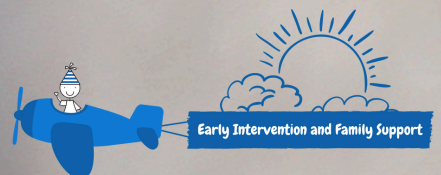


Social Communication Needs



...next steps guide

2024





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*“Autism Awareness is when
you know who I am.”*

*Autism Acceptance is when
you're glad to see me”*

Kaelynn Partlow - Project HOPE Foundation



Welcome

Welcome to the Social Communication Needs Family Support Service.

We are part of the Early Intervention & Family Support Service also known as the Bromley Children Project.

We have devised this guide to give you as much information about the support & signposting that we can offer currently within London Borough of Bromley.

We have worked hard to try to ensure that we have current information & that it's easy for you to follow.

We hope you find this an easy read & helps to answer some of those puzzling questions you didn't know who to ask!



1. Social Communication Needs

Social communication refers to the use of verbal (spoken language) & non-verbal (eye gaze, facial expression, gestures) communication in social situations, to tell other people what you want, express feelings, relate to other people & develop meaningful relationships (NHS definition).

We use Social Communication Needs (SCN) as a broad term that covers Autism, ADHD & any other diagnosed or undiagnosed need.

SCN such as ASC & ADHD are classed as neurodivergence. We understand that neurodivergence is just a difference & doesn't need treatment but empathy & understanding.



2. Social Communication Needs Service

When children have Social Communication needs, knowing when & where to get support can be confusing.

SCN such as autism are often life-long differences, & the journey many parents take is one of accepting that their child is different in their own unique way.

Support is about understanding your child's environment, & 'putting on your autism lens' to see the day as your child sees it, & to understand what interventions & adaptations work best for your child.

Sometimes it's the simplest support that can have the biggest impact.

This service offers support to parents/carers of children with Social Communication Needs (incl. Autism) 0 - 25yrs:

- Signposting
- Regular coffee mornings
- Information updates
- Newsletters & invitations to coffee mornings
- Single point of referral to Bromley Mencap's Autism Family Support Service Specialist Autism Family Support Service in the SCN Journey to support (parent support not direct work with child) - [Bromley Mencap](#) - click for further information

3. How to register for this service

We'd love to stay in touch! To keep you in the know about our monthly online coffee mornings during term-times, we'll add your email address to our database. Just complete the online enquiry form to register & you're all set!

Click Here

Children & Family Centre
Registration online form

Click Here



Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) scheme came into force in 2018. It's a law about data protection & privacy & addresses the usage & storage of personal data.

There are 2 forms to complete at your initial appointment with your FSPP

#1 Registration Form

- ★ Everyone using our service has to be registered. This requires you to complete a form which asks for a few personal details.
- ★ The information you supply is then added to our secure database (EISI) & the registration form then shredded. It's not passed to any other external agency unless required to do so by law.
- ★ Once completed, you'll have access to our 6 Children & Family Centres (CFCs).

#2 Privacy Notice

- ★ We need to ensure that you are happy with whom information is shared & we do this with our Privacy Notice which is on the reverse of the Registration form.
- ★ It is really important that you let us know how you want us to contact you as if you do not, for example, select 'text message', we are unable to text you. We cannot guarantee to send out letters in the post for all activities, but you can pick more than one contact method.
- ★ Your FSPP will use your information to contact you. However, our CFCs will not be able to text etc., if you have not ticked that box.



4. Diagnosis Pathway

Click here to see the [LBB SCN diagnostic pathway](#).

What happens?

Referrals for children and young people under the age of 18 can be made by any professional or person who knows your child well, for example a teacher, a tutor, SENCO, a therapist (speech and language, occupational or play therapist), childminder or nursery staff. Your GP will advise you to check with these professionals for the referral. This is because there is a need for a professional who knows your child to complete a SCN questionnaire.

More information on the pathway can be accessed on the Bromley Healthcare webpages <https://www.bromleyhealthcare.org.uk/explore-our-services/complex-communication-diagnostic-service/>

Support

The diagnosis process can take a long time but there is support available during this process and not dependent on an actual autism diagnosis. To find out more visit the SEND Local offer <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/send-social-communication-needs-1>



Take My Hand...

Take my hand and come with me
I want to teach you about ADHD
I need you to know, I want to explain,
I have a very different brain
Sights, sounds and thoughts collide
What do I do first? I can't decide
Please understand I'm not to blame
I just can't process things the same.

5. Myth Busting

MYTH: 'My child needs a diagnosis to get the support they deserve'.

FACT: The diagnostic pathway & the support pathway in LBB are two different things, & not getting a specific diagnosis shouldn't prevent your child from receiving support based on their needs. (Please link to Education pages)

MYTH: 'School are not on board so I can't get my child on the diagnostic pathway?'

FACT: With some SCN children their needs are not always obvious in school. So think...who else does your child spend time with outside of the family unit? Clubs, tutors & other professionals may be able to see changes in behaviour. Paediatrician's will consider other settings.

MYTH: 'The paediatricians are trying to build up a picture of your child to ensure the correct course of action'. they do not see what I see....

FACT: You could request another copy of the SC Toolkit from the SENCO so that another setting can fill it in & there is more than one source of input.

MYTH: 'My child is not in school & is electively home educated therefore they are unable to receive a diagnosis'.

FACT: it's about trying to build a picture - does your child have a tutor; attend any clubs; church groups; SCN support - groups who regularly spend time with your child? They can also feed in using the SC Toolkit.

Myth Busting

MYTH: 'The Paediatricians have seen my child for first neurodevelopmental appointment but have not referred onwards to the Complex Communication Diagnostic Service'.

FACT: The ASC diagnostic criteria is robust & has to follow the DSM5 criteria. Not all children will hit the full diagnostic criteria which is comprehensive. This doesn't mean that your child may not have SCN traits or needs.

FACT: Paediatricians need to rule out if there is an underlying condition such as mental health, trauma & if the paediatrician thinks there's insufficient information from school, they might ask for more before proceeding.

MYTH: my child masks at school; so school will never see the issues'

FACT: Paediatricians know that with ASC & ADHD the mask will always slip. So think about what parts of the day your child's SCN shows. Respectfully push back & ask school about who has enough knowledge, or who can be present at unstructured times of the day, to help look beyond the mask.

Fact: We know that transition times & overstimulating environments can be challenging for SCN pupils so is there a member of staff at these times of the day that can 'look through the SCN lens' to identify needs?

MYTH: 'Do I need to attend a Parenting course to get a diagnosis (e.g. Cygnet for ASC or NFPP for ADHD)

FACT: this is purely a suggestion & will help with parenting a child with additional needs...again, not every child will meet a diagnosis criteria.

6. Plan ahead...

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR NEURODEVELOPMENTAL APPOINTMENT IS REALLY IMPORTANT.

If there is extra information you want to present now is your chance so ensure you bring all the evidence of needs along.

'I wasn't able to talk about my child's needs properly because they were in the room & I didn't want them to hear'.

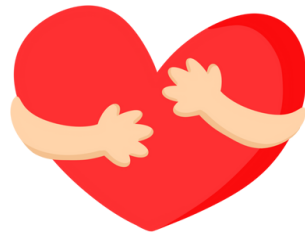
If your child is not OK with hearing about their needs then you need to think about this in advance. Talk to the paediatrician before or at the start of the appointment. The paediatrician will be observing your child throughout the appointment. You may want to bring a friend or relative along who can sit with them so you can have a more in depth discussion once the observation part is over.



7. Support Pathways

NOT EVERY CHILD WITH SCN REQUIRES COMPLEX SUPPORT.

A diagnosis of Autism or ADHD does not mean that there is anything 'wrong' with your child. We understand that neurodivergence is just a difference & doesn't need treatment but always empathy & understanding.



Support is varied & based on need. In Bromley, the support is delivered through family support, school settings & specialist & community services, as per section 11 (Education).



1 Complete online Enquiry form



Trust your JOURNEY

2 We'll acknowledge your enquiry & send you SCN Co-ordinator contact details!

3 Did this e-booklet help?



Great! Sign up via the Enquiry form to keep in the loop & receive SCN newsletters & coffee morning invites!

4 Do you need a little extra support through Universal Services?



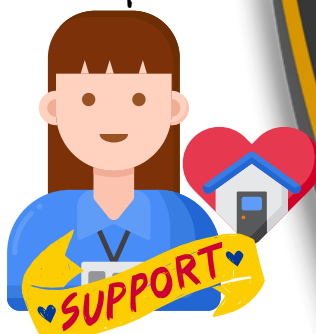
Have you tried our Children & Family Centres yet?



Parenting courses are FREE!



5 Targeted support may also help?



1-1 Family Support (discuss with the SCN Co-ordinator)

6 Specialist support: If things haven't improved

E.g. Mencap (discuss with the SCN Co-ordinator)



Take My Hand...

Take my hand and walk with me
Let me show you about ADHD
I try to behave, I want to be good
But sometimes I forget to do as I should
Walk with me and wear my shoes
You'll see its not the way I'd choose
I do not know what I'm supposed to do
But my brain is slow getting the message
through.

8. BCP Parenting Courses

Courses in Autism including other Social Communication Needs & Bromley Children Project (BCP) Core parenting courses.

Check out the BCP's parenting programmes! Parents love them because they're based on solid evidence & help them level up their skills in understanding Social Communication Needs (SCN) and Autism. If you're keen to dive into Autism, go for the 6-week Cygnet course. Or, if you prefer bite-sized chunks, there are online webinars that fit the bill too! If your child is older, don't forget to sign up to Puberty, Sex & Relationships after Cygnet.

Positive outcomes include learning about some of the approaches & strategies that can help when parenting SCN children. Building knowledge based confidence for when you need to discuss your child's needs with a professional, & accepting neurodiversity as just a difference.

Specific Social Communication Needs webinars include subjects 'What is Autistic Spectrum Condition' & 'What is ADHD?'.
<https://www.bcp parenting.gov.uk>

Click here to access the online parenting course application form! Need a bit of hand-holding? No worries! Drop us a line at bcpparenting@bromley.gov.uk or ring us at 020 8461 7259 for some extra support.



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For more info
on
parent/ ASC
courses
[click here](#)

9. Bromley Mencap

Bromley Mencap's Specialist Autism Support Family Support Service can offer:

- Behaviour management & emotional regulation tools
- Sensory Processing
- Managing a healthy home/school relationship
- Young carers & short breaks referrals

The referral pathway for Bromley residents is ONLY via the Social communication Needs Family Support Service socialcommunicationneeds@bromley.gov.uk

Helpful information to consider before requesting a referral:

- Not all families will require a referral to Specialist support.
- Work is with families & not directly with the children.
- The specialist service is delivered by two part-time Autism Family Support Workers & offers short term (max 12 weeks) intensive support to families who have several queries to work through.

Bromley Mencap

- The support pathway: access Universal Support first as some issues can be resolved & supported at this level.
- Discussion with SCN Co-ordinator to look at targeted support through the Children & Families Hub where a Family Support & Parenting Practitioner will be allocated if appropriate to your family following the completion of an Early Help Assessment.
- Family will be allocated a Family Support & Parenting Practitioner-targeted support undertaken.
- Upon completion of Universal & Targeted Support- if the family feel there are still unresolved issues they can consult with the SCN Co-ordinator to discuss what the continuing issues are that may require specialist support.
- Mencap referral for Specialist support -completed & case discussed & decision taken to offer further support if appropriate.

Bromley Mencap

To help you prepare for the call the key questions we will ask you for the referral are:

1. Reason for the referral (for what specific issues are the family seeking support with?)
2. Have you accessed the SCN support pathway as previously identified?
3. Are there issues in more than one environment? e.g. School & home?
4. What kind of tips & strategies are you looking for to model in the home?
5. Outcomes (What outcomes would the family like from this referral?)
6. Are there other family issues not related to SCN that you would like support with?

Please Note

This specialist service offers valuable family support, but doesn't take the place of mental health services. It may be inappropriate to work with a family whose child is experiencing a crisis of this nature, however, each referral can be discussed with the specialist services at Bromley Mencap on an individual basis.

Since no two children are the same, each case deserves its own one-of-a-kind chat to get to the bottom of things.

In this situation please contact the Children & Families Hub on 020 8461 7373/ 7379/ 7026 or email candfhub@bromley.gov.uk

Take My Hand...

Take my hand and talk with me
I want to tell you about ADHD
I rarely think before I talk
I often run when I should walk
It's hard to get my school work done
My thoughts are outside having fun
I never know just where to start
I think with my feelings and see with
my heart.

10. ...other Support Services

A therapy Collective for Bromley.

Welcome to b-HIVE



Children's Speech & Language Therapy

Contact Care Co-ordination Centre for queries in relation to Speech & Language Therapy.

Open from 9am-5pm Mon-Fri: bromh.cccpod5refs@nhs.net



0300 3305777

Groups & 1:1 SLT support for Early Years Inclusion Team (0-4)
Parents can self-refer to SLT are given an appt & then given the option for groups dependant on the child's understanding & use of language. Children's Speech & Language Therapy
0300 330 5777 bromh.cccpod5@nhs.net

There is a SEN specialist Nurse who works within Bromley Health Visiting Team.

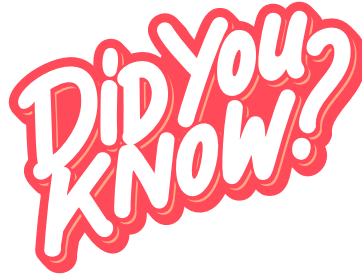
Rebecca Osborne SEND Specialist (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities).

11. IASS in Bromley

Bromley IASS – Bromley Information, Advice & Support Service (IASS) - [Click here to access the IASS website.](#)

Bromley IASS offers free, impartial, independent, confidential, information, advice & support about Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) for children & young people up to age 25, including their parents & carers.

www.bromleyiass.org.uk



IASS can support with school meetings (given enough notice their volunteers may be able to attend)

IASS can support with filling in EHC request to assess.

12. Early Years Inclusion Team

EYSENAT offer a range of services to pre-school children, families & settings....

- **Portage** Home Visiting.
- **Training**, CPD through the SEND Training Collaborative, newsletters & on-line resources.
- **Casework** - following referral. This may lead to the completion of a SEN support plan, outlining child's needs & attainment, parent views & recommendations. The EYSENAT support settings to baseline & set targets for children. Where appropriate, settings (Nursery/ Pre-school) can discuss a request for a statutory needs assessment for a child.
- **EYSENAT** work closely with partners across health & social care & co-ordinate Multi-Agency meetings for babies & infants born with a high complexity of need. Intensive key working is offered to families who require more holistic support & signposting.
- **Settings** can apply for SENIF to support pre-schoolers with low level emerging needs.
- **Early Years Inclusion Team** parent & child groups are run at the Phoenix Centre as well as our Children & Family Centres.

For more information on the Early Years Inclusion Team [click here](#) or scan the QR code

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13. Primary & Secondary

Often enquiries are complex in that they concern not just diagnosis challenges & uncertainty but school communication. This is because learning about & adapting the environmental triggers at home & at school is key to support. Remember the point of diagnosis Autistic SC Needs doesn't necessarily receive a treatment plan & is a life-long condition. Learning your child's triggers is important to figuring out what can help them.

Support at school: As children spend much of their day at school it's important that you work with the school to understand what they have put in place for needs, which require identification & intervention.

Is your child on the SEN register?

SEN register information:

A pupil does not need a diagnosis to be put on the SEN register in a school, it is needs led & related to support required, that is 'different or additional to' their peers.

The Code of Practice states that schools/settings must follow a cycle of ASSESS, PLAN, DO REVIEW & they are encouraged to seek support & advice from LBB professionals.

The SEN register is dynamic & pupils can move on & off of it.

READ MORE



Take My Hand...

Take my hand and stand by me
I need you to know about ADHD
It's hard to explain, but I want you to know
I can't help letting my feelings show
Sometimes I'm angry, jealous or sad
I feel overwhelmed, frustrated and mad
I can't concentrate and I lose all my stuff
I really try hard, but it's never enough

Primary & Secondary

If you have SCN concerns about your child

1. Speak to your child's teacher
2. Speak to the SENCO
3. Get in touch with Bromley's Information Advice & Support Service (IASS) – this is for parents & carers who may need support understanding & advocating statutory rights for their children in schools. [Click here](#) to access IASS information. You can formalise this with a Team Around the Family (TAF).

ISAT & SEN Team promote Autism Champions within the London Borough of Bromley. They support SENCO's with best practice knowledge on SCN incl. Autism it is called ISAT (Inclusion Support & Advice Team).



Although parents can't directly contact ISAT it is useful to know about as you may want to ask your Senco or teacher if your child is known to that team - if so, has the teacher/team taken advice, & what was it?

Follow your school policy which should be published online & gives you the roadmap of what schools promise to deliver for SEN children. ★

ISAT also run a programme called autism champions that distribute information into schools

Primary & Secondary

This is also the case for diagnosis, if you want to pursue it, which is led by school working with you, using a form called 'Social Communication Toolkit' which looks at evidence from home & school. There are also steps that a school should take as soon as a parent raises concerns around SEN - Special Education Needs.



14. 16+

People with Autism aged 16+ Link to [Bromley Well](#)

We can help you with Social & leisure activities

- Health matters
- Managing your money, grants & benefits
- Housing
- Support with transition into adulthood
- Managing communication, letters, forms & applications
- Support with employment
- Life skills training
- Signposting to further services

Bromley Well offer regular events & weekly peer support activities. We also provide monthly face-to-face workshops in community venues which are available through video conferencing.

Follow us for updates on our Facebook Page

Find us on Instagram @bromleywellautismsupport



Take My Hand...

Take my hand and learn with me
We need to know more about ADHD
I worry a lot about getting things wrong
Everything I do takes twice as long
Everyday is exhausting for me
Looking through the fog of ADHD
I'm often so misunderstood
I would change in a heartbeat if I could

15. The Local Offer

ACTIVITIES & PEER GROUPS; BENEFITS, SHORTBREAKS & ADVOCACY SERVICE LINKS

The Local Offer is an information hub for children & young people with SEND &/or disabilities & their families to find the information & support they are looking for from across Bromley,

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/LocalOffer>



Mencap offer a form filling service for DLA, Short breaks application & can advise on other benefits. They do not offer EHCP application support.

There is a specialist respite service which includes childminding, buddying sitting service, & other activities known as 'Short Breaks'

Bromley Mencap can support with the application (although there is no guarantee you will be awarded it). It might be beneficial for you to have a chat with the Children's Disability Team Information Officer to find out more before applying as there is a high criteria. Children's Disability Service only - please contact the team via disabledchildrensteam@bromley.gov.uk

16. Benefits

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE (DLA).

Form Filling

Call Bromley Mencap for support with filling in the form (you could mention that we have signposted you there so they don't tell you about this service again).

You can self-refer to access the form filling support. Contact 020 8466 0790 / enquiries@bromleymencap.org.

(Bromley Mencap can't offer support on DLA appeals as they have not had any input on the original application).

You may find it useful as a first step to phone the DLA department to initialise your application as that will be the date that the application is backdated to.

For more information call Disability Living Allowance helpline: 0800 121 4600

Benefits

MY MAX DISCOUNT CARD

The My Max Card is a discount card for families of children with disabilities. It can help you save money on great days out at castles, zoos, bowling alleys & more.

Click [My Max Card](#) for further information. To apply, register your child on Bromley's [disability register](#).

You don't have to register your child if you don't want to, it is entirely voluntary. However, by law Bromley has to keep a register of disabled children living in Bromley.

For the register, the definition of disability is taken from the [Equalities Act 2010](#) & can include: Autism / ADHD. They may ask for evidence of your Education, Health & Care (EHC) plan, Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or benefit documents, either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

The register helps plan services for disabled children. If you register you may be able to get a discount card called a My Max Card. When you register your child on Bromley's disability register you will be able to apply for a My Max card.

17. Bromley Y

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

From the point of referral, assessment & through to treatment, Bromley Y considers the needs of children & young people with special educational needs & disabilities.

The support they offer includes:

- Interventions up to the age of 25 to CYP with SEND.
- Contribution to EHCP assessments after an assessment or an intervention with us.
- Tailored Interventions based on an understanding of SEND.

We also signpost families & supporting referrals to other local services such as Bromley MENCAP, CASPA Bromley, Information, Advice & Support Service (IASS) & the Inclusion Support Advisory Team (ISAT).

If it is felt the needs of the child or young person are too complex for Early Intervention & the support Bromley Y can offer, then a referral to Bromley CAMHS will be made. For children & young people with an EHCP in place, a referral would be made to the SEND Advisory Team (SENDAT).



Take My Hand...

Take my hand and listen to me
I want to share a secret about ADHD
I want you to know there is more to me
I am not defined by it you see
I'm sensitive, kind and lots of fun
I'm blamed for things I haven't done
I'm the loyalist friend you will ever know
I just need a chance to let it show.

18. Useful Links

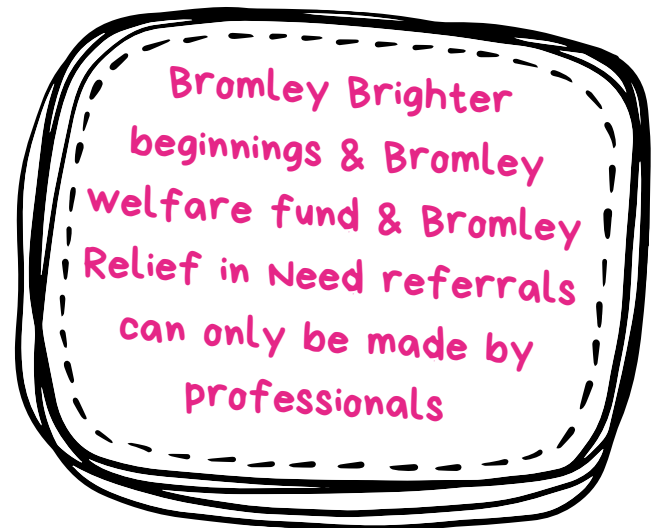


Bromley Well offer support to parents & carers as well as SCN children & young people. www.bromleywell.org.uk

Caudwell Children support families & children with autism. Go to their website for more information & to apply for a sensory pack - www.caudwellchildren.com

Advocacy for All

Lumi Nova: Tales of Courage - Digital therapy enabling children to self manage their worries



CAMHS Resources: This is a collection of downloadable self-help guides that may be useful to you. Some are aimed at adults but the ideas & suggestions in them can still be relevant for young people & parents. If you click on the website image it will automatically download the PDF from its source & the credit will link to the originators main website.

Kooth (online wellbeing service for young people aged 11-25)

Useful Links



Young Minds - fighting for young people's mental health
www.youngminds.org.uk

Charlie Waller Trust - information for parent's to help support a child with anxiety (click here for a downloadable booklet on anxiety) www.charliewaller.org

"Exploring Feelings: Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to Manage Anxiety" by Dr Tony Attwood, Click here

Here is an article on de-escalation that was written with schools in mind but is just as relevant for parents & carers. Click here (Beacon School Support send out regular newsletters & links to podcasts which are both interesting & enlightening. You can search for them & sign up)

CASPA has been providing invaluable support & enriching experiences to autistic / neurodivergent children, young people & their families since 2002.

Useful Links & Videos



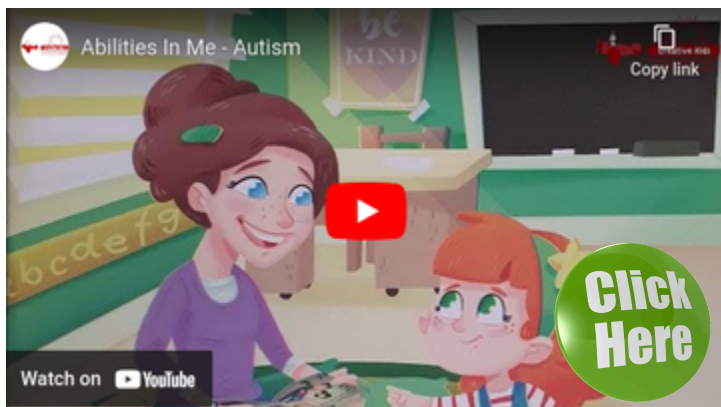
Fledglings is one of many organisations who can provide sensory toys, clothing, equipment & sensory products
www.fledglings.org.uk

Childline: For under 18 support www.childline.org.uk

The Mix: For Teenager Support www.themix.org.uk

Sibs: For brothers & sisters of disabled children & adults
www.sibs.org.uk

PDA Society: Info, support & training www.pdasociety.org.uk



19. Confusing Acronyms!

BROMLEY WELLBEING - Not operational but often confused with BROMLEY WELL!

SALT-Speech and Language Therapy

ASD/ASC Autism Spectrum Condition

ADHD- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

EYIT-Early Years Inclusion Team

ISAT - Inclusion Support Advisory Service

Bromley IASS - Bromley Information, Advice & Support Service

SENDAT - SEND Advisory Team

EHCP - Education Health & Care Plan

PRA - Pupil Resource Funding -now known as FIP Funded Inclusion Plans

EHCP- Education health Care Plan

CCDS- Complex Communication Diagnostic service

CAF / TAC - not used anymore

TAF - Team Around the Family





Many famous men & women are autistic...



Take My Hand...

Take my hand and look at me
Just forget about the ADHD
I have real feelings just like you
The love in my heart is just as true
I may have a brain that can never rest
But please understand I am trying my best
I want you to know, I want you to see
I'm more than the label, I am still me!!!!

By Andrea
Chesterman-Smith



Scan to
get your
electronic
copy here!

