

# Supports for Teachers of Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs)

## Introduction

The **Special Education Support Service (SESS)** provides continuing professional development (CPD) and support for school personnel working with pupils with special educational needs in a variety of educational settings including mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special classes and special schools.

Key initiatives in supporting teachers working with pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) include:

### ▪ Teaching Approaches

*Approaches central to the Primary Curriculum together with ASD-specific approaches are the focus of the work. The decision to use a particular approach or a combination of approaches is based on the individual need of each pupil and is concerned with furthering the holistic development of the pupil. Courses provided include TEACCH, ABA, Lámh, Intensive Interaction, Assessment, Hanen, Floortime, Social Stories, etc. Course details and application forms are available on [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie).*

### ▪ Contemporary Applied Behaviour Analysis

*This course is designed to teach the skills necessary for the design, implementation and evaluation of behaviour management programmes for use with individuals with mild, moderate or intensive needs, in a variety of settings.*

### ▪ Kids on Block Autism Awareness Programme

*Additional information is available on [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie).*

### ▪ Development of Teams of Advisors and Associates for ASD and for Behaviour

*Teachers with specific expertise comprise SESS Teams of Advisors and Associates. They provide seminar delivery and specialised in-school support*

### ▪ Subvention for On-line Courses

*SESS provides fees subvention for autism specific on-line courses through ICEP Europe at [www.icepe.eu](http://www.icepe.eu).*

### ▪ Supports Scheme

*Schools and / or individual teachers identify their own professional development needs in relation to special education, including teaching and learning of pupils with ASDs, and apply to the SESS for support. Support sought may be financial, professional and / or advisory in nature. See 'Supports Scheme' at [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie).*

***"Every student can learn,  
just not on the same day,  
or in the same way"***  
- George Evans

## Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma

The provision of a **Post-Graduate Certificate/ Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional development in Special Educational Needs (Autistic Spectrum Disorders)** represents an innovative and responsive approach to the provision of continuing professional development for teachers of students with ASDs. Funded by the Department of Education and Science, the programme is being provided on an inter-agency partnership basis by Teacher Education Section of the DES, St. Angela's College and Special Education Support Service. The programme is accredited by NUI Galway.

In order to provide teachers with flexibility the Certificate/Diploma course can be completed over two years. Teachers avail of modules on a regional basis, thus ensuring that access to this accredited programme is nationwide. The course combines theory and practice. It transforms the existing menu of course into an integrated academic programme, based on current research and with strong theoretical underpinning. Accreditation is given for prior learning. Applications forms are available on [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie).



## Feedback from Teachers

- *"I learned about identifying priority needs and not trying to cover too many needs as part of the IEP, linking curricular areas to each target"*
- *"What appealed to me was the opportunity of building an emotional relationship with children through their language, interests and behaviours"*
- *"It was a reminder to make visual prompts for all lessons, if that's what works best for the individual involved"*
- *"I now have a good tool for assessing the children in my class"*
- *"The course has done wonders for my confidence"*