

Have you considered how you support inclusion within your setting?

Some of the questions below could apply to all the children in your setting but may have more of an impact for children with ASN. What might be a minor inconvenience for some could have a dramatic impact on others. Adjusting your spaces, interactions and experiences could make all the difference for them.

How will my family feel part of my learning?

“Family learning is a partnership approach which can lead to positive outcomes for both adults and children.”

Realising the ambition: Being Me

You will already have processes in place in your setting to communicate with parents/carers and families. For some children in your setting an enhanced form of communication with home could be useful due to the nature of individual needs. You may also need to consider if a child has a split placement how everyone shares information and feels included. The decision as to the communication tool used needs to be flexible and meet the needs of both home and setting/s. See [EASEYS for ASN Communication with Home](#) for some ideas.

Moving into, between or on to new settings

Consider any transition, big or small, from the child’s perspective, that of the family and all current and receiving staff. The aim is to make the transition a positive experience for all with effective communication to ensure a seamless process. See [EASEYS for ASN Vertical Transitions](#) for ideas and supporting documents. The new ‘**Being Me. My Personal Care Plan**’ is a collection of documents designed to support transitions into and between ELC settings.

Spaces: environmental adjustments, accessibility and sensory needs

Your Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) space has got to work for all but sometimes we need to adjust the environment to make it work for the needs of some individual children, particularly those with ASN. See [EASEYS for ASN Outdoor Learning and Play](#) for adjustments you could make in your outdoor spaces.

Is the environment supporting my needs?

The following ideas are not exhaustive or prescriptive but should be personalised to the individual, taking on the recommendations of parents/carers and all other partners to the Child’s Plan.

Can I access all areas? Can I explore & move?

For children with mobility needs we need to consider not only how furniture is arranged to create activity areas and spaces but also other factors which might impact on accessibility. Points to consider could include:

- Does the flow of space work? Will I get stuck or bump into things?
- Is there room to turn my buggy, wheelchair, mobile stander, walking frame, etc?
- Are there bumps, steps or differences in floor levels? Will I need a ramp to get me anywhere?
- Can I reach all the things you put out for us? Are the table heights right for my buggy/wheelchair?

Where’s that toy I like?

Consider the visual definition of spaces, their purpose and where things are kept:

- Are things clearly labelled? Consider using objects of reference, photos, pictures, words, whatever is best for my level of understanding or vision.
- Can I find things easily by looking? Try reducing visual clutter, keeping things in the same place and tidied regularly. Do you need high contrast presentation of visual signage (e.g. black on white/yellow) for anyone?

Are there quiet spaces?

The hubbub of your setting could impact on some children’s learning; children with glue ear, language and processing difficulties, mild hearing loss, attention difficulties and children who struggle to listen and look at the same time. Consider simple ways to reduce it. This could include things like bubble wrap liners for storage of construction toys/pens/pencils, using soft furnishings/floor coverings or plants to deaden noise levels, etc. For more information contact [Highland Deaf Education Service](#). For some children a more dedicated quiet space may be required to reduce sensory overload e.g. from visual and auditory stimulus, heightened alertness or emotional levels. See [EASEYS for ASN Quiet Time](#) for other ideas.

Arriving at your setting

First look at your centre's **Settling in Policy** or consider creating one. The following is relevant to all children who are new to your setting however for some children with ASN it can be relevant on every single day they attend.

Who will greet me and settle me in?

Consider having a visual 'check-in'. This is a way of letting parents and children know who is working in the setting that day. Photos of staff could be displayed in the entrance at child height, so the parent can direct their child to the photos and talk about the relevant key worker/staff member. Remember, if using this system, it is essential to keep it updated for all children in your setting. It is also a helpful way to keep parents informed if you also use photos for visiting staff/professionals.

Be mindful when talking about tomorrow's staffing arrangements with the child or parents/carers. You can't always be sure who is going to be there tomorrow (illness, etc.) so photos on the door or in the entrance may be more relevant and useful for the child.

A 'well-being check-in' is another useful approach as the personal handover from a parent/carer provides an opportunity to share information that could impact on the child's wellbeing that day. It may be essential to consider the following questions for the child to have a good start to the session:

- Have I slept well?
- Might I be hungry?
- Am I too alert – do I need to start off with some quiet time?

Do I need help 'starting off'?

Some children have difficulty starting to play when there is so much to choose from; it can be overwhelming. They may need some personal help, structure or visuals to help them start to play. Do they have a daily routine or favourite activity or toy they always like to go to first? Can you make it easier for them by offering them a limited choice?

Try to establish a starting routine until they are more independent. This could mean:

- starting me off with some quiet time or a self-regulation activity, if I need it;
- taking me to a favourite activity and playing a little to help me get started;
- partnering me with a peer who is already engaged in an activity;
- offering me choices, verbally or through offering me toys/photos/symbols;
- supporting me when I go outside or move to a different area; and
- watching in case I get 'stuck' between activities. I may need support to move on.



Who is looking out for me? Who do I go to?

It can be really useful when one member of staff builds a positive relationship with a child with ASN but this can be problematic when that staff member is absent or the child becomes over dependant on that adult. More than one member of staff needs to build a relationship with the child and know how best to support them. The child also needs to know which adult is specifically supporting them that day and if their key worker changes during the session. Ideas like, using a personal handover or having the child help to change the photos could help with this.

Which of my friends are here today?

Some children may have difficulty recognising individual children and learning their names, especially in a busy setting. They may learn the adults' names long before they learn the children's names.

You could help by:

- walking me round the setting to see what's going on and who is in today;
- using children's names, commenting on what they are doing individually;
- supporting me to take photos of the other children to help me focus on them; and
- using photographs to show who is here today. Perhaps we could 'self-check in'.



Supporting me in the setting

Do you know what I am learning and what help I need?

Children in your setting will have personalised support strategies recommended by their parents/carers and supporting professionals. You need to be familiar with what an individual child requires to help support their development and know which strategies to use in your practice. This support information may be stored in:

- A Profile/Learning Journey;
- Developmental Overviews;
- Other documents used to support my progress e.g. Play Steps, Developmental Journal, etc;
- A Child's Plan;
- Specific protocols or Personal Care Plan;
- A 'Ways You can help Me' sheet with identified targets and strategies; and
- An enhanced '**Being Me. My Personal Care Plan**'.

Look at **EASEYS for ASN Meeting Additional Support Needs** for further information and ideas.

Who is going to keep me safe?

Children with ASN often have a compromised sense of personal safety or that of others. They may not be aware of common dangers, be impulsive and unaware of the consequences of their actions. They may display behaviours of much younger children e.g. throwing toys, mouthing, fleeting attention, wandering, etc. As well as providing developmentally appropriate toys and activities staff need to plan, model and support appropriate play experiences for these children.

How can I make friends?

It can be difficult for children with ASN to build and maintain friendships. One of the roles of a key worker is to support relationships. Ideas to foster peer relationships could include:

- Commenting on what I am doing and what my peers are doing;
- Encouraging and supporting my attempts at social play;
- Supporting these peer interactions; be my voice and say what you think I might be wanting to communicate; and
- Modelling to my peers how best to play with me. Tell them what I like doing and what I might like them to do.

Who will have time to play with me?

Another role of a key worker is to ensure that the learning opportunities a child meets link to their stage of development and interests. Generally, staff will promote independence in play but may need to take a more guiding role and be more intentional when supporting the play of children with ASN. These documents detail different types of support strategies which may be useful:

- **SELFIE Steps**
- **EASEYS for ASN 'Intensive Interaction'**
- **EASEYS for ASN Support Strategy Toolbox**

Can I still choose what I do and when?

A visual choosing system can be useful for lots of children including those with ASN. Initially this may offer a restricted choice to make it easier for the child to learn the skill. An individual visual timetable can help some children to start, finish and move between activities especially when horizontal transitions and daily structure are a challenge for them. Using objects of reference, photos and/or visuals can help children to know answers to questions like:

- What am I doing now or next? Can I do this all day?
- When can I have my snack?
- When is my home time?



Be guided by the advice from parents/carers and the professionals working with the child. For more specific advice contact the '**Just Ask**' enquiry line on **03003031365** on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1pm to 4pm.