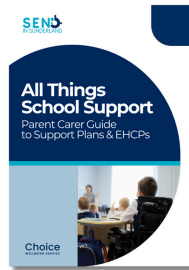
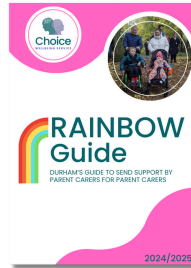
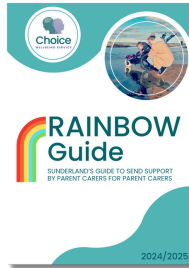


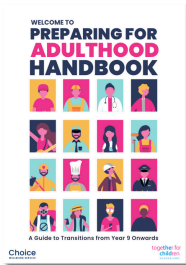
Here are just a few more guides we have available!



Guides on specific subjects



Rainbow Guides



Transitions Guides

# Understanding Autism

## Parent Carer Guide to Autism

# Your Child, Your Choice

Because one size doesn't fit all

Find our website here:



Autism is a lifelong difference in how people's brains work. It affects how they experience and interact with the world. While every autistic person is unique, they share some common traits: different ways of thinking, feeling, and communicating. Social situations can be confusing or tiring, and loud environments can be overwhelming. Some autistic people have strong interests, value routine, and use repetitive movements for comfort. Sometimes, they might hide their discomfort to fit in, which can negatively impact their mental health.



We now understand that autism is a spectrum, meaning every autistic person is unique. They have their own blend of strengths and challenges. How these traits appear can vary greatly and change over time or with masking. It's crucial to avoid making assumptions about an autistic person's abilities or needs. Autism is **not** a learning disability or a mental health condition. But around a third of autistic people also have a learning disability. And autistic people are more likely to experience mental health problems.

### Where does Autism come from?

Research indicates that autism has a genetic basis. Scientists are working to identify the specific genes involved, and it's believed that multiple genes contribute, rather than just one.

### Communication

Autistic people may communicate differently than non-autistic people. They might interpret words, tone of voice, and body language in unique ways. Some autistic people might have limited or no spoken language and communicate through writing, sign language, gestures, sounds, or using communication aids like picture cards or electronic devices.



### Is Autism a Disability?

Legally, autism is considered a disability in the UK, offering protection from discrimination and the right to support in education, work, and services. Some autistic people prefer to view their challenges as arising from societal barriers, a concept known as the "social model" of disability. Many also identify as neurodivergent. And like anyone, autistic people may have other disabilities or health conditions.

### What is Masking?

Some autistic people use a strategy called "masking" to appear non-autistic and fit in better. They might do this consciously or without realising it, in places like school, work, or even at home. Masking, also known as camouflaging, involves observing and mimicking the behaviour of others, either in person or from media like TV and books.



Autistic people have described masking as:

- hyper-vigilance for and constant adaptation to the preferences and expectations (whether expressed, implied or anticipated) of the people around you
- tightly controlling and adjusting how you express yourself (including your needs, preferences, opinions, interests, personality, mannerisms and appearance) based on the real or anticipated reactions of others, both in the moment and over time

You can receive more support and information from the following organisations:

[Daisy Chain](#)

[Toby Henderson Trust](#)

[North East Autism Society](#)

