



Autism  
Education  
Trust

Early Years

# Competency Framework

This framework can be used by practitioners as a self-reflection tool that enables them to evaluate their practice when supporting autistic children



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# Introduction to the AET Early Years Competency Framework

**The Autism Education Trust (AET) Early Years Competency Framework provides guidance that enables practitioners to reflect upon and evaluate their own practice when working with autistic children.**

The Framework can be used by childminders and practitioners in a range of early years settings. This includes preschools, nurseries, children's centres, and schools. It is an ongoing self-reflection tool that enables practitioners to:

- Self-assess their skills and competencies.
- Identify priority areas to work on.
- Decide which aspects of their practice require further development.
- Consider their professional development needs.
- Seek appropriate professional development.

The Competencies also support practitioners to meet the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021), the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (2014), and their equality duties whilst complying with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2019).



## Why is it important to have specific competencies for staff working with autistic children?

Autistic children often face significant barriers to learning within the educational environment. These can be overcome by ensuring we create supportive teaching environments that are structured, consistent and respectful of differences. The environment that autistic children require is one that should be saturated in high quality and inclusive teaching.

Practitioners need to be aware of the three key areas of difference in autism and how they influence the way in which autistic children learn and experience their educational settings. Knowledge about autism and these areas of difference is crucial for understanding autistic children. Staff need to take into account differences in:

- Social understanding and communication.
- Flexibility, information processing and understanding.
- Sensory processing and integration.
- Autistic children often have uneven or spiky development, and each autistic child will have their own unique profile. They may excel in one area but require additional support in another.
- Autistic children often have additional co-occurring conditions and differences alongside a diagnosis of autism. As with all children, co-occurring conditions and differences need to be considered in educational planning.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage and the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:8).

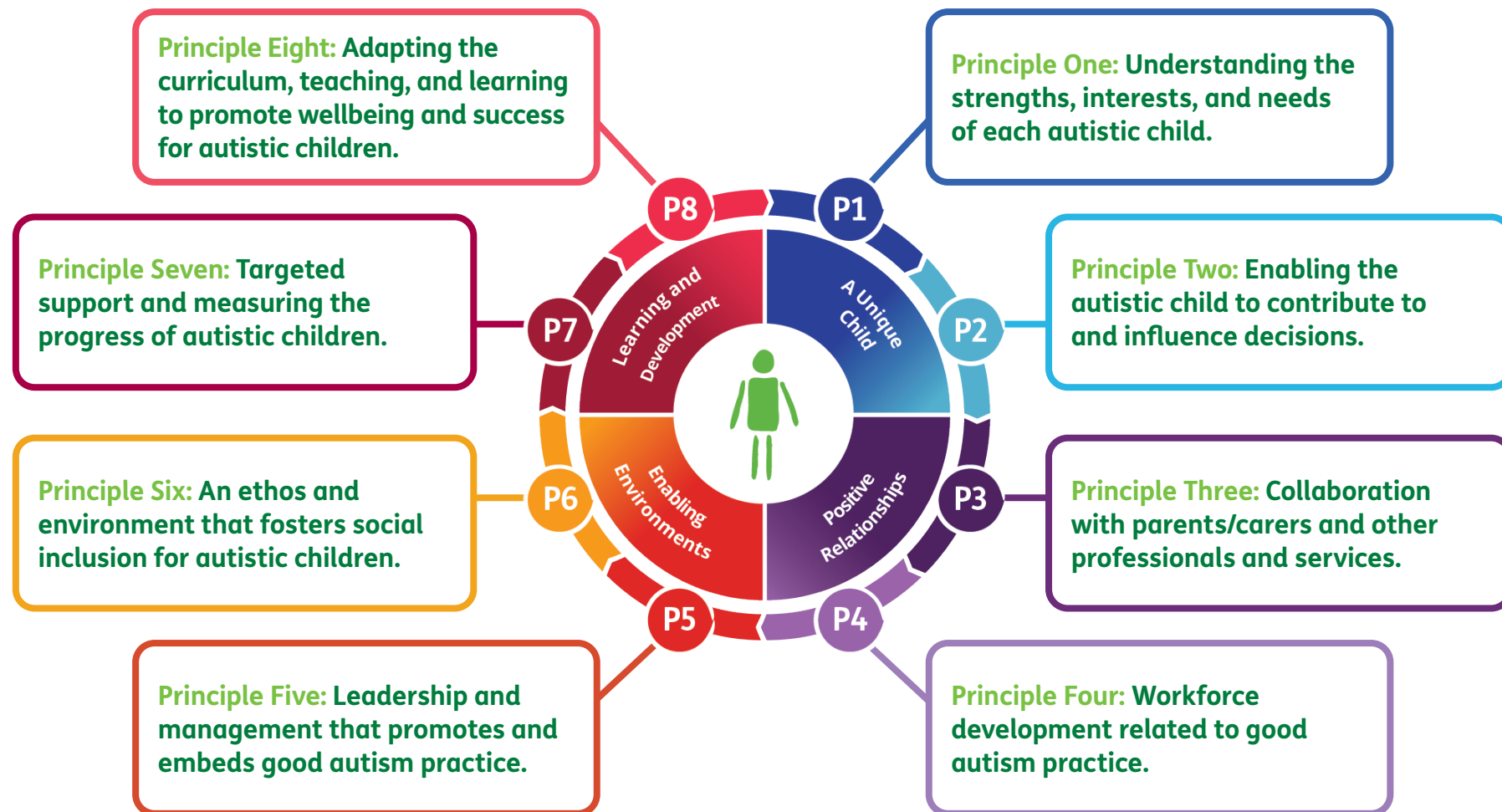
All schools and registered Ofsted providers must follow the statutory framework. This includes childminders, preschools, nurseries, and school reception classes.

The AET Early Years Competencies align with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS handbook, 2021) and are embedded within the EYFS themes. They are also structured around the AET's Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice that guide the development of good autism practice when working with autistic children and their families.

The eight principles have emerged from an examination of the current evidence from research and practice, as well as key policies and the perspectives and insights of autistic individuals (Guldberg et al., 2019). The reports outlining this work are available on the [Autism Education Trust](#) website. They consist of a full report on good autism practice, a practitioner guide and a suite of case studies.

# The Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice

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



# The Eight Inclusion Promises

The AET is supported by a panel of Autistic Young Experts to share the voices of autistic young people.

The Panel brings their diverse experiences in different types of education to our work, including the creation of our professional development programmes.

To ensure the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice are accessible, the Panel created the Eight Inclusion Promises for autistic children to better understand what staff should be doing to support them.

## We promise to:

- 1 Understand what you are good at, what you like doing, and when you might need help.
- 2 Listen to and act upon your ideas about how we can help you if you need it.
- 3 Listen to and work with the people who know you best and who you trust.
- 4 Make sure we are always progressing towards your goals and aspirations.
- 5 Make sure all staff know the best way to support you, both in and out of lessons.
- 6 Help you to get involved and be included in the activities you wish to participate in.
- 7 Work together to set achievable goals that are important to you, and that help you see how well you are doing.
- 8 Help you to feel safe, secure, empowered, and able to learn.

# AET Early Years Professional Development Programme

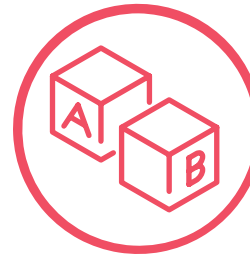
The AET Early Years Competency Framework is part of the Early Years Professional Development Programme. This Programme contains a set of modules and materials for staff working in early years across mainstream and specialist settings.

In addition to the Competencies the AET Early Years Professional Development Programme consists of:

- The AET Early Years Standards Framework that enables leaders or leadership groups within schools to enhance and embed inclusive practice in their settings.
- The AET Progression Framework, a comprehensive interactive assessment tool that supports practitioners to identify learning priorities, set key learning intentions, and track progress for autistic children and young people in both mainstream and specialist educational provisions.

The AET Early Years Professional Development Programme also has a range of training modules for those working in early years educational settings. For further information, please visit the AET website:

[www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/training](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/training)



## Early Years

### Modules

Making Sense of Autism

Good Autism Practice

Progression Framework

### Elective topic based modules

Anxiety Module

Inclusion Module

### Editable framework documents

Standards Framework

Competency Framework

Progression Framework

### Leadership Resources

Leadership Modules

GAP Resources

## At a Glance:

The four key themes, the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice, the AET Early Years Standards, and the AET Early Years Competencies.



The following tables outline how the four themes, the Eight Principles of Good Autism Practice, the AET Early Years Standards, and the AET Early Years Competencies are interlinked.





## A Unique Child

### Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests, and needs of each autistic child.

#### STANDARDS

**S1.** We are committed to developing knowledge about autism, and we gather information from a range of sources to fully understand the individual autistic child.

**S2.** We take into account how each child's co-occurring conditions and differences, including anxiety and stress, can affect behaviour and cause barriers to learning. We are committed to understanding the causes and functions of a child's behaviour.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C1.** I identify the key strengths and differences of autistic children in the areas of social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing and understanding, and sensory processing and integration.

**C2.** I understand that many autistic children have co-occurring conditions and differences. They experience high levels of anxiety and stress, and these can create barriers to learning. I know that a child may display behaviour based on a combination of factors and I work hard to understand the causes and functions of the behaviour.

### Principle Two: Enabling the autistic child to contribute to and influence decisions.

#### STANDARDS

**S3.** We use child-centred approaches to consult and involve children in any decisions being made.

**S4.** We provide play and learning opportunities that are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and that take into account their autism. We involve children as partners in their learning goals.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C3.** I include, consult, and support children to communicate their experiences. I understand the importance of observing and listening to the child. I regularly involve children in any decisions being made.

**C4.** I see the child as a partner in their learning and actively involve autistic children in the development of their learning goals.





## Positive Relationships

### Principle Three: Collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals and services.

#### STANDARDS

**S5.** We actively listen to and involve parents/carers in contributing to decisions about their child's education and future aspirations.

**S6.** We work collaboratively with health, social care, and other professionals to improve educational experiences and outcomes for autistic children.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C5.** I engage and build up trust with parents/carers to establish and develop ways of communicating and sharing information, ideas, and progress.

**C6.** I collaborate with health, social care, and other professionals to improve educational experiences and outcomes for autistic children.

### Principle Four: Workforce development related to good autism practice.

#### STANDARDS

**S7.** We show a commitment to continuing professional development on autism across our staff and ensure they receive ongoing training that is appropriate to their role.

**S8.** We audit staff confidence levels, understanding and knowledge of autism, and the changes staff make to their practice as a result of undertaking professional development.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C7.** I engage in professional development that enables me to address the needs of autistic children and to enhance and embed inclusive practice.

**C8.** I reflect on, note down, and gather data on the implications of my learning and development for my own practice, and ultimately for the autistic child/children I work with.



## Enabling Environments

### Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice.

#### STANDARDS

**S9.** We promote a supportive environment where leaders and managers are knowledgeable about autism and cascade information to their staff. We encourage our staff to reflect upon, discuss, and evaluate their practice.

**S10.** We develop mutual understanding, communication, and support between autistic children and staff, between autistic children and their peers, and between parents/carers and staff.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C9.** I create enabling environments based on what I know of the individual child and through making reasonable adjustments accordingly.

**C10.** I create positive, supportive, and caring relationships, between autistic children and staff, between autistic children and their peers, and between parents/carers and staff.

### Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic children.

#### STANDARDS

**S11.** Our enabling approaches foster a calm, low-arousal learning environment and we promote a sense of wellbeing, security, and belonging for our autistic children.

**S12.** Our learning environments are structured, understandable, and predictable. We adapt learning environments to enable children to participate fully in learning and play.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C11.** I understand the importance of focusing on identifying and addressing barriers to learning in the three areas of difference, namely social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing, and understanding; and sensory processing and integration.

**C12.** I provide a clearly organised learning environment that takes into account the needs of autistic children.



## Learning and Development

### Principle Seven: Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic children.

#### STANDARDS

**S13.** We use a holistic approach to assessment that includes a child's sensory needs, emotional wellbeing, and preferred way of communicating, interacting, playing, and learning.

**S14.** We develop and implement targeted child-centred support plans in partnership with the child and parents. These are regularly reviewed to monitor progress.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C13.** When assessing progress towards learning goals, I have a holistic approach that builds on strengths and interests, whilst addressing skills and understanding that autistic children may find difficult as a result of their autism.

**C14.** I am involved in the development and implementation of child-centred support plans in partnership with children, parents and other staff.

### Principle Eight: Adapting the curriculum, teaching, and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic children.

#### STANDARDS

**S15.** We provide a broad, flexible, and balanced EYFS curriculum that addresses the learning needs of autistic children and their social and emotional well-being, communication needs, and life skills.

**S16.** We always promote positive attitudes towards autism and have high expectations for all of our children and staff.

#### COMPETENCIES

**C15.** I strive to understand autistic children and I adapt the learning environment and my teaching approaches to provide high-quality support for autistic children.

**C16.** I promote positive attitudes towards autism and have high expectations for all the children I work with.

# How to use the AET Early Years Competency Framework

The AET Early Years Competencies can be completed by an individual member of staff or a small group of staff. The individual or group can rate their knowledge and skills against the set of examples that outline good autism practice. Not all staff will be in the position to develop and implement each of the competencies in full, but all staff will benefit from having as much involvement as possible.


We suggest that the practitioner or team of practitioners reflects on which of the AET Early Years Competencies they have identified as a priority for them, and then uses the Next Steps Action Plan for deciding which ones will be worked on and the timescales involved.

For each competency, you should aim to collect:

- Documentary evidence (e.g. records of training events, assess, plan, do, review documentation, accounts from children, child outcomes, observation schedules, and policy documents).
- Photographs, or video clips of relevant practice.

1. Give each competency, and each example under that competency, a RAG (red, amber, green) rating:

 **Room for improvement:** I need to undertake further professional development to develop practice in this area.

 **Developing:** I have started working on this area of practice.

 **I do this really well:** My practice is well developed in this area.

2. Use this information to decide which of the AET Early Years Competencies are the most important for you to focus on at this moment in time.
3. Document your evidence for those competencies that you have rated as amber or green. The examples provided will help you here but you can also provide other evidence.
4. Using the Next Steps Action Plan, document your priorities for the competencies that need improvement and include specified timeframes for implementation.
5. Collecting data allows you to monitor the progress of identified improvement areas against your agreed timeframes.

# Theme one: A Unique Child





# A Unique Child

**Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests, and needs of each autistic child.**

**Competency One:** I identify the key strengths and differences of autistic children in the areas of social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing and understanding, and sensory processing and integration.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Examples of how I can do this:

I have a good understanding of the main areas of difference of autistic children. I understand that autistic children may develop differently from their peers and are likely to have an uneven profile of abilities.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I gather information from a wide variety of sources about the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child. This includes drawing on observations and/or discussions with the autistic child, discussions with their carers and other professionals who work with them, and from previous reports and assessments.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I observe the child in at least four different settings (e.g. in the playground; during a structured classroom activity, in PE, and working independently). These help me to understand the child's strengths, interests, and ways of learning in a range of environments.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Links to statutory frameworks

Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:6).



## A Unique Child

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

#### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:





# A Unique Child

**Principle One: Understanding the strengths, interests, and needs of each autistic child.**

**Competency Two:** I understand that many autistic children have co-occurring conditions and differences. They experience high levels of anxiety and stress, and these can create barriers to learning. I know that a child may display behaviour based on a combination of factors and I work hard to understand the causes and functions of the behaviour.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Examples of how I can do this:

I have a good understanding of autism and co-occurring conditions. I am able to develop a holistic understanding of the child's individual needs based on this knowledge.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I work closely with the child, parents/carers, and other staff to identify and understand the reasons for and the functions of behaviour, particularly if they that signify distress. I use positive behavioural support for learning, and functional behavioural analysis to understand the functions of behaviours, and plan effective and individualised approaches.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I record any co-occurring conditions and differences of children I work with in the one page child profile and I ensure medical records are up-to-date.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Links to statutory frameworks

Providers must have and implement a behaviour management policy, and procedures. A named practitioner should be responsible for behaviour management in every setting (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:23).

A detailed assessment of need should ensure that the full range of an individual's needs is identified, not simply the primary need. The support provided to an individual should always be based on a full understanding of their particular strengths and needs and seek to address them all (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:96).





## A Unique Child

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

#### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



# A Unique Child

**Principle Two: Enabling the autistic child to contribute to and influence decisions.**

**Competency Three:** I include, consult, and support children to communicate their experiences. I understand the importance of observing and listening to the child. I regularly involve children in any decisions being made.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Examples of how I can do this:

I recognise that autistic children learn in different ways and at different rates. I use a range of tools with the child to find out what they enjoy, what they find difficult, what they are good at, and how others can help them.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I support and encourage each child to use their preferred means of communication to convey their views, experiences e.g. their likes /dislikes.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

All one page profiles, education support plans, and Education, Health and Care plans have up to date information about the child and families' hopes, dreams and aspirations.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Links to statutory frameworks

Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and all providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:31).

Childminders are encouraged to identify a person to act as a SENCO and childminders who are registered with a childminder agency or who are part of a network may wish to share the role between them (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:31).



## A Unique Child

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

#### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



## A Unique Child

**Principle Two: Enabling the autistic child to contribute to and influence decisions.**

**Competency Four: I see the child as a partner in their learning and actively involve autistic children in the development of their learning goals.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I identify individual priorities for the individual child for that particular point in time in partnership with the child, parents/carer, and staff.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

Once I have identified individual priorities for children, I set short-term goals, then implement support for learning, followed by reviewing and recording progress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I provide learning and development opportunities that are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and that take into account their autism.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child established the right of all children to express their views and to have these views listened to and taken seriously when decisions are being made that affect them.



## A Unique Child

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:

# Theme two: Positive Relationships







# Positive Relationships

**Principle Three: Collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals and services.**

**Competency Five:** I engage and build up trust with parents/carers to establish and develop ways of communicating and sharing information, ideas, and progress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Examples of how I can do this:

I facilitate the exchange of information between practitioners, home, and relevant professionals. This includes identified special educational needs, the provision required to meet these needs and the child and parent/carers wishes.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I am aware of the importance of understanding the needs of parents. This includes parents who themselves may have diagnosed or undiagnosed autism as well as families from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I talk to parents and carers sensitively about their child's special educational needs, including any pre-diagnostic concerns if and when that might be appropriate.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Links to statutory frameworks

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships (EYFS statutory framework, 2021).

Local authorities, Early Years providers and schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about the child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:21).



## Positive Relationships

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



## Positive Relationships

**Principle Three: Collaboration with parents/carers and other professionals and services.**

**Competency Six: I collaborate with health, social care, and other professionals to improve educational experiences and outcomes for autistic children.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I engage in or contribute to joint planning and working with health and education professionals beyond the setting to support language, communication, and emotional wellbeing, and to create an environment conducive to learning (this includes Educational psychology, CAHMS, specialist autism teams, careers guidance, and transition support service).

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I am aware that the SEND Code of Practice highlights the importance of the Team Around the Child working in a multi-agency way. For example, this can include drawing up a plan of action that might lead to an Education, Health, and Care Plan.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I am confident in knowing who the Team Around the Child is and how and when I might need their professional input.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

An EYFS profile completed by a practitioner alone only offers a partial picture of a child's attainment. Practitioners must actively engage children, their parents and other adults who have significant interaction with the child in the assessment process (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:15).

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action (Keeping children safe in education, 2020:5).



## Positive Relationships

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



# Positive Relationships

**Principle Four: Workforce development related to good autism practice.**

**Competency Seven: I engage in professional development that enables me to address the needs of autistic children and to enhance and embed inclusive practice.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Examples of how I can do this:

My ongoing professional development includes self-directed learning, mentoring and coaching, discussion, and collaboration with colleagues.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I consult with my line manager, and/or the Lead Practitioner and SENCO regarding my professional development needs.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I have attended training in autism and common co-occurring conditions that is relevant to my role and will or have scheduled refresher training.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Links to statutory frameworks

The local authority must set out information in its Local Offer on securing expertise among teachers, lecturers or other professionals to support children and young people with SEN or disabilities. This should include professional development to secure expertise at different levels (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:68).



## Positive Relationships

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



## Positive Relationships

**Principle Four: Workforce development related to good autism practice.**

**Competency Eight:** I reflect on, note down, and gather data on the implications of my learning and development for my own practice, and ultimately for the autistic child/children I work with.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I reflect on whether my own interactions and communications are enhancing the learning and wellbeing of the children I work with, and carefully consider the adaptations I need to make to my practice.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I reflect on and observe the impact of approaches and strategies I use with individual children and I change those if needed.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I reflect upon, discuss, and evaluate my practice in partnership with other staff.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

The daily experience of children in early years settings and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:21).





## Positive Relationships

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:

# Theme three: Enabling Environments





## Enabling Environments

**Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice.**

**Competency Nine: I create enabling environments based on what I know of the individual child and through making reasonable adjustments accordingly.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I am aware of the different forms of disability discrimination and our setting's legal duties under the Equality Act (2014) and am aware of my statutory obligation to create enabling environments through making reasonable adjustments.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I consider how autism affects an individual child (including levels of anxiety and stress) and whether reasonable adjustments have been made to support them.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I am aware of and adhere to the setting's SEND policy, Inclusion Statement and any other policies that may have a direct impact on autistic children.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

The learning and development requirements are informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations for good future progress. Early years providers must guide the development of children's capabilities with a view to ensuring that children in their care complete the EYFS ready to benefit fully from the opportunities ahead of them (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:4).



## Enabling Environments

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

#### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



## Enabling Environments

**Principle Five: Leadership and management that promotes and embeds good autism practice.**

**Competency Ten: I create positive, supportive, and caring relationships, between autistic children and staff, between autistic children and their peers, and between parents/carers and staff.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I create an inclusive learning environment through promoting positive attitudes and behaviours toward autistic children at all times.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I implement approaches to develop mutual understanding, positive communication and support between autistic children and their peers. I build effective relationships by actively listening to and observing children, and by communicating regularly and positively with parents/carers.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I understand that an autistic child might find it difficult to tolerate and accept the presence of others and I support the child to work towards a shared interest or enjoyment of activities.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

The learning environment should provide balance across the areas of learning. Integral to this is an ethos that:

- respects each child as an individual
- values children's efforts, interests and purposes as instrumental to successful learning (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:11).



## Enabling Environments

### How do I document evidence of working on this competency?

I document evidence of working on this competency through case studies, keeping one page profiles and support plans up to date, making reasonable adjustments and recording the impact of these.

#### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

#### On my own practice:

#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



## Enabling Environments

**Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic children.**

**Competency Eleven:** I understand the importance of focusing on identifying and addressing barriers to learning in the three areas of difference, namely social understanding and communication; flexibility, information processing, and understanding; and sensory processing and integration.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I consider the accessibility of the learning environment for autistic children by taking into account potential social demands of working with or being with their peers.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I consider the accessibility of the environment for autistic children by taking into the account potential sensory demands of working in a busy, noisy environment.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I consider the accessibility of the environment for autistic children by taking into the account potential changes to the environment or the daily/weekly routine.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:15).





## Enabling Environments

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### What has been the impact of implementing this competency?

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#### On parents/carers:

#### On autistic children:



## Enabling Environments

**Principle Six: An ethos and environment that fosters social inclusion for autistic children.**

**Competency Twelve: I provide a clearly organised learning environment that takes into account the needs of autistic children.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I ensure the pupil has a safe space they can go to when they need a break and they have the means to request this. If they are unable to request a break themselves, I will know when to prompt a break.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I support verbal and non-verbal communication through a range of approaches, including the organisation of the setting, visual aids, reducing and simplifying language, and providing sufficient time for processing and understanding of language instruction.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I recognise that coping with change can be difficult. I structure learning experiences when possible and put supports in place to reduce anxieties caused by unpredictability and change.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers (EYFS statutory framework, 2021:6).



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# Theme four: Learning and Development





## Learning and Development

**Principle Seven: Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic children.**

**Competency Thirteen:** When assessing progress towards learning goals, I have a holistic approach that builds on strengths and interests, whilst addressing skills and understanding that autistic children may find difficult as a result of their autism.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

I actively involve parents, children, and external professionals, as appropriate, in the identification of strengths and needs, in setting shared learning objectives, and in reviewing and assessing progress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I am confident of the process involved when a child is not making progress and not meeting expected levels of development.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I use or contribute to the use of a range of assessments to identify areas of strengths and those needing additional support.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals (see Section 1). Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile (EYFS profile handbook, 2021:11).



## Learning and Development

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## Learning and Development

**Principle Seven: Targeted support and measuring the progress of autistic children.**

**Competency Fourteen: I am involved in the development and implementation of child-centred support plans in partnership with children, parents and other staff.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Examples of how I can do this:

Children have individual one page profiles and support plans that are tailored to their strengths and needs, have clear learning targets and strategies, and monitor progress.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I initiate one page profiles and support plans promptly. They focus on communication and joint social interactions, and include opportunities for peer collaboration and home/school links to support the generalisation of skills.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I develop and implement individualised transition plans which combine information from the child, their family, and staff who know them well.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

### Links to statutory frameworks

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution (EYFS profile handbook, 2021:11).



## Learning and Development

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# Learning and Development

**Principle Eight: Adapting the curriculum, teaching, and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic children.**

**Competency Fifteen: I strive to understand autistic children and I adapt the learning environment and my teaching approaches to provide high-quality support for autistic children.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Examples of how I can do this:

I see social communication skills as a foundation for learning and a key predictor of positive long-term outcomes. I prioritise the development of communication skills such as joint attention, communication, speech, and vocabulary, as well as turn-taking and interactions with peers.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child I work with, and use this information to plan an enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning, play, and development.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I understand the need to provide support for children in developing personal, social, and independence skills.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Links to statutory frameworks

Early years providers, schools and colleges should know precisely where children and young people with SEN are in their learning and development. They should ensure decisions are informed by the insights of parents and those of children and young people themselves; have high ambitions and set stretching targets for them; track their progress towards these goals; keep under review the additional or different provision that is made for them; promote positive outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development, and ensure that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact on progress (SEND Code of Practice, 2014:25).



## Learning and Development

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# Learning and Development

**Principle Eight: Adapting the curriculum, teaching, and learning to promote wellbeing and success for autistic children.**

**Competency Sixteen: I promote positive attitudes towards autism and have high expectations for all the children I work with.**

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Examples of how I can do this:

I embrace and celebrate differences between children and promote awareness and acceptance of autism.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I am committed to staying attuned to recognising a child's strengths and talents, and to encourage others to do so.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

I strive to help the child to recognise their own strengths and talents, and to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

DEVELOPING

I DO THIS REALLY WELL

## Links to statutory frameworks

Public bodies, including further education institutions, local authorities, maintained schools, maintained nursery schools, academies and free schools are covered by the public sector equality duty and, when carrying out their functions, must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between disabled and non-disabled children and young people (Equality Act, 2010:17)



## Learning and Development

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#### Evidence to show how I meet this competency:

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# Author and Acknowledgements

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## Lead Author:

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