#)

#### 3.4 Plans a journey / trip out

- Identifies best way to get to destination  
*i.e. based on distance, cost, weather etc*
- Uses app or online tool to plan route
- Plans route using a map
- Finds times of chosen transport  
*e.g. using an app or online timetable*
- Prepares what they will need to take with them on journey / trip out  
*e.g. money, bag, clothing etc*
- Knows own home address

#### 3.5 Prepares to use public transport

- Finds correct stop / platform
- Checks information about departure
- Stands safely on kerb / platform whilst waiting
- Indicates bus should stop (if necessary)  
*i.e. by putting out arm*
- Takes place in queue to board transport
- Buys ticket for public transport  
*e.g. in advance for train or on bus / train / tram as appropriate*

### 3. Road safety and travel • continued

**Links with other PF areas:** [Personal safety](#),  
[Problem solving and thinking skills](#).

#### 3.6 Uses public transport

- Shows ticket / pass to driver / conductor
- Stores ticket safely for future use
- Finds an 'appropriate' empty seat  
*This will vary depending on how busy it is and may require teaching and practice of social 'rules' and conventions*
  - Copes with proximity of other public transport users
  - Responds appropriately to attempts at communication from other transport users  
*e.g. polite response but avoids being 'drawn in'*
  - Locates where to get off  
*e.g. using familiar landmarks*
  - Signals that they want to get off at next stop by pressing bell (bus)
  - Checks they have belongings before getting off



#### 3.7 Solves problems that may occur when travelling

- Recognises when they find a situation difficult and applies a strategy to help  
*e.g. using MP3 player to block out noise in a crowd, avoid conversation*
- Uses mobile phone to seek help from agreed source if unsure how to proceed  
*e.g. if lost, feeling anxious, unexpected changes occur*
- Asks appropriate person for information / help  
*e.g. asks station staff for platform, bus driver for where to get off, uses a 'help' card with information about needs*
- Takes appropriate action to solve problem  
*e.g. waits for next bus if missed or delayed, walks to a place where they can find someone to help*
- Avoids people / situations that pose a risk  
*e.g. crosses road / moves seat to avoid someone causing a disturbance*

## 4. Leisure

When deciding on outcomes in this area it is important that practitioners take into account the way in which children and young people respond to leisure activities and experiences ie are they gaining enjoyment from the activity and does it improve their overall well-being? Opportunities for regular access to such activities can then be built into their schedules. In addition, preferred activities can provide meaningful contexts for developing other skills, such as social interaction, organisation and communication. Opportunities should also be provided for young people to extend their range of interests and to tolerate guidance from others e.g. in relation to amount of time spent on an activity.

**Links with other PF areas:** [Personal safety](#), [Problem solving and thinking skills](#).

### 4.1 Shows preference for particular activities

- Identifies own preferred activities
- Is willing to try out new leisure activity with support / preparation
- Communicates enjoyment of a new leisure activity
- Communicates dislike of a new leisure activity
- Makes a choice between leisure activities  
*e.g. using a choose board*
- Communicates what they like / dislike about a leisure activity  
*e.g. helps them relax; venue too busy*

### 4.2 Plans own leisure activity

- Finds information about chosen activity  
*e.g. finds time of TV programme / swimming pool opening*
- Makes preparations for taking part in activity  
*e.g. arrangements for transport; booking; where to meet friend*
- Prepares items they will need for leisure activity  
*e.g. correct equipment; money; sensory aids*

### 4.3 Engages in social exchange within leisure activity

- Initiates interaction about leisure activity
- Responds to interaction about leisure activity
- Recalls others involved in leisure activity or who have similar interests

### 4.4 Takes account of others within activities

- Takes turn within leisure activity
- Copes with presence of others within leisure activities
- Copes with others approaching an activity differently

### 4.5 Accepts and applies guidance within leisure activities

Instructors / leaders may need support in understanding needs of the individual

- Follows instructions within activity  
*e.g. safety aspects*
- Accepts and applies suggestions for how to improve performance within activity
- Practices activity with the aim of improving
- Accepts and applies boundaries for time spent on leisure activities  
*e.g. amount of 'screen' time*

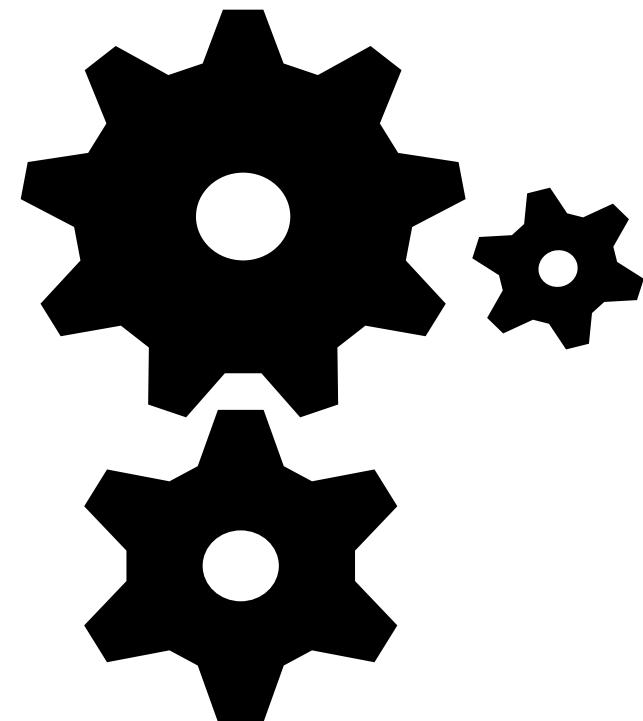
## Resources and links

[Autism Education Trust 'The Den'](#)

[Ambitious about Autism: Using public transport](#)

[Ambitious about Autism: Staying safe](#)

[National Autistic Society: staying safe online](#)



## AET Progression Framework: Individual learning plan

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

Learning Intention	Baseline assessment and date	Assessment and date:	Assessment and date:	Assessment and date:	Comments / Evidence reference

Not yet developed (NYD)
Developing (Dev)
Established (Est)
Generalised (Gen)

[Download here](#)

## AET Progression Framework: Individual learning plan

Not yet developed (NYD)
Developing (Dev)
Established (Est)
Generalised (Gen)

### Example 1: Learning intentions drawn directly from Framework

	Learning Intention	Baseline assessment and date	Assessment and date:	Assessment and date:	Assessment and date:	Comments / Evidence reference
1.	With preparation accepts when it is time to finish (Interests, routines and processing 1.1)	05.09.19	20.10.19	15.12.19	14.02.20	Term 1: using symbol instructions and timer Term 2: timer only Term 3: without timer
2.	Shares leisure activity with a peer (Social understanding and relationships 4.2)	05.09.19	20.10.19	15.12.19	14.02.20	Term 1: accepted peer using certain Lego bricks (not all) Term 2: offered peer a brick (supported) Term 3: accepted peer using preferred bricks
3.	Independently makes use of equipment / aid to alleviate sensory input (Sensory processing 4.3)	05.09.19	20.10.19	15.12.19	14.02.20	Term 1: verbal and symbol support Term 2: consistently fetched ear defenders in class-independent Term 3: in class, playground, dining room

### Example 2: Learning intentions tailored to individual

	Learning Intention	Baseline assessment and date	Assessment and date:	Assessment and date:	Assessment and date:	Comments / Evidence reference
1.	With preparation Callum will accept when it is time to finish looking at his magazine during lunch break e.g. using 5 minute timer (Interests, routines and processing 1.1)	05.09.19	20.10.19	15.12.19	14.02.20	Term 1: using symbol instructions and timer Term 2: timer only Term 3: without timer
2.	Callum will share the class Lego bricks with another classmate during 'choose' time session (Social understanding and relationships 4.2)	05.09.19	20.10.19	15.12.19	14.02.20	Term 1: accepted peer using certain Lego bricks (not all) Term 2: offered peer a brick (supported) Term 3: accepted peer using preferred bricks
3.	Callum will independently put on his ear defenders when the noise level increases (Sensory processing 4.3)	05.09.19	20.10.19	15.12.19	14.02.20	Term 1: verbal and symbol support Term 2: consistently fetched ear defenders in class-independent Term 3: in class, playground, dining room

## Progress Scale

<b>Not yet developed (NYD)</b>	Not present or only beginning to emerge. High level of prompt or support.
<b>Developing (Dev)</b>	Evidence of progress, lower level of prompt or support. Sometimes spontaneous.
<b>Established (Est)</b>	Is used frequently and maintained over time. Mostly independent / spontaneous, only occasional reminders.
<b>Generalised (Gen)</b>	Consistently used and applied within range of settings/contexts and with a range of people. Independent and unprompted.

Note: Practitioners will need to decide what constitutes good progress and support their judgments with evidence. 'Generalised' may not always be the intended final outcome for all young people in all areas.

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## References and links

- Autism Education Trust** [www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk)
- National Autistic Society** [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)
- Ambitious about Autism** [www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk](http://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk)
- Jessica Kingsley Publishers** [www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com)



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#### **2015/16 Progression Framework**

Respondents from the parent survey (241); respondents from the schools survey (91); respondents from the pupil survey (151); respondents from the autistic adults survey (25)

**Pilot schools/services:** Freemantles school, Surrey; STARS autism outreach, Leeds; Gosberton House School, Lincs; Kisimul school, Lincs; Portland Academy, Sunderland; Wandsworth Autism Advisory service; Inscape House school, Cheshire; Jewish Community Secondary School (JCoSS), London; Chipping Sodbury School, South Gloucestershire; Devonshire Junior Academy, West Midlands; Granta Special School, Cambridgeshire; Fosse Way school, Bath; Staffordshire Psychology / Education Inclusion Service

Original Progression Framework (2016) produced for the AET by Autism Associates (Suzanne Farrell, Ruth Fidler, Phil Christie, Linda Lyn-Cook) with software development by Chris Leach; design work: Genium

#### **2017/18 Progression Framework review**

Respondents from the Progression Framework review survey (194)

**Focus group / team feedback:** AET Programme Partners; AET Early Years Leadership Group; AET Young People's Panel; Leicestershire Autism Outreach Service; Lincolnshire Working Together Team; Nottingham City Autism Team; Nottinghamshire Specialist Schools and Families Service; Birmingham Communication and Autism team; Linden Bridge school; Essex specialist teaching and pre-school service; The Puzzle Centre, Bucks; Worcester Autism Bases

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**The Progression Framework has been revised and updated for the AET in 2019 by Autism Associates**

**Project lead and core author:** Suzanne Farrell

**Advisory team:** Ruth Fidler, Phil Christie, Linda Lyn-Cook    **Design work:** Genium

SUPPORTED BY:



DEVELOPED BY:



DESIGN:

genium