



Communication and Autism Team

The Communication and Autism Team (CAT)

What do we do?



@A2Education

www.accesstoeducation.gov.uk



**Access to
Education**



**Birmingham
City Council**



Communication and Autism Team

Who are the CAT Team?

- A group of professionals passionate about supporting and enabling children and young people
- A Local Authority education service
- Part of Access to Education (A2E)



Communication and Autism Team

Deborah Parker

- Been with CAT since Sept 2021
- Taught in mainstream and special schools
- Autism specialist
- Parent of an Autistic son.



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Autism Diagnosis

- You can take your child for a routine GP appt.
- Tell them a brief outline of your concerns relating to autism and they should refer you to a paediatrician.
- There is a long waiting list for this next appointment.
- The Paediatrician may observe your child face to face, they will send you and school a questionnaire to complete. They may do telephone consultations.
- Eventually you should get a letter telling you if your child has a diagnosis or not.
- Private options are available.
- Going to another country to diagnosis does not guarantee that this will be accepted in this country.



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Diagnosis means....

Getting the right support and advice from professionals and school.

Diagnosis does not mean....

- you will get or need an EHCP
- you will get any sort of benefits.
- your child can or will need to go to a special school.
- Your child will not continue to develop, change and grow.
- That your child is necessarily limited in life at all.



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What is Autism?

- Lifelong condition with a medical diagnosis.
- There is no medical test for autism.
- There is no cure or treatment for autism.
- It is not a learning disability – but lots of people that have autism can also have a learning disability.
- Essentially the world needs to adapt for autistic people and the way they need to access the world.



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How we can help your family

- We can meet at school to discuss any difficulties at home.
- We can talk on the phone or email.
- In some cases we can do a home visit to observe or meet with a child.
- We offer parent and carer awareness courses (CATPAC)



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Common differences

- Socialising and communication

Difficulties turn taking

Limited interest in interaction with others

Frustration / Anger

Limited eye contact

Language delay



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Strategies

- Use of symbols
- Practice turn taking at home
- Do not force eye contact
- Seek speech and language support
- More and Finished



Common differences

- Sensory Processing

Covering ears

Squinting

Limited diet

Less movement than peers

stimming

Scared in crowds

More movement than peers

Toileting issues



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Strategies

- Ear defenders
- Encourage food / messy play
- Allow them to stim if safe
- Offer fiddle / comfort toys





Flexibility and Information Processing

Hyper focus

Will not share

Likes order and rows

Struggle with spoken instructions

Struggles to transition

Needs processing time



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Strategies

- Give lots of warning when something is going to finish
- Use Now and next if possible
- Keep their favourite things safe from others

And these people ARE



Anne Hegerty



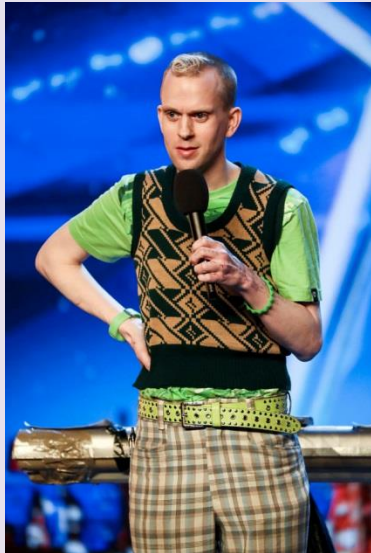
Messi - Footballer



Satoshi Tajiri
Creator of Pokemon



Chris Peckham –
Naturalist, Nature
Photographer, TV
presenter, Author



Robert White - comedian



Susan Boyle - Singer



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How does my child/young person get referred to CAT?

- We support children and young people with a diagnosis of autism and those on the pathway towards a potential diagnosis of autism. We also support children with significant speech, language and communication differences.
- The SENCo within the school or setting will ask you if you are happy to refer your child/young person to our team for support.
- We will only work with your child following receipt of your consent.



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Do CAT give support to parents?

- We deliver webinars and sessions around specific issues in addition to the CAT PAC.

Information will be sent via your school SENCo.

- Previous webinars which you can watch and listen to can be found via this link:

<https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/webinars/>

- CAT also run coffee mornings within schools and in the city for parents to meet up and discuss experiences.



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How do I contact CAT?

CATParentEnquiries@birmingham.gov.uk

deborah.parker@birmingham.gov.uk