autism education trust
for parents & carers

Supported by:
Department for Education

A parents and carers' guide to

finding a school for your child with autism



FREE GUIDANCE– Working together with your child's school
www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/parent-guide

This guide gives ideas on the questions parents and carers might ask when choosing a school for their child with autism or Asperger syndrome.



All children with autism are different and all schools are different. This guide aims to identify the key features of good autism practice in a school.

This could be provided in a mainstream school, a special school or a school or unit which specialises in autism.

Children with autism attend all these types of school and can move from mainstream to special or from special to mainstream school during their school life. Together with the *Working together with your child's school* guide which can be found at www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/parent-guide, this leaflet can help you decide which school in your area is likely to suit your child best.

The AET has also developed resources for all schools to help staff develop good autism practice and separate resources for those settings which work with 16 to 25 year old students with autism. These can be found at www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk.

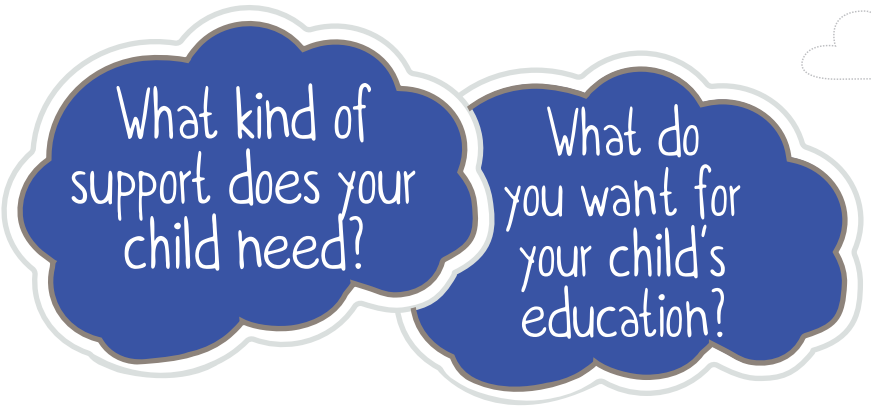
USEFUL LINKS

www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk

www.autism.org.uk



Finding a school which suits your child...



Information about the school

Go onto the school's website or look at the school brochure/ prospectus. This should give you a general idea about the school structure, curriculum, staffing, ethos and policies. Talk to family, friends, other parents and professionals to gain a broader view from their experience or knowledge of the school.



Visit the school

- Attend open days or contact the school directly to arrange a visit during normal school hours.
- Visit several schools so that you can compare what is on offer.
- You may want to visit the school with a friend, relative or professional who knows your child well.

If you feel that none of the schools in your local area can effectively meet your child's needs, then this should be discussed with your child's current school, and with other professionals who know your child and have knowledge of the provision in your authority (eg Educational Psychologist). There may be a Parent Partnership organisation or a Parent Support Group that can offer advice to you.



Checklist for choosing a school inside...

Questions to consider

General

Questions that the parents of all children may ask, such as: Is there a school uniform? What are the school's opening hours and holiday dates? What is the school's policy on bullying?

Specific to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

What help is available in school if your child needs additional support with learning or with social and emotional issues?

Autism Specific

Questions which parents of children with autism may ask (see inside). These can help you to compare the type of provision and practice at different schools. This is only a guide and you are likely to have other questions relevant to you or your child to ask the school staff.

Other considerations

Go with your first impressions and trust your instincts. You know your child best and if your observations and discussions with staff make you feel confident, then it is likely the school will be a good school for your child.

You can use the checklist inside to gain a view on how well a school might be able to meet the needs of your child.



Bradley, R., Jones, G., Milton, D. and Kerem, M. (2014) A parents and carers' guide to finding a school for your child with autism: London: Autism Education Trust.

To find out more please contact:
AET, c/o National Autistic Society, 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG, UK
t.020 7903 3650 e. info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk

Developed by:
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Checklist for choosing a school

Your child

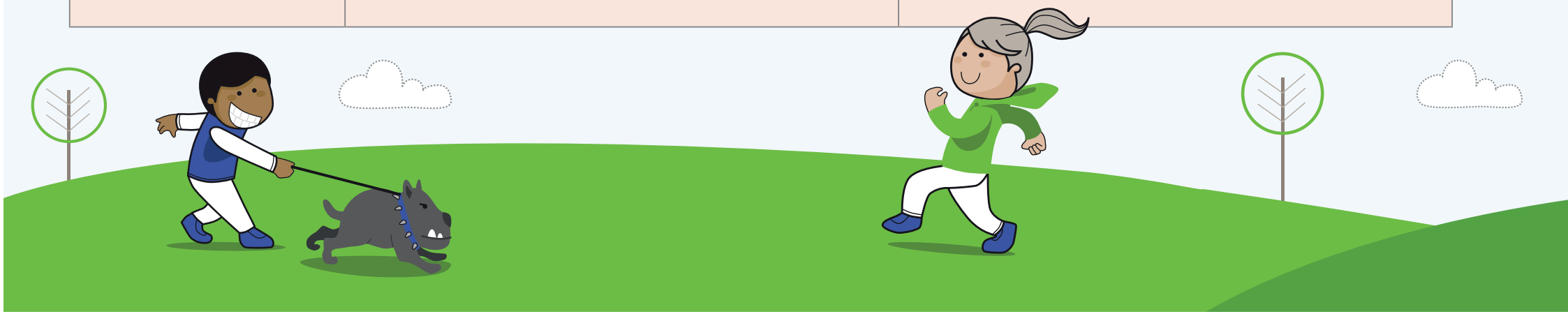
	School information	Parent's comments
Will the school develop a pupil profile for my child stating their strengths, interests and needs?		
Will all school staff who teach and support my child be aware of their needs?		
How will the school enable my child's views and preferences to be taken into account?		
Does the school use visual supports to make learning activities and the structure of the school day more predictable for children with autism?		

Working together with the school

	School information	Parent's comments
Does the school have a named person responsible for children with autism?		
Does the school help children develop relationships with other children?		
Has the school got a good system for sharing key information about children with autism with other staff?		
Does the school create more opportunities for parents to meet with the staff, if requested?		
Does the school have staff with knowledge and skills in the education of children with autism?		

Adapting the learning for your child

	School information	Parent's comments
Does the school make adjustments to how lessons are taught for children with autism?		
Does the school promote children's social and emotional well-being as well as their academic progress?		
Does the school help children with autism with life skills? (eg cooking, travel, self-care skills)		
Has the school created structured break and lunch time activities for children with autism?		



Supporting your child at school

	School information	Parent's comments
How does the school assess sensory issues for children with autism?		
Has the school made adjustments to the sensory environment for children with autism?		
Has the school got a safe haven or quiet area for children to spend time in, where needed?		
How will the school prepare my child for transition to another activity, class or to their next school?		

