Autumn 2024

ENFIELD ADVISORY SERVICE FOR AUTISM

EASA TERMLY NEWSLETTER

for Families, Educational Settings, Professionals and Partners

WELCOME

EASA has been busy as ever through the summer break and autumn term. I am very pleased to share some of the things we have been doing in this newsletter.

Read about two very inspiring primary schools who have worked with us and achieved the **Autism Inclusion Award.** We also have some top tips for secondary schools and supportive ideas for families preparing for the festive season.

Best wishes,

Dr Rachel Walker, Head of Service

In the Summer Term 2024..

225 Parent referrals received

4 Settings in the Borough requested bespoke training delivery for their staff

81 Individual Case Study Consultations took place

19 Settings had staff attending AET training modules centrally

*"Our mission is to empower the education workforce, parents and autistic young people to **work together**, **share understanding** and **create opportunities** to **enhance the education, wellbeing and success** of all autistic children and young people in Enfield."*

EASA Team Development Day 2024

Every September, the EASA Team members get together for a day of professional learning and development. It's the only time in the year that you will find us all in one place! We reflect on the year gone by, listen to feedback and plan ahead, thinking about the aspects of our service we'd like to develop.

This year we are very aware that our services are needed more than ever. We now have 1 in 40 Enfield children (up to 18yrs) registered with us. We know there are many more autistic children and young people in Enfield who we haven't met yet and we look forward to working with more educational settings, families and young people in the year to come.

We are going to re-launch our aims and action plan to align with the Autism Education Trust's 8 Principles of Good Autism Practice, which we are passionate about. We want to ensure these key principles are at the heart of everything we do.

At the end of August 2024, we sadly lost our long-standing colleague and Deputy Head of Service, Suzanne Goddard, as a member of EASA. However, she has not gone far: we are proud that she is now full time Deputy Head at Russet House School, and we look forward to working in partnership with her and the school to share great practice and develop our joint training offer for schools with autism-specific Specialist Resource Provisions and Units.

Meet The EASA Team

EASA's Implementation of the AET's 8 Good Autism Practice Principle

Autism Education Trust Regional Partner

Adapting teaching to support learning needs and promote wellbeing

- Providing examples of curriculum adaptations to support engagement
- Supporting development of the visual, auditory and tactile environment to make settings easier to navigate, and for CYP to feel safe and included
- Implementing strategies that promote independence and self-regulation

Understanding individual strengths, interests and needs

- One Page Profiles completed by the CYP
- Observation
- Listening to people who know the CYP well
- Working collaboratively with those who have assessed the CYP
- Psychoeducation for CYP to support understanding of self and neurodiversity

Targeted support and measuring progress

- Providing bespoke advice for families, settings and professionals based in individual circumstances
- Providing resources and aids matched to the learning needs of individual children
- Providing training and guidance on planning and assessment, including use of the AET Progression Framework
- Setting goals with settings and families to support progress and achievement

Enabling the child's/young person's voice

- Supporting families and settings to have communication systems in place
- Seeing behaviour as communication and interpreting signs of regulation and distress
- CYP's voice at the heart of Case Study Consultations
- Including CYP in Enabling Environment Audits
- Helping CYP express their thoughts and feelings through therapeutic group work

Ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion

- Providing a supportive and judgement-free place for families to come and meet each another
- Providing groups for young autistic people to meet and explore their strengths and challenges together
- Supporting settings to implement Special Interest clubs and social opportunities for autistic CYP where they can be themselves
- Conducting Enabling Environment Audits of settings to identify areas for development and potential barriers to engagement for autistic CYP

Collaboration with families and services

- Cuppa and Chat sessions to enable parents to meet with each other and team members
- Working with colleagues in health, education, social care and the voluntary sector to develop and provide cohesive services for settings and families
- Inviting parents, key staff and other professionals to be part of consultations about individual CYP
- Ongoing development of a web-presence that is easy to navigate and supportive of all who come to EASA
- Supporting the LA SEND Team with autism-related queries and case work

Leadership and management that promotes Good Autism Practice

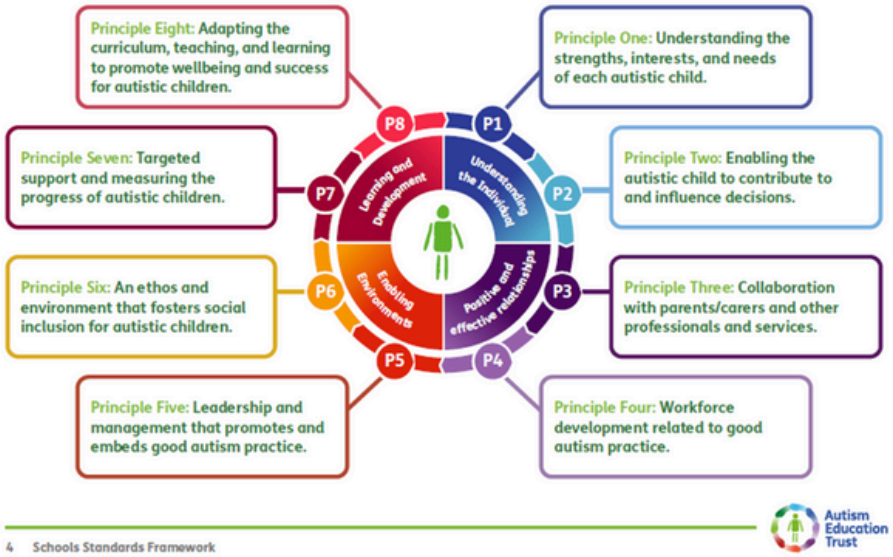
- Setting an example in London and beyond, though our work as the Regional Partner of the Autism Education Trust for London
- Having conversations with school leaders about developing practice and giving them the tools to bring about community change
- Working with LA colleagues to develop frameworks and guidelines that set expectations and promote good practice

Developing Good Autism Practice (training)

- Providing a wide range of AET training modules in different formats
- Supporting schools with SRPs and Units to implement effective classroom practice and meet the AET Standards
- Providing TA/LSA Mentoring to staff working alongside autistic children in mainstream to help them meet the AET Competencies
- Providing tailored workshops for parents to support home-life, skills and wellbeing

The AET Eight GAP Principles

This is how the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice are embedded in the four themes.



4 Schools Standards Framework

Autism Education Trust

Playground art

Bus stop and roadway designs by a young Enfield pupil whose special interest is transport.

For Young People 18 - 25yrs

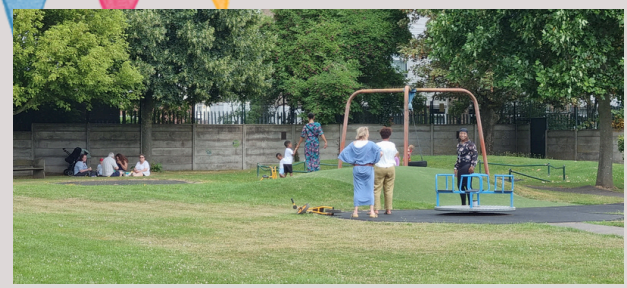
For young people aged 18 – 25yrs, we now have a self-referral form on our website. Young autistic people and their peers can get in touch with us to seek advice or support.

We are happy to engage with young people by phone, email or text message and can tell you about other local services who may be able to help. 16 and 17yr olds can also contact us with parent permission.

You can find this form in the Children and Young People's tab menu on our website.

Summer Holiday Playground Sessions

EASA families were invited to enjoy the playground at Russet House School during August again this year



The playground was open to EASA families on 8th and 15th August. Some families brought picnics and the children enjoyed using the playground equipment in a safe and supportive environment. Members of the EASA Team were there, providing cold refreshments, advice and a listening ear for families.

New Website

Over the next few months we will be working behind the scenes to redesign a new website.
We would like to hear if you have any feedback or comments.

Scan the QR code to have your say.

Autism Inclusion Award

NAS Autism Inclusion Award - Using Case Consultations

We are delighted that two Enfield Schools recently achieved the National Autistic Society's Autism Inclusion Award. They were supported by us at EASA to develop their practice and embed the AET's 8 Good Autism Practice Principles to fully include autistic children in their mainstream schools.

Part of that work was to complete four individual case consultations in each school. The case studies are structured to enable schools to evaluate their practice; what is working well, and what is already in place that aligns to the 8 GAP principles. I observed the children and spoke to people who know them well. I was then able to offer advice and next steps to support each child's learning and wellbeing.

Advice was well received by schools and parents, and strategies were implemented across the whole school community showing that inclusion can be about applying effective strategies for all.

An example of this is introducing energy level tools, where the following advice was given, incorporating the child's interest in *Teeniepings*:

"Help E to understand his energy levels and what energy is needed for what task. E could make the class their own energy tool using the Teeniepings as the characters have their own powers linked to an emotion. Ask him to think about what character would represent what energy level. This can be a whole class resource so he feels included."

School staff quickly realised that this energy tool helped all the children in E's classroom.

Joanne Dudley, Specialist Autism and Communication Practitioner

Supporting both schools in achieving the Autism Inclusion Award has been an incredibly rewarding journey. Conducting Enabling Environments Audits within two different schools provided invaluable insights into how we can create truly inclusive and supportive learning spaces. A particularly memorable part of the experience was being guided around each school by autistic students themselves, who shared their unique perspectives on the environment around them. Hearing their honest and thoughtful feedback was inspiring, and it has genuinely reshaped the way I approach the audit to better serve all students.

Jessica Patel, Occupational Therapist

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School

- Staff have agency to plan bespoke activities, ensuring pupil engagment
- The school uses pupils' strengths and interests to support learning
- There are robust efforts to engage and collaborate with parents
- Pupils are supported to express their choices, have a voice, and engage
- Widget resources are used consistently by staff across the school

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School was thrilled to be approached by EASA last year to participate in the Autism Inclusion Award. The process allowed us to review our practices using tools from the Autism Education Trust and reflect on our next steps. EASA's support, both during the award process and previously, has been invaluable in improving our overall provision. The evidence we provided showcases good practice, and EASA helped guide us through case studies and offered additional training. We learned a great deal, continue to reflect, and adapt our approach. The assessor was supportive, creating a relaxed environment to celebrate our school's progress. We were delighted to achieve the award and are proud of all our pupils, parents, staff and governors who work together to create an inclusive and welcoming environment at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Margaret Payne

Deputy Headteacher & SENDCo - Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Freezywater St George's Primary School

- The school has robust systems to review needs and progress with parents
- They have an adapted Pathway curriculum for pupils who are not yet ready for NC learning
- Staff have a sound understanding of the causes and function of behaviour
- One-page profiles are working documents so that pupils' wishes and needs are regularly updated, shared and used to support transitions.
- Autistic pupils have active roles as School Councillors and Eco Ambassadors

Autism Inclusion Award Achieved

Staff and pupils at **Freezywater St. George's Primary School** were proud to achieve the NAS Autism Inclusion Award in September. The audits and assessments leading up to the award were hugely beneficial in enabling us to think further about how to best support our Autistic pupils, and in helping us to enhance our offer for them. This included identifying areas of need in relation to staff training, considering our physical environment from a sensory perspective, and looking at provision for individuals and groups of children. Through this process, we were then able to create bespoke professional learning opportunities, make adaptations to various areas of our school, and work together with parents, carers and staff to provide further support for children. We are extremely grateful to EASA for all their help and expertise, which really supported and inspired us throughout this process, and we would like to extend a huge thanks especially to Rachel, Jo and Jessica.

Louise Amin

Head of School and SENCo - Freezywater St. George's CE VA Primary School

Enfield's Autism Specialist Resource Provisions (SRPs)

Focus on Firs Farm Primary School

We are really happy at Firs Farm to have been able to welcome families into our new SRP provision (Starlight Class) this September. We have worked hard with the children in our existing SRP (Twinkle Class) for the past 3 years and are looking forward to taking more families on this journey with us. At Firs Farm we endeavour to provide an environment that not only encourages children to reach their full academic potential but also to learn life skills and join in community events. Last year our SRP children enjoyed performing at the Enfield Schools Dance Festival at the Millfield Theatre, lots of Panathlon events at Lee Valley Athletics Centre, including swimming at the Olympic Park and using public transport to visit local parks. Lots of our SRP children take on various roles and responsibilities around the school, including being Ambassadors for Singing Playgrounds, where they teach other children singing rhymes and games and Girls Sport Leaders, where they encouraged girls to be more active in the playground.

Alison West, Assistant Head for Inclusion

A picture of Twinkle Classroom, the autism-specialist provision at Firs Farm Primary School

From September 2024, EASA staff have been working alongside Local Authority SEN Advisors to support the development of the new SRPs and Units. It is great to see provision that enables autistic children to be included, visible and valued as part of their mainstream school communities. We are working hard in partnership with school staff and ECASS colleagues to ensure that all SRPs and Units in the borough have routines, structures and communication systems in place that enable autistic pupils to thrive.

Rachel Walker & Liz Lafferty (EASA Team)

Tips for Managing the Festive Period

Preparing

Many autistic people can find any kind of change difficult. You could:

- Use a calendar or visual timetable to prepare for Christmas, or other festive events, to highlight school days and home days, or the night when a relative is coming to stay
- Talk about Christmas time and what this means for your family
- Make a booklet about Christmas with pictures of Christmas trees, decorations and Christmas food. Consider that, if your family member takes things very literally, they may become anxious if your Christmas does not appear exactly as the pictures
- Liaise with school or college so that the same strategies and visual supports are used as at home, and so that Christmas preparation is started at the same time
- Prepare the person for specific events, e.g. by showing them a photo of a man dressed as Father Christmas

Schedules

Many autistic people have a strong need for routine. You could:

- Keep the daily schedule the same as far as possible, including on Christmas Day
- Incorporate a Christmas activity that they enjoy into their daily schedule, e.g. opening the advent calendar, or switching on the tree lights
- Give them some Christmas-free time on their daily schedule - this could help you to observe anxiety levels and make any adaptations for the rest of the day
- Give them quiet time with a favourite activity in a Christmas-free zone at key moments that may be stressful, such as when other people are opening their presents.

Decorations

Many autistic people may have sensory differences, returning home to find a tree with flashing lights could be a bit of a shock. You could:

- Involve the person in changes to the house, e.g. take them shopping for decorations, let them handle decorations, let them see decorations being hung up, or let them help putting them up
- Consider decorating gradually, e.g. you could put the Christmas tree in position, decorate it the next day, then put up other decorations even later
- Keep things that might overload them away from communal areas, e.g. flashing Christmas lights could go in bedrooms rather than the living room.

Presents

Having many presents could be overwhelming. You could:

- Set a limit on the number of presents, e.g. one from Mum and Dad and one from grandparents - other family members could perhaps give money
- Introduce presents one by one, instead of all at once
- Put out a present next to a favourite item (e.g. a new toy next to a favourite toy)
- Leave their presents unwrapped unless they like the sensation of unwrapping.

Top Tips for Secondary Schools

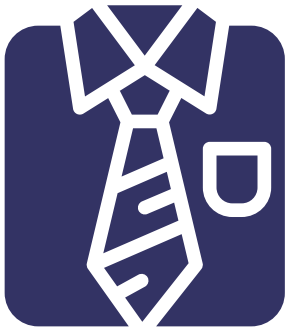
Transport to school – It's best if students become independent travellers. They may need Travel Training to do this. If travelling to school by public transport, they may have difficulties if there are disruptions enroute or any other problems arise. It may be useful for them to carry a 'What if' card that includes strategies and scripts to try if things go wrong.
How to communicate with people and what to ask, e.g. "Excuse me, do you know what has happened to 123 bus?" "What other route could I take?"
Some autistic young people may use an app such as Brain in Hand https://www.braininhand.co.uk/or similar, where these kinds of strategies can be programmed in.

Arriving at school – Students should have a keyworker or named, trusted adult they can speak to in a safe place once they arrive in school if they feel distressed. Transitional times after a holiday can be stressful returning to school, so they may need a 'soft start'.

School routines, procedures & environment

Toilets - Some autistic students have difficulty with interoception (responding to body signals). They may need a 'toilet pass' to use in lesson times if needed. However, the time this takes should be monitored, as the toilet may be used as a place of escape from classroom pressures. In this case, it's better to use a rest break system where they can go to a safe space and continue with work away from the classroom environment.

Uniform - Some adjustments may need to be made if sensory difficulties with uniform are reported. For example, one school allowed a girl to wear a soft polo shirt in the school colours instead of the school white shirt as the sharp-edged collar was causing her great distress and affecting her concentration in class.



Break & Lunch times - These can be times of great stress as they are often unstructured, with many social demands and sensory stimuli. Alternative venues to have lunch could be arranged. Some students may need to go early into the school canteen before the crowds come as this can present many sensory challenges. Autistic students could join existing lunch clubs and could even be encouraged with support to start their own club based on a special interest.

Secondary School: adapting routines, procedures & the environment

Planners and timetables - These are generally well used for all students in many secondary schools. Colour coding may help. Check that autistic students are writing down important things they need to remember, like homework. Any changes in the timetable should be written in with as much notice as possible.

Transitions between lessons - Crowded corridors can cause anxiety so it can help if the student is allowed to leave a lesson early or later. A member of staff or peer buddy could also be an escort especially if there are social relationship difficulties and fears of bullying.

Homework - After school clubs can be very helpful for providing opportunities for support in doing homework. Be aware that some students will be tired at the end of the school day and need to go straight home especially if they have a long journey. Discuss approaches to homework with the student and parents.

School profiles and information cards - Each member of staff should have a profile of the student which includes their strengths and interests that can be built upon for motivation and engagement with learning. The profile also need to include details of reasonable adjustments that should be put in place in class. Students should be consulted about reasonable adjustments. They could also compose a small card with one or two things which they think are vital for them in class. These could be discreetly given to new and temporary teachers.

Sessions for Parents and Carers

The new Supporting Self-Care workshops, led by our expert team, Occupational Therapist Jessica Patel and Parent Support Advisors, Jacky Stevenson and Marsha Walton, was a great success this term. New dates for Spring and Summer are live to book on our website. Please visit the Events & Training section to book your place.

> *As ever, the course was extremely beneficial. Thank you for running such informative courses in an incredibly supportive and encouraging fashion. Please pass on my thanks to all the team.*

Parent feedback from Autumn workshop

What's coming up in Spring Term 2025

Sessions for Parents and Carers

Cuppa and Chats:
For those with Early Years and Primary-aged children: 9th January, 13th February (joint age-phases), 13th March

For those with Secondary and Post-16 aged Children &Young People: 16th January, 13th February (joint age-phases), 20th March

Russet House School, Autumn Close, from 9:30am - 11am.

Time to Play (children 18 months and 3 years 6 months):
6th February, 6th March, 3rd April

Supporting Self-Care Workshops (children under 12):
Starts - Wednesday 15th January 10:00am-12:00pm

Family Enablement Program:
(Abridged SAFE: Systemic Autism Related Family Enabling)
Dates coming soon, keep checking our website.

Therapeutic Sessions for Children and Young People

Therapeutic Groups for Children aged 11-16:

- PEERS (abridged)
- Tree of Life

Please email us if you are interested in taking part in these groups and we will contact you with a date for an introductory session in the Spring term with a view to offer the course in summer and autumn 2025. Sessions will take place on Thursdays 16:15-17:15.

AET Training

AET Training for Staff in Educational Settings and Parents & Carers
Modules coming soon:

- Good Autism Practice
- Making Sense of Autism
- Developing Play
- Developing Toileting
- Autism and Inclusion Part 1 & 2 ***(Professionals Only)***

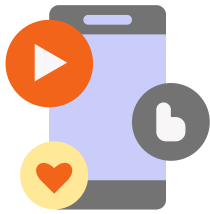
Autism Education Trust — Regional Partner

All About Me - Dates coming soon, keep checking our website.

For all sessions and training dates please visit our website for more information and to register your place.

Follow - Like - Share

We love hearing how our service has impacted the community from small to big changes! So we invite you to tag EASA and share social media posts so we can all reach the wider community.



If you're not following us already, you can search our Facebook Page:

Enfield Advisory Service for Autism

Coffee Mornings in Schools

EASA continues to be invited to schools in the borough to present at their coffee mornings. These are a great opportunity for community building. All parents can be invited, giving autism families a chance to get together as well as helping others learn more about autism and creating a stronger autism friendly community.

If you would like us to attend a Coffee Morning at your school please email admin@enfieldasa.org.uk

Let EASA hear your thoughts!

Have you worked with EASA in the last year?
Attended a Cuppa & Chat session or been to AET training?
Have you spoken with a member of the team?

Then we would love to hear from you!

We always like to receive feedback from parents and professionals, as we believe this contributes to developing and improving our services further.
Please take a minute to scan the QR code below to leave us a google review.

If you can't find the help you need or if you would like more information on our services, please get in touch.

Enfield Advisory Service for Autism
Bell Lane, Enfield, EN3 5PA
07921 298 440
admin@enfieldasa.org.uk
www.enfieldasa.org.uk

ENFIELD Council