

Autism Spectrum Condition – Early Years

By Roisin Philip

The child I am going to talk about is a pupil with Autism. He joined our school in Nursery, just after his second birthday and by the time he entered my Reception classroom, he had an Educational Health Care Plan to support him. To ensure I effectively supported him with his learning when he transitioned from nursery to reception, I used the graduated approach.

Assess (these heading do not need to be read aloud. They are just for editing purposes)

During the assess phase, I started by trying to gain an understanding of the pupil as an individual to understand what their learning needs might be. To do this I made use of any available data - I spoke to the previous class teacher about how they had supported him in Nursery, whether there had been any interventions, timetable changes or any other resources used to support him. I looked through his EHCP to identify what his targets were and spoke to the SENCO for further guidance on how I could support him to achieve these targets through adaptive teaching.

Plan

From the assess phase, it became apparent that the pupil struggled with different sensory experiences and became discomforted when touching different textures. Therefore, during the planning stage, I focused on planning for strategies that would support and develop his ability to cope with different sensory experiences. After speaking with the SENDCo, I planned to provide the pupil with 3 different activities each week to work towards his sensory targets. The activities I planned for him to do were touching rainbow slime, painting using his fingers and playing with farm animals that were in a tray of foam.

Do

To implement these activities in the classroom, I put the activities in what we call his 'challenge box'. This is a tray in the classroom that is set up just for him. In the tray, there was one activity for him to access at a time. These activities were sometimes carried out with me, and sometimes with his 1:1 learning support assistant, although, he was encouraged to access and complete these activities independently. Once he completed one activity, it was replaced with a different one. He was encouraged to complete the three activities several times over the course of the week.

Review

During the review phase, I met with other stakeholders to discuss the progress the pupil has made. In our school. We do the 'review' element at the end of each term to see how the pupil has developed, which helps to inform their next steps. The pupil met his targets, so we used any new data we had to begin the cycle again and set new ones. These targets were focused on progressing sensory needs further. For example, one of his new targets was freezing dinosaur eggs which I planned to implement by myself. These were in his challenge boxes to access, I encouraged him to access them throughout the morning session.

The process of assess, plan, do, review, is continually used to shape the support around the changing needs of the pupil as they progress throughout the year and their school journey. It has helped him to make good progress towards his targets and his confidence to touch new objects in the classroom and at home is has grown. He says he feels happy in school and this is reflected in his behaviour.