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 54 St. James Street, Liverpool, L1 0AB

The Impact of a Neurodiversity Paradigm in Education

Arron Hutchinson
Education Training Director

arron.hutchinson@adhd.foundation.org.uk



Language Used to Discuss SEND

Struggle

Impairment

Disadvantage

Attainment

Expected
Progress

Slower

Fails

Less than
expected

Problems



Language Used to Discuss SEND

"Not meeting age-related expectations"

"Falling outside of normative development"

This focuses too heavily on 'delays' or 'impairments'



Latest Statistics – January 2022

Just under **1.5 million pupils in England** have special educational needs.

An increase of **77,000** from 2021 to 2022.

Pupils with an EHCP made up almost **one quarter (24%)** of all pupils with SEN

The percentage of pupils with an EHCP has increased to **4.0%**.

50% increase since 2016

The percentage of pupils with SEN but EHCP has increased to 12.6%.

14% increase since 2016

The most common type of need for those with an EHC plan is **autism** and for those with SEN support is **speech, language and communication needs**



This begs the question...

What is 'normal
development'?



Neurodiversity

Strength-based

Interest-based

Differences rather than deficits

There is no 'normal' or 'healthy' brain



Flipping the Narrative



Taking a Strength-Based Approach



Enthusiasm

Big-picture thinking

Honesty

Innovation

Hyperfocus

Creativity

Attention to detail

Analytical

Critical thinking

Problem solving

Dedication

Authenticity

The Impact

Encourages more accepting attitudes

Helps to improve self-esteem

Challenges stigma

Brings attention to the role that neurodivergent minds can play in society

The sky is the limit!



What Skills do we need for the Future?



| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Generalists | Good handwriting | Specialists | IT literacy |
| Mental Arithmetic | Conformity | Coding skills | Creativity |
| Memory-based learning | Punishing differences | Encouraging diversity | Flexible working |

Moving Forward

Knowledge is power

Explore language

Reframe our thinking

Consider the 'spiky profile'

Support executive functions

Celebrate neurodiversity



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Thank you!

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