# ASD Approaches

at

Arbour Vale School

28 January, 2025

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# Agenda

1. Introduction
2. ASD strategies
3. Sensory regulation activities and sensory circuits
4. Zones of regulations
5. Appendix A: Other useful home strategies for ASD pupils

# Introduction

# ASD Classes

Within Arbour Vale School there are classes specifically set up for pupils on the Autistic Spectrum. In addition, many of our pupils have associated learning difficulties, specific sensory, behavioural, medical, social or emotional needs.

## Do the ASD classes have their own curriculum?

The classes follow the department's curriculum and participate in its activities, such as assemblies, shows and sport events. Lessons and activities are differentiated according to the individual needs of the students.

**ASD classes are integrated into the 4 departments:**

**Early Years -** 6 classes

**Primary -** 10 classes

**Secondary** - 8 classes

**Post-16** - 2 class

# ASD Strategies

***'To help children with autism, we don't need to change them or fix them. We need to work to understand them, and then change what we do'***

Barry Prizant (Uniquely Human)

## 'What do ASD classes offer pupils?'

**Structure and routine**– To work *with* ASD individuals learning preferences. To increase predictability therefore decrease anxiety, increase wellbeing & provide a secure framework within which pupils can focus and learn.

**Teaching areas** – To aid situational understanding, so pupils' haves some idea what they will do when they arrive at a particular area. Making things predictable.

**Visual supports** – ASD students are visual learners and have an interest in visual details therefore they learn well through visual channels. Visual supports can then be used to support their relatively weaker skills.

**Visual Personalised timetables** – For information. To inform pupils what happens, when and in what order. As a means of informing pupils of unexpected change. To show them the passage of time. To promote independence and less reliance on adults. To encourage communication. To learn to reference a timetable for information – something which can be continued throughout their lives and can be adapted over time to suit each individuals level of understanding.

**Tidy work spaces** – In order to help pupils concentrate on the task in hand. Remove all external distractions for more focussed learning.

**Sensory circuits** – Some pupils are unable to concentrate on their learning if they are affected by sensory issues. Some pupils require sensory input in order to self-regulate.

**Attention  Autism** – E.g. Bucket sessions, helping children to engage and focus on learning tasks.

**The carousel system -** works by incorporating different types of learning. In a mainstream school children work alongside the teacher, independently and with their peers. The carousel system aims to include all these areas.

# Using Routines

We all follow routines in life

- People with ASD enjoy routines
- Routines can be used to encourage interactions
- Support independence such as timetables
- Routines can be developed which:
- Involve other people
- develop independence (e.g. dressing)

# What is Autism?

- Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them. It is not an illness and cannot be 'cured'.
- Autism is a spectrum condition. All autistic people share certain difficulties, but being autistic will affect them in different ways.
- Some autistic people also have learning disabilities, mental health issues or other conditions such as ADHD or Sensory Processing Disorder, meaning people need different levels of support.
- The characteristics of autism vary from one person to another, but in order for a diagnosis to be made, a person will usually be assessed as having had persistent difficulties with social communication and social interaction and restricted or repetitive patterns of behaviours, activities or interests since early childhood, to the extent that these limit and impair everyday functioning.
- Autistic individuals often experience Sensory Processing difficulties causing them to see, hear and feel the world differently from other people.

# Social Communication

*Autistic people have difficulties interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language like gestures or tone of voice. Many have a very literal understanding of language, and think people mean exactly what they say. They may find it difficult to use or understand: facial expressions, tone of voice, jokes and sarcasm.*

**Communicating with ASD children…**

- Always use the child's name when addressing them so they know you are talking to them.
- Make sure they are paying attention before you ask a question or give an instruction.
- Use their special interest, or the activity they are currently doing, to engage them.
- An autistic child can find it difficult to filter out the less important information. If there is too much information it can lead to 'overload', where no further information can be processed.
- Say less and say it slowly.
- Pause between words and phrases to give the child time to process what you've said, and to give them a chance to respond.
- Don't use too many questions.
- Use Visual Supports (e.g. symbols, timetables, Social Stories).
- Be aware of the environment (noisy/crowded) that you are in. Sensory input may be affecting how much they can process.
- Remember: Behaviour is communication - look into the reasons behind it.

# Social Interaction

*Autistic people often have difficulty 'reading' other people - recognising or understanding others' feelings and intentions as well as difficulty expressing their own emotions.*

This can make it very hard for them to navigate the social world. They may:

- Appear to be insensitive or seek out time alone when overloaded by other people.
- Not seek comfort from other people
- Appear to behave 'strangely' or in a way thought to be socially inappropriate.
- Find it hard to form friendships
- Want to interact with other people and make friends, but may be unsure how to go about it.

# Repetitive behaviour and routines

- The world can seem a very unpredictable and confusing place to autistic people, who often prefer to have a daily routine so that they know what is going to happen every day, e.g. they may want to always travel the same way to and from school or work, or eat exactly the same food for breakfast. A resistance to change or transition is common.

- Structure, order and predictability help Autistic individuals to gain some control over their environment. Repetitive movements, obsessions and rituals act as a counterbalance to the chaos they feel in their environment.

- Many autistic people have intense and highly-focused interests, often from a fairly young age. These can change over time or be lifelong, and can be anything from art, writing or music, to trains or computers.

# Sensory regulation activities and sensory circuits

# Sensory Processing

Autistic people often experience Sensory Processing difficulties which can manifest as an over or under-responsive sensitivity to the senses. The sensory experiences of sound, sight, touch, taste and smell can therefore be different from that of a neuro-typical individual. The Vestibular System may also be affected.

For example, an Autistic child may..

- Find certain background sounds, which other people ignore or block out, unbearably loud or distracting. This can cause anxiety or even physical pain.
- Be fascinated by lights, colours or spinning objects.
- Have an aversion to certain textures or tastes.
- Seek deep pressure or avoid touch entirely.
- Experience pain or temperature differently.
- Smell certain foods and materials that we would not consider smelling.
- Experience problems with balance, co-ordination and spatial awareness.

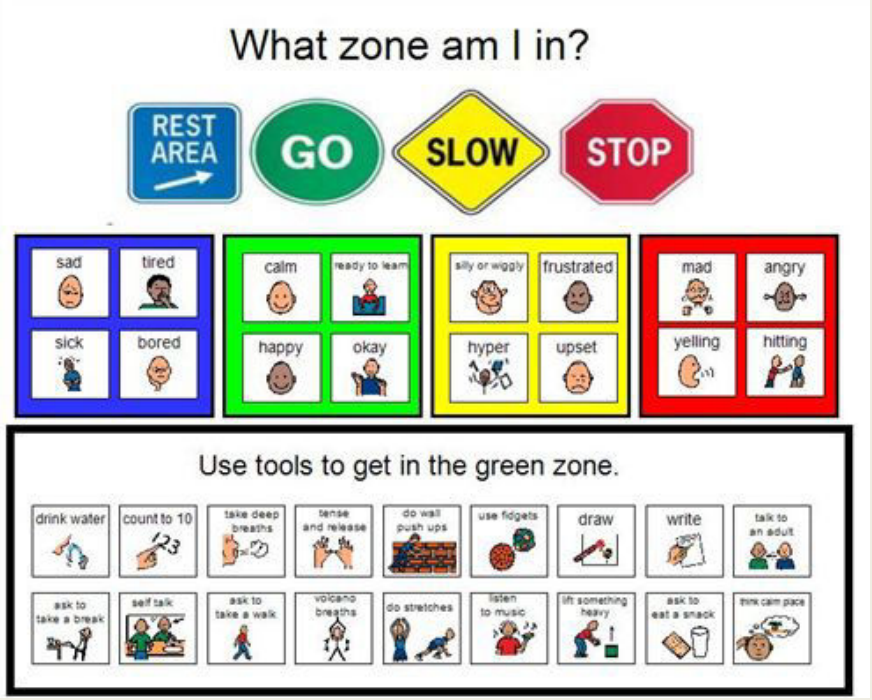
# In Practice: Sensory Circuits

- Sensory circuits are short motor skills programme which helps children to get ready for their school day.
- ALERTING: these are very brisk, quick alerting exercise to help the body to wake up. This could be bouncing or rolling over a therapy ball jumping or step-up/ skipping/ dancing, bunny hops and crab walks, bouncing on trampette.
- ORGANISING: This are activities which challenge the child and help them to organise their body, plan space and do more than one thing at one time. Activities such has hopping on coloured spots, walking along a bench, throwing objects into targets ball catching/wobble boards, blowing bubbles, skittles throwing/rolling a hoop along a line.
- CALMING These are activities that will calm the calm and give the child proprioceptive input. Deep pressure, laying under a blanket, having a therapy ball rolled over them and massage can be included.

# Zones of Regulations

# Emotional regulation strategies

- Zones of regulation

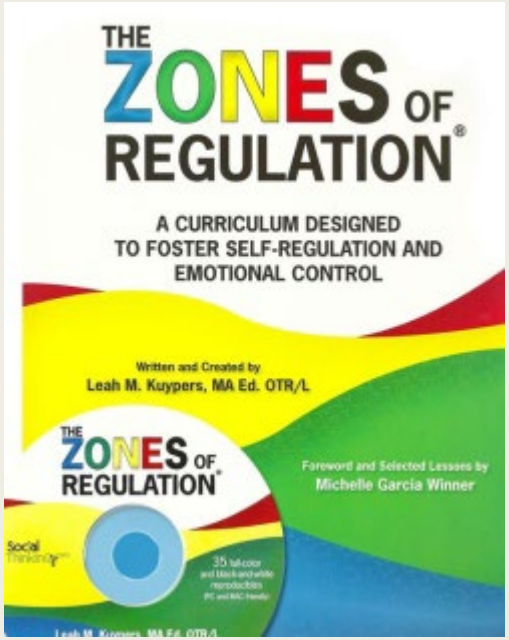



- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1cnNsTPRaA

# Zones of Regulation Aims

- Recognise our feelings (physiological, emotional & cognitive)
- Express our feelings
- Manage our feelings positively e.g. without hurting ourselves or others

- www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html



# Rationale

If a child cannot read we teach

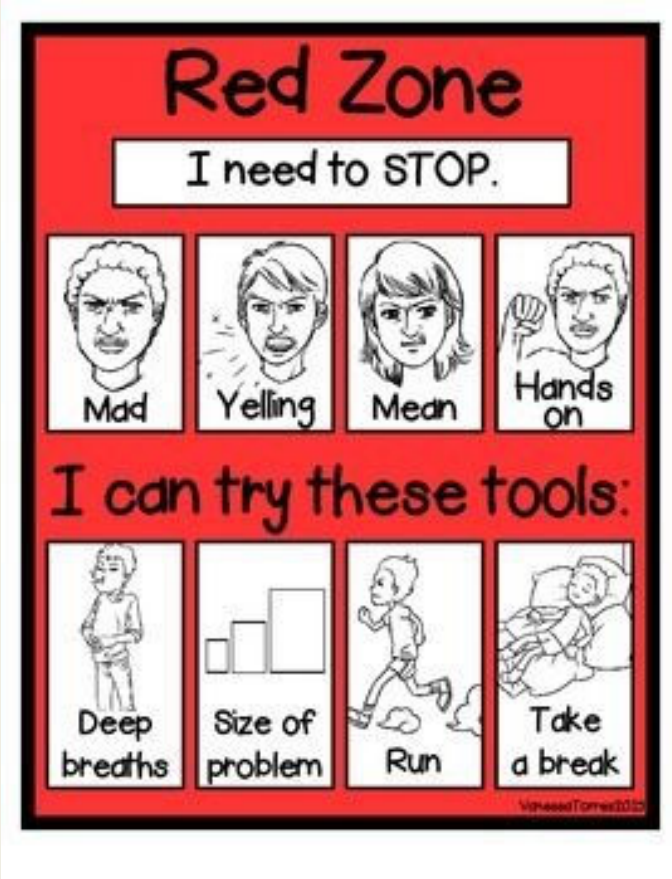
If a child cannot swim we teach

If a child cannot multiply we teach

If a child cannot behave we …

# Tools – Red Zone

- Ask for help
- Take a break/ time out
- Muscle relaxation
- Find a safe space
- Go for a run

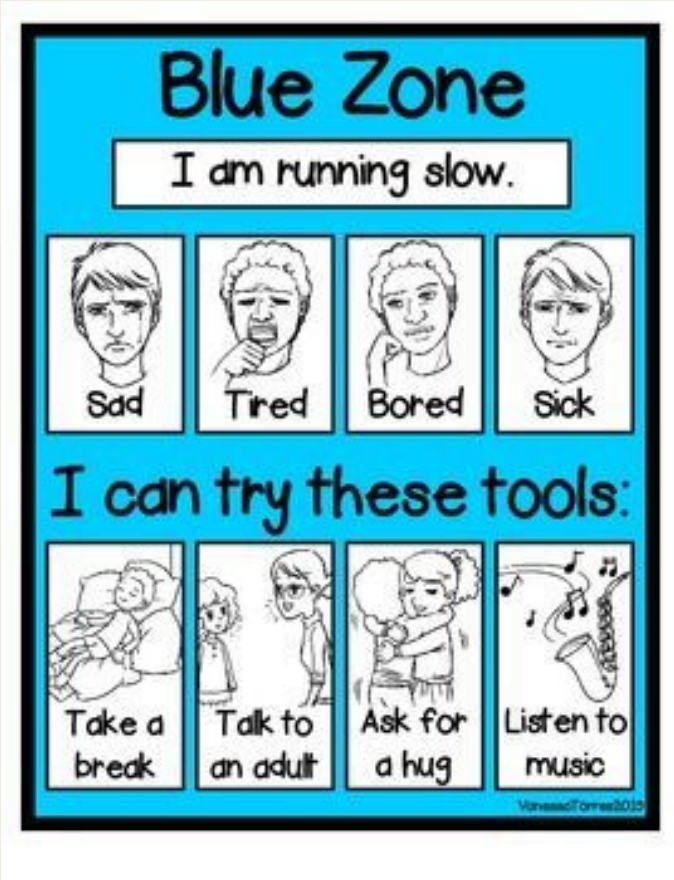


# Tools – Yellow Zone

- Talk to an adult
- Look at emotion cards
- Take deep breaths
- Squeeze something
- Draw a picture
- Sensory circuits
- Fidget toy
- Dark tent

# Tools – Blue Zone

- Talk to an adult
- Look at emotion cards
- Stretch
- Stand
- Take a walk
- Have a drink
- Sensory circuits



# Tools – Green Zone

- Ready to learn
- Celebrate your success!

# Appendix A: Other useful classroom strategies for ASD pupils

*'To help children with autism, we don't need to change them or fix them. We need to work to understand them, and then change what we do'*

Barry Prizant (Uniquely Human)

| Do | Don't |
|---|---|
| • Get to know the child<br>• Know likes and dislikes<br>• Understand sensory needs<br>• Understand how they communicate<br>• Speak clearly and use visuals cues<br>• Give processing time<br>• Encourage independence | • Assume they don't understand<br>• Talk about them rather than to them<br>• Overload them with language<br>• Give unrealistic consequences<br>• Repeat instructions multiple times without giving processing time |

# Using Timetables and Symbols

**Remember**

- Symbols are concrete and lasting
- Allow for processing time by having the symbol where it can be easily seen
- Refer to the timetable where possible
- Make timetables and folders part of the routine
- Use symbols to support learning, verbal prompts and instructions

# How can we help?

- Inform -don’t assume they know
- Have positive behaviour approach-tell them what they should be doing.
- Use language that is appropriate
- Support verbal communication with other forms of communication
- Allow time to process and be patient!
- Have high expectations-assume they can do it!