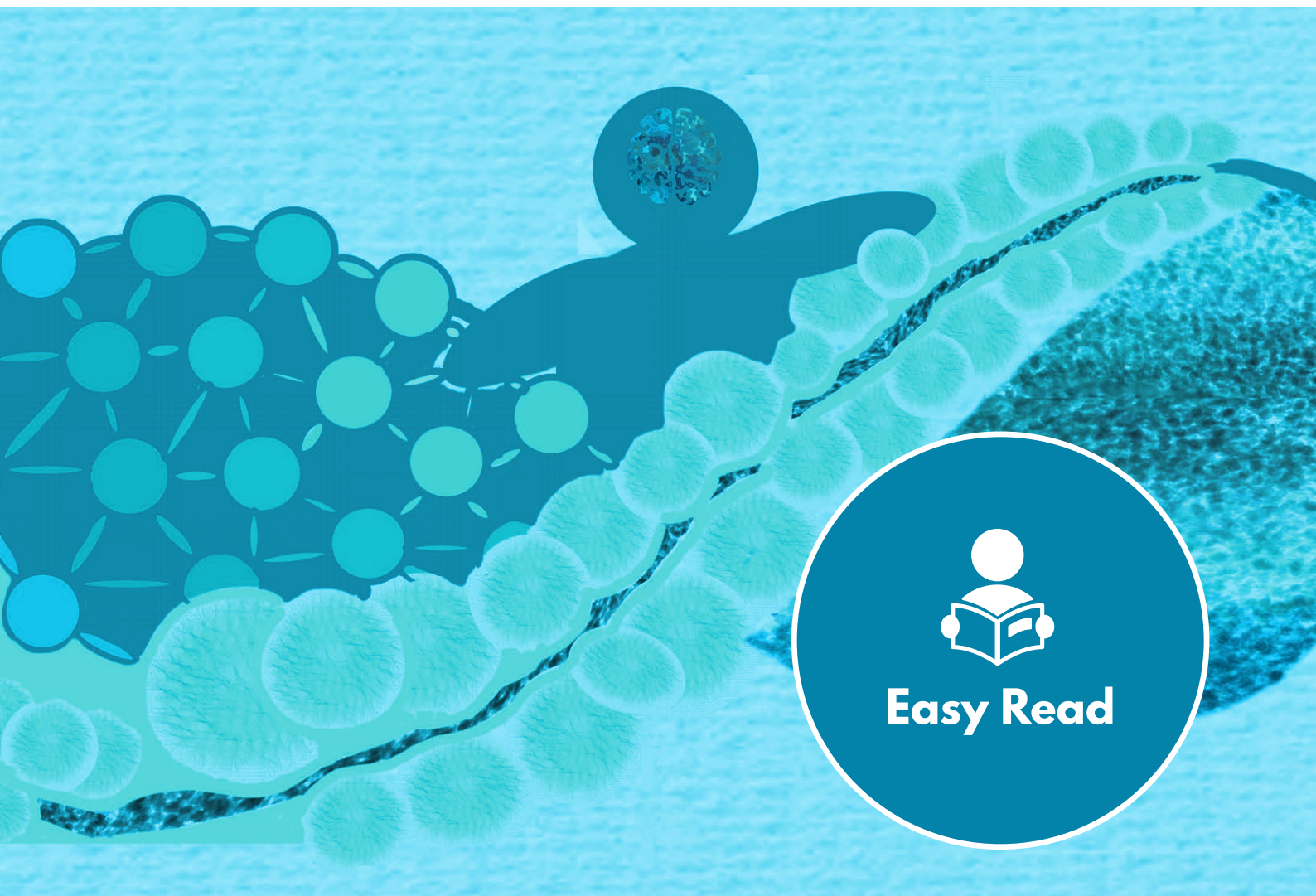


Guiding Principles

National Guidance

For best practice in inclusive education for autistic students

FEBRUARY 2026



Easy Read

How to use this document



Autism CRC wrote this document.

You can learn more about Autism CRC at autismcrc.com.au



We wrote this document in a way that is easy to read.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

Bold means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what the bold words mean.



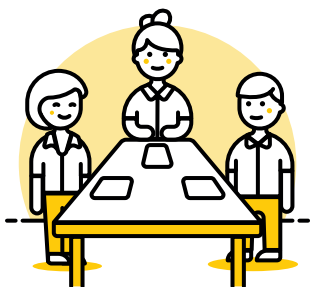
If you have any questions about this document you can email us at

info@autismcrc.com.au

This paper is about **Guiding Principles**. They tell us what is important to think about when we support autistic students in pre-schools and schools in Australia.



Guiding principles are ideas that help you make choices.



A group of people who understand autism made these guiding principles.



They were asked about what helps autistic students at school.



There are 9 things to think about.

The 9 guiding principles are important and should be used together.



Guiding Principle 1: **Collaborative**

Collaborative means everyone who supports the student should work together.

This includes many people.



- the student
- their family



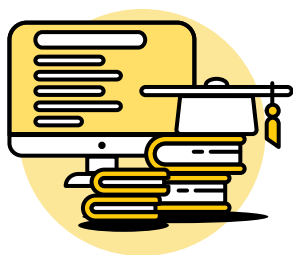
- school leaders
- teachers



- support staff
- health workers.

Students have ideas that should be listened to before choosing supports.

Guiding Principle 2: **Evidence-informed** and **practice-based**



Evidence-informed means ideas should come from

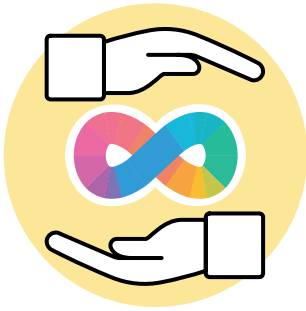
- what we know works from research about autistic students
- what professionals think is right for the child
- what children and families tell us they need.



Practice-based means

- staff should use research about autism in schools
- everyone at school can learn how to support autistic students.





Guiding Principle 3: **Neurodiversity-affirming / Social model of neurodiversity**

Neurodiversity-affirming means

- all brains are different
- all brains are important
- there is no right way to think and learn.



Social model of neurodiversity means sometimes spaces and the way teaching is done makes it hard for children to learn.

- everyone deserves to be respected
- we all have a right to learn.





Guiding Principle 4: **Personalised**

Personalised means every autistic student is different and will need support to learn that is made just for them.



Students can help choose supports that fit



- what they like

- what they need



- what they are good at



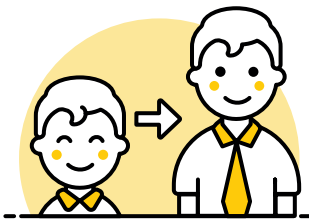
- the way they learn best.



Guiding Principle 5: **Proactive** and **coordinated**

Proactive means supports should be ready for children and families to use where and when they need them.

- all students change as they grow and learn new things
- supports need to change too
- autistic students may need different supports as they grow up.



Coordinated means everyone who is helping the student and family should talk to each other about how they plan supports.



- we need to think about how things fit together for students in all areas of their life
- students should get the right support for their whole time at school.



Guiding Principle 6: Respectful and culturally responsive

Culturally responsive means

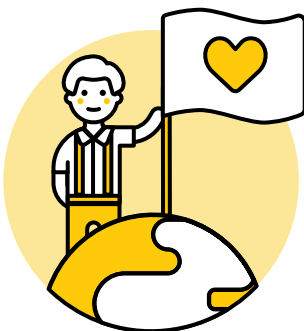
- talk to students and families about culture



- listen to what students and families know about their culture



- teach everyone about different cultures



- respect different ways of working together to support students.

Guiding Principle 7: **Rights-based**



Rights-based means



- every person has human rights
- human rights are protected by the law



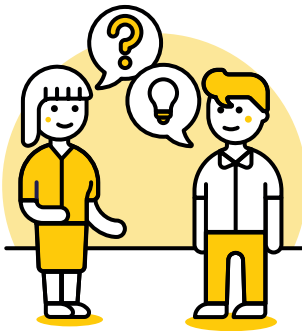
- the rights of students and families must be protected
- every student has the right to learn at school.



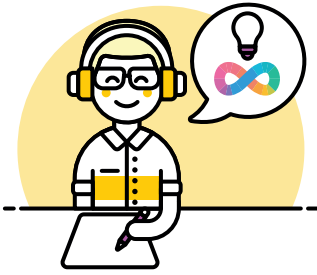
Guiding Principle 8: **Student-centred**

Student-centred means every autistic child gets support that is just right for them.

- support should be planned by getting to know the student



- ask students about what they like
- ask students about what they find hard
- ask students about how they like to be supported at school.



Guiding Principle 9: **Supportive**



Supportive means understanding that different brains need different things.

Everyone can work together to support autistic students at school.

All students can



- feel respected
- feel safe
- feel calm
- be ready to learn.