

Introduction

Children with autism are colourful – they are often very beautiful and, like the rainbow, they stand out.

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Children with autism can find the world a confusing place. A core difficulty of autism is understanding and interacting with other people and the social world around them. Schools are very social places. The social demands on children start the moment they walk through the school gate and continue relentlessly throughout the day until they leave at 3.15. Parents will then have to deal with a child who is exhausted and overwhelmed just through having used so much energy to interact socially all day at school. There are then additional social demands from family interactions, being out in the community, appointments and celebration events.

However, most children with autism are keen to have positive social interactions. They want to enjoy being with others and understand what to do in different situations. Much of the help they need is simply understanding from others. The effort others put into communicating effectively with children with autism is always a large part of the solution to social inclusion.

Children and adults with autism can also find it difficult to understand the perspectives of other people in a social situation which leads them to

Chapter 4

Presenting a Story

Now you are ready to read the story with a child with autism, you can remember that this is something that is to help, reassure and support the child in understanding a situation that has been or will be difficult for them. If you are using the text as it is on the CD-ROM and you are happy that the story will be meaningful for the child then you can go ahead and read it with them. I will also look at how to present a story for a child who cannot read or is much younger in this chapter.

Present your story to the child

You may want to laminate your story for longevity but this is not usually necessary unless the pupil likes to tear paper. Print more than one copy so that you have a spare and can send a copy home for parents to keep and read with their child at home.

Top tips

- *Think about where and when you will share the story with the child, and try to choose a calm and relaxed time and place with minimal distractions.*
- *The child may want to read the story to themselves or you can read it to them (particularly the first time).*
- *It is important to read it slowly. Allow time for the child to process the language and for them to respond if they so wish.*
- *Speak in a patient, calm and positive tone.*