

[return to contents page](#)

[return to case studies menu](#)

Case Study - Charles

Charles, who is six years old, is a pupil at a [resource base](#) for young people with [autism](#) which is located in a [mainstream school](#).

Charles has partial sight. He was diagnosed with [autism](#) at the age of four years. He has [severe learning difficulties](#).

Charles has [autism](#), [cataracts](#) in both eyes and [nystagmus](#). At the age of five he had a distance [visual acuity](#) of 6/48. He uses his sight to locate near-by objects, but his fine-motor skills are compromised as he does not look at what he is doing. He explores all items by mouthing.

The school [tailors provision to meet Charles' needs](#): he follows an individualised curriculum, not a modified version of what is provided for his typically developing peers.

Charles is physically very active. He does everything at high speed and often runs off from a group or from adult supervision. This, coupled with his poor sight, means he is vulnerable to accidents. Staff try to [build on his interest in football to promote his peer relationships](#) : they prompt older non-disabled young people to include him in their playground football games. However, this has so far met with very limited success: he continues to play alongside rather than with his peers. However, it does mean that Charles uses a great deal of energy during breaks in the playground; this may help to reduce restlessness during educational activities.

He is highly distractible and has a short attention span. He engages in high-speed twirling and head weaving. He runs on tip-toe. His teacher has recently started to encourage Charles to focus visually on an object by [promoting attention to stimuli using a sensory environment](#).

Charles enjoys using the soft-play room. Initially, Charles typically went into [crisis](#) when told to finish this activity. Therefore a strategy is in place to [inform him of when to expect the end of the activity](#).

Charles enjoys the attention of adults and initiates interaction through speech or by eye contact. His speech is not very clear, so people who do not know Charles do not readily understand him. He is at the two to three word stage of understanding and expression.

Because Charles is subject to rapid swings of mood, staff [monitor his behaviour and moods closely](#). If they expect him to have a disturbed day, staff make fewer demands on him than usual; they also help him to stay [calm by enabling him to use a lot of energy](#), or by [providing access to the sensory environment](#).

Charles is not upset by changes to routine, [transitions of location](#), or by sudden or loud noises.

The [resource base](#) uses structured teaching based on the [TEACCH](#) approach and Charles has a [timetable](#).

Although Charles enjoys activities that link music and action, [music](#) is not used in any strategies.

[top of page](#)