





How can Jigsaw PSHE support children with Autism?

This article aims to identify and detail the support currently within Jigsaw, the mindful approach to PSHE, which could be beneficial for children with Autism, plus some possible adaptations which may be used.

We are aware that each child is an individual and what works for one autistic pupil may not work for another, but many of the tools, resources and strategies within Jigsaw match or can be adapted to match best practice for supporting a range of needs.

The National Autistic Society website provides advice and support for autism (www.autism.org.uk). The left hand column below has been adapted from their information, especially in relation to relevant strategies from their SPELL framework (Structure, Positive approaches and expectations, Empathy, Low arousal, Links). The middle column explains how these are embedded within Jigsaw and where adaptations may be helpful, and the final one shows where in the programme they are most commonly found.

Feeling/difficulty or suggested support mechanism	Resources/strategies within Jigsaw and possible adaptations as appropriate.	Where do I find them?
Some autistic people say the world feels overwhelming and this can cause them considerable anxiety.	Provide mindfulness activities and strategies to help children calm themselves and moderate their reactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm Me in every lesson • Specific lessons e.g. Healthy Me dealing with stress and anxiety
Understanding and relating to other people - persistent difficulties with social communication and social interaction. Introduce social skills programmes	Social skills are practised in a fun and non-threatening way in every lesson through games, group work and sharing of ideas. Allow the child to participate at their own comfort level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect us • Group work • Turn taking and listening to others in circle time • Use of the Charter to reinforce how we treat and relate to each other
Other children can also struggle to build rapport with autistic people	Acknowledging and being aware of differences is built into Jigsaw as is respecting and celebrating these differences in a positive way. The social skills support the non-autistic children in finding ways to relate to their autistic peer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating Difference Puzzle. Year 6 specifically look at disabilities. • Connect us in every lesson • Specific KS1 and 2 lessons on supporting children to understand autistic classmates (on Community Area)

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<p>Structure can aid personal autonomy and independence by reducing dependence (e.g. prompting) on others.</p>	<p>The Jigsaw Programme is structured in a way which enables routine to be established. The lessons (ages 5-11) always follow the same six-part format allowing children to know what is coming next thus reducing anxiety. The child could have a paper copy of the slide shown (from our free training materials), so they know what is coming next.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jigsaw 6-part lesson format 
<p>Visual information can support the child's understanding of the structure.</p>	<p>Visual aids such as the Jigsaw Charter, the use of the Jigsaw Jerrie Cat slide for moments of calm Pause Points, and the "Help Me Reflect" assessment prompt are repeated in every lesson in Jigsaw to support learners for whom visual supports are beneficial. Child (or adult working with the child) could have a copy of any appropriate visual aids being used such as the Jigsaw Charter.</p>	 <p>The Charter is at the start of every lesson as a graphic on PowerPoint and a hard copy class version should be on display in the classroom. Jigsaw Jerrie Cat slide or actual Jerrie Cat soft toy raised by teacher as a visual prompt to invite children to pause. (See below)</p> <p>Self-assessment sheet is shown on PowerPoint as well as given to children and includes pictorial prompts using basic symbols of thumbs up/sideways/down to show how they feel. (See below under assessment)</p>

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<p>If using pictures, once you choose a type or style (for example, line drawings), use it consistently.</p>	<p>This is especially important in topics such as sex education. Jigsaw has diagrammatic animations, PowerPoints and picture cards which follow the same style in every year group to ensure this is explained clearly.</p>	<p>The same consistent "house style" is used across the board in all Jigsaw diagrams, PowerPoints and animations.</p>

Some examples of Jigsaw Visual Supports:

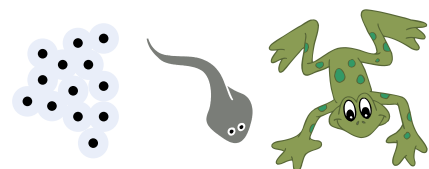


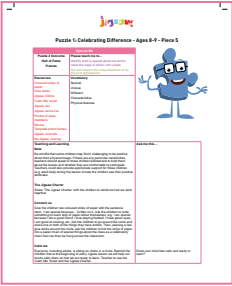
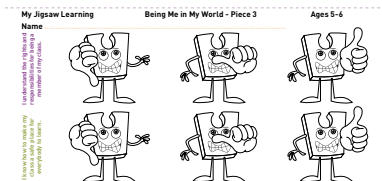
Jigsaw Jerrie Cat visual support is used in every lesson and initiates "Pause Points"

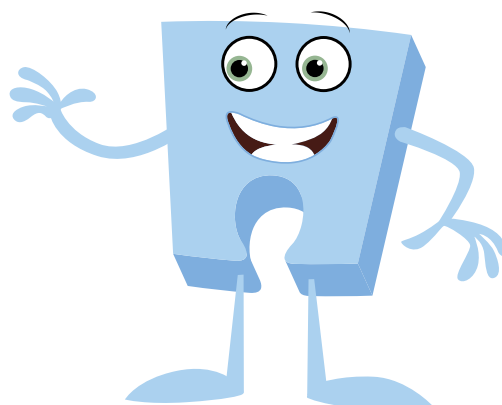



Drawings of Jigsaw Friends are used consistently throughout the programme resources alongside the actual soft-toy version of the Friends.

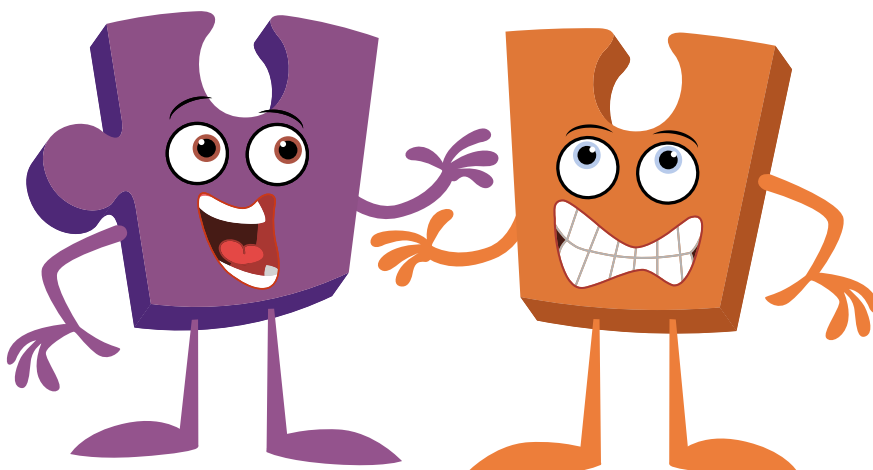
Changing Me resources for younger children to show baby to adult development:

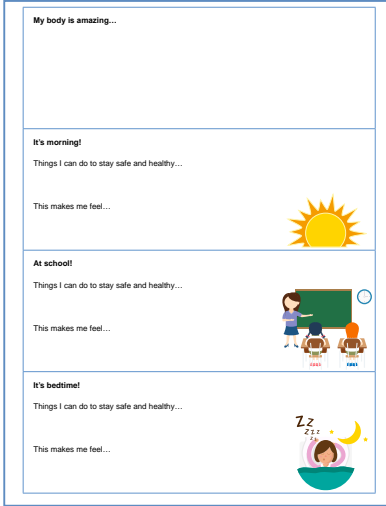



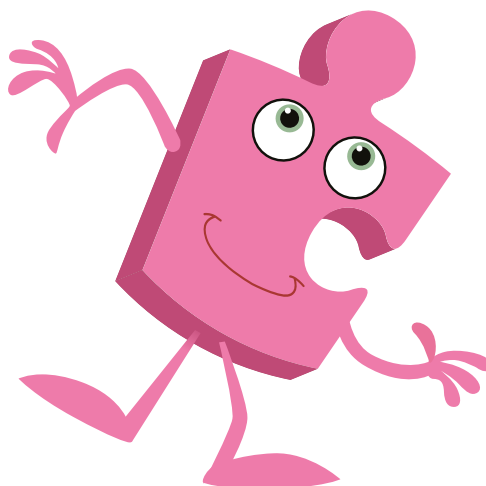
Feeling/difficulty or suggested support mechanism	Resources/strategies within Jigsaw and possible adaptations as appropriate.	Where do I find them?
<p>Positive approaches and expectations can establish and reinforce self-confidence and self-esteem by building on natural strengths, interest and abilities.</p>	<p>Jigsaw teaches children what positive feelings and behaviours feel like so that they can recognise how these build their self-esteem. Specific lessons on self-esteem are included as well as less discrete skills and strategies to boost this by being respected and listened to within the classroom through the use of the Jigsaw Charter. This allows children to express their own feelings, interests and strengths non-judgementally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Jigsaw Charter • Relationships Puzzle: relationship with self • Changing Me Year 6: ideal/real me • Dreams and Goals Puzzle allows children to consider their own aspirations for the future, whatever their interests or abilities might be. • Celebrating Difference discusses celebrating unique features. 
<p>Expectations should be high but realistic and based on careful assessment. Many people on the autism spectrum may have difficulty with verbal communication, leading to an underestimation of their ability and potential.</p>	<p>Assessment is provided in Jigsaw and support such as exemplars of what children may say or do are provided to enable teachers to make holistic and valid judgements.</p> <p>Children can also self-assess at the end of each lesson so that the teacher can see how they are feeling about the lesson content and how they have developed in both their PSHE subject knowledge and their emotional aspects of learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplars and assessment criteria within each puzzle for both the purple and the green learning intentions. • Weekly self-assessment sheet includes basic symbols (thumbs up) which are clear for the child so aid self-assessment to be as accurate as possible. 




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<p>Many autistic people may avoid new or potentially aversive experiences, but through the medium of structure and positive, sensitive, supportive rehearsal, their levels of anxiety can be reduced, and they can learn to tolerate and accept such experiences and develop new horizons and skills.</p>	<p>Whenever new skills or experiences are introduced, it is through the same routine of the 6-part Jigsaw lesson that the children are used to. Practicing and rehearsal are frequently used as strategies. The Jigsaw Friend is a non-threatening distancing tool and children can practice with them as part of the lesson before practising with peers. Children with autism could continue to use the Jigsaw Friend voiced by an adult or peer, if they find this more beneficial.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of Jigsaw 6-part lessons. • Rehearsal is evident in many lessons in every age group e.g. Celebrating Difference where children rehearse what they would say to stop bullying.
<p>The quality of the relationship between the person and supporter is of vital importance.</p>	<p>The sharing of all the experiences in Jigsaw in a respectful and empathetic way not only allows relationships between children to build, but also the relationships between the children and the adults who support them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Jigsaw lessons • Adult participation is encouraged to be at an equal level e.g. everybody sitting on chairs for circle times, all joining in for the Connect us activities.
<p>Approaches and the environment need to be calm and ordered in such a way so as to reduce anxiety and aid concentration.</p>	<p>The Jigsaw lesson promotes calm to ensure that learning time and experience is optimised. Calm Me has its own section early in every lesson and the teacher also gives the children time to pause and refocus using the Jigsaw Jerrie Cat Pause Points.</p> <p>If the Chime is not appropriate for the child because it overstimulates, the paws slide could be used to start, and the teacher could countdown to the end.</p>	<p>In every lesson.</p> <div data-bbox="1059 907 1445 1182" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><small>Celebrating Difference Jerrie Cat PowerPoint Slide 1 - Ages 6-7 - Piece 1</small></p>  </div>



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<p>Clear information should be given in the medium best suited to the individual with care taken not to overload or bombard.</p>	<p>The PowerPoints and images supplied with Jigsaw enhance the clarity of the information.</p> <p>Activity sheets are presented in a child-friendly format, many with graphic representations of the information.</p>	<p>Every lesson includes appropriate images to support learning.</p> <p>Where certain activities are prescribed to complete, activity sheets are clear and minimal with pictorial clues e.g. this sheet from Healthy Me:</p> 
<p>Some autistic children may seek out sensory experiences.</p>	<p>Children may enjoy the sensation of holding and passing the Jigsaw Friend or Jerrie Cat. This can be regulated by e.g. the routine of passing on the friend when their turn to speak has finished. The Chime also provides an auditory sensory experience at the start and end of each Calm Me (the mindfulness section of the lesson) and we have found many autistic children benefit hugely from this, sometimes having quite profound experiences.</p>	<p>The Jigsaw Friend, Jerrie Cat and the Jigsaw Chime are in every lesson and can be used at other times within the school day as appropriate.</p> 



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<p>Supplementary relaxation and arousal reduction therapies, multi-sensory rooms, music and massage, sensory diet etc may be helpful in promoting calm and general well-being and in reducing anxiety.</p>	<p>Calm Me is a specific part of the lesson which enables the children to relax and put other distractions to one side and promote calmness within themselves. Teachers are supported by a script, and children are shown photos to support children in understanding what calmness feels like. It allows them to practice mindfulness which means they can consider and regulate their feelings and emotions with no judgement. Mindfulness can support with reduction of anxiety by being able to identify thoughts and feelings as they arise in the present moment and then using mindfulness techniques as self-interventions.</p>	<p>Calm Me is in every lesson and can be used at other parts of the day when children may feel anxious and want to use this technique.</p> <p>Children can do this for themselves at any time they need to.</p> <p>There is a Calm Me audio file on the Community Area that could help children give themselves a Calm me time using headphones.</p>
<p>Keeping links open and sharing information with parents, carers and other professionals working alongside the child is beneficial.</p>	<p>The use of the Jigsaw Journal, and the ongoing assessment by the child themselves and the teacher recorded in it, chart both the PSHE learning and also progress in emotional learning. This is vital information which can be shared with all parties and may even log and track targets from EHCPs if these correlate with the emotional learning within Jigsaw.</p> <p>The green learning intention in every lesson is focused on the development of emotional literacy and social skills, and the overviews of all the attainment descriptors could prove a useful monitoring tool, along with the Summative assessment tracking sheet in every Puzzle.</p>	<p>The 'Help Me Reflect' section of every Jigsaw lesson involves the use of the Jigsaw Journal for assessment. Other activities can be stuck in or written directly into the book as appropriate.</p> 




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<p>Social storiesTM and comic strip conversations can help autistic people develop greater social understanding and stay safe.</p> <p>Social stories present information in a literal, 'concrete' way, which may improve a person's understanding of a previously difficult or ambiguous situation or activity.</p> <p>By providing information about what might happen in a particular situation, and some guidelines for behaviour, you can increase structure in a person's life and thereby reduce anxiety.</p>	<p>In Jigsaw lessons, the Jigsaw Friends often have a story or problem which the children help them solve. The topics below are from suggestions from the Autistic Society website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care • Social skills • A situation e.g. how to behave if you are being bullied • How to cope with change • Giving compliments • How to cope with behaviour challenges such as disappointment, anger etc. <p>Cartoon PowerPoints are also included in the programme to explain concepts such as mindfulness or introduce Jerrie Cat.</p>	<p>Jigsaw Friend and Jerrie Cat in all lessons.</p> <p>Examples of where the topics listed on the Autistic Society website are covered by stories in Jigsaw</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Me • Being Me in My World • Celebrating Difference • Changing Me • Relationships • Dreams and Goals, Celebrating Difference, Relationships

Some examples:

Maya's story from Celebrating Difference

Open my mind

Slide 1: Sing or listen to the Jigsaw song : There's A Place
Ask the children to pick out some words from the lyrics that teach us about how to respect each other.

Pause Point: Slide 2:  Raise Jigsaw Jerrie Cat's paws to indicate this Pause Point. Invite the children to stop, take some gentle, deep breaths and look inside to identify their thoughts and feelings in th present moment.

Tell me or show me

Share Maya's story with the children.
Ask the children to think about how the bullying started and why it was hard for Maya and other people to spot, and share some of their ideas, perhaps using Jigsaw Jaz as the talking object within the circle.

The start of Jigsaw Jack's letter from Being Me in My World

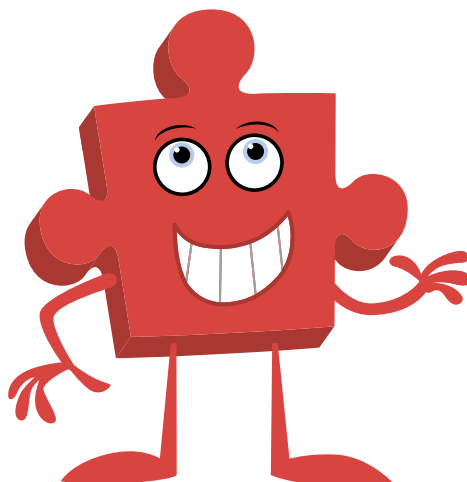



Dear children

Part 1

My name is Jigsaw Jack. I am really pleased to be staying with you all the time you are in this class. Because I don't know you yet I feel really nervous and it would help me if you could tell me your names and make me feel welcome.

(Teacher goes around circle with Jigsaw Jack introducing and getting children to say hello and their name.)



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<p>There may be issues when “No” is used with autistic children. If it’s a safety issue, look at ways of explaining danger and safety.</p>	<p>Learning about danger and safety are integral to Jigsaw PSHE. Pre-emptive teaching and rehearsal of how to deal safely with dangerous situations can help to alleviate this issue.</p>	<p>Found across a variety of topics e.g. Celebrating Difference: how to deal with bullying, Healthy Me: crossing the road.</p> <div data-bbox="1193 302 1449 593" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Learn to Cross the Road</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think first 2. Stop 3. Use your eyes and ears 4. Wait until it's safe to cross 5. Look and listen 6. Arrive safely </div>
<p>If “No” is being used to regulate behaviour, try using other routines and having a calm reaction which may help to de-escalate the behaviour and decrease it in future.</p>	<p>The use of mindfulness in Jigsaw lessons and the freedom to use e.g. the chime, Jigsaw Jerrie cat’s Pause Points and/or breathing techniques to calm down at any point necessary, can help the child begin to use this themselves and regulate their own behaviour.</p>	<p>Calm Me in every lesson but the Jigsaw Chime and strategies can also be used at other times.</p> 
<p>Behaviour can be supported by allowing autistic pupils to have a time out card or exit pass to indicate to teaching staff that they are feeling anxious and need to leave the classroom.</p>	<p>Within the Jigsaw Charter is the “Right to Pass”. This is integral for all children but will be especially important for autistic children. It is also beneficial for them to see that other children may utilise this strategy.</p>	<p>Every Jigsaw lesson within the Jigsaw Charter.</p>

Note ref Social stories™ : The terms ‘social story’ and ‘social stories’ are trademarks originated and owned by Carol Gray see www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips

