

TRANSCRIPT: Intensive Support Centre - Positive handling

Andy Squire

The sort of children we are working with, typically, are those who've got severe autistic spectrum disorder and a degree of challenging behaviour that makes them a risk working with staff and alongside peers in an ordinary special school setting.

The problems that we experienced in school become even more profound at home because the family begins closing down. The family's unable to go on visits or regular holidays or go out for a meal or go to the cinema, those sorts of thing that a typical family would be able to do.

The overarching principle when we introduced *Team Teach* across the school was that we cared enough about them not to let them be out of control and not to let them close their lives down in the way that they had been doing.

And what *Team Teach* did give us was a solution to that problem that did allow us, in the most caring way possible, to intervene and protect that young person from themselves or protect other people from that young person, in a holistic context - and by holistic context I mean, within a structure that gives the young people outlets in other ways and builds up and develops interest and skills that can replace some of those rigid and repetitive behaviours that they've developed.

Team Teach gives us a structure by which we can make things safe, if we need to. There are graded and gradual levels of intervention and the principle would really be that we would want to use the minimum physical intervention for the least amount of time but, if necessary, it does give us strategies for dealing with youngsters who are, in effect, adult size and presenting adult-sized challenges that we need to meet.

Now, if physical intervention happens in isolation and there is no significant improvement and no reduction either in the duration or the frequency of those interventions, then it's not working and we need to try another way. So we need to move that young person on and, through a process of monitoring and recording and evaluating those interventions and, crucially, talking those over with the parents and the carers, we can analyse the success and take a judgement upon that.