

# DEALING WITH BEHAVIOUR AND CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

An E-Book for *Anyone Living or Working with Children  
on the Autism Spectrum*

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DEALING WITH BEHAVIOUR AND CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM  
SPECTRUM (V1.1)

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome!

One day, whilst I was at work in my job at a Special Needs Playgroup, I watched as one of the mothers bowled in to the respite playgroup with her two beautiful - but rather busy young children.

She could not get there fast enough to take advantage of the four hours of respite she would have to herself – which she needed so badly, whilst her children were being minded.

She had a 5-year old girl who was ADHD and a 3-year old boy who was recently diagnosed with Autism. She had no car and had to manage catching a bus to the playgroup with her two children in tow.

She looked very tired and helpless in her efforts to keep her children “under control”. I watched her face and felt a huge empathy for her and her situation. Life was a really big challenge for her every minute of each day.

I have witnessed many more of these scenes and all the while, I have wondered, how could I contribute to alleviating some of the stresses that parents experience.

So as a result, I decided to offer my years of experience in the form of a very practical e-book.

My idea was to expose a greater number of parents to the knowledge and techniques that I have used and shared with parents in the past; using this information and newfound knowledge, parents can experiment with different ideas and approaches so giving them a broader range of options to work with.

No single approach is “the right answer”.

With each child, I have used lots of trial and error before I found something that worked, and then I tried to develop a range of strategies around what had worked.

Not infrequently, the strategy worked some days and not others, and sometimes it stopped working altogether, and we had to go back to the drawing board to find some new options.

I expect this is the case both at home and at school and it is therefore my intention to give principles and ideas to work with, so that you can think laterally and come up with some of your own creative ideas.

I hope that you will find the information in this e-book of great use, ideas you can keep coming back to, when things are getting stuck.

Be adventurous and lateral in your thinking as you learn about my ideas and try to adapt them to your own style and ways of parenting. There are no rights and wrongs, you know your child best, so have faith and keep on keeping on, you guys are amazing!

## 1.1 About the Author

I am a Paediatric Occupational Therapist for my paid work and a mother of two girls and one boy, for my unpaid work.



I have been a therapist for 20 years and a parent for 14, enough time to experience an awful lot!

It has been a fascination of mine ever since I can remember to understand the underlying reasons for children's behaviours. I believed that children weren't just being "naughty" all the time, but that they had unmet needs that they were trying to communicate in the only way they knew how.

I saw it as my job to work out what that need was and fulfil it in the most appropriate way.

Ignore the need and you are asking for an issue!

Over the years, I have used various strategies with both my own children and my therapy kids. I have shared these ideas with many parents, who have found them to be invaluable.

Now I would like to share these insights with you, to give you the benefit of my 20 years experience. I am sure this knowledge will give you some interesting food for thought, and the skill to apply these strategies to your children.



The Family

## 1.2 How to Use This Book

This book will provide you with insights and strategies to use in integrating this information.

Each section will:

- Introduce topics of discussion.
- Provide food for thought and strategies to try.

For ease of use, I am referring to “he” as the child. This does not mean that *only* boys are on the spectrum!

In my opinion, behaviour is very often a reflection of a child’s needs. This workbook focuses specifically on understanding *and* working with your child’s needs, thereby assisting you to better manage your child’s behaviour.

As you go through each Section, I encourage you to make notes, talk to your partners and friends, and keep some form of diary of your insights, feelings, and thoughts. By doing this you will be making this an interactive learning experience.

I believe very strongly in “learning by doing”, as it helps you to integrate the information and make it part of you so that you don’t forget all the pearls of wisdom you gain along the way.

I urge you to make a HUGE effort to actually use and practice the strategies in this book!

Nothing will change if you do nothing!

Your action will let your child know that you understand and want to work together to make everyone feel happy and in control of their own destiny. You owe it to yourself to “have a go”.

Now, on with the show!