Children with autism from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities face a double discrimination which makes their educational experience consistently worse than that of their white British peers, according to The National Autistic Society (NAS).

The NAS is today launching a report, *Missing out? Autism, education and ethnicity: the reality for families today*, which reveals that:

- 62% of parents from BME communities who have a child with autism said they did not have a choice in the type of school their child attended.
- 24% of BME children with autism had been excluded from school.
- 78% of parents from BME communities said their local education authority did not provide support to their child with autism during exclusion.
- Parents from BME communities were significantly less satisfied with their child’s academic and social progress compared to their white British counterparts.

The double discrimination of disability and ethnicity

**Date:** 16 April 2007

**Press Code:**
Joan Nelson, whose son is black and has autism, said:

"I really do feel that ethnicity has a significant impact on the level and type of education given to my child. There appeared to be more of a belief that my child was bad as opposed to having special needs. Black boys are penalised on several fronts; because their special educational needs (SEN) cause them to have difficulty accessing appropriate education, because they are black, and because they are boys. This hinders them in achieving what they should in today's system."

Prithvi Perepa, BME Development Officer for the NAS, said:

"It is the right of all children in the UK to access a full education. As a society we must ensure that children from BME communities do not lose out. All children must be able to access appropriate support and a range of educational provision in order that their individual needs are met."

The NAS report recommends that:

- every child with autism has local access to a diverse range of educational provision
- schools must address bullying on the basis of race and/or disability explicitly in anti-bullying procedures
- all professionals working with children with autism from BME communities should receive training in autism and cultural awareness
- speech and language therapists should be aware of strategies for working with children who have autism whose first language is not English.

Missing out? Autism, education and ethnicity: the reality for families today will be launched today (16 April) at an NAS conference called Autism, education and ethnicity.

The report is part of the NAS make school make sense campaign. The campaign aims to exert pressure on Government and local authorities, and to work with them to deliver improvements to education for children with autism.

To obtain a copy of the Missing out? report please email campaign@nas.org.uk or telephone 020 7923 5799.

ENDS

Please contact Jenny Robottom on 020 7903 3578 or email jenny.robottom@nas.org.uk.
for a copy of the report, interviews, images and further information
for further information on the NAS make school make sense
campaign.

Notes to editors

- Autism (including Asperger syndrome) is a lifelong developmental
disability. It is a spectrum condition occurring in varying degrees of
severity. More than 500,000 people have autism in the UK today
and over 2 million people are affected by the disability. It is
characterised by a triad of impairments: difficulties forming social
relationships, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication
and the development of strong, narrow, obsessional interests.

- The National Autistic Society is the UK’s leading charity for people
with autistic spectrum disorders and their families. Founded in
1962, it continues to spearhead national and international
initiatives and provide a strong voice for all people with autism. The
NAS provides a wide range of services to help people with autism
and Asperger syndrome live their lives with as much independence
as possible.

- The NAS relies on the support of its members and donors to
continue its vital work for people with autism. To become a
member, make a donation or to find out more about the work of
the NAS, visit the NAS website www.autism.org.uk or call the NAS
donation line 08702 33 40 40 (national rates apply).

- For more information about autism and for help in your area, call
the NAS Autism Helpline on: 0845 070 4004 10am-4pm, Monday to
Friday (local rates apply).

- The NAS Autism Services Directory is the UK’s most comprehensive
directory of services and events for people with autism. Visit
www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory to find autism services and
support networks in your area.

Related resources

Related areas/articles elsewhere on this website

- Education: make school make sense