Welcome…
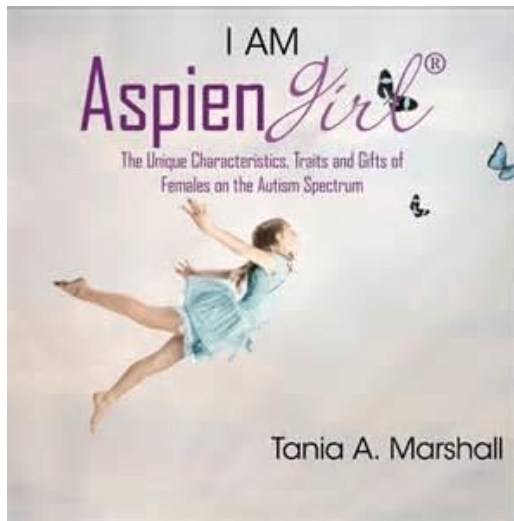
Supporting Students and Young People

Autism and the Children's & Families Act (2014)

25th January 2016

Housekeeping & plan for the day…

Workshop sign-up…

Thanks to…

Priestnall
educating for life

Aukids
magazine
POSITIVE PARENTING FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITIONS

I AM
Aspien girl®
The Unique Characteristics, Traits and Gifts of
Females on the Autism Spectrum

Tania A. Marshall

IPSEA
Independent Parental Special
Education Advice

What do you want from today?

- Think about your circumstances…
- Focus on how today can help you make positive change…
- Establish contacts – many parents/carers have experienced similar challenges…
- Enjoy the day!
- Please do stay until then end – we will finish shortly after 2pm…

'The education of the peer group is an essential part of moving towards a truly inclusive community'

Gareth D Morewood (2011)

Ensure clear communication with parents/carers

➤ Keep parents/carers informed

➤ Make sure they know who to contact and how

➤ Provide honest communication – no long-term benefit in providing anything but the truth

➤ Listen to parents/carers – give them time

➤ Try to avoid uncertainty/misinterpretation

MOREWOOD, G. D., & BOND, C. (2012) *Understanding Parental confidence in an inclusive high school: a pilot survey.* *Support for Learning,* Vol. 27 No.2, p53-58 Wiley Blackwell Publishing.

Improving educational experiences and outcomes of students with autism: Insights from parents/carers and young people

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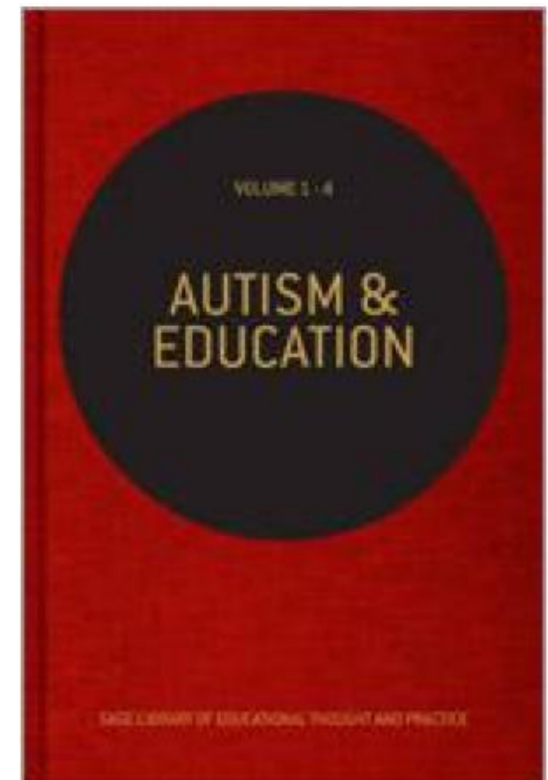
What I will talk about today

- Autism education research at the University of Manchester
- Why can school be such a challenging place for many young people with autism?
- What do parents/carers and young people with autism want?
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Autism education research at the University of Manchester

- www.autism.manchester.ac.uk (also @autismUoM)
- Inclusive education for pupils with autism in mainstream secondary schools (Humphrey & Symes)
- Development of resource base provision for children with SLI/ASC (Bond & Hebron)
- Risk factors for exposure to bullying among children with ASC (Hebron)
- Transition from primary to secondary school for children with ASC (Hebron)
- Educating persons with ASC: A systematic literature review (Bond, Symes, Hebron, Humphrey & Morewood)
- Autism and education (Humphrey, Bond, Hebron, Symes & Morewood)

VOLUME 1 - 4

AUTISM & EDUCATION

SAGE LIBRARY OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

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Why can school be such a challenging place for many young people with autism?

- Only 23% of pupils with ASC achieved 5 or more A*-C grades (including English and Maths) at GCSE, compared to 54% among all students in the same year (DfE, 2010, 2011)

- Pupils with ASC are more likely to receive both fixed-term and permanent exclusions from school than their peers (DfE, 2013a, 2013b)

- A range of studies in different countries have also demonstrated that they are amongst the most likely to be bullied in the school population (Schroeder et al, 2014)

- 70% of parents report experiencing difficulties in getting the educational support their child needs, with 18% having to resort to the tribunal system to achieve this (NAS, 2011)

- Prevalence rates of anxiety, depression and anger problems are significantly higher among young people with ASC than their peers (Hebron & Humphrey, 2014)

Why can school be such a challenging place for many young people with autism?

- For the student
  - Learning in a social setting, reading social situations, deciphering the unwritten rules
  - Learning in a complex language environment with limited visual support
  - Understanding and communicating with other pupils and adults
  - Coping with change, transitions and unexpected breaks in routine
  - Day to day organisation
  - Generalising learning beyond the setting in which it took place
- For staff and parents
  - Gaining, maintaining and refocusing attention
  - Motivation
  - Differentiation of language and/or curriculum
  - Managing behaviour
  - Accommodating special interests

Why can school be such a challenging place for many young people with autism?

- For the peer group
  - Lack of understanding
  - Resenting extra attention
  - Social advances that are ignored or rejected
  - Distraction or disruption
  - Feeling that double standards are applied ('getting away' with things)
  - Being nervous or fearful
  - Ignoring, teasing, winding up, bullying (Morewood, Humphrey & Symes, 2011)

Why can school be such a challenging place for many young people with autism?

Taken from Humphrey & Lewis (2008)

Why can school be such a challenging place for many young people with autism?

killed by
Bomb. Angels
sad to get him.
Pupils have
party because
he is dead
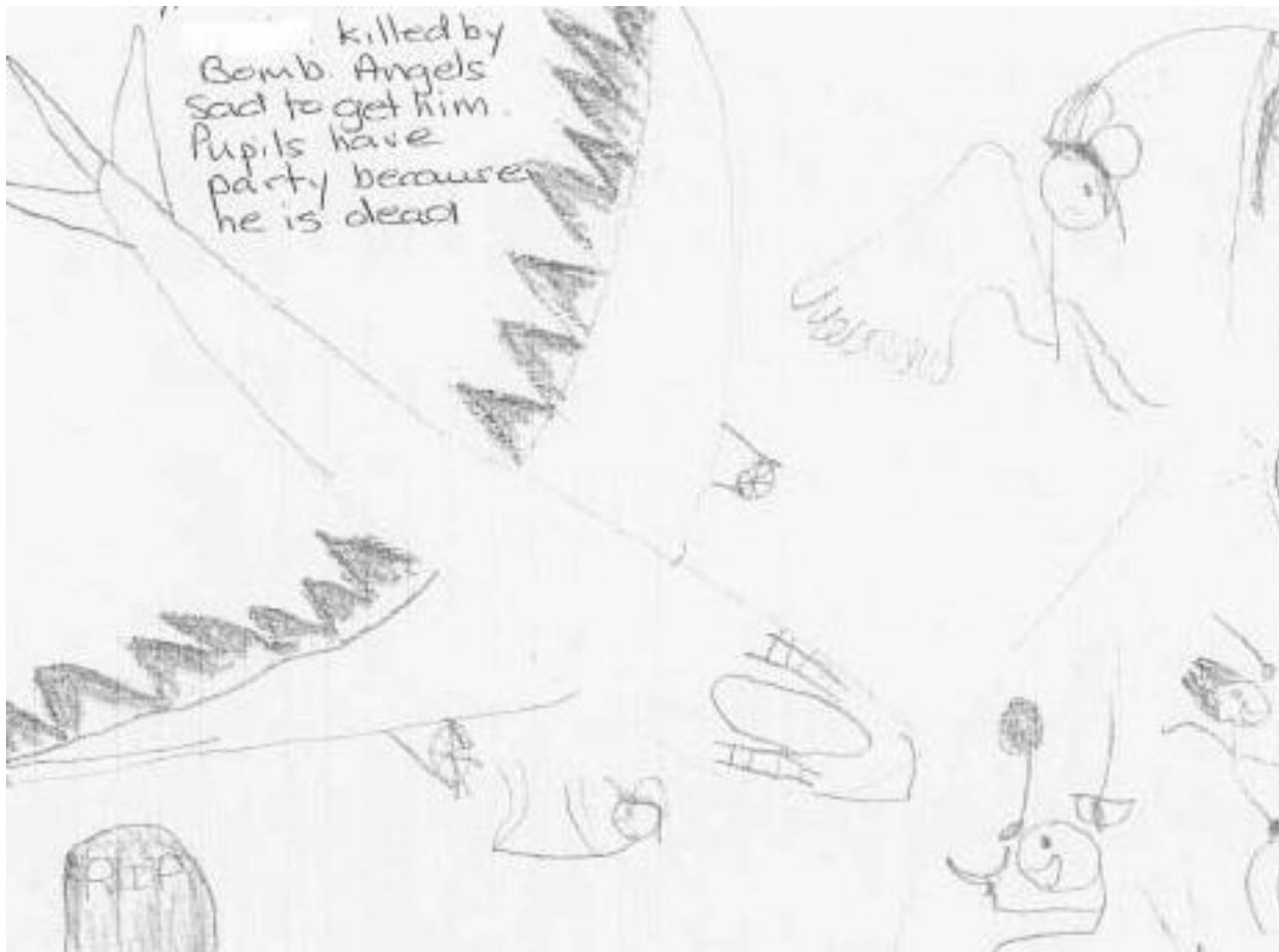
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What do parents/carers and young people with autism want?

- Appropriate support, without a battle
  - "I found that if, as a parent, I had not been prepared to fight for my child, he would not have got where he is now, let alone got the specialised help that we needed. The sooner help is received, the quicker the child can begin to fulfil their potential" [parent] (National Autistic Society, 2011, p.7)
  - "It shouldn't be like this, we shouldn't have to battle for every crumb available" [parent] (National Autistic Society, 2011, p.12)

- Choice and flexibility
  - "Special schools are vital to children such as mine. My son simply would not cope in a mainstream environment" [parent] (National Autistic Society, 2011. p.19)
  - "The teacher intuitively understood my child and how to teach him. She gave him work that was at his intellectual level, and let him choose what he wanted to do—all of it or some of it. This was a first grade teacher providing fourth grade materials. She was flexible and understanding and knew how to teach kids, depending on their learning styles" [parent] (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.184)

- To feel listened to
  - "I have felt very able to challenge the school" [parent] (National Autistic Society, 2011, p.23)

What type of school placement is your child in, and what placement would you like them to be in?
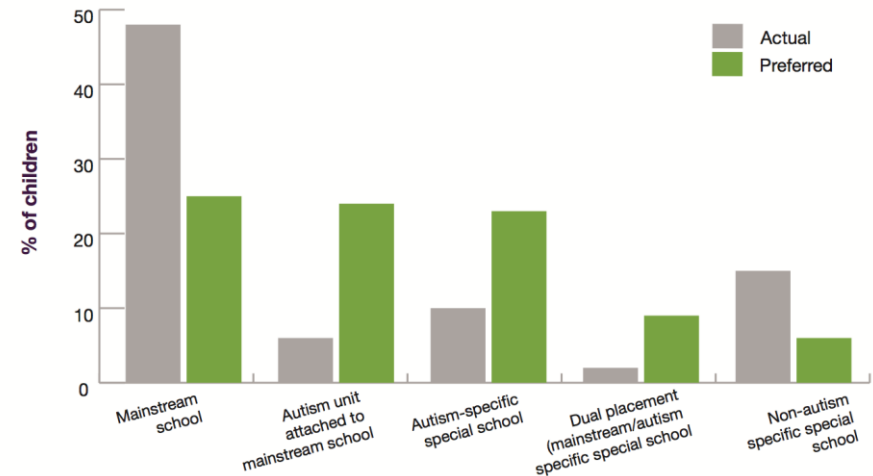
Taken from National Autistic Society (2011)

What do parents/carers and young people with autism want?

- Autism to be viewed as difference, not disorder
  - "My brain is different, but I'm not bad" [YP] (National Autistic Society, 2011, p.4)
  - "I'm fine with it… sometimes it upsets what I do but it's a small compromise with friends that I've got and like the problems they've got… it gives me all those bonuses" [YP] (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.32)
  - "[Autism] is not a disease that must be corrected. It is a different way of thinking that must be taught— differently" [parent] (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.181)
- Support to negotiate their differences
  - "I did have a teacher that had us do a journaling exercise. In one entry, I was whining about all the things I that I tried to be "normal" and he told me that I should think about just not trying for once and being myself. I would feel more successful. It took me a lot of years to figure out what that meant, but I finally figured it out and I live by that. Don't try to do what you think everyone else wants or need you to do, just be yourself" [YP] (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.182)
- Better understanding of the challenges of school for pupils with autism
  - "Its really hard to go to school. People don't understand how hard it is. They judge me for doing things I can't help" [YP] (National Autistic Society, 2011, p.7)
  - "The noisier or more larger the group, the more difficult it is" [YP] (Connor, 2000, p.291)
  - "Because I am well-behaved in school, I get overlooked when I am requiring help" [YP] (National Autistic Society, 2011, p.27)

What do parents/carers and young people with autism want?

- Teachers and school staff to set a positive example
  - "You, the teacher, can make a huge difference – positive or negative – in the way other students view a child with autism. As the leader of the classroom, you set the tone. Be careful not to give the others license to bully that child" [parent] (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.182)
  - "Her most recent teacher made a point of telling our child regularly, 'I am not giving up'" (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.182)
- Understanding of the individual student and their autism
  - "He is a CHILD first… Do not focus on the disability, but rather his tremendous abilities" [parent] (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.180)
  - "The more they learn about Asperger's the more sympathetic they feel" [YP] (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.40-41)
  - "I am leaving my present school as they do not understand autism at all. I get treated pretty much the same as other children although I don't think I act like them. I am different but they don't take much notice of me at my school" [YP] (National Autistic Society, 2011, p.18)
  - "You met another kid on the spectrum? That's nice. Here's another one. Not the same one. Another one" [parent] (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.180)

What do parents/carers and young people with autism want?

- Make use of the differences associated with autism in a positive way
  - "His teacher realized that my son's "obsessive interest" revolved around sprinklers, fire alarms and bells. He asked my son to bring in some of his collection and made it a point to design many of his Algebra classes around these items (e.g. 'find the circumference of a fire bell'). My son not only got an A in that class but for the first time, actually looked forward to going to school in the morning. It was huge for us!" [parent] (Sciutto et al, 2012, p.183)
  - "People are often questioning me… 'How do you know all this, how do you know all that?'… I often feel proud of myself" [YP] (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.32)

- Peer support and understanding
  - "People don't get on with me and I don't really get on with them and I often try to make friends with them . . . [but] they often just go against me" [YP] (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.35)
  - "Yeah if people are nice to you, you feel better. When I was in school when people didn't like me it was rubbish and now many more people like me its easier" [YP] (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.35)
  - "I do have friends who very often stick up for me" (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.35)
  - "Sometimes I just want to play by myself" (Calder et al, 2013, p.306)

- School staff support matched to individual needs
  - "I think the support has played a good role, especially in technology" [YP] (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.39)
  - "[My support is] 'behind the scenes'… I know I have someone there to help me" (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008, p.40)

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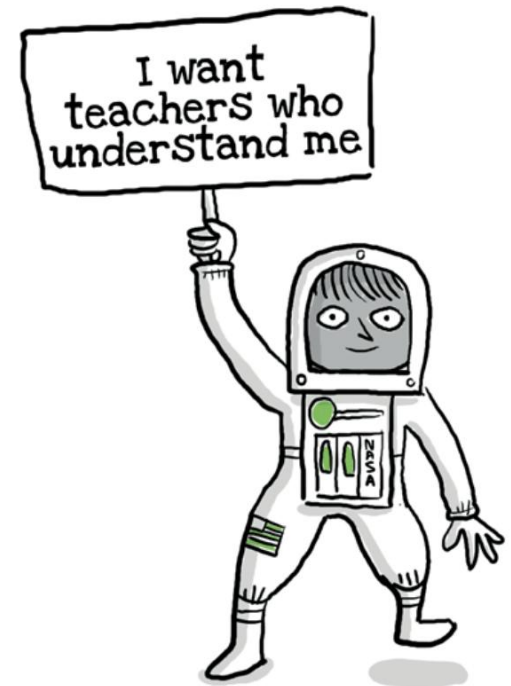- Morewood, Humphrey and Symes (2011)

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- The 'double empathy problem' in autism (Milton, 2012)

- Applying aspects of the 'triad of impairments' to the education system (Humphrey et al, 2015)

  – Inflexibility – how can we be more flexible in the way in which we organise our educational provision?

  – Social communication – how can we improve communication between the range of stakeholders in autism education in order to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of students?

  – Imagination – should we not be more imaginative ourselves in thinking about approaches to teaching and learning?

Taken from National Autistic Society (2011)