

The National Autistic Society promotes early intervention and parent support through its EarlyBird and EarlyBird Plus parent programmes.



Our EarlyBird Centre has developed the Healthy Minds programme, which aims to help minimise the risk of children with autism (including Asperger syndrome) experiencing mental health problems in adolescence and early adulthood.

For information about your local Healthy Minds team, please contact:

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Illustrations by Steve Lockett

# EarlyBird Healthy Minds programme



**A six-session parent support programme to help promote good mental health in children with autism**



Accept difference.  
Not indifference.

# EarlyBird Healthy Minds programme

## What is the Healthy Minds programme?

Healthy Minds has been developed in response to recent evidence which indicated that a high percentage of children with autism (including Asperger syndrome) are at risk of experiencing mental health problems in adolescence and adulthood. The programme aims to help minimise this risk.

## Who is the programme for?

Three places are allocated on the Healthy Minds programme: two for families whose child is in Key Stage 1 or 2, and one for an accompanying professional.

## Who runs the programme?

Autism-experienced professionals run the programme for families in their local area. The professionals are trained and licensed by The National Autistic Society's EarlyBird Centre team.

Sessions are run weekly for six weeks and last two and a half hours.



## What are the aims of the programme?

Healthy Minds aims to empower parents, carers and accompanying professionals to understand more about the mental health issues that young people with autism may face.

Participants will learn about, and be encouraged to use, a range of strategies to help their children develop and maintain a positive and confident approach to the 'Humpty Dumpty' moments that we can all experience in daily life. That is, times when we may feel overwhelmed or upset, but are able to pick ourselves up and carry on.



## What will participants learn about?

During the six Healthy Minds sessions, we will look at strategies that can help children with autism to:

- > build self-esteem
- > increase confidence
- > reduce anxiety
- > develop resilience.