

What you might see:

You might see a child who:

compares themselves negatively to others.

may be very self-critical when they make mistakes.

fears getting something wrong and avoiding attempting tasks.

avoids new activities unless supported.

is very motivated by their own interests but disengages from tasks they don't find meaningful.

finds open-ended or abstract tasks hard to stay engaged with.

may not always recognise or describe their own emotions.

experiences emotions intensely, leading to overwhelm or shutdown.

appears calm while feeling stressed inside (masking).

experiences increased anxiety when routines change, in social uncertainty, or during sensory overload.

shows distress through withdrawal, shutdown, movement or avoidance.

What you can try:

- Work with the child and Parent Carers to agree strategies to support emotional regulation.
- Provide specific, meaningful praise and feedback when they persist and achieve, tailored to their preferred form of feedback.
- Provide clear verbal feedback on next steps in learning.
- Plan opportunities for success through carefully matched expectations and interventions.
- Make explicit links to prior learning. Share clear steps so they know what to expect.
- Plan activities that support independence and self-actualisation.
- Promote self-esteem by celebrating strengths and reinforcing success
- Provide access to a designated safe space, agreed with the child.
- Promote positive autistic role models.
- Provide opportunities that foster enjoyment and positive experiences of school.
- Teach and model emotional language explicitly within the curriculum (e.g. PSHE).
- Use emotional regulation tools (e.g. 5-point scale) to agree and support strategies.
- Support understanding when the child perceives an injustice.
- Provide access to a key adult at agreed times.
- Use co-regulation strategies when they are anxious or dysregulated.
- Provide opportunities for independent work and skill development.