Educational / social programs for children with ASD: good practice and inclusion

Niš, Serbia March 13th & 14th 2017

Prof. Sarah Parsons
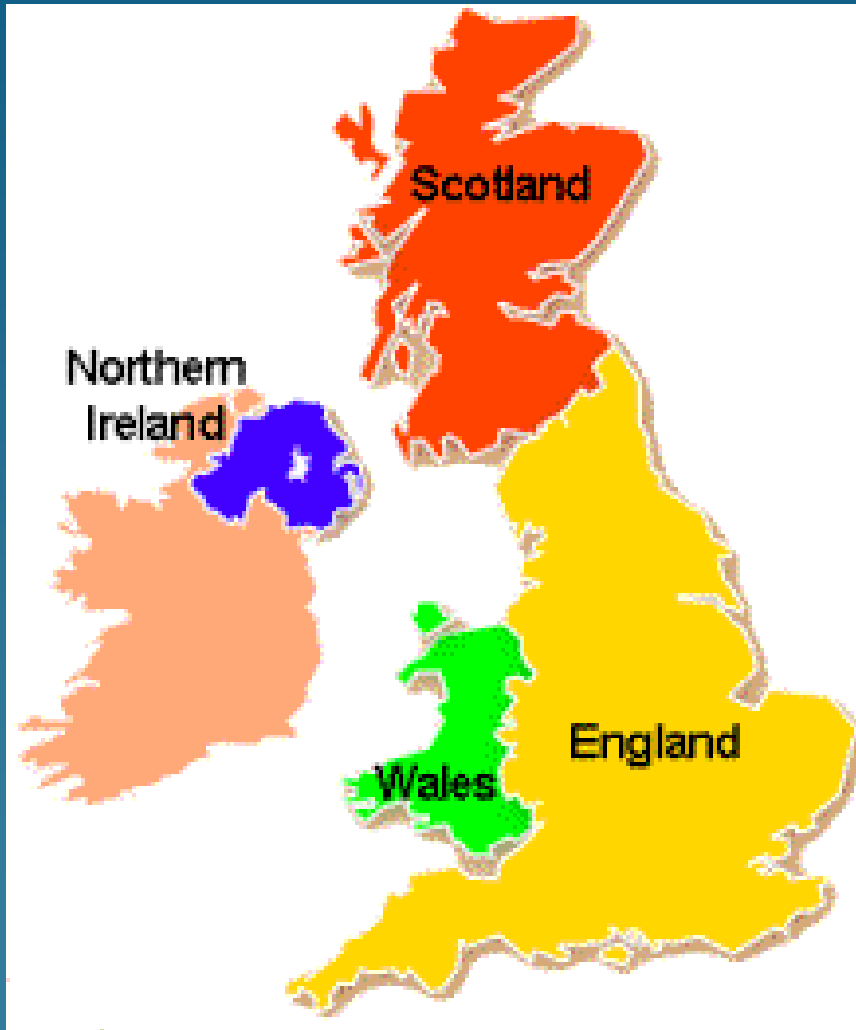
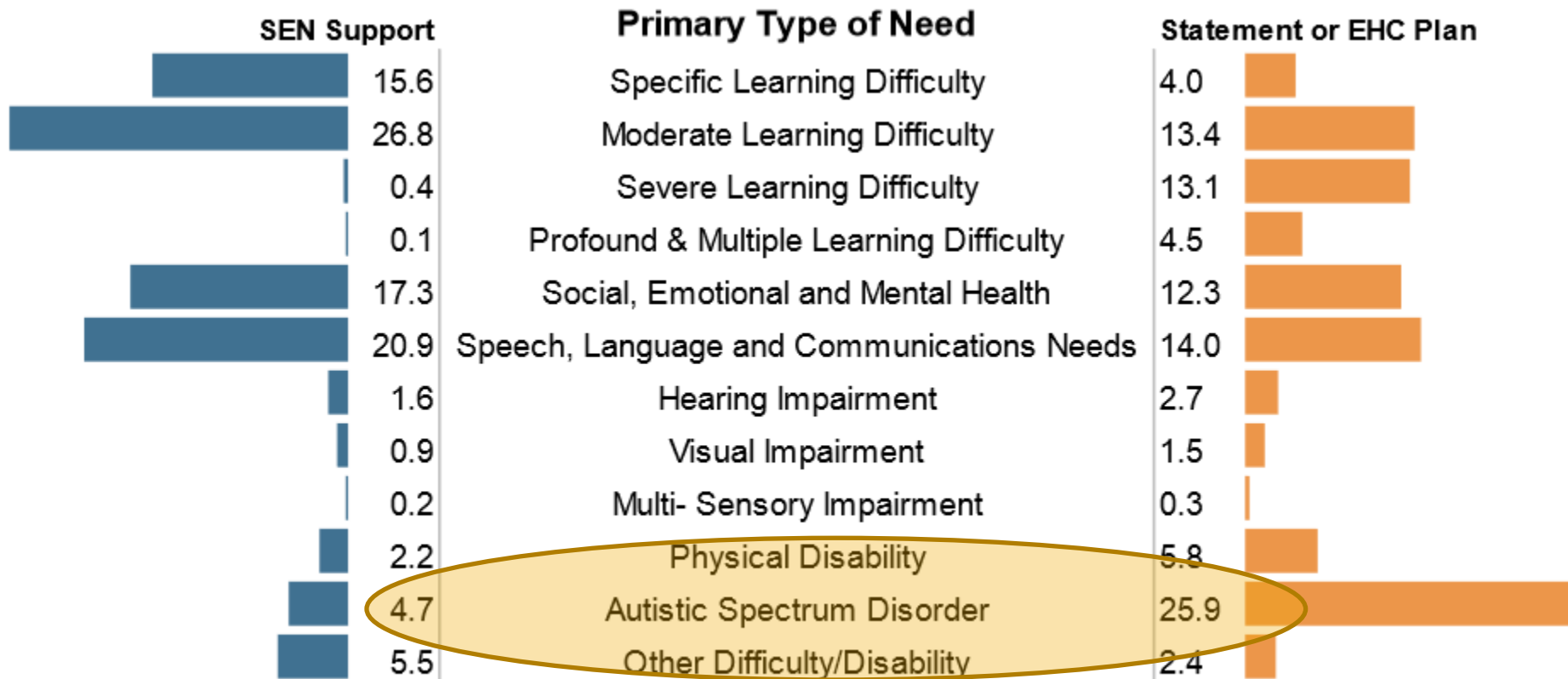S.J.Parsons@soton.ac.uk

Southampton Education School

Outline

- UK context for children with special educational needs (SEN)

- Autism and inclusion

- Good practice in autism education

- Good practice in autism research

- UK Population 63million

- 1 in 100 children have autism

- 100,000 children

- 0.7 million people with autism

- 4 x more common in boys

% of pupils (England only)

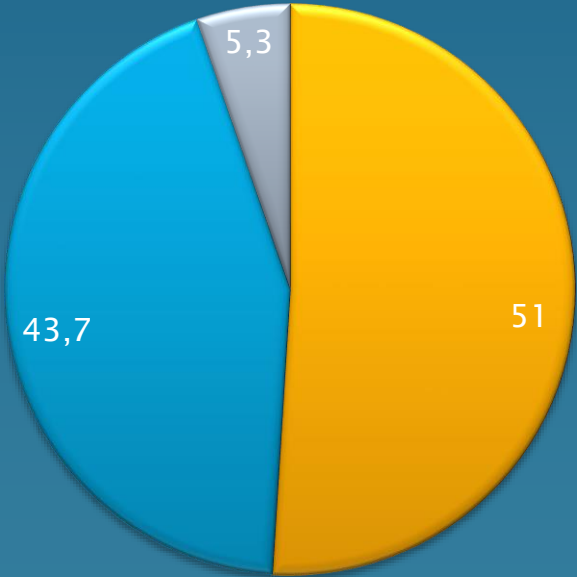| SEN Support	Primary Type of Need	Statement or EHC Plan
15.6	Specific Learning Difficulty	4.0
26.8	Moderate Learning Difficulty	13.4
0.4	Severe Learning Difficulty	13.1
0.1	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	4.5
17.3	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	12.3
20.9	Speech, Language and Communications Needs	14.0
1.6	Hearing Impairment	2.7
0.9	Visual Impairment	1.5
0.2	Multi- Sensory Impairment	0.3
2.2	Physical Disability	5.8
4.7	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	25.9
5.5	Other Difficulty/Disability	2.4

Source: *Schools census 2016*

Where do children with SEN go to school (DfE, 2015)?

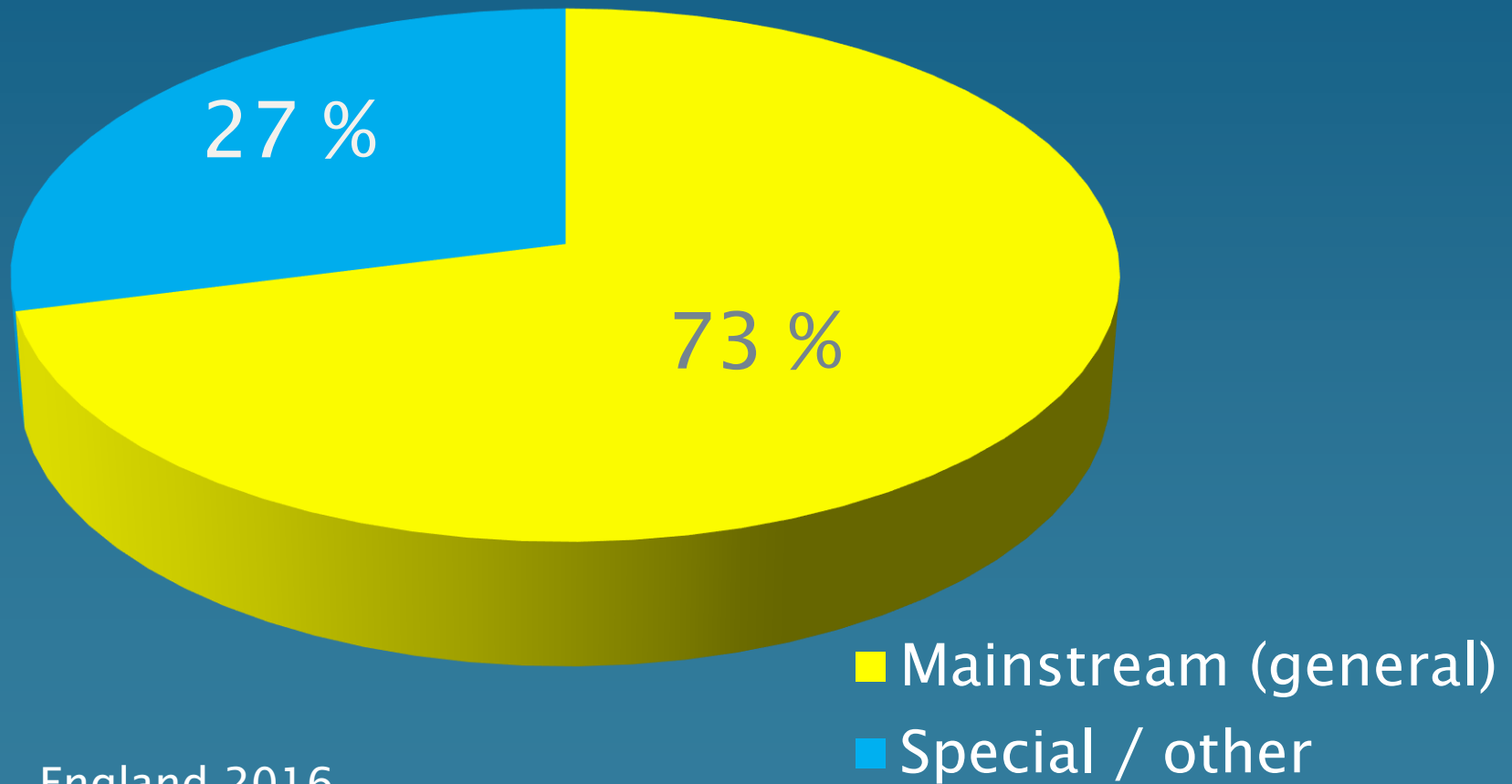Just over 1.3 million children have SEN, in England only

All children with SEN
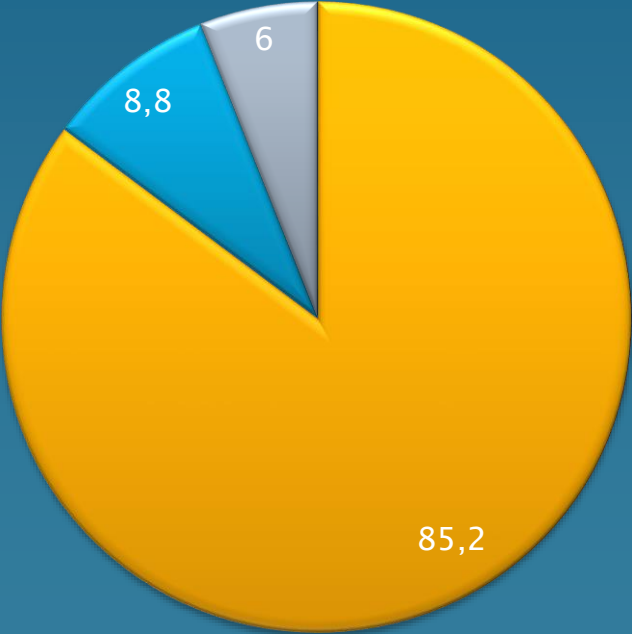
Children with higher support needs

All children with SEN pie chart:
- 6 (Independent)
- 8,8 (Special)
- 85,2 (Mainstream)

Mainstream Special Independent

Children with higher support needs pie chart:
- 5,3 (Independent)
- 43,7 (Special)
- 51 (Mainstream)

Mainstream Special Independent

Where do children with autism go to school?

27 %

73 %

England 2016

- Mainstream (general)
- Special / other

- In most OECD countries up to 1% of children are taught in special settings (special schools or classrooms)
- Avramidis & Norwich (2002)

Inclusive education

'…the UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and young people and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education.'

'…a general presumption in law of mainstream education'

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015)

'A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age. Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support.'
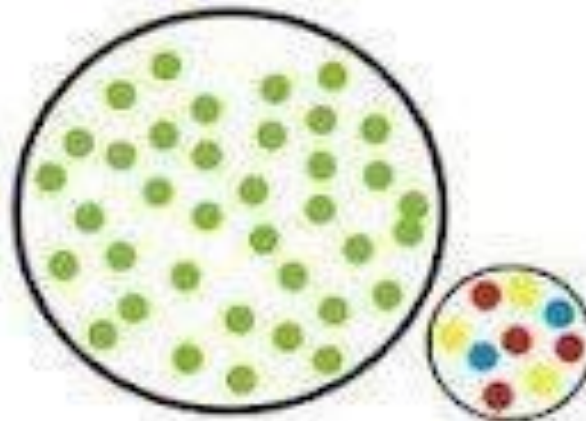
Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015)
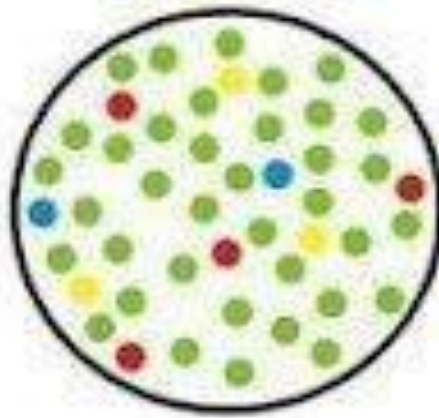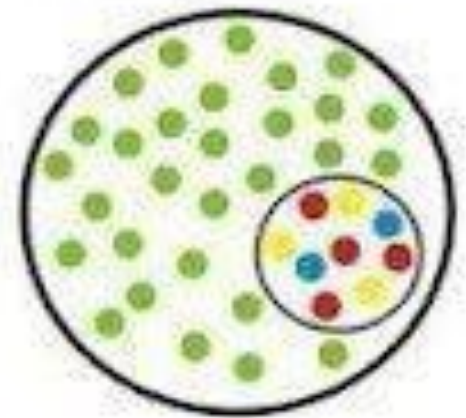
Inclusion
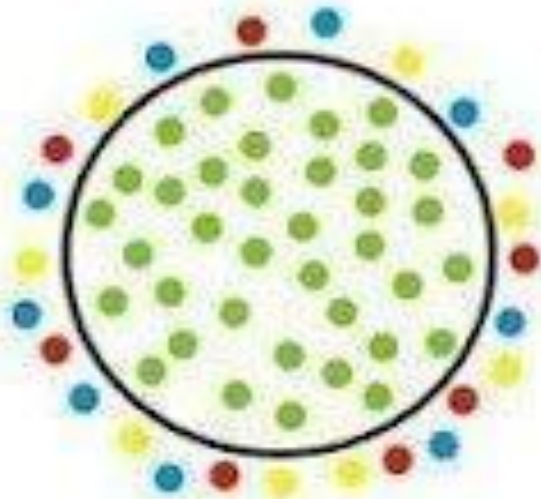
Exclusion

Segregation
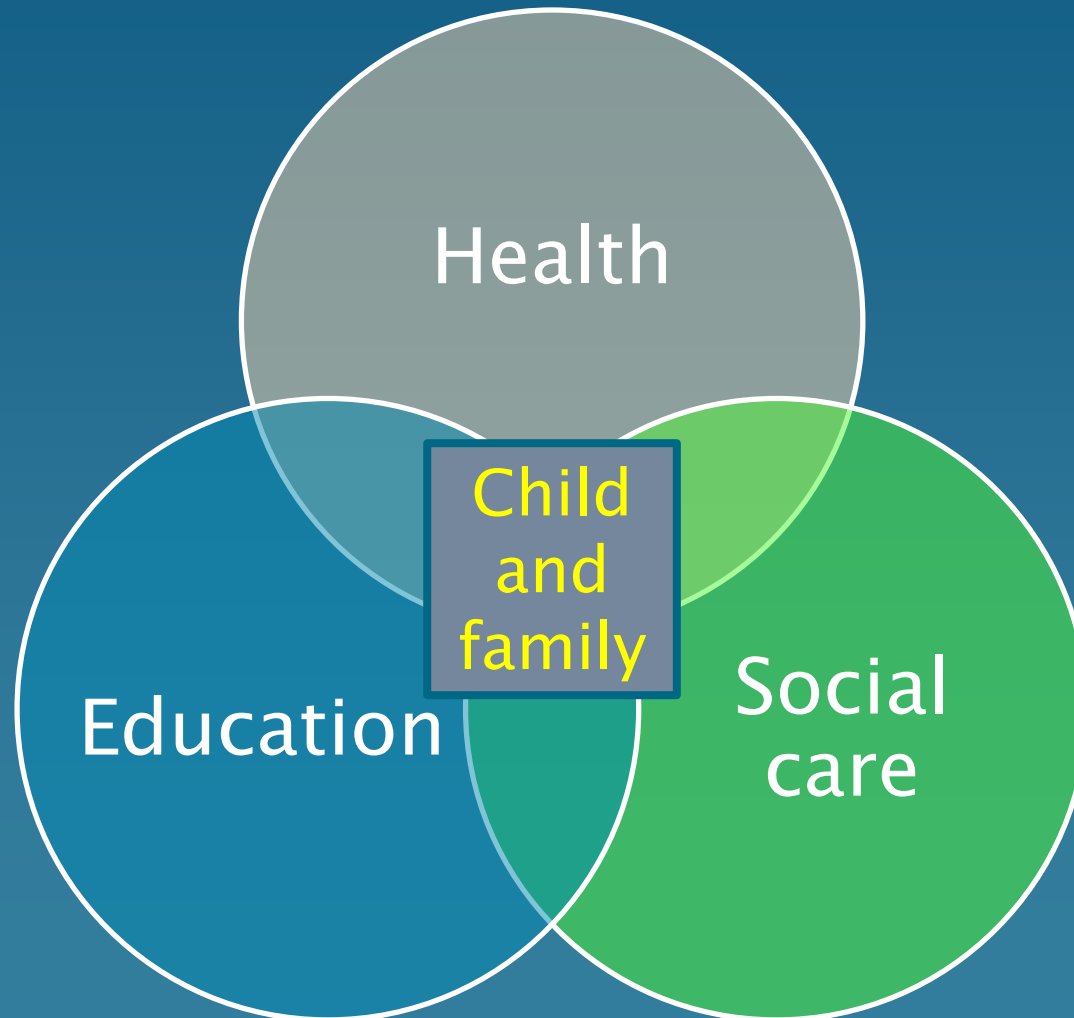
Integration

Wave 3
Additional highly personalised interventions

Wave 2
Additional interventions to enable children to work at age-related expectations or above

Wave 1
Inclusive quality first teaching for all

Multi-disciplinary approach

Inclusion and autism

- Most children educated in mainstream

- Spectrum diversity → no single type of placement can meet the needs of all

- Adequate support is required

- High risk of bullying and social exclusion (Batten et al., 2006; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008)

- Parents and pupils value teachers / schools that understand autism (Batten et al., 2006; Humphrey & Lewis, 2008; Parsons et al., 2009)

- In practice there is a range of provision

Types of educational placements

- Mainstream no support

- Individual support in mainstream

- Resource base

- Special schools

- Residential schools

- Private schools

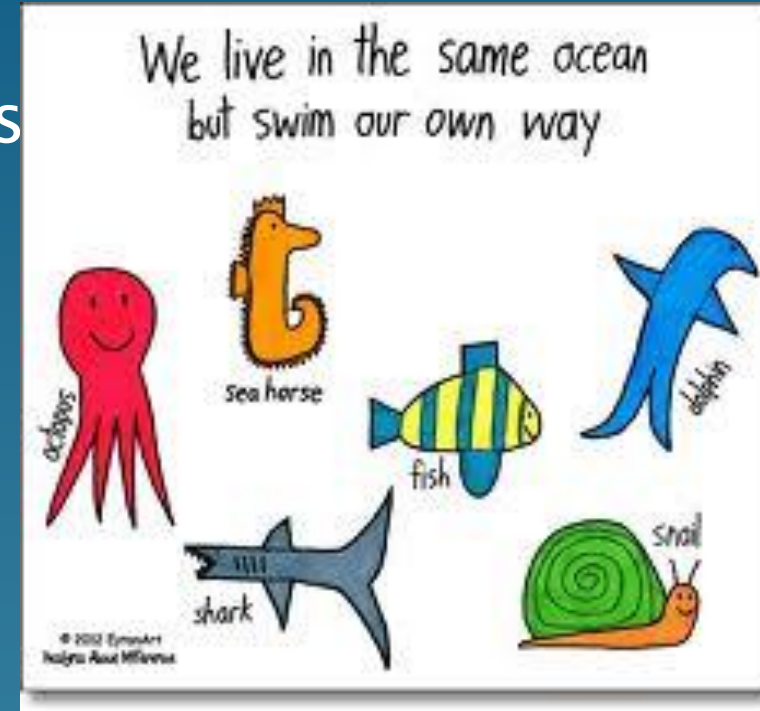- Home-schooled

Educational provision

- **Mainstream (general)**
  - Mix of time in main classrooms and specialist support
  - Teaching assistants
  - Limited research to show what happens

- **Special schools**
  - Range and mix of approaches
  - TEACCH ('Structured teaching') very common
  - Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Intensive Interaction

- Differences in how friendships and relationships are desired and experienced (Calder et al., 2013; Humphrey & Symes, 2011)

- Children with autism perceive and experience the world differently (Mundy et al., 2010; Vermeulen, 2001; Lind, 2010; Frith, 2012)

- Mainstream secondary school experienced as loud and chaotic; desire to 'fit in' but difficulties in doing so (Humphrey & Lewis, 2008)

- Must not make normative assumptions about people with autism (Parsons, 2015)

Needs-based inclusion

- Make sense of difficulties experienced

- Trigger for support and services

- Educational assessment and holistic approach involving the family

- Rights under Disability legislation

- Recognises and respects differences
  - Ravet (2011)

We live in the same ocean but swim our own way

octopus
sea horse
fish
dolphin
shark
snail

http://eytanart.com/

Teachers who do not understand the diagnosis of autism, or appreciate its import, will find it difficult to anticipate, recognise, understand and address the degree of distortion of development they are dealing with when confronted with a child on the spectrum.

Ravet (2011; p.676)

- By failing to recognise the individual needs in the context of the diagnosis teachers may take a 'neurotypical' approach which may not be helpful

- 'rights-based' inclusion [i.e. mainstream (general) school for everyone] may be exclusionary if we fail to address particular needs

- Children have a right to have their needs met

- Failure to do this can be very damaging

Good practice in autism education

- High ambitions

- Celebrate achievements

- Work with strengths

- Pupil voice

- Partnership with parents

- Community presence and visibility

- Visionary leadership

What is Good Practice in Autism Education?

Research Team: Tony Charman, Liz Pellicano, Lindy V Peacey, Nick Peacey, Kristel Forward, Julie Dockrell (2011) Centre for Research in Autism and Education (CRAE), Department of Psychology and Human Development, Institute of Education, University of London

http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/good-practice/good%20practice%20report.aspx

Focus on impairment

- Assumes disability is inherent to individual
- Least effective interaction patterns

Focus on environment

- Disability is interaction between child and environment
- More interactions and persisted in supporting learning

School ethos

- Strongest predictor of effective teaching was the headteacher's beliefs as enacted in practice

Stanovich & Jordan (1998)

Research-practice gap

- Even in areas of education where we have more research evidence there is a lack of use of evidence in schools

- Teachers less concerned about implementing evidence-based practice and tend to make a 'best fit' for child's needs

- Importance of social acceptability to the uptake and use of intervention approaches

Research-practice gap

- Much autism education research does not take place in schools

- Schools are complex places that make controlled research designs difficult to implement (Kasari & Smith, 2013)

- But children spend most of their time at school

We need to do more research in schools!

- >1670 respondents

- Research priorities:
  - Life skills
  - Services
  - Thinking and learning

- Many people with autism, families and practitioners did not know much about research and were not involved

- Sense of being 'specimens' to be examined

- Greater partnership needed in research

A FUTURE MADE TOGETHER
SHAPING AUTISM RESEARCH IN THE UK

Pellicano et al (2013) http://newsletters.ioe.ac.uk/A_Future_Made_Together_2013.pdf

Commentary – bridging the research and practice gap in autism: The importance of creating research partnerships with schools

Sarah Parsons
University of Southampton, UK

Tony Charman
Institute of Psychiatry, UK

Parsons, S., Charman, T., Faulkner, R., Ragan, J., Wallace, S. & Wittemeyer, K. (2013) Bridging the research and practice gap in autism: the importance of creating research partnerships with schools. *Autism*, 17(3), 268-280.

Autism Community Research Network @ Southampton (ACoRNS)

- Children at the centre of research and practice

- Co-construct a research agenda to meet local needs: *'transitions and trajectories'*

- Build a sustainable partnership

Schools

Researchers

Evidence-base
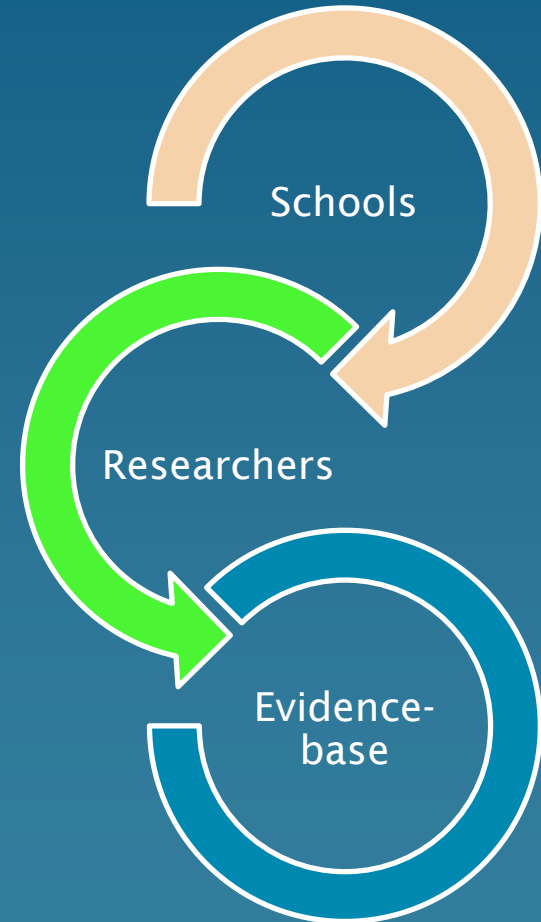
Consider this – autistic children do in fact grow into autistic adults.

Blackburn, 2000; p.13

It is an obvious, though rarely considered, fact that we are adults for many more years than we are children. On average, UK citizens will be adults for approximately 60 years. Services for adults, therefore, need to be planned to cover a much longer period of an individual's lifespan and respond to their needs arising at different stages of adulthood. A survey published by researchers at the

Wittemeyer et al (2011)

Evidence for adult outcomes

- Generally poor outcomes reported for many adults on the spectrum

- Best predictor of outcome = verbal IQ (but less relevant for more able individuals; Renty & Roeyers, 2006)

- Improvements over time due to closure of institutions + more supported employment

  - (e.g. Howlin, 2000; Billstedt et al., 2005; Eaves & Ho, 2008)

Autism Act 2009

Ozmen 2013

February 2008:
NAS 'I Exist' campaign launches

New research highlights lack of support for adults with autism, resulting in Government agreement to produce a strategy to address this.

June 2009:
National Audit Office (NAO) reports

An in-depth and influential report published by the NAO, 'Supporting people with autism through adulthood', analyses effective public spending on adults with autism.[1]

November 2009:
Autism Act receives Royal Assent

History is made as a new law puts a duty on the Government to produce a strategy and supporting statutory guidance to improve the lives of adults with autism.

December 2010:
Statutory guidance published

'Implementing Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' document sets out new legal duties on local authorities and health bodies to support crucial elements of the strategy.[3]

March 2010:
National strategy for adults with autism published

'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' strategy document sets out Government commitments, as well as actions for local authorities, the NHS and other statutory bodies.[2]

April 2011:
Self-assessment framework established

A new framework, primarily for commissioners to complete, alongside local partners, is developed as a way to respond to the strategy and statutory guidance.

2013:
Review of adult autism strategy

In the strategy, the Government committed to review the impact it was having, making sure it is being implemented properly and that services are improving for people with autism.

'Fulfilling and rewarding lives'

The strategy for adults with autism in England (2010)

Download here
Update here

- Training of staff working with adults

- Identification and diagnosis of autism in adults

- Planning for transitions beyond school

- Local planning and leadership of services for adults

30

"There needs to be A LOT more awareness of the lived REALITY of the various aspects of Autism & their implications for an Autistic person so that support can be offered in place of judgement of a person's character & the support can be meaningful & helpful to the AUTISTIC person in living their own life choices - whatever they may be."

- Respondent to adult survey for 'Outcomes' project (Wittemeyer et al., 2011)

"The major factor affecting social outcomes in adulthood is *the adequacy of educational provisions* and access to *appropriate education* for later employment and social and economic independence"

– Levy & Perry (2011) http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S17509467 11000298

Statutory guidance

SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years

From: Department for Education and Department of Health
Part of: Secondary school teachers: useful information, Primary school teachers:
                useful information, School leadership teams: useful information, Schools:
                statutory guidance, Special educational needs and disability (SEND), and
                Special educational needs and disability (SEND)
First published: 11 June 2014
Last updated: 1 May 2015, see all updates
Applies to: England

Guidance on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) system for children and young people aged 0 to 25, from 1 September 2014.

Documents

Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25
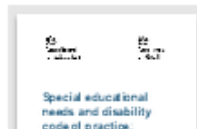
In conclusion

- Underpinning policies are crucial for influencing practice

- Strong leadership and beliefs in inclusion positively influence effective teaching

- There remains a lack of evidence about what really works, for whom, in what context over time

- Research-school partnerships offer much potential for addressing this

Thanks for listening ☺

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