

Research-based toolkit supports neurodiverse children

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A new child-centered suite of resources, backed by the latest research, has been launched to support parents and teachers of neurodiverse children.

The resource, known as the EPIC Think Learn toolkit, is the first of its kind to be based on research. It is designed for caregivers of autistic children and those who have ADHD, dyspraxia or were born prematurely.

It can be used from the point a difficulty is noticed, whether the child has a diagnosis or is awaiting assessment.

Support needed

[EPIC](#)—Edinburgh Psychoeducation Intervention for Children—aims to bridge a gap in supporting families against a backdrop of long waiting times to be diagnosed, which can be up to five years, with demand having risen sharply since COVID.

Dr. Sinead Rhodes, of the University of Edinburgh's Center for Clinical Brain Sciences, who founded the toolkit, co-developed the resources with those they aim to support: children, parents, teachers and clinicians.

Parents have praised the toolkit for providing clear resources, designed to empower the child—highlighting strengths as well as what they struggle with.

Having conducted research with neurodivergent children for over 25 years, I have witnessed the [waiting times](#) get longer and parents and teachers feeling unsupported. Many myths exist about these conditions, such as that they present in isolation when, in fact, meeting the criteria for more than one condition is the norm rather than the exception.

"I see the need for parents and teachers to learn about up-to-date research on neurodivergence and to receive that information in a way that they can implement straight away with the children in their care," says Dr. Sinead Rhodes.

Online platform

With the support of Edinburgh Innovations, the University of Edinburgh's commercialization service, EPIC Think Learn has spun out of the Center for Clinical Brain Sciences into a community interest company.

The toolkit has launched with an [online platform](#) for parents, including webinars about how to use the resources. Materials are continuously revised based on the latest research.

Teacher services such as webinars and in-service training options are also available, with a full teaching platform to come online next year. Webinars for clinicians will be available from autumn this year.

"We are proud to have supported EPIC through our [business development](#) and enterprise support and to have funded them via the Wellcome Trust iTPA program. With waiting lists burgeoning, it is vital that [parents](#) and teachers of neurodivergent [children](#) can access high quality [support](#), backed by research, that they can fully trust," says Dr. Susan Bodie.

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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