

Slough Early Years – Childminder Toolkit



Slough Early Years Service
Revised version January 2026

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Introduction

This pack is designed to support early intervention for pre-school aged children that you have identified as possibly having additional needs, particularly with social communication and social interaction differences.

The support strategies that are included are ordered so that there is a clear starting point and pathway for you to follow.

We recommend that you try at least the first two strategies, or two strategies that you think will support your child accordingly. It will take time for you and the child to learn the skills required to make the strategies successful. We therefore recommend that you work on your chosen strategies for approximately a month before re-evaluating your approach and identifying your next steps. If you still have significant concerns and things are not progressing, please contact Danielle Mercer – Senior Childcare Development Officer at earlyyears@slough.gov.uk to discuss the next best steps for support and intervention.

The first two interventions, Intensive Interaction and Adult Modelling do not require resources to be made therefore can be started almost immediately. With most of the interventions there are short accompanying YouTube clips that demonstrate how to deliver the intervention. We highly recommend that these clips are viewed to support your practice and therefore maximise the potential for success.

There are accompanying summaries of each intervention within this pack for you to refer to. We would recommend that you read them in their entirety before commencing any interventions with the child.

It would be helpful if you could share the support strategies that you are using with the child's parents/carers so that there is a continuity of approach and the skills that the child is learning are transposed into other areas of the child's life.

Included in the Intervention Timeline are examples of targets for each strategy, that can be used to support an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Included in this pack is a **Request for Support** form and **Child Information** form that should be completed and sent via email to: eysend@slough.gov.uk

Safeguarding children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Practitioners working with children and young people with SEND should be aware of the additional needs children may have that could mean they are more vulnerable to abuse and are less able to speak out if something isn't right.

Some children may be vulnerable because they:

- have additional communication needs
- they do not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- need intimate care or are isolated from others
- are dependent on adults for care

If you are concerned that a child or young person is being harmed through abuse or neglect, please contact Slough Children First.

If the child or young person requires immediate protection please call **01753 875362** and send the electronic multi-agency [referral form \(MARF\)](#) to sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk. The operating hours (for this team only) are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

For emergencies outside of Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, call the Emergency Duty Team on **01344 351999** email: EDT@bracknell-forest.gov.uk or **dial 999**.

Further Safeguarding practice guidance can be found by visiting the Pan Berkshire local procedures web page

[Children with Disabilities \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

SEND Inclusion – Code of Practise Summary

Inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in mainstream nurseries is a core principle. Mainstream nurseries must follow the SEND Code of Practice. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) is statutory guidance for early years providers, outlining how to identify, assess, and support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It emphasises a graduated approach, involving assessment, planning, action, and review, to meet individual needs. The Code also highlights the importance of collaboration between professionals, families, and other agencies to ensure children with SEND receive the necessary support. Settings are expected to adapt to individual children's needs and provide support accordingly. Unless specific circumstances prevent it, children with SEND should be included alongside their peers during activities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Here's a breakdown of key aspects:

1. Legal Framework and Principles:

- **SEND Code of Practice:**

All early year's settings, including school nurseries, are legally bound to follow the SEND Code of Practice.

- **Inclusion:**

A core principle is that children with SEND should be included in mainstream settings and activities, as long as it is feasible and does not impede their learning or the education of others.

- **Equality:**

Mainstream nurseries should ensure that children with SEND have equal opportunities to participate and learn.

- **Individualised Support:**

Recognising that each child's needs are unique, nurseries should tailor support and provision to meet those specific needs.

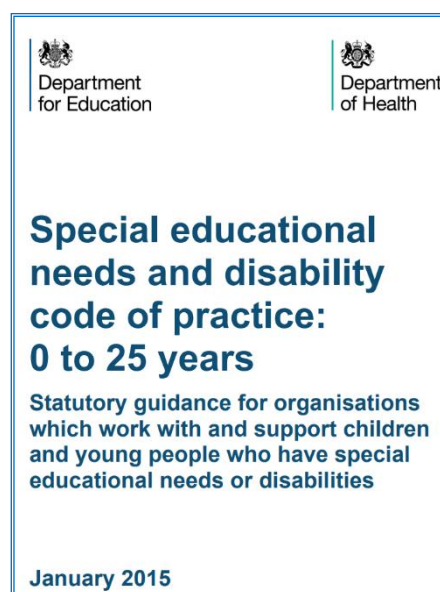
2. Key Practices and Support:

- **Assessment and Planning:**

Nurseries should assess a child's needs, develop a plan in collaboration with parents and specialists, and implement strategies to address those needs.

- **SENCO:**

A designated Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is responsible for overseeing SEND provision within the setting.



- **Adaptations and Adjustments:**

This might include modifying the learning environment, providing adapted resources, and adjusting teaching styles to suit different learning preferences.

- **Positive Relationships:**

Building strong, trusting relationships with key adults is crucial for children with SEND to feel safe and supported.

- **Collaboration with Parents:**

Parents are key partners in the process and should be involved in planning and reviewing support for their child.

3. When Inclusion Might Not Be Appropriate:

- **Impracticality:**

If it's genuinely not feasible to include a child in a particular activity.

- **Hindered Learning:**

If inclusion would prevent a child from receiving the necessary support or would negatively impact their learning.

- **Disruption:**

If inclusion would significantly disrupt the education of other children or the efficient use of resources.

4. Key Considerations for Nurseries:

- **Create an Inclusive Environment:**

Adapt the physical environment, provide accessible resources, and ensure positive interactions among all children.

- **Focus on Strengths:**

Recognise and build on the child's strengths and capabilities.

- **Responsive Communication:**

Use effective communication strategies that support the child's individual needs.

- **Early Intervention:**

Address any emerging needs as early as possible to prevent them from becoming significant barriers to learning.

Mainstream nurseries play a vital role in providing an inclusive and supportive environment for children with SEND. By following the SEND Code of Practice, tailoring support to individual needs, and fostering positive relationships, nurseries can help children with SEND thrive alongside their peers.

What are reasonable adjustments? (The Equality Act 2010)

Reasonable adjustments in early years settings aim to ensure all children, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, can fully participate and benefit from their learning environment. These adjustments can be small, practical changes or more significant adaptations, and they are tailored to the individual needs of the child.

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/04/what-are-reasonable-adjustments-and-how-do-they-help-disabled-pupils-at-school/>

Here are some examples of reasonable adjustments in early years settings:

Physical Environment:

- **Modifying the layout:**

Adjusting indoor and outdoor spaces to be more accessible, like creating ramps, handrails, or wider pathways.

- **Providing supportive seating:**

Offering comfortable seating options, including those that can be adjusted to meet specific needs, like comfortable chairs or cushions, or allowing children to sit on the floor if that is their preference.

- **Sensory Considerations:**

- Modifying lighting, temperature, reducing noise levels, or providing quiet spaces for children who are sensitive to sensory overload.

- **Modifying uniform policies:**

Allowing for variations in uniform or clothing to accommodate sensory sensitivities or other needs.

- **Making objects more stable:**

Using non-slip mats, suction cups, or sloped boards to help children with motor difficulties manipulate objects.

- **Creating quiet spaces:**

Providing a designated quiet area or sensory room where children can retreat when feeling overwhelmed.

Teaching and Learning:

- **Providing visual aids:**

Using visual timetables, picture cards, or other visual supports to help children understand routines and instructions.

- **Giving clear and concise instructions:**

Breaking down instructions into smaller steps and using simple language, potentially paired with visual cues.

- **Offering differentiated activities:**

Adapting activities and materials to match the child's developmental level and learning style.

- **Providing extra time:**

Allowing extra time for tasks or activities, especially for children who need more processing time.

- **Using assistive technology:**

Providing tools like adapted cutlery, pencil grips, or communication devices to support the child's participation.

- **Encouraging movement breaks:**

Allowing regular movement breaks to help children regulate their energy levels and focus.

Social and Emotional Support:

- **Quiet Spaces:**

Providing designated quiet areas where children can retreat if they need a break from the group or are feeling overwhelmed.

- **Social Stories:**

Using social stories to help children understand social situations and expectations.

- **Buddy Systems:**

Pairing children with a supportive peer to help them navigate social situations or activities.

- **Flexible Routines:**

Adapting routines to accommodate individual needs, such as allowing children to enter or leave activities at different times.

Individualised Approach:

- **Collaboration:**

Working closely with parents, caregivers, and other professionals to understand the child's specific needs and preferences.

- **Flexibility:**

Being open to adjusting strategies and approaches as needed based on the child's progress and changing needs.

Important Considerations:

- **The Equality Act 2010:**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e3237ed915d74e33f0ac9/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

Direct link to The Equality Act pdf

The Equality Act requires early years settings to make reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled children at a substantial disadvantage.

- **Anticipatory Duty:**

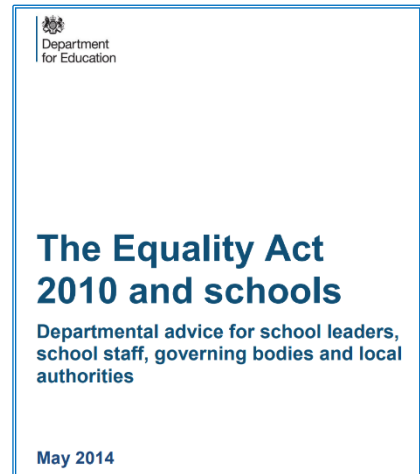
Settings should proactively consider potential barriers and make adjustments in advance.

- **Individualised Needs:**

Adjustments should be tailored to the specific needs of each child.

- **Cost and Practicality:**

While adjustments should be effective, they should also be reasonable in terms of cost and practicality.



It's important to remember that reasonable adjustments are individualised and should be developed in collaboration with the child, their parents, and other professionals involved in their care.

By implementing these reasonable adjustments, early years settings can create a more inclusive and supportive environment where all children can thrive and reach their full potential.

The New Ofsted Inspection Framework

November 2025 – Inclusion (Google AI)



The new Ofsted inspection framework, effective from **November 2025**, elevates inclusion from a general theme to a **standalone, graded evaluation area**. This change aims to provide a more detailed and nuanced assessment of how educational providers support all learners, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils.

Key Aspects of Inclusion in the 2025 Framework

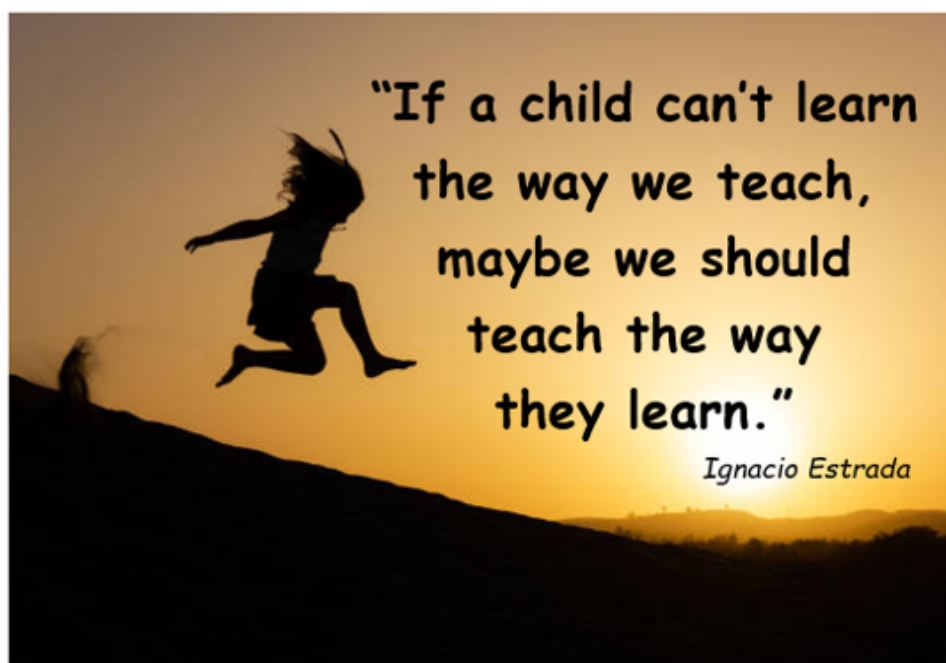
- **Standalone Evaluation Area:** "Inclusion" is now one of the core areas on which schools and other education providers will be explicitly graded using a new five-point scale (Urgent Improvement, Needs Attention, Expected Standard, Strong Standard, Exceptional).
- **Focus on Vulnerable Groups:** The framework places a sharper focus on how schools support specific groups, including:
 - Disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for pupil premium).
 - Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
 - Pupils known to or previously known to children's social care.
 - Pupils who may face other barriers to their learning or wellbeing, including those with protected characteristics.
- **Evidence of Impact:** Inspectors will be looking for practical evidence of impact, not just policies and paperwork. This includes:
 - How effectively barriers to learning are identified and removed.
 - The accessibility of the curriculum and the meaningfulness of adaptations.
 - The lived experience of inclusion from the perspective of learners, parents, and staff.
 - Impact on attendance, exclusions, and overall wellbeing data.
- **Threaded Throughout All Areas:** Inclusion will also be a key theme considered across all other evaluation areas, such as Curriculum and Teaching, Behaviour and Attitudes, and Leadership and Governance.
- **Role of SENDCo/Inclusion Leads:** These staff members are expected to play a more central role during inspections and will be directly involved in discussions about provision, strategy, and outcomes.

- **Contextual Considerations:** Inspectors will consider the unique context and circumstances of each provider, acknowledging local demographics and socio-economic conditions, to ensure a fairer evaluation.
- **Teacher Training (ITE):** Initial Teacher Education providers will be evaluated on how well they prepare trainees to teach pupils with SEND and from diverse backgrounds, ensuring inclusion is a central part of their training, not an add-on.

The changes signal a significant shift towards a more holistic view of education, where a culture of belonging and support for every pupil is considered fundamental to a school's effectiveness



For comprehensive information on the Education Inspection Framework: for use from November 2025 visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-use-from-november-2025>



Inclusion in Childminding (Google AI)

Inclusion in childminding is the practice of ensuring that **every child**, regardless of their background, ability, or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), is treated fairly and has equal access to learning opportunities.

For childminders, inclusion is often described as the "**golden thread**" that should weave through all aspects of their setting.

1. Key Principles for Childminders

- **High Expectations:** Maintaining ambitious goals for all children, including those with SEND, and celebrating individual milestones.
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Making practical changes to the physical environment or routines (e.g., using visual aids or adapting toys) to remove barriers to participation.
- **The Graduated Approach:** Using a cyclical process of **Assess, Plan, Do, and Review** to identify and meet specific needs early.
- **Childminder as SENCo:** In most childminding settings, the childminder takes on the role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), leading the inclusive strategy.

2. Practical Inclusive Strategies

- **Diverse Resources:** Providing toys, books, and materials that reflect various cultures, family structures, and abilities to foster a sense of belonging.
- **Partnership with Parents:** Working closely with families to understand their child's unique needs and sharing the [Local Offer](#) of support services.
- **Inclusive Environment:** Creating a "home from home" atmosphere where routines are flexible enough to accommodate children who may need extra time or specialized care.

3. Support and Training Resources

- **Dingley's Promise:** Offers [free early years inclusion training](#) specifically for practitioners and childminders.
- **Local Authority Inclusion Teams:** Most councils provide an [Early Years SEND Inclusion Service](#) that offers advice from Area SENCos and educational psychologists.
- **Inclusion Funding:** Many local authorities offer specific **SEN Inclusion Funds (SENIF)** or **Disability Access Funding (DAF)** to help childminders afford specialized equipment or extra support.

Interventions in chronological order

1. Intensive interaction
2. Adult modelling
3. Play routine

Supporting Strategies -

4. Curiosity activities
5. Copy Box

Supporting Strategies-

6. 3 Way joint attention activities
7. Adult led turn taking activities

Supporting Strategies-

Supporting Strategies-
Backward Chaining
Visual Communication

Intervention Timeline

The following interventions are chronologically ordered. Starting with the first strategies that can be instigated when SEND/Social Communication and Interaction differences have been identified.

1. Intensive Interaction

2. Adult Modelling

IEP Target example: child will engage with and share interactions with adult through **Intensive Interaction** on a daily basis (working on Social Interaction and Communication).

IEP Target example: child will begin to observe and copy adult actions. When the child is observing the adult or when they are engaged with activities of interest, the **adult will join the child alongside and model** language and extend play through their own actions. (Working on Understanding, Cognition and Learning).

3. Play routines

IEP Target example: child will begin to share attention and communicate using gestures, eye gaze and/or sounds or language while engaging in a motivating play routine. Adults will use simple, repetitive play routines using highly motivating activities to offer the child opportunities to communicate and interact. (Working on Joint Attention, Social Interaction and Communication).

4. Curiosity activities

5. Copy Box

IEP Target example: child will begin to share attention with an adult and take part in 1:1 time using **Curiosity activities**. (Working on Joint Attention, Social Interaction and Communication).

IEP target example: child will select an item from the **Copy Box**, and share attention and interaction with an adult through shared interest in the same toy. Child or adult may copy the others action with the selected toy (child and adult will have the same item each to play with). (Working on joint attention, social Interaction and Communication)

6. Three-way joint attention activities

7. Adult Led Turn-taking

IEP example: child begin to share **Three Way Joint Attention** with an adult using a highly motivating activity during 1:1 time. The activity will be adult led and **child** will follow

physical/verbal prompts and guidance from the adult when support is needed (working on Joint attention, Social Interaction and Cognition and Learning).

IEP Target example: Child will take part in a highly motivating activity with an adult, the adult will instigate **turn taking** with the components of the activity and will use physical/verbal prompts to support **child's** understanding (working on Social Interaction and Communication, Cognition and Learning).

Summary of Chronological Interventions



1. Intensive Interaction



2. Adult Modelling



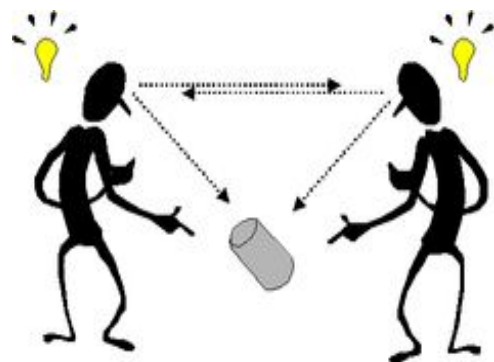
3. Play routines



4. Curiosity Activities



5. Copy Box



6. 3 Way Joint Attention



7. Turn-Taking Activities

1. Intensive Interaction



The Intensive Interaction approach involves creating moments of interaction with people/children who have communication needs, by imitating their behaviour, responding to them in a very highly responsive way, and mirroring what they do to communicate and interact with them.

The approach is based on the way we observe and respond to the actions and noises of babies, and interpret these as communication. It helps a person/child and their communication partner to connect and enjoy each other's company more.

It's about watching closely how a child responds to different situations through their body language, voice and facial expressions – and then responding similarly (by copying) to this.

Intensive Interaction is two-way communication and can be used at all times in all environments.

Intensive Interaction is an approach that can be used by everyone who is involved in supporting a child to interact with other people and develop communication skills in a natural, relaxed and enjoyable way.

Top Tips

- Be available....be the most interesting thing in the room!
- Encourage your child's curiosity by being and playing alongside them.
- Watch...copy...wait...try again, be present in the moment.
- Have fun and enjoy....
- Model some movements and sounds yourself so that they can watch and may even copy you.
- Don't worry if initially you experience rejection...as you continue to offer these opportunities there will also be moments of success!

Useful YouTube links that demonstrate Intensive Interaction:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2V5A6mSZew0> - Intensive interaction
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjKxu6QKjAo> - Intensive interaction

2. Adult Modelling actions and play



Modelling refers to the practice of Practitioners/care givers demonstrating how to perform a skill, or how to think through a concept before the child has a go themselves. Modelling can also include introducing new concepts to a child already engaged in an activity to support and extend the development of learning experiences.

Effective modelling techniques can help young children become fully engaged in their learning experiences and confident in their own learning capabilities.

Modelling can be used in all stages to help children learn a new skill, undertake a task more effectively in terms of the success criteria, develop thinking skills and thought processes etc.

Task modelling occurs when the Practitioner/care giver demonstrates a task the child will be expected to do on their own.

For example:

- You may join a child who is observing or taking part in water play at a water play table and begin to scoop up water in a jug and tip it into a funnel. You may accompany your actions with the words 'scoop' and 'tip'.
- You may join a child on the carpet who is lining up Lego bricks and collect some bricks of your own and begin to fix the bricks together to build a tower.

Other top modelling tips

- Model play ideas for interacting with unfamiliar items/activities, or model ways to extend a child's play experience.
- Model positive actions to the child and verbally label: "Good sitting"
- Model problem solving when given a task: "I can't open it. Ah – pull here."
- Model what to do when stuck by trying or saying "help".
- Rather than tell a child to do something, model an action and explain the reasoning: "It's cold. I'm going to put on my coat."
- Model using communication aids for pre-verbal children. Hand over a picture of raisins at snack and say, "I want raisins".
- Try different activities and foods so children can see that trying new things is okay.
- Listen attentively and react positively to activities and stories – enthusiasm is contagious!

3. Play routines

How does play help with communication and language development?

Play supports language in so many ways, when children play they learn to interact and express themselves. Play offers a low stress environment. This allows children to interact with others while practicing their language skills and building on their ever-expanding vocabulary.



How are play routines different from play

activities? A play routine is similar to a play activity because they are fun and interactive and allow for bonding, creativity, stimulation, and problem solving. However, a play routine is different than a play activity. Play activities do not have to intentionally follow a predictable order. They are not necessarily designed to trigger something to happen. A play routine, unlike a play activity, has been constructed to embed the learning through its actual structure. Each play routine should have a beginning, a middle and an end. The beginning is marked by something that triggers the child to think, “We’re starting something new and exciting.” The middle is the real heart of the play and the longest part of the routine. This is also where you can challenge the child a bit because he is most likely warmed up and fully engaged in the play. At the end, the child is alerted that the play is soon ending based on a predictable action, word, or song. This should give your child time to process that it’s time to clean up and get ready for the next event. It is in these play routines where you can embed language learning techniques.

Too often adults try to target too many new things all at once. This is overwhelming for both the child and the adult. The beauty about play routines is that the learning is facilitated in an organised fashion. And, once you become familiar you can create your own play routines with your child!

How do play routines facilitate language development in children?

A play routine is a purposeful way of playing and interacting with a child that follows a simple sequence. It involves predictability, repetition, and of course, lots of fun! Many toddlers like knowing what to expect because it gives them a sense of comfort, security, and control. When toddlers can anticipate what comes next, they are more likely to socially interact and communicate.

Having a routine implies that there is some repetition. Repetition allows for practice and multiple opportunities to acquire a new skill. Just like when we are learning

something new (like playing the piano) we have to continually practice in order to do better; children who are not talking need that same preparation.

Also, repetition is not boring to toddlers. In fact, many of them love it! Have you ever noticed that your child likes to read the same book over and over again? Or, that he likes to play with the same toy all the time?

What is it?

The idea of play routines is to introduce simple, repetitive language and actions around a set activity and reinforce the idea that it is okay to go, do and then finish the activity. This helps children to develop and extend their play skills and language. The play routine is often introduced and finished using a first and then board and activity cards. When starting out it is often best to use a simple, uncomplicated and enjoyable activity with a quick exchange of turns if turn-taking is the focus.

How do I do it?

Ready, Steady....Go!

Create a simple play routine using the repetitive language of 'ready, steady...go!' Building anticipation by pausing between steady and go once the routine has been repeated several times and established. By allowing time with a pause you are offering the child an opportunity to instigate the next step by verbalising, reaching, or using eye gaze etc. This simple strategy highlights the need for reciprocal communication in a communicative interaction, the very first steps towards conversation. Ideal activities for this strategy could be blowing bubbles, rolling a ball backwards and forwards to each other, simple cause and effect activities. You can also create a play routine in this fashion using simple, familiar nursery rhymes or songs that your child enjoys such as 'Row, row, row your boat' and pausing at the same moments in the song to see if your child will attempt to fill in the missing word or phrase. Action songs can work well in the same fashion as they do not require verbal communication. Any items, toys or songs used will need to be highly motivating to your child so that they are motivated to share time and space with you.

Turn-Taking



Choose an activity that the child prefers and introduce a play routine (see example below) with a set phrase e.g. “build a tower” or “music time” and show the appropriate activity card (if you are using visual pictures to support communication), then play a simple repetitive game. Whilst pointing to the activity card, gain the child’s attention using their name and the set phrase e.g. “Name, build a tower” and encourage them over to a quiet area. Once there, stack 2 bricks while repeating “build a tower” then hand one to the child saying, “Name’s turn, build a tower’, support this to be successful by using physical prompts and/or gestures, then have a turn e.g. “Sarah’s turn, build a tower” quickly followed by Name’s again (same language). When there are 5 blocks in total, start counting down, with waiting time so the child has time to make eye contact. Build up the excitement in your voice “5..4..3..2..1...CRASH” using your own or child’s hand (as appropriate) to knock the tower down. Repeat. Finish the game before the child loses interest using “build a tower, finished” with clear gesture and remove activity card from the board. Communication boards: if you are using communication boards with your child, use this to model language that goes with the activity. Point to each symbol as you say the word/phrase e.g. ‘more’, ‘blocks’, ‘knock it down’. What next? Put out the equipment/resources used in the play routine as a free play activity to allow the child to use the rehearsed skills and ideas independently. Build up a range of different play routines to introduce different skills.

It is worth remembering that if you are using a toy or item that a child has already established a pre-conceived way of play it may prove problematic to try and change the way the toy is used or interacted with. For example, if your child loves to lie on the floor by themselves and line up building blocks systematically, you may be met with resistance if you suddenly invite your child to come and sit with you and take turns with the bricks and building a tower! It is often easier to introduce a new, highly motivating activity so that you can establish that you are part of the activity and also how the activity is going to be used.

Choices

You can also give your child choices within an activity that has components- for example; ‘do you want red or yellow’ (brick) when it is their turn to participate if you are building a tower? - To elicit a particular word from him. There are SO many ways to model and elicit language during a simple, favourite play routine! It doesn't have to be complicated to be fun!

Useful video links to support the above strategies: YouTube:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuOOR48aN6Y> - Play routines

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hIXvfxaa4Q> ready, steady, GO play routines

4. Curiosity activities

The idea is to encourage your child to become curious about what you have or what you are doing. It is not a teaching opportunity per say, so you would not begin to count the items you are using or label colours etc., but more of a shared interesting experience between you and your child using materials/items that motivate your child to be curious. Start with what your child enjoys doing ... emptying and filling, building up and knocking down, posting, sprinkling, unwrapping, sorting and lining up.

To do this you will need.....

- To be the most interesting thing in the room!
- A range of exciting everyday items to conceal in a range of visually appealing containers.
- To entice them yourself with a peek into a tin and encourage their sense of curiosity to explore.



Here is an egg box filled with pom poms (you can use different types of items dependant on what you think would interest or motivate your child). You could firstly demonstrate by opening the box, playing quietly by yourself alongside your child. You could empty out the pom poms, throw them in the air then put them back in the box and replace the lid.

Leave the box within reach of your child but try not to push it towards them and don't worry if they ignore the first few attempts. You can always try something else!

There is no right or wrong way for your child to respond. If they decide to pick the box up and drop it so that everything falls out, you respond with interest and curiosity too! Don't be tempted to guide what happens and how the curiosity box, bag or container is used.



Simple containers of items such as coloured lolly sticks and pipe cleaners (see picture) are surprisingly effective in developing curiosity, attention and focus. These everyday items when presented in interesting containers appear very different to their normal use, they become great sprinkling toys!

For each box or bag, keep to one group of materials e.g. Straws, foil, pasta, or beads. This will keep the activity simple and also help you to know what your child enjoys exploring. When you know this you can work with variations of similar things e.g. if they like exploring pasta



you could introduce a box with lentils, tapioca or rice.

Remember that very young children often do not yet understand object permanence, so you may need to start off with clear containers/bags etc., then move on to solid-coloured containers. You should aim to do 3 boxes/containers daily (these could be done at 1:1/focus time.) The containers could be placed in a decorated bag or box and brought out and explored one at a time.

Curiosity time is best delivered in a quiet, distraction free area or room with just you and your child.

5. Copy Box

What is a Copy box?



A Copy Box is a DOUBLE set of toys, presented to a child in a large container. The kind of toy you put in the copy box is relevant to the child's developmental needs and also what interests and motivates them to engage. The idea is to play with your child by offering the box, WAITING to see what your child chooses to do, and then copying alongside your child with the duplicate piece of equipment, and copying your child's actions.

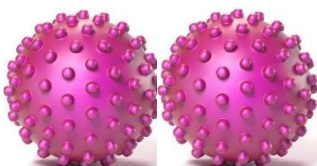
This is a fantastic way to initiate conversation between peers or adults. The duplicate items allow for mirroring and positive modelling of interactions with objects and others in a gentle manner.

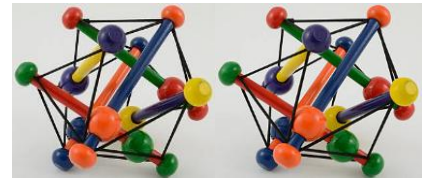
Copying is a very important skill to practise as it encourages eye contact and allows the adult and child to socialise together. It is good for children to take the lead in their play, and it provides valuable opportunities for adults to add simple language/gestures, and sometimes extend or develop the child's play skills.

A copy box could contain:

2 sensory balls 2 cars 2 popping circles 2 shakers 2 spinning tops 2 bead puzzles 2 mirrors

The list could be endless. You could even create different themed boxes based on the child's interest, or introduce toys or items that are unfamiliar to the child, offering you the opportunity to model the use of the toy or item to support their understanding of how to go about using them.





Who might benefit?

Copy boxes are particularly useful for children who tend to play on their own and don't easily respond to playful attention from adults or other children.

How to use

Put together a copy box that's likely to interest the child you have in mind. Show the child the box and its contents. Get down onto the same level as the child- if he/she is on the floor sit there together. Sitting opposite will allow for more opportunities to make eye contact, but some children find it easier if the adult sits alongside. Follow the child's lead; copy what he or she does. Don't ask questions use brief Simple language to describe what the child and you are doing e.g. "brushing hair". Some children may be more relaxed if you copy quietly.

What to watch for:-

- The child may look at you or show in some other way that they have noticed you are copying them.
- Once the child gets used to being copied in this way, he or she may keep looking at what you are doing.
- He or she may begin to pause and wait for you to copy. This is the beginning of turn taking.

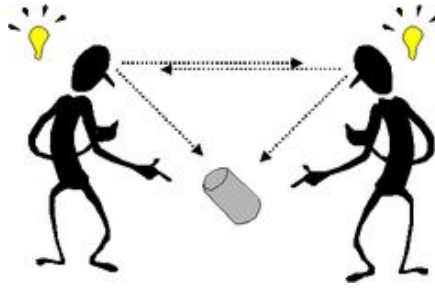
What next: -

Try adding a little something to the play, something similar to what the child's just done, then pause and see if he or she copies you.



Create a relaxed enjoyable atmosphere and have fun!

6. Three-way joint attention activities



To begin working on joint attention and following an adults lead you will need to have a box of highly motivating activities put aside to **use only** at focus/1:1 time. It will be best to work with your child in a quiet, distraction free area/room, preferably the same area each day. Each activity that you use will need to have components that you can use to lead the activity; for example, the noisy shape sorter pictured.

You can sit on the floor with your child and hand each shape to your child one at a time (if all the shapes are readily available to your child, they are likely to take them all and complete the activity without your involvement, which is not the end goal!) You can accompany your actions with labelling language such as colour, shape or item, as you hand the object to the child. You could say “Orange”, “Circle” or “orange Circle” depending on the child’s level of understanding.

If your child is ready to sit at a table to do the activities then this could be your starting point.

It will be important to use activities that your child does not have free access to during the day as they will be less motivated to share the activity with you at 1:1 time. You may need some activities that your child does not have a pre-existing way of playing with. For example, if you choose building blocks and your child is used to lying on the carpet and sequencing the blocks into a row and you then decide that you would like them to stack the blocks into a tower, as you hand the bricks to them one by one you may be met with resistance! It will also be important that you set the tone for the activity, this could be that you take the first turn to demonstrate how the activity is done. You may also need to support your child by using prompts initially so that they are confident about how to complete the activities (see YouTube clip below for examples).

It will be important to have realistic expectations for your child when it comes to the amount of time/how many activities you do with your child. If your child is enjoying the activities

don't be tempted to keep going until they get fed up or bored and leave the table voluntarily. Assess what is a good time frame for them to be able to successfully complete the tasks you have in mind and perhaps finish with a fun activity such as bubbles where they can move around and interact with you and the bubbles.

Be consistent with your approach and techniques so that daily 1:1 time becomes predictable and expectations are clearly communicated in this way.

YouTube links to support three-way joint attention:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ng3j8zIZRD8> using prompts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-c50HNnPg0> joint attention play

7. Adult led Turn-Taking

To begin working on turn-taking with your child you will need to be sure that they are able to share joint attention with you and an activity (3-way joint attention). It is always best to work with your child in a quiet, distraction free area and at a time when you know your child is going to be receptive. For example, if your child has just come in from outside and is very lively and excited it would not be a good time to ask them to sit down with you and focus on an activity that you want to share with them!. If your child comes into the play room in the morning and always plays with a specific toy right away it would not be a good idea to attempt to get them to leave the preferred activity to come and join you. It is always better to build new activities into an established routine and try to communicate this to the child beforehand to prepare them. Remember that routines are a form of communication, they also become familiar to your child and therefore predictable which can be helpful to an anxious child with communication differences. If you have already established a regular time for focus 1:1 time then that would probably be a good time to introduce the concept of turn-taking. In fact it will probably be the next step on from a well-established strategy that you have successfully embedded with your child. Remember that everything you are asking your child to do needs to be achievable so think about their skill set when you are planning your activities. Can they sit on a chair at a table? Would it be better to sit on the carpet? Do you need a rug or carpet square to show the child where to sit? What are their favourite characters and interests? Can you build these into the activities that you are going to use? What type of activities does your child particularly like to do; puzzles, posting, cause and effect, cars, dinosaurs etc.?

The activities that you use for the purpose of turn taking will need to be highly motivating to your child to encourage them to engage with you and stay focused. You may need to introduce some new activities so that your child doesn't have a pre-conceived way of using the toys/activities. The activities that you use for turn taking will need to be kept aside and only used when you are working with your child. If the child has free access to the toys throughout the day they are less likely to want to come and share them with you and play with them in a specific way. It is a good idea to use activities that are simple and offer a quick exchange of turns. Remember to take the first turn to establish that you are going to take part in the activity and use verbal/physical prompts to support your child as is necessary. You will need to keep control over the pieces/components of the activity so that the child

doesn't take over the activity and complete it without your involvement. You could do this by placing puzzle pieces into a bag, using a box, or simply passing a shape to your child to take their turn. Remember that the end goal is turn taking so don't hyper focus on teaching colours, shapes, objects etc., there is no harm in labelling these things as you go along if your child enjoys doing this.

Remember to have realistic expectations about the amount of time that you spend doing the activities. It is important that it is enjoyable and that you both have fun together, your child is much more likely to want to come and join you again when invited if the experience is positive.

Useful YouTube clip: -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDS9PsS86C8> turn taking

Visual Communication

Developing relationships through communication and sharing experiences supports personal, social and emotional development. Being able to connect socially as well as use language to explain ideas and share thinking with others is central to successful learning in all areas. We therefore need to seriously consider when we introduce alternative means of communication for our children with social communication differences. The most important consideration is what type of alternative communication is your child ready to engage with and understand? Below is a chronological list of communication supports. Two of the most important considerations when introducing visual communication should be; can your child share joint attention and if so do they understand picture representation?

Objects of reference

Objects of reference are real objects, such as a nappy for changing time, coat for outside, beaker for drink time etc., that are used to show your child preceding an activity that is due to take place. As with other visual communication systems you would build up a bank of objects to represent key activities that your child is expected to take part in.

Object & picture reference



Examples of objects of reference



Object of reference timetable (pictures can be added in a Velcro sequence over the top of the objects to support object/picture transition).

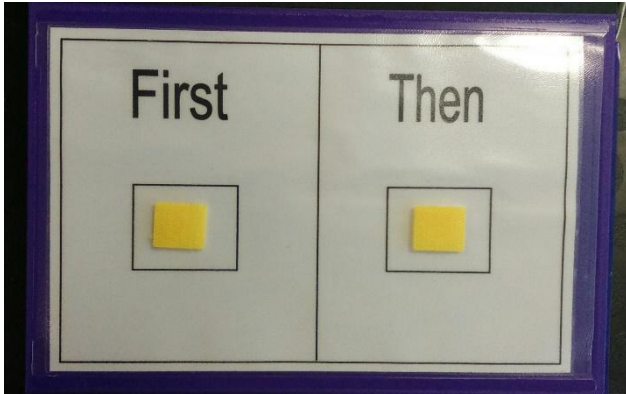


Object, picture reference

Introducing pictures alongside the objects that you have been using, working towards transitioning your child onto visual pictures

Visual pictures/photographs

Visual pictures, usually photographs taken within the setting (with the written word underneath) used to represent daily activities that take place and that the child takes part in. These pictures can be sequenced on a two-part First/Then/Finished timetable folder.



YouTube clip demonstrating the use of First/Then/Finished visual timetable:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-uf1Xclt4> – Using First/Then visual boards

Last is First in Backward Chaining

Often when we teach a child a new skill we start at the beginning, move through the sequence of steps, and finish with the last step. Backward chaining is the reverse of this. Backward chaining involves teaching the last step first, moving backwards through the sequence of steps, and concluding with the first step, slowly reducing the amount of adult support/prompting as we go.



Benefits to Backward Chaining

Backward chaining allows a child to experience instant success every time. As each step is achieved independently, a child completes a newly taught step immediately, followed by the steps they have already successfully learnt. This reduces the expectation of completing the whole task all at once independently (which can often feel overwhelming). Breaking down the task into small achievable steps gives the child a sense of success each time. This feeling of success increases their confidence and keeps them motivated to learn and complete the entire sequence of steps.

Example of Backward Chaining

To teach a child to put on their own socks, you might break down the steps as:

1. Pick up the sock
2. Put it over the toes
3. Pull it up to the heel
4. Pull the sock up over the heel to the ankle
5. Pull it all the way up to the knee

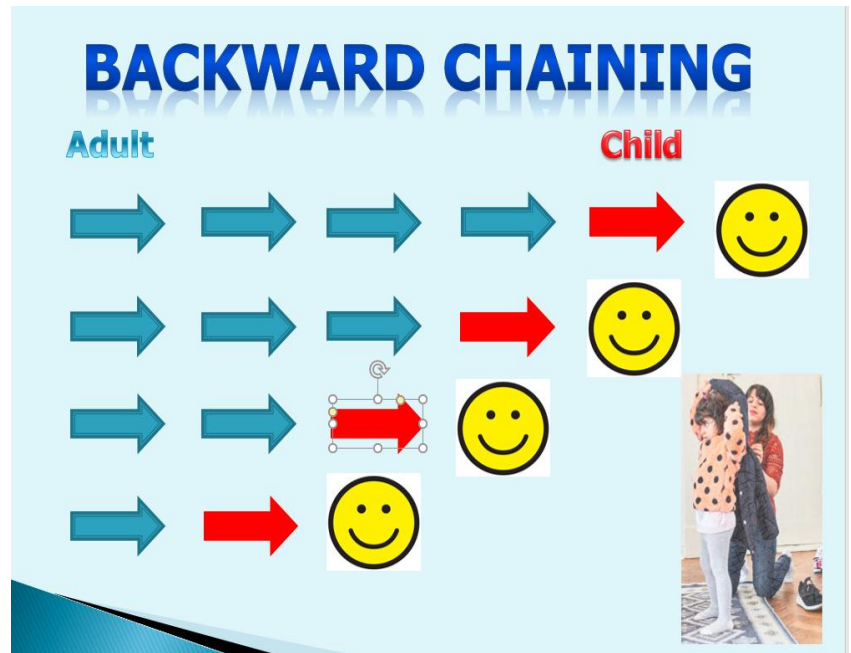
To start with, the adult would do steps one through four, with the child expected to do step 5, pull the sock up to the knee (this may initially require a physical prompt too). When that can be done consistently by the child, the adult would do steps 1 to 3, with the child pulling the sock up over the heel to the ankle. As the child becomes comfortable with each step, the step before it is introduced, always with the goal of having the child *finish* the task successfully.

Think about ways you can support success of the task, for instance, with the above task using a loose-fitting pair of socks would support success rather than a harder tighter-fitting pair of socks.

Use physical prompts if necessary to show your child how to go about doing their 'step' in the task and then reduce the physical prompts as they understand how to go about their step.

Backward chaining can also be used to teach children all sorts of independence skills such as how to get dressed or undressed.

For example, at the end of the day when it is time to undress you would start by removing all your child's clothing and then let them put the clothes into the washing basket. Next time, you would take off all your child's clothing except for the last item and let them complete the task by taking off the last item themselves and putting all the clothes into the wash basket. With repetition and over a period of time the end goal would be that the child will be able to completely undress and put their clothes where they belong independently.



We can use backward chaining to support a child with attending a structured group activity (such as circle time) if they are struggling to attend for the whole of the activity. You would start by picking a realistic amount of time for them to attend, always starting towards the end of the activity. This enables the child to successfully attend and finish the activity to the end with their peers. You would then gradually, over a period of time, begin to build up the amount of time they attend by joining the group at an earlier point.

This is especially effective in reducing the potential for inadvertently re-enforcing challenging behaviour. If the child joins the activity at the beginning and is unable to sustain for the duration, they may become restless and distracted, prompting you to take them away. The child may quickly learn what behaviour instigates their exit! If the child is unable to sit for an extended period of time they will begin to recognise that to leave, they need to repeat the successful behaviour. Behaviour that meets the end goal will often be repeated.

YouTube clip demonstrating backward chaining:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_lYEqUxvnM - Backward chaining

Summary



Top Tips for Childminders working with SEND children

So here are our top tips and firstly, remember that each special needs child is different and unique and what motivates and engages one child may not motivate and engage another. It is therefore important to firstly begin to recognise what motivates your child and what activities or items your child is engaging with.

Even though every child with a social, communication difference can learn to communicate, it's not always through spoken language. Nonverbal individuals have much to contribute to society and can live fulfilling lives with the help of visual supports and assistive technologies.

Your environment

Declutter: sometimes the old adage; 'less is more' is actually accurate! Our environment can indeed communicate to our children. So, it is far more effective to have a few toys out at once, then rotate what you have out periodically.

Environment: Organising your environment can be a challenge, particularly if it is your own home that you are working in! But things you can try to support communication can be simple and effective. If you do certain activities daily try and hold those activities in the same area and as much as possible don't multitask areas. So, for instance if you have a snack at a play table try and place the table in the same area each day and preferably only use that table and area for snack time. So, you would have specific areas where specific activities take place; cushions on the floor in one area with books, floor play area with toys, tabletop activity with perhaps puzzles (as an example).

Routine: familiar routines are comforting and communicate what is happening and what is going to happen. There is a reason children become happier and more settled in an environment over time, things become familiar and predictable! So, try to do any planned daily activities in the same order and around the same time (this is creating a timetable of daily events).

Organisation: it is a good idea to have the toys that are currently not in use tidied away into see through containers that are out of reach of your child/children. This is actually creating potential moments of engagement and communication. If a child sees a toy that they are motivated to engage with but cannot access the toy without help they are more likely to seek you out to instigate the help they need. Or upon seeing the child eager to access the out of reach toy, if they don't seek you out, you can model the 'request' they need to make by going to them and saying 'help, Jack wants help' then get the toy for them.



Lego

Labels: try to label boxes of resources with pictures (photographs) of what's in the box and the word written underneath. Pictures communicate to your children and support language, communication and cognition and learning.

Strategies for promoting language and interaction development in children with social, communication differences:

Imitate your child (sometimes known as Intensive Interaction): Mimicking your child's sounds and play behaviours will encourage more vocalising and interaction. It also encourages your child to copy you and take turns. Make sure you imitate *how* your child is playing – so long as it's a positive behaviour. For example, when your child rolls a car, you roll a car. If he or she crashes the car, you crash yours too. But don't imitate throwing the car!

Focus on nonverbal communication: Gestures and eye contact can build a foundation for language. Encourage your child by modeling and responding to these behaviours. Exaggerate your gestures. Use both your body and your voice when communicating – for example, by extending your hand to point when you say "look" and nodding your head when you say "yes." When asking your child to sit down on a chair you might say 'Jason sit' and pat the chair with your hand. Use gestures that are easy for your child to understand and imitate. Examples include clapping, opening hands, reaching out arms, etc. Respond to your child's gestures: When he/she looks at or points to a toy, hand it to her or take the cue for *you* to play with it; similarly, point to a toy you want before picking it up.

There are many forms of communication, not just language. When you are looking for a communicative response from your child remember to watch your child's physical responses such as, reaching for, moving an arm or leg, a fleeting eye gaze, a vocalisation and reward it with a response of your own. Respond promptly, the promptness of your response helps your child feel the power of communication.

Remember behaviour usually is communication! What is successful will usually be repeated whether it is appropriate behaviour or not. Try not to respond to a negative or unwanted behaviour (as much as is safely possible). Reward positive desired behaviour with an acknowledgement or response.

Leave “space” for your child to talk: It’s natural to feel the urge to fill in language when a child doesn’t immediately respond. But it’s so important to give your child lots of opportunities to communicate, even if he/she isn’t talking. When you ask a question or see that your child wants something, pause for several seconds while looking at him expectantly. Be aware that each child has different language processing requirements. Try to gauge how long your child usually takes to process and respond to verbal communication, don’t be tempted to repeat questions too quickly as this may mean that your child then has to begin re-processing and de-coding what you have said all over again!

Simplify your language: Doing so helps your child follow what you’re saying. It also makes it easier for him/her to imitate your speech. If your child is nonverbal, try speaking mostly in single words. (If he/she is playing with a ball, you say “ball” or “roll.”) If your child is using single words, up the ante. Speak in short phrases, such as “roll ball” or “throw ball.” Keep following this “one-up” rule: Generally, use phrases with one more word than your child is using. Try to follow the principle of; using your child’s name first to gain their attention and then give an instruction e.g. ‘Jason sit’; and then sequence your language in the order that you would like the child to complete the tasks in hand e.g. ‘Jason first puzzle then iPad’.

Follow your child’s interest: Rather than interrupting your child’s focus, follow along with words. Using the one-up rule, narrate what your child is doing. If he’s playing with a shape sorter, you might say the word “in” when he puts a shape in its slot. You might verbally label the shape when he holds it. By talking about what engages your child, you’ll help him learn the associated vocabulary.

Encourage play and social interaction: Children learn through play, and that includes learning language. Interactive play provides shared enjoyment and the potential to create opportunities for you and your child to communicate. Use activities that can encompass your child’s special interest if possible. Cause and effect toys are usually effective and also offer opportunities to verbally label items, colours, numbers etc. Also try playful activities that promote social interaction e.g.; singing, reciting nursery rhymes and gentle rough and tumble. During your interactions, position yourself in front of your child and close to eye level – so it’s easier for your child to see and hear you.

Use simple play routines: Play routines are a great way of offering your child the opportunity to join in. They need to be fun, simple and repetitive. For example; blowing bubbles; you might use ‘ready, steady, go!’ and then blow the bubbles. You would repeat this several times and then begin to pause after saying ‘ready, steady...’ to see if your child responds with the word ‘go!’, or an action (reaching for the bubbles) or eye gaze (making eye contact with you) to indicate they want you to blow the bubbles. They may show anticipation by pursing

their lips, in each instance this should instigate your response, and they should be rewarded with bubbles!

Offering guided choices: While interacting through activities with your child try to establish from the start that you are going to be part of the activity and lead from the start. Keep control over the items involved in the activity and offer each piece in turn.

For example, if you have chosen to use a shape posting activity you could offer guided choices; offering a choice of two shapes for the child to select a preference and post e.g. 'square or circle?' (if they know their shapes) when the child reaches for one they can take it and post it.

Turn-Taking: Introduce the concept of turn-taking when you feel your child is ready. After all social interaction requires the art of turn-taking! The activity you choose will need to be motivating, perhaps based around a special interest. It will need to be simple and offer the opportunity for a quick exchange of turns; For example, posting shapes, stacking bricks. You will need to lead the activity and keep control over any pieces that are used for the activity. Use structured, repetitive language e.g. '(Adult's name) Julie's turn' 'Jason's turn' using a physical prompt to indicate which person you are referring to. Once this skill has been learnt through play it can be transposed into other areas of communication and learning.

Use objects of reference to communicate to your child: This is the first form of visual communication you can begin to use and requires no significant preparation! Use real objects relevant to the activity you are about to do to communicate visually to your child; for example; you might show your child a puzzle piece and a DVD and say, "Jason first puzzle then DVD". You can begin to generalise this into other everyday activities; showing them a nappy to indicate it is changing time, car keys to indicate you are going out in the car etc.

Lastly, remember to play with joy: Lose your inhibitions and enjoy what you are doing. You will need to provide an irresistible invitation for your child to join you!

Dingley's Promise Training is bringing about a fundamental change in early years practice across England.

Using our knowledge and experience of supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in our nursery settings for over 40 years, we have developed a range of inclusion training courses to help others supporting children with SEND in the early years.

These courses are funded by Comic Relief and are available to all those working with children in the early years in your local authority, at no cost to you.

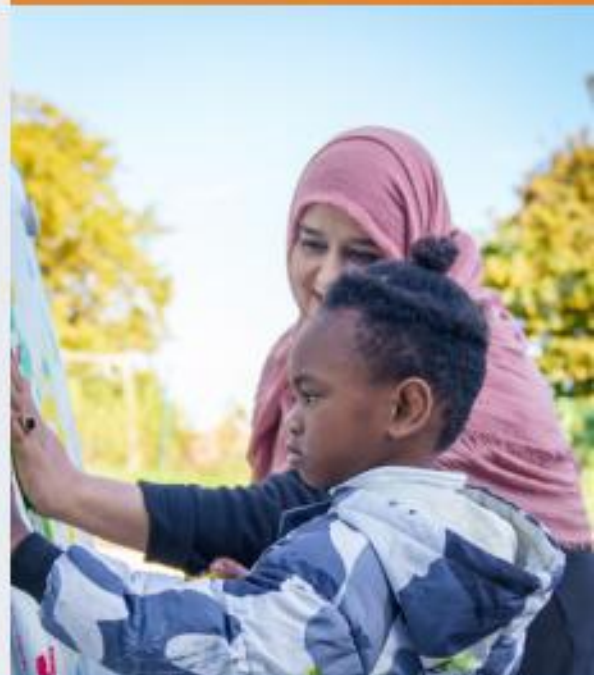
Each course has been designed to enable flexible remote learning and includes webinars and resources for practical application of the learning within daily practice.

Current courses include:

- Introduction to Early Years Inclusion
- Early Years SEND Transitions
- The Voice of the Child
- Managing Difficult Conversations
- Behaviours That Challenge



Scan the QR code to sign up!



Useful Documents to support Inclusion



- **Individual Education Plans – Assess, Plan, Do, Review**
- **IEP template & example**
- **SEND Assessment Guidance and Resources**
- **One Page Profile**
- **ABC behaviour analysis chart & example**
- **Request for Intervention Form**
- **Pupil Information Form**

Individual Education Plans – Assess, Plan, Do, Review

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/providers/inclusion/iep>

Writing a plan

A plan is a written working document that enables all members of staff to see what the child's strengths are and which areas of their development have been identified as needing extra support.

With help from parents, the SENCo and staff should collect information about what a child can do and what they find difficult. For example the child has good visual skills but may have difficulty understanding language.

The SENCo and staff would try a range of different strategies or teaching approaches to meet the child's needs. These would be part of the group's normal strategies; for example, most children will sit and listen to stories as they understand the social expectation, however some children need reminding, encouraging and praising.

A plan would be written when it is recognised that a child has not responded to the normal strategies. In fact, the child may have great difficulty sitting and listening to a story because they do not have the necessary levels of understanding. A plan would be put in place to both enable the child to access books at their level and promote the child's understanding of language.

Strategies may include:

- **differentiating the curriculum**; for example, a child who cannot complete a 10-piece interlocking puzzle could try a five-piece interlocking puzzle.
- **providing special equipment**; for example, a child who has difficulty using scissors independently would benefit from a four-hole pair of scissors, which enable an adult to guide the cutting.

When the setting has concerns regarding any aspects of a child's development, they will discuss this with parents. This will help to explore whether the same difficulties exist at home. If this is the case, then a discussion can take place about possible reasons for this. If the parents do not share the concerns or see the same behaviours at home it is helpful to ask the parents about the approaches they use at home that could also be used in the setting. Parents need to understand and agree that their child would benefit from the process and be encouraged to contribute.

Reviewing the plan

The plan should be reviewed after a short period of intervention (2 to 6 weeks). New targets may be set according to the child's progress. Given that a plan is a working document, progress should be monitored and recorded at least weekly. This should form part of the graduated Assess, Plan, Do and Review approach.



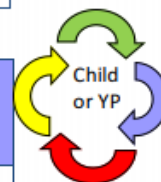
MAKING INTERVENTIONS WORK

Assess Plan Do Review Cycles

Pupil Name:	Class:	Year:
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Assess:	Date:	Who:
Carry out child observations, hold discussions with key staff, parents/carers to identify & analyse needs e.g. IE 360°		
Any relevant assessments carried out by external agencies e.g. Health, EP, Social Care.		
Consider parent, pupil & staff questionnaires		
In- school screening assessments		






Do:	Date:	Who:
Implement the plan as agreed. Clearly show Who, What, When, How		
Continue to observe and record evidence of support and progress		



Plan:	Date:	Who:
Hold discussions & meet with parents, staff and any specialist services involved to plan for what needs to happen		
Ensure that the 'plan' is outcome focused e.g. improve, develop, achieve. Remember child and parents at the centre of the planning		
Outline interventions & support needed – Provision Map. Record expected impact on progress, development & behaviour		
Set time limits for interventions Set date for review		

Review:	Date:	Who:
Discuss with others e.g. SENCO, parents, colleagues, pupil about how effective the interventions have been and the impact on the pupil		
Analyse and compare data, observations and planned outcomes		
Think about next steps. Plan carefully with parents, other specialists and the pupil		
Does the APDR cycle need to begin again?		

My Individual Education Plan -Assess, Plan, Do, Review

<p>Assess</p> 	<p>Plan</p> 	<p>Do</p> 	<p>Who Will Help Me And When?</p> 	<p>Review</p> 

Name
Date of Birth
Date

IEP Number
IEP Agreed By
SENCo

SENCo Signature
Parent's Signature
Review Date

Having a simple and clear method of assessment

For comprehensive guidance and resources please go to the web address below:

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/support-for-practitioners/send-assessment>

Practitioners and experts agree that excessive assessment paperwork is not beneficial in the early years as it takes valuable time away from interacting with children and puts unnecessary strain on practitioners. However, for children with SEND, a simple and clear method of assessment to capture where children are, so that you can give them the right support at the right time, is essential.

Effective practice in the early years starts with a carefully planned, high-quality curriculum and all observations and assessments should be linked to the intended learning. When you notice that a child is not progressing through the curriculum as intended, you should shape teaching and learning experiences appropriately so each child can learn what you intend. If a child has not secured the intended learning following adaptations to your practice, this is when you should consider additional methods of support for the child, such as these resources.

These resources have been created to support a child-centred, strengths-based approach to assessing children's needs. They will support the assessment of the development of each unique child, providing a simple approach to identify and meet their needs as soon as possible.

The resources have been assembled through surveys and consultation with a range of early years professionals. The recommended tools have all been user tested for effectiveness and functionality to ensure they can be applied within your practice.

Carry out an assessment: What you need to know

Assessment of children in the early years can help to recognise a development delay.

The assessment process

Children will develop at their own unique rates and not every child will follow a "typical" pattern of progression of development, this however does not limit a child's ability to make progress or take away from focusing on the child's individual strengths.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets out information and requirements in relation to proactively observing and assessing children as it is crucial to building your understanding of the whole child and their individual characteristics, skills and interests. Assessment of children in the early years can help you to promptly recognise any gaps in learning and allow you to implement appropriate support at the earliest point, ensuring the needs of both the child and their family are met.

Types of assessment

- Starting point – an initial assessment, completed with parent and or carer views when a child begins attending your setting. This is not included in the EYFS and is not a statutory requirement.
- Formative assessments – this is your ongoing assessment and is vital in the learning and development process. It involves you understanding your children’s interests, what they know and what they can do, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. This includes observations, which is the continuous process of noticing what a child knows, understands and can do in order to build knowledge of each individual child. There is no requirement in the EYFS to keep written records in relation to the formative assessment.
- Summative assessments – these are often written at predetermined points of the year and provide you and the parents and or carers with a summary of what the child knows, understands and can do at a particular point in time.
- [Progress check at age two](#) – when a child is aged between two and three, you must review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a short, written summary of their child’s development in the three prime areas.

Using the assessment tools

The DfE assessment resources provide a suggested way of working when assessing children with SEND in the early years. Whether you are a school-based provider, group-based provider or childminder, these resources can be used to support your children with potential or known SEND. You may want to use everything or choose which specific elements will be helpful for your setting.

The resources include:

- four assessment tools centred around the four broad areas of need
- examples of how to use the assessment tools in practice
- a one-page profile to capture the voice of the child
- SMART targets sheet to set short-term targets
- support and achievement play plans (SAPPs) to capture a child’s long-term goals and needs

The assessment tools

There are four assessment tools, that reflect the four broad areas of need, with a focus on the core skills children with SEND may gain in each area. You can use them at any stage of supporting a child, and they are designed to be used individually or together based on the needs of a child.

The Four broad areas of need

These are the four broad areas of need set out within the SEND code of practice.

The four broad areas of need are set out within the SEND code of practice, which can be used as a basis for understanding and supporting a child's individual needs. You should not aim to fit the child strictly into the categories but should be flexible in understanding the whole child, using whichever parts of the different areas are relevant.

The four broad areas of need are:

- communication and interaction, which may include difficulties speaking, understanding or communicating as well as autism spectrum conditions
- cognition and learning, which may include mild learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) where children may require varying support to access their learning as well as specific learning difficulties (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia
- social, emotional, and mental health, which may include a range of mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders or physical symptoms which are medically unexplained - this could include behaviour you may find challenging, as well as conditions such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder
- sensory and or physical needs, which may include a physical disability (PD) which hinders their ability to access standard provision, this may also include visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) - [the sensory and physical assessment tool](#) also includes sensory processing difficulties, how children interact with the sensory environment and life skills

It is important to remember that whilst these are some of the identified needs within the four broad areas of need, they are not the only needs or the only areas of support a child may require.

For further information on SEND code of practice see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Social and emotional

My name is: _____

My key person is: _____

My date of birth is: _____

My communication method: _____

Social skills		Regulation		Awareness of self	
I recognise when others are engaging with the same experience as me	I can initiate an interaction with other children	I can recognise strategies which support my emotional regulation	I can use strategies to wait my turn with peers	I can play contently on my own	I can wear personalised aids and equipment that support me to access the environment
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I can initiate interaction with a familiar adult	I am comfortable engaging in a group of more than 2	I seek comfort when emotionally dysregulated	I can recognise some consistent boundaries	I can show preference for people or tasks	I can label some of my own emotions verbally or by using signs or visuals
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I look in the direction of the person or object I am interacting with (not necessarily making eye contact)	I can play alongside others or allow others in my space	I demonstrate my emotions through my behaviour and actions	I can wait my turn with a familiar adult	I can copy the facial expressions of others	I can recognise when an adult is sharing language about emotions with me
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I show awareness of familiar people	I can approach an activity where others are already playing	I react to the emotions of those around me	I can be encouraged to change activities using a now and next approach	I show enjoyment when looking in a mirror	I demonstrate a want to do things independently
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I

E Emerging (1 mark) **S** Supported (2 marks) **I** Independent (3 marks)

Cognition and learning

My name is: _____

My key person is: _____

My date of birth is: _____

My communication method: _____

Play skills		Exploratory skills		Problem solving	
I can co-operate with a familiar person when playing, for example rolling a ball back and forth	I can focus on an activity of my own choosing for up to 2 minutes	I show awareness of routines through reaction to visual and audio stimuli	I can use a visual routine to support my understanding of the day	I can search for hidden objects	I can adjust my approach to achieve my desired outcome
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I can copy the actions of others	I link ideas during play such as putting a teddy in a car and pushing it along	I can remember where preferred objects are and seek these out	I can transition to a new task using a visual or audio prompt	I can balance objects on top of each other	I show awareness of counting objects during play
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I explore new objects with interest	I can play with items in different ways	I can look for objects placed near or around me	I can re-enact or imitate everyday routines during play	I try to complete tasks independently, using trial and error	I can group or organise objects in a way which is meaningful to me
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I recognise familiar objects and the joy they bring	I repeat actions demonstrating cause and effect	I use my different senses to explore new objects and environments	I correctly understand the use of objects, such as putting a phone to my ear	I can notice change as I interact with my environment	I demonstrate pride in my accomplishments
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I

E Emerging (1 mark) **S** Supported (2 marks) **I** Independent (3 marks)

Communication and interaction

My name is: _____

My key person is: _____

My date of birth is: _____

My communication method: _____

Interaction		Expressive communication		Receptive communication	
I show excitement during one-to-one turn taking games	I respond to interactions initiated by others	I can use my method of communication to demonstrate a need or want	I commentate on things I see around me verbally or by using gestures or signs	I can join in with familiar rhymes, songs or books using my method of communication	I can focus on a directed activity for up to 1 minute
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I seek interaction through movements or vocalisations	I can request more during a highly motivating activity	I can communicate my choice between two options	I can combine two or three words when communicating, this may include signs or symbols	I can follow a simple instruction involving my method of communication	I can follow an instruction involving two parts
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I demonstrate distress when left alone	I can complete a back-and-forth interaction using my method of communication	I can make some non-speech sounds	I am learning new words or visuals or signs regularly	I attempt to copy actions or sounds in familiar rhymes, songs or books	I can look between two objects when shown them (recognises two objects are present)
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I react in anticipation of familiar play or interactions	I can imitate the communication of others	I can attract attention to express a want or dislike	I can request support or communicate my need for help safely	I respond to sounds made near me	I can wait for "Go" during ready, steady, go games
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I

E Emerging (1 mark) **S** Supported (2 marks) **I** Independent (3 marks)

Sensory and physical

My name is: _____

My key person is: _____

My date of birth is: _____

My communication method: _____

Mobility		Life skills		Sensory	
I can crawl, shuffle or roll from one place to another	I can move in a variety of ways on two feet, with or without a support aid	I can drink from an open top cup without support	I can navigate fastenings when dressing myself, such as zips, buttons and clips	I will engage with new textures with interest	I can adjust my environment to meet my sensory needs, such as switching off lights, putting on ear defenders, removing uncomfortable clothing
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I can move my arms or legs across my body, crossing my midline	I can move around a room by cruising or using an adult for support	I can feed myself with some success using hands or cutlery	I co-operate with dressing	I repeat actions which achieve a familiar outcome	I can express discomfort towards a sensory experience
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I can grasp objects within my reach	I can put weight through my feet, this may be using an appropriate support aid	I try new foods during mealtimes	I can sleep for periods of two hours or longer	I respond positively to games involving physical touch or movement	I can respond in different ways to different sensory opportunities
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I
I can move parts of my body in response to stimuli	I can sit using an appropriate support	I can open my mouth for feeding or drinking	I can brush my gums or teeth appropriately	I can close my fist around given objects	I am interested in exploring new experiences
E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I	E S I

E Emerging (1 mark) **S** Supported (2 marks) **I** Independent (3 marks)

Setting targets and long-term goals


Alongside the assessment tools, you can choose to use the below resources in your setting, to capture the voice of the child and set longer term goals for the children with SEND in your care.

A one-page profile is also a useful document to be able to forward to a new setting that your child is transitioning into.

One-page profile

A one-page profile creates a clear outline of who the child is as an individual and will enable you and others to consider the child’s strengths, interests and types of play regularly to ensure the support provided is impactful. It is important to reflect on what a child enjoys and doesn’t, as well as any key support that makes the environment and experiences accessible to them throughout the day. In the box titled “how I play”, you can refer to or describe how a child participates in play. You might want to include characteristics of effective learning or types of play, that have been observed by you or the family, whether this is solitary play, playing parallel to peers etc. For more information on types of play, follow the links within the glossary of terms. Some of this information may change over time, so use regular opportunities with parents and or carers to discuss changes in interests, challenges, and communication strategies to ensure you keep a child’s one-page profile up to date.

One page profile

<p>My name is...</p> <p><i>Leigh</i></p> 	<p>I feel happy when...</p> <p><i>I am playing independently</i></p> <p><i>I have my monkey</i></p> <p><i>Someone sings</i> <i>“The wheels on the bus”</i></p>
<p>I communicate by...</p> <p><i>Pointing and gestures</i></p> <p><i>Introducing objects of reference and Makaton signs</i></p>	<p>How I play...</p> <p><i>Spinning and rolling objects</i></p> <p><i>Solitary play</i></p>
<p>I might feel sad or upset if...</p> <p><i>I am not given time before a transition</i></p> <p><i>The fire alarm goes off or noise levels are loud</i></p> <p><i>Someone is playing too close to me</i></p> <p><i>I am tired</i></p>	<p>You can support me by...</p> <p><i>Using now and next with me with visuals</i></p> <p><i>Showing me a sand timer before a change</i></p> <p><i>Getting my ear defenders during a fire drill</i></p> <p><i>Following my sleep routine</i></p> <p><i>Limiting unnecessary noises in my environment</i></p>

One page profile

My name is...	I feel happy when...
[Insert child's photo]	
I communicate by...	How I play...
I might feel sad or upset if...	You can support me by...

ABC Behaviour chart

This ABC chart can be used to record behavioural concerns.

- 'A' stands for **antecedents**, that is, what happens immediately before the behavioural outburst and can include any triggers, signs of distress or environmental information.
- 'B' refers to the **behaviour** itself and is a description of what actually happened during the outburst or what the behaviour 'looked' like.
- 'C' refers to the **consequences** of the behaviour, or what happened immediately after the behaviour and can include information about other people's responses to the behaviour and the eventual outcome for the person.

It can also be a good idea to keep track of where and when the behaviour occurred to help in identifying any patterns. There are some filled in examples from page 2.

Day, date and time	Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence	Notes

Functional Analysis questionnaire

Questions to establish the function of a behaviour

(Adapted from Willis & LaVigna, 1993)

1. What happens during a behavioural incident (i.e., what does the behaviour look like)?
2. How often does the behaviour occur (i.e., several times per day, daily, weekly)?
3. How long does the behaviour last?
4. How severe is the behaviour?
5. What time of day is the behaviour most likely to occur?
6. In what environment or where is the behaviour most likely to occur?
7. With whom is the behaviour most likely to occur?
8. What activity is most likely to produce the behaviour?
9. Are there any other events or situations that can trigger the behaviour (such as particular demands, delays or transitions between activities)?
10. What is gained by engaging in the behaviour (i.e., what is the consequence or outcome for the individual)?
11. What is avoided by engaging in the behaviour?
12. Is the person experiencing any medical issues that may be affecting their behaviour (such as toothache, earache, sinus infections, colds, flu, allergies, rashes, seizures)?

13. Is the person experiencing difficulty with sleeping or eating?

14. How predictable is the person's daily routine (i.e., to what extent does the person know what is happening throughout the day and when)?

15. Have there been any recent changes to routine?

16. How does the individual communicate the following?

- Yes/no/stop
- Indicate physical pain
- Request help
- Request attention
- Request preferred food/objects/activities
- Request a break.

17. What objects, activities or events does the individual enjoy?

18. What skills or behaviours does the individual have that may be alternative ways of achieving the same function as the behaviour of concern?

Sourced from: <https://axia-asd.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Functional-analysis-questionnaire.pdf>

Request for Intervention from Slough Early Years SEND

Once you have identified a child may have additional learning needs you will need to start your cycle of Assess, Plan, Do Review and also pick 1/2 strategies from the intervention timeline to support this. When you have completed your first cycle, have attempted to embed the inclusive strategies and perhaps recognise that there are significant concerns that warrant specialist support from our service we would ask you to complete the following form; Request for intervention Pupil Information Form and return it to danielle.mercer@slough.gov.uk who will then get in touch with you to discuss the next best steps.

Please complete the document below 'Request for Intervention Pupil Information and return to:

Email address: earlyyears@slough.gov.uk

**Slough Borough Council
People-Children
Early Years SEND
Observatory House
25 Windsor Road
Slough
SL1 2EL**

Slough Early Years SEND Service - Request for SEND Intervention

Please return to: earlyyears@slough.gov.uk mark for the attention of Danielle Mercer	Please return completed questionnaire with 21 days. Before returning please share a copy with the child's parents/carers.
Instructions for completing	
This questionnaire has been designed to provide information about the child in their environment with their peers and adults who are not their main carers. This helps us to form a complete picture of a child's strengths and difficulties. Please answer questions as fully and give examples where possible. Thank you for your help.	
Child's Name:	DOB:
Name of person completing the form:	Position of person completing the form: SENCO/Setting Manager/Practitioner
Date completed:	Current setting:
What Toolkit strategies have you tried to use to support the child	
What is Working Well?	
What outcomes do you hope to achieve?	
Your message is ready to be sent with the following links and attachments: <i>Note: To protect against computer viruses, email programs may prevent you from sending or receiving certain types of file attachments. Check your email security settings to determine how attachments are handled.</i>	
Request for intervention pupil information	

General
What are your main concerns?
What are their strengths?
What do they find more difficult?

Communication				
When people call their name do they respond?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	
If you smile at them will they smile back?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	
Do they give eye contact when communicating with you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	
Will they point with 1 finger to ask for something?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do they use gestures such as shrugging shoulders, shaking head? Examples of the gestures they use.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	
Will they try to enter into a conversation with you? If so, do they use language, vocalisations or babbling?	<input type="checkbox"/> Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocalisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Babble	
Do they get your attention to show you something that they find interesting or enjoyable spontaneously?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/> Never	
Do they get your attention to gain help?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No		
During the session, they get your attention by ...				
• Looking at you	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	• Tugging without looking at you	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

• Talking to you	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	• Catching your eye from across the room and gesturing to you	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
• Tugging while looking at you	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	• Other (specify) ...		
Do they use language more widely for their interests rather than for communication? E.g. may sing or label items to themselves but not use this language to request items			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Any unusual vocalisations, intonation, pitch, volume or using accents? Any echoing of words or phrases? Please give examples:			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do they approach staff for comfort / reassurance?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If "yes", then ...					
• In what circumstances might they do this?					
• What comfort is needed to help? (E.g. a reassuring look, a pat on the arm, removing him/her from the room, etc.)					
Do they show a natural range of facial expressions in response to being happy, sad, and amused, like other children in the same situation?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are expressions appropriate to the situation?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Does this happen spontaneously, or is it copying other children?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do they make any unusual faces, grimaces or noises?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Is their response to other people's facial expressions appropriate?			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

Play:					
What do they do if left alone to occupy themselves? Please describe the activity:					
Would they....					
• Flit from one activity to another?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	• Only play by her/himself?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
• Generally prefer to play with others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	• Do nothing unless encouraged?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
• Only do repetitive activities • e.g. same toys and/or play themes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No			

Play with other children, e.g. with toys, role play, construction ...		
Do they...	• Know what to say to join in with other children's play?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Play alongside other children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Join a group of children without language?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Stand watching on the edge?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Have to be brought in to an activity by an adult?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Get brought in to an activity by another child?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Demonstrate an awareness of other children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they carry out activities which involve sharing and turn-taking like other children of that age?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they...	• Need adult support to access a structured game such as lotto?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Access a structured game such as lotto independently?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Need adult to support an unstructured game such as shop keepers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	• Access an unstructured game such as shop keepers independently?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they do pretend play such as pretending to drink from an empty cup, talking on pretend telephone, feeding a doll?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they show imagination in their play? Examples:		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Interacting with others:		
Do you feel they understand personal space?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are they happy for others to be in their personal space?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they accept cuddles?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
What is their response if someone is upset?		
Does he/she eat in the nursery setting; if so are they fussy eaters, aversion to textures, colours, food touching other food?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is he/she toilet trained?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Patterns of behaviour		
Do they understand and follow the routine of the session?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If "yes" do they do this by ...	Watching the other children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Following a group instruction?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Following an individual instruction to him/her?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
How do they react to a change of routine, e.g., a change of staff, a new activity, and an absent activity?		
Do they have any more restricted or intense interests? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
If so please describe:		
Do you notice any repetitive movements, hand flapping, spinning?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you notice any repetitive use of objects e.g. lining up toys, grouping items?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If so please describe:		
Do you notice any additional sensory needs? For example adverse response to specific sound or texture or excessive smelling, touching of objects, visual fascination with lights or movement?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Please give examples:		
What additional support is required in the setting? (please describe below)		

Thank you for your time and the information you have provided.

Supporting Transition into Nursery



Childminder Guidance for Nursery Transition

What is a Social Story?

Social Story-What is Nursery?

This is Me – Guidance and Transition Booklet

Top Transition Tips for Parent/carers

All About Me – Guidance and Template

Transition is a
process,
not an event.



Childminder Guidance for Nursery Transition (Google AI)

Childminders play a vital role as a "consistent anchor" during a child's transition into nursery or school. Because childminders typically operate with smaller groups, they can offer highly personalised support that builds a child's confidence before they move to a larger setting.

How Childminders Facilitate the Move

- **Sharing Developmental Records:** Childminders provide parents with the child's learning journey, a [Transition Form](#), any assessment forms that have been completed, to share with the nursery and any other useful information such as a one page profile, All About Me, transition book (This is Me) etc. This ensures the new staff understand the child's strengths, interests, and any specific needs.
- **Building Independence Skills:** They focus on "school readiness" by helping children master personal care tasks like:
 - Putting on coats and shoes.
 - Using the toilet independently.
 - Feeding themselves and managing lunch boxes.
- **Familiarisation Activities:**
 - **Route Practice:** They may walk the route to the new nursery during their daily outings.
 - **Visual Aids:** Childminders often create "transition booklets" with photos of the new nursery, its staff, and the environment to look at together.
 - **Role Play:** They incorporate the nursery experience into play using uniforms, book bags, or puppets to act out new scenarios.
- **Emotional Support:**
 - They use [stories and books](#) about starting nursery to spark conversations about feelings.
 - If providing "wrap-around care" (before/after nursery), they may align their activities with the nursery's themes to provide continuity in learning.
- **Professional Liaising:** With parental consent, childminders can speak directly to nursery staff to share what works best for a particular child, especially those with [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\)](#).

What is a social story?

These specially written 'social stories' can be read to your child repeatedly over an extended period of time. The stories are designed to support your child's understanding and familiarise them with some of the new, different experiences they may have when starting nursery or transitioning on to school.

A social story is a short story written in a specific style and format. They are used to support the development of social skills and social understanding (particularly for autistic children and young people). Social stories are used to help a child understand a small part of their social world and how to function appropriately within it. Each story provides a child with clear, accurate information about what is happening in a specific social situation, outlining why it is happening and what a typical response might be; or what people do, why they do it, and what the common responses are. The story describes what is obvious to most of us but not obvious to those with impaired social understanding. The stories are written with the individual child's needs in mind.

The objective of a social story is to share information that will help a child understand a particular situation; they should not be used as 'bossy' rule books.

The goal of each story should be to teach social understanding, not rote compliance; to describe rather than direct.

Social stories can be used to: -

- Provide positive feedback to a child so that they can recognise their own appropriate skills and responses (in an affirming style).
- To support the development of self-care skills (e.g. how to clean your teeth, get dressed etc.)
- To prepare a child for a new experience.
- To help a child customise themselves to a new situation and to give information about appropriate responses within the particular scenario.
- To help prevent extreme responses that may be triggered by a lack of social understanding.

The writing of a social story should be suited to match the language and vocabulary levels of the child in mind. The story should be written in the first person and present or future tense and should contain one aspect or step per page.

Basic social stories use three kinds of sentences: -

- **Descriptive sentences:** are truthful and observable sentences (opinion and assumption free) that give accurate information about the environment or setting. They provide, in words, the basic facts about what can be seen. They often answer "why" questions. Example: 'There is a waiting room at the doctor's surgery'. 'The waiting room usually has a row of chairs around the edge'; 'The people sitting on the chairs are waiting to see the doctor'.
- **Perspective sentences:** refer to or describe the internal state of other people (their knowledge/thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions, motivation or physical condition). These sentences give the child insight into the heads and hearts of those featured in the story, so that the individual can learn how others perceive various events. Example: 'The people usually like to sit quietly, because they don't feel very well'. 'The people will be happy if I sit quietly and wait'. 'Dad will be happy if I sit quietly next to him'.

- **Directive sentences:** present or suggest, in positive terms, a response or choice of responses to a situation or concept. Example: 'I will try and sit quietly next to Dad and wait'. 'It is good to sit quietly in the waiting room'.

The ratio of these sentences used within a story are; 1 directive sentence for every 2-5 descriptive and/or perspective sentences. (There are seven sentence types that may be used in advanced social stories).

Example social Story: -

What do I do in the waiting room at the doctor's: -

There is a waiting room at the doctor's surgery.

The waiting room usually has a row of chairs around the edge.

The people sitting on the chairs are waiting to see the doctor.

The people usually like to sit quietly, because they don't feel very well.

The people will be happy if I sit quietly and wait.

Dad will be happy if I sit quietly next to him.

I will try and sit quietly next to Dad and wait.

It is good to sit quietly in the waiting room.

Notice the non-directive language used; usually, I will try, it is good to (rather than you will!) Other good examples could be; sometimes, most, my teacher will be happy if.

Social stories were developed by Carol Gray (1994). <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/>

For further information: <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>
(National Autistic Society).

Recommended reading:

The New Social Story Book by Carol Gray

Writing & Developing Social Stories – Practical Interventions in Autism by Dr Caroline Smith

What is Nursery?

Social Story – What is Nursery?



Soon I will be going to nursery...



**Nursery is a place where children go
to play, learn, and make friends....**



There will be lots of fun things to do at Nursery...



**There will be adults at nursery who
will help me...**



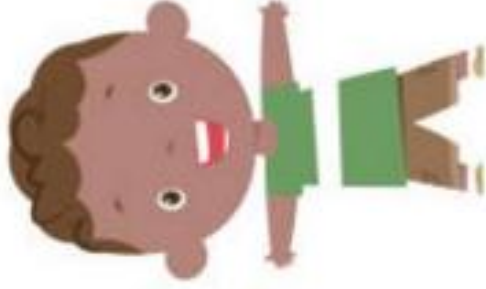
I will spend some time at nursery during the day.



**Then my Mum, Dad or carer will come
and take me home...**



Children have fun at Nursery.



I will be ok.

This Is Me – Guidance Notes

The aim of the 'This Is Me' profile is for the child to be involved in creating a 'snapshot' of themselves that provides key information in an easy-to-read format.

This is useful for practitioners who are new to the child or have infrequent contact e.g., supply teacher, lunchtime supervisor, voluntary staff and students.

You can include whatever the child wants to say, and the child can record using drawings, photos, writing or adult can scribe.

Ideas for what to include:

At home

Information about people who are important such as family and friends.

Pets the child might have.

Places the child might go.

At Nursery or Setting

Favourite subject areas.

Friends at school.

Special events.

I really like

Include areas of strength.

Special interests.

Hobbies.

I do not like/ get upset/ worried

Areas the child needs support with including academic, social, sensory, physical needs etc.

Worries the child may have due to changes of teacher, changes to the timetable etc.

Fears and phobias the child may have.

Strategies the child can use to feel calm

Reading a favourite story.

Go to quiet place for 'chill out time.'

You can help me by

Signalling change before an activity changes by telling the child or showing a picture of the next activity.

Say my name before speaking to me, so that I know the instruction is for me.

Other Things about me

E.g., If a child has difficulty eating and drinking consider what their specific requirements are: -

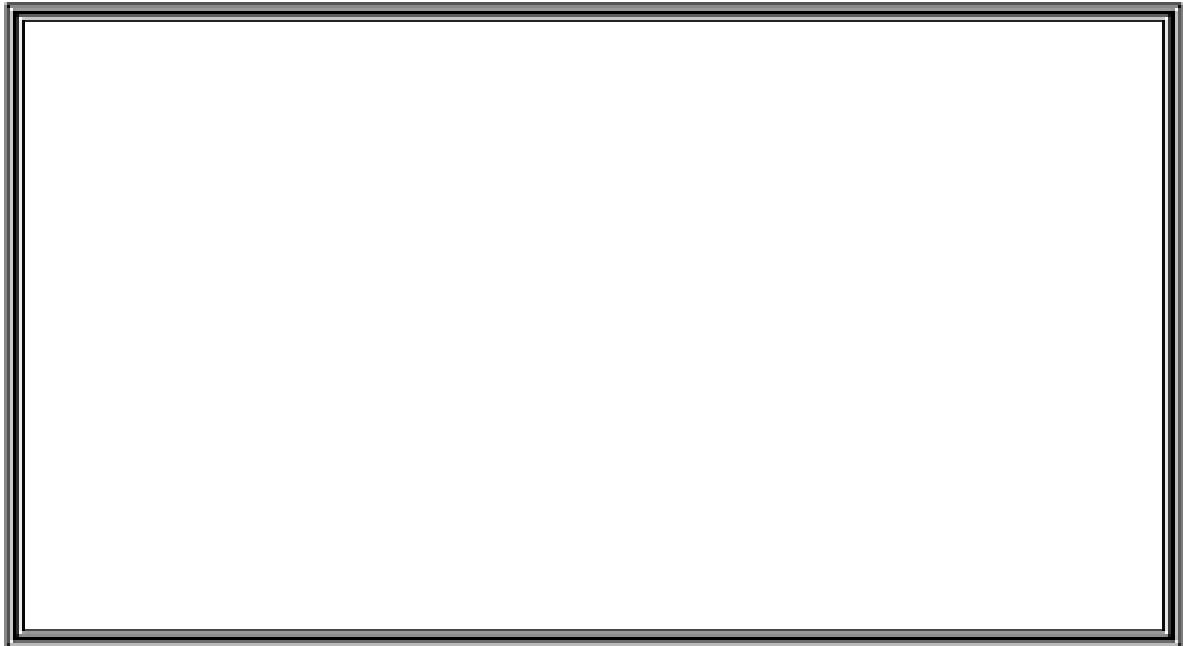
- I like my drink at the end of a meal.
- I cannot eat eggs they make me sick.
- My favourite foods are...

This
Is
Me

By:

This a special story all about me for my new teacher

Here is a picture of me.



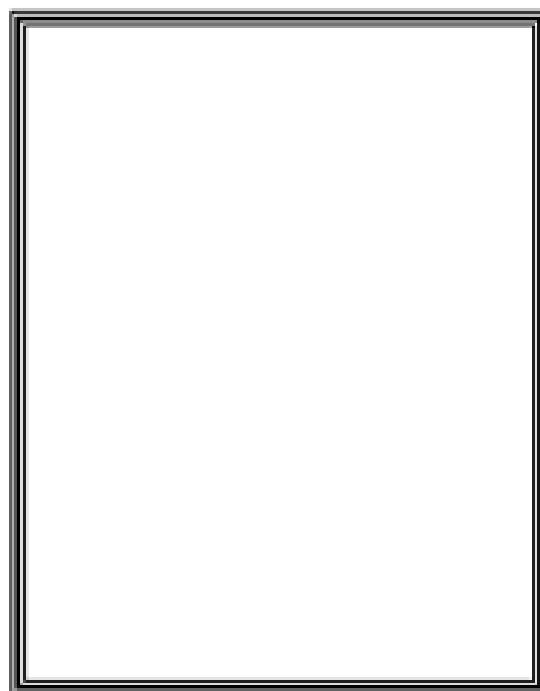
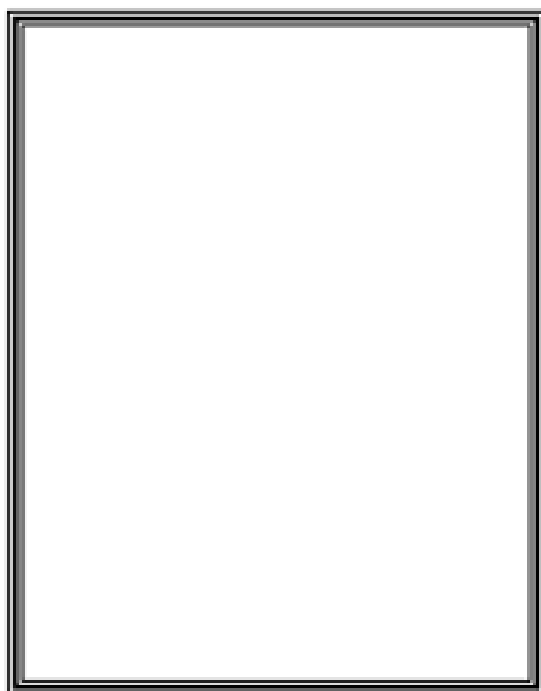
My name is

and I live at



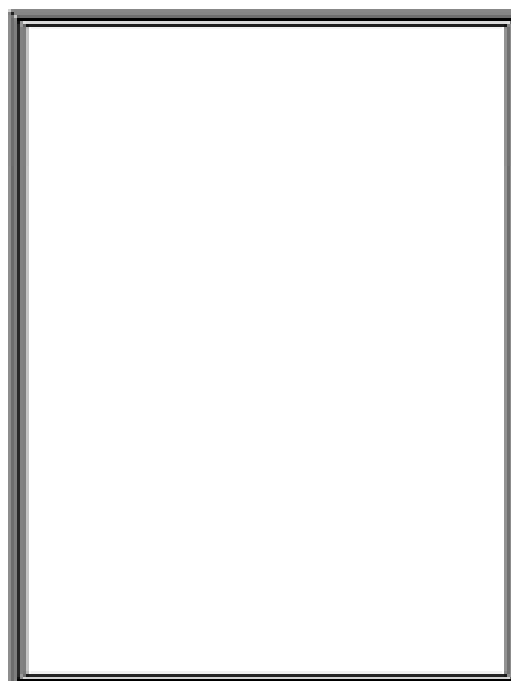
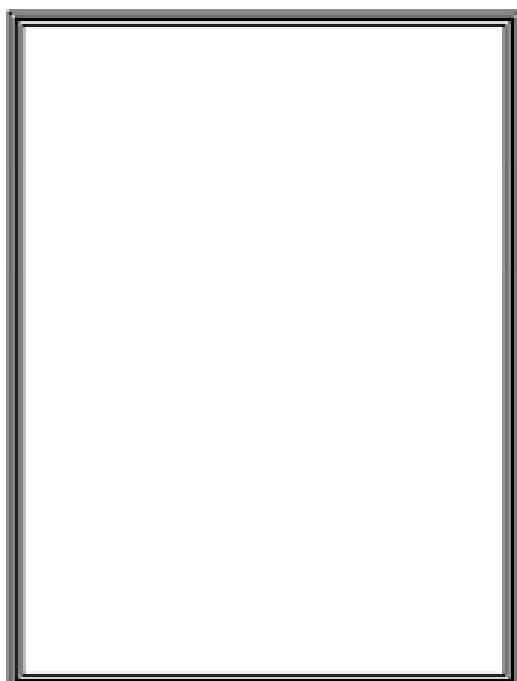
At home my favourite things are

.....

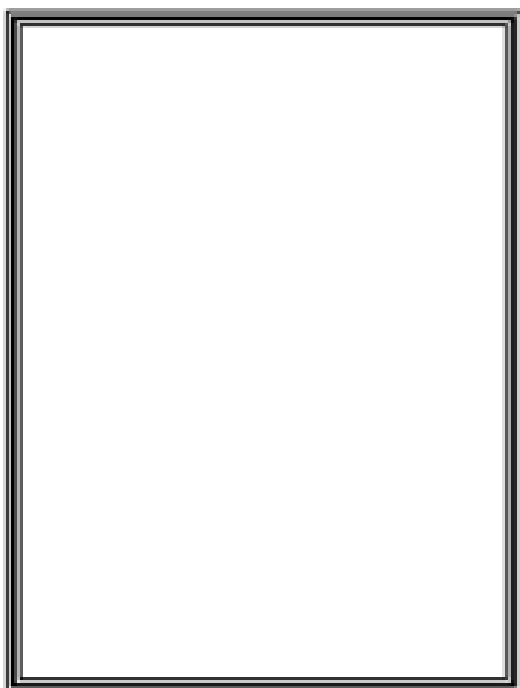


At my childminders my favourite things are...

.....

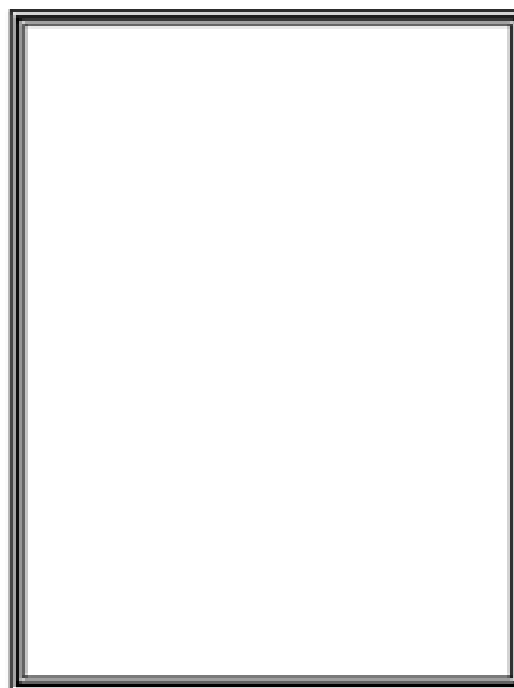


I really like



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I do not like

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I might get upset or worry when

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If I get upset to feel calm I

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You can help me by

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Other things about me

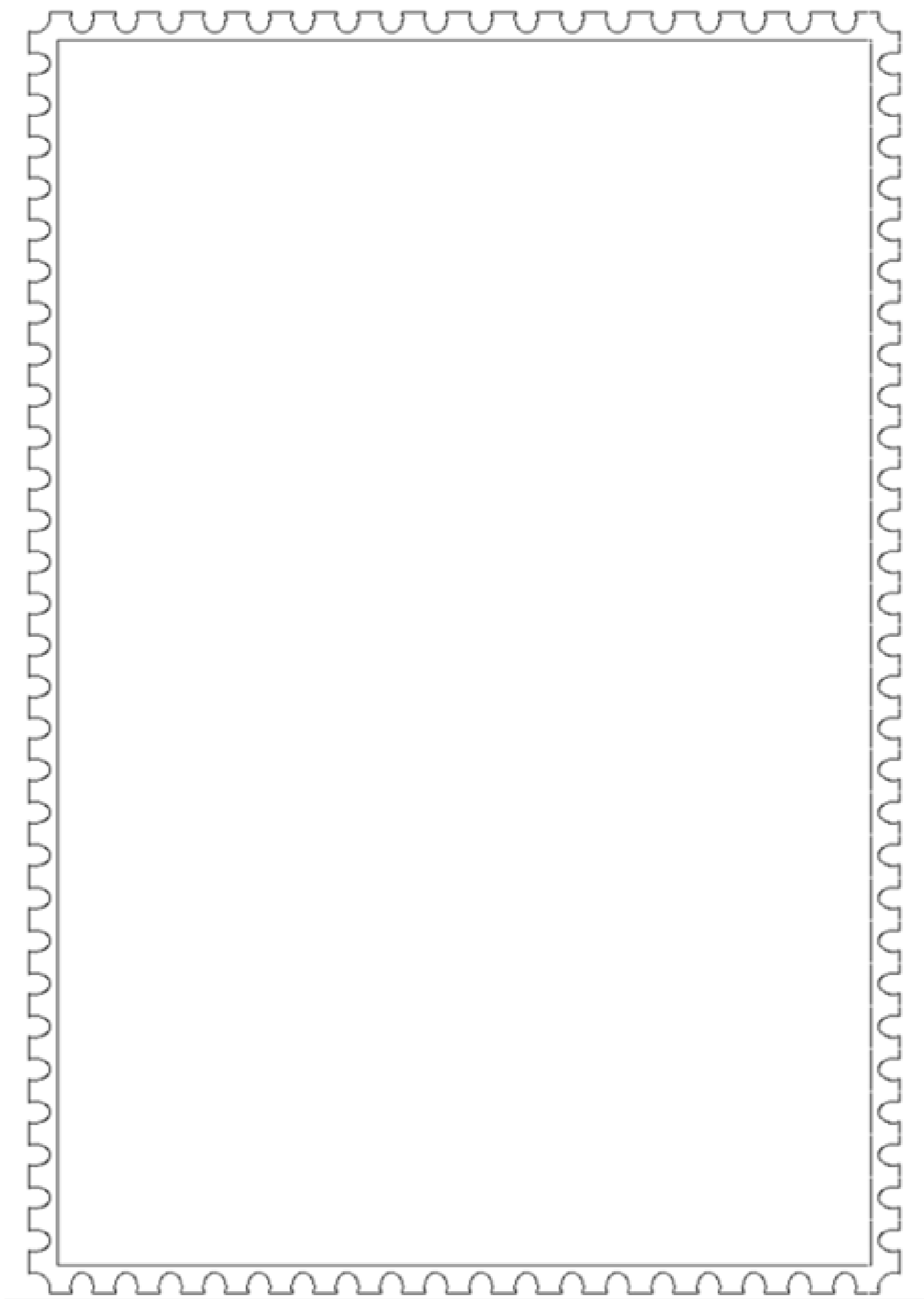
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TOP TRANSITION TIPS FOR PARENT/CARERS

All of these tips are advice to help you and your child's transition into a new environment go as smoothly and stress free as possible. It aims to provide your child with the daily structure and routine that will be expected of them in the coming weeks and hopefully makes this transition easier for yourself as well as your child.

1. Get your child into a similar routine as that of their new setting/nursery/school - **Tip: think about eating timings, play timings etc.**
2. Practice transitioning times (changing between different activities during the day)- **Tip: use sand timers for countdowns.**
3. Start to introduce a structured bedtime/sleep routine- **Tip: this will help with enabling your child to get up for school/nursery when the time comes more easily.**
4. Practice/create a morning routine that your child can continue when they go back to school/nursery- **Tip: washing, brushing teeth, getting dressed, breakfast.**
5. Once you know when your child is starting or returning to nursery start a countdown calendar-**Tip this will help your child to 'see' when they will be going back and prepare them for the transition.**
6. Use social stories to support your child's developing understanding of the changes ahead. **Tip: this should help relieve some of the anxiety that your child may be experiencing about some of the new experiences and impending changes.**

N.B. Remember to discuss with your child all the things that will stay the same or similar. We are often tempted to prepare our children for

change by highlighting all the new, different things that are going to happen. Starting off with the things that will still be happening can be a huge comfort to our children and lay a secure foundation to build upon.

Ladder

Steps to getting your child ready for Nursery/School.

Top tip: Visual resources such as timetables and routine strips can assist with independent skills and can make transitions easier.

Ready for Nursery/School.

Practice your route to nursery/school with your child.

Create a morning routine e.g. washing, brushing teeth times, breakfast times.

Practice getting dressed into uniform or create a dressing routine.

Create a structured daily routine for your child e.g. play time, learning time, and story time.

Top tip: Rewards no matter how small are a good way of reinforcing positive behaviour.

Try and get your child into a consistent eating pattern e.g. snack and meal times.

Try and get your child into a regular bedtime routine/sleeping pattern.

Top tip: A countdown calendar can help to show your child when/what day they will be going back to Nursery/School helping them to prepare for going back.

Top tip: Social stories are a good way of preparing your child for nursery/school and the changes ahead.

All about me

Guidance for Parents and Carers

This simple profile is designed to begin to support your child with the transition process and share important information with their new setting and the people who are going to be supporting your child.

It is a good way to provide a 'snapshot' of your child and to record their thoughts and feelings as they enter into this new exciting stage. We also hope it may look great on the family fridge! These notes will hopefully give you lots of ideas on how to use each section.

My name is

For this section you could write or print out some of your family's first names on paper, mix them up and help your child to find theirs. Your child could then be helped to stick their name on the space on the poster, or to try and write their own name if they would like to. More ideas: Encourage your child to recognise their name using a sign on their bedroom door, alphabet fridge magnets or homemade letters.

This is me

For this section you could help your child to take a selfie, print it out and stick it onto the poster, or use an existing photograph. They could also draw or paint a simple self-portrait, if they are able to.

More ideas: Look in a mirror together and explore your facial features, making faces and talking about your expressions.

What does a happy or sad face look like?

I am.... years old

For this section you could support your child to write the number that represents their age, or write some numbers down on bits of paper and help them to identify their age and stick it onto the poster.

More ideas: Try some simple number games to develop your child's awareness of numbers, like Musical Number Songs. Use simple number inset puzzles or go on a number hunt at home or while you are out together, looking out for numbers on houses, in shops or at the park.

Things that I like

For this section talk to your child about their favourite things and people and write them down in the relevant section. More ideas: Record your chat on your smartphone and listen together. Take pictures together of their favourite things, activities, toys, places, foods etc.

Things that are important to me

For this section fill in the things that are meaningful and that your child may rely on e.g. a specific fiddle toy, having time with a favourite activity, quiet time,

I'm practising

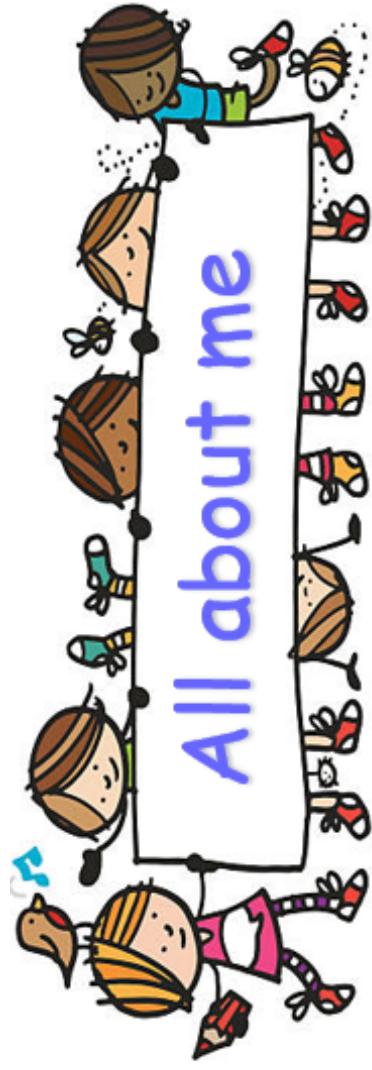
For this section circle the activities that your child is practising and learning to do. More ideas: Encourage your child to attempt the self-care activities on the poster as part of their daily routine, or when you have a few spare minutes and are not in a rush. Let your child dress and undress themselves, borrow some school uniform and try it on, or set up a 'sniffle station' with tissues within reach. Ask them to help you wash and dry your hands by showing you how it's done.

I may need help with

For this section write down the things that your child may need support with. It could be things like putting their coat on, tying their shoes. Or it could be things like lining up, sharing toys, coping in noisy busy places, communicating their needs to an adult when they are upset. Write down things that you feel are important for someone to know who is not yet familiar with your child and that perhaps your child is not able to articulate just yet.

How you can help me

For this section write down useful strategies that really help your child in certain situations e.g. what helps to calm your child if they are upset. What works really well for them in certain scenarios.



My name is

I am years old

Things that I like

This is me

Things that are important to me

I may need help with...

How you can help me

I am practising:



Useful Articles to support Inclusion in Early Years



- **Joint Attention in Toddlers: Why it's important for Language Development**
- **The Power of Turn-Taking**
- **A Complete Guide for using Prompts**
- **Using Prompts to Teach Individuals with Special Needs**
- **What is Sensory Play?**
- **Physical challenging behaviour**
- **What is Autism?**
- **Autism – Misunderstanding Fear**

Joint Attention in Toddlers:

Why It's Important for Language Development



Article sourced from: <https://teachmetotalk.com/2017/03/02/joint-attention-toddlers-why-its-important-for-language-development/>

By: Laura Mize

Have you ever wondered if a child is “just a late talker” or if there’s a larger problem?

Research reveals that there are [several risk factors](#) that let us know that a child’s late talking is likely a part of a child’s developmental delay, rather than the only issue. I’ve started a series of articles to address these concerns. In this post, we’re addressing the second red flag which is:

DIFFICULTY WITH JOINT ATTENTION

What is joint attention?

Joint attention can also be called “shared attention”, and it occurs when two people focus on the same thing. Usually an episode of joint attention begins when one person does something to alert someone else to an object or event using:

- *Words* such as “Hey mum!” or “Look!”
- *Gestures* like pointing or showing an item
- *Nonverbal methods* of gaining attention such as eye gaze. For example, the child looks at something and then looks back at you as if to say, “That’s what I want you to notice!”

The examples above cover a child's ability to initiate joint attention, but responding to others is an important aspect of joint attention too. This means that a child may be happily playing with a toy, but if you call his name, he looks up at you. Another example is that she attends to what you're trying to show her. When you point to something across the room, the child follows your point with his eyes. A child recognizes and welcomes your attempts to engage her, to talk with her, and play with her.

When I explain joint attention to parents, I talk about a child's ability to shift his attention between an object or event and another person. Three participants are involved in this "triad" of attention – the child, you, and the item/occurrence. There's mutual focus. Beyond both people actively participating, both also understand that they are paying attention to the same thing and it's purposeful for both parties. That's what constitutes the "sharing" principle in joint attention.

Why is joint attention important for language development?

Joint attention is a social skill, meaning the way a child interacts with other people. That's what communicating is – a way of interacting with another person. Communication begins with this shared attention and engagement piece. When a child doesn't notice that you're trying to get him to include you or share an experience, there's not much real interaction going on between the two of you.

Babies and toddlers must regularly interact with other people before they begin to listen to your words. Over time with consistent listening and attending to what you're saying, they learn to understand what you're saying by linking meaning to your words.

This is how I "draw it out" for parents who have difficulty seeing the correlation between their child's lack of consistent interaction and delayed language skills. When I'm using this illustration, I draw an arrow when I'm saying, "leads to," as you can see here:

Interaction leads to listening.



Listening leads to understanding language.



Understanding language leads to using language...



Using language (such as gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze) leads to talking.

Of course, there are exceptions, (which point to different reasons a child isn't learning to talk), but generally, this is how speech-language skills emerge.

Frequency Matters

Another important consideration is the frequency of a child's ability to shift his focus and share experiences with others. A child's skills don't have to completely absent in this area before it's a problem. If a child's joint attention skills are best described as "hit or miss," there's still usually a language delay.

Here's why...opportunities for learning language are limited for this kid because he's not tuned in to what he can learn from others during exchanges virtually all day long. On closer inspection, much of this child's day may be spent "doing his own thing" rather than seeking out someone else to play and interact with or responding when someone tries to engage her. When a child doesn't demonstrate strong joint attention in hundreds of interactions with others every day, he is at a serious disadvantage for learning to talk. He's missing all of those potential opportunities for learning the language.

Signs of Difficulty with Joint Attention

Toddlers who have difficulty with joint attention inconsistently respond to your words, your gestures (such as pointing at something for them to look at), and your actions. They may appear to avoid others or ignore what's said to them. They seem to tune out their own names and other verbal directions. Things need to be their own idea or they're not really interested. Adults may have to work pretty hard to get and keep this child's attention.

Kids with joint attention issues don't use increasingly mature ways to gain attention from others. For example, a toddler over 12 months may fuss or cry when something is wrong, but she doesn't make attempts to tell or show you what's happened.

Contrast this with a child who has mastered joint attention. A typically developing toddler is quite adept at interjecting their will. They frequently interrupt and try to direct a parent's activities in order to get what they want, even before they begin to talk. They look toward, point, or lead parents, and then they continue to use any way they can to make sure that mom or dad complies with their request.

An issue with decreased joint attention is even more serious when a child also has difficulty with other social skills such as making eye contact with other people and sharing frequent warm, joyful expressions with others during close interactions.

Diagnostic Implications for Decreased Joint Attention

When a child doesn't consistently display joint attention, we become concerned about the social aspects of language development. Toddlers with various developmental delays can certainly show lapses of decreased joint attention, but when a child's joint attention is consistently limited or absent, we do become concerned about autism. We should look for other red flags or deficits of ASD (autism spectrum disorder) not to confirm the suspicion, but as a way to address a child's core issues.

Ways to Improve Joint Attention

There are plenty of things you can do to establish solid joint attention skills during everyday activities at home. Strategies to improve joint attention with young children begin by working on eye contact and his ability to look at your face when you're talking to him. I encourage parents to give a child something worth paying attention to – be fun to look at and listen to as you're playing or talking together! Use interesting objects to capture a distracted toddler's attention. Frequently model gestures, such as pointing and showing items, so that a child will first begin to understand these important nonverbal ways of communicating and eventually

use them to initiate interaction with you. Position yourself to make eye contact and sustained interaction easier for the child. Get on the same level. For example, if he's up on the couch, sit on the floor so that your eyes are across from his. For additional ideas, [read more about joint attention](#). If you're more of an auditory learner, [listen to my podcast](#) about joint attention.

Recommendations for Parents

The most important recommendation I can make for parents of a child who is struggling with joint attention is to get professional assistance. Begin by discussing the concerns with your paediatrician or other healthcare professional. Ask for a referral for a developmental assessment. If your doctor dismisses your concerns, get another opinion! You know your child better than anyone else ever will and if you're feeling uneasy about your child's development, trust your instincts!

Early intervention is especially critical for a child with joint attention and other social skill problems since **maturity alone does not resolve these kinds of issues**.

By this I mean that a child won't "grow out of it."

Intervention is absolutely necessary and may look different over the course of a childhood for a kid with social interaction differences. In early toddlerhood and throughout the preschool years, I believe that specialized developmental services are critical. This period is when we can make the MOST difference in a child's outcome. It's when developing brains are most "ready" for growth.

Parents of a child with any kind of social-communication problem will benefit dramatically from having a professional or team of professionals teach them ways to successfully address their own child's needs at home. When this happens, intervention isn't a once or twice a week thing limited to therapy or preschool. By working with therapists and teachers who have had experience treating other children with similar backgrounds, you'll be able to trust that you're doing everything you can to help.

Special note for/about professionals...

Sometimes a speech-language pathologist may be reluctant to discuss the importance of joint attention and other red flags for autism with parents opting for more general terms such as "language delay" or "late talker." This can occur when a therapist is unsure if a child would meet the diagnostic threshold for receiving an official diagnosis of autism. A therapist may be afraid of being "wrong" or overstepping their bounds. In some states, therapists are discouraged from offering a diagnosis and must refer a child for further testing from a developmental paediatrician, neurologist, or another medical specialist.

While I understand these issues, it's not an excuse not to talk honestly with families. As I've stated in [previous posts in this series](#), when we don't share the full extent of a child's issues with parents, I believe that we're essentially withholding important information. I don't want to be that kind of professional (or that kind of person) so I have "the talk" with parents, even when it's uncomfortable for everyone.

If you're a parent and working with a professional who you sense may be holding back, be direct. Bring up the subject yourself. Take a deep breath and ask, "Do you think this is more than late talking?"

WRAP UP

In summary, a toddler with limited joint attention may have difficulty acquiring a broad range of developmental skills including learning how to interact with others and make friends, how to talk, how to understand words, and how to process and use incoming information. These challenges may overlap into additional areas of development, but early intervention (when the child is young – before 5) can be highly successful for significantly improving, and in some cases, even eliminating these problems.

If you're a parent, I hope that this information will help you understand what may be going on with your own child. If you're a therapist, this is the kind of information that doctors, and other professionals may not be sharing with parents of a child with a language delay due to limited social skills. It's up to us to help families understand the depth of a child's issues and provide hope that therapy, along with consistent parental commitment, can make a huge difference!

The Power of Turn-taking: How Back-and-forth Interactions Help Children Learn Language

[The Power of Turn-taking: How Back-and-forth Interactions Help Children Learn Language \(hanen.org\)](#)

By Andrea Lynn Koohi
Hanen Staff Writer

Having a back-and-forth conversation with a child may seem like a small thing, but it turns out it's everything when it comes to helping them learn language.



A new study has shown that the more children participate in back-and-forth interactions with their caregivers, the more activity they have in the part of the brain responsible for language production and processing. The study also showed a strong connection between the number of turns children take in conversation and the scores they receive on standardized language tests [1, 2]. The more children are involved in back-and-forth exchanges, the greater the impact on their language skills.

What makes back-and-forth interactions so powerful?

There's a lot children learn when they're involved in back-and-forth conversations that they couldn't learn if they just listened to someone else speak. This comparison chart shows just some of the advantages of conversation:

Learning opportunity for children	Just listening to words (e.g. watching TV or videos, or just listening to an adult talk)	Participating in a conversation
Hear a variety of words they may use on their own later on	Maybe	Yes
Learn to pay attention to someone else	Maybe	Yes
Learn how to start an interaction	No	Yes
Learn how and when to take a turn in an interaction	No	Yes
Learn how to send a message effectively	No	Yes
Learn to clarify or repeat a message if it wasn't understood	No	Yes
Practice using words and gestures	No	Yes

Learn to ask questions	No	Yes
Draw on previous knowledge, experience and problem-solving skills to articulate a point of view	No	Yes
Build confidence in communicating	No	Yes

So it's easy to see why back and forth interactions have a greater influence on children's brain development and language learning than just hearing words. While it's important to expose your child to lots of words, what's much more important is involving him in high-quality, enjoyable interactions where he has the opportunity to take as many back-and-forth turns as possible.

How to set the stage for turn-taking

Parents and caregivers are in the best possible position to encourage the back-and-forth conversations that help children learn. That's why the focus of all Hanen Programs and resources is helping these important adults engage children in high-quality interactions. Here are a few ideas and strategies we share with parents to help them set the stage for an enjoyable interaction with lots of turn-taking:

When and where to do it

The best thing about high quality interactions is that they're most likely to happen during everyday situations like having a bath, walking to the park, or getting ready for bed.

Anytime and anywhere! The best thing about high quality interactions is that they're most likely to happen during everyday situations like having a bath, walking to the park, or getting ready for bed. Basically, any situation in which your child is having a good time and is enjoying your company is the perfect time to have the interaction.

Some helpful Hanen strategies

- **OWL™ (Observe, wait and listen™)** – This key strategy allows the child to lead the interaction. It gives him the opportunity to take the first turn about something that interests him, and allows you to respond to what has captured his attention. This is a critical first step because children are much more likely to take another turn and stay in the conversation when they have started the interaction:

Observe – Get face-to-face with your child and don't say anything. Just pay close attention to what he's interested in. His eye gaze, gestures, facial expressions and sounds are important clues.

Wait – Without speaking, wait to give your child a chance to send you a message. Remember that he doesn't need to use words – he might just give you a quick look or make a gesture. Pay close attention or you might miss it.

Listen – Your child may also send a message with words or sounds. Treat any sound, look or gesture as your child's first "turn" in the interaction. [3]

Follow Your Child's Lead – Now that your child has taken the first turn, respond immediately by saying or doing something that's directly related to what he just communicated. For example, if he stacks a few blocks on top of each other and then looks at you and smiles, you could say, "Wow, you're building a tower!". Then wait quietly again. If your child takes another turn on the same topic, take another turn as well. Then wait without speaking for him to take another turn. When he does, that's success! You've established a back-and-forth interaction. Keep it going for as many turns as possible by sticking to what your child is interested in, responding by building on what he has said or done, and remembering to wait to give him a chance to respond. [3]

As the back-and-forth turns continue, you'll know he's learning a lot. But you'll also be able to see that he's really enjoying the interaction and connecting with you. He'll have no idea how much he's learning or that his brain is doing important work – he'll just know he's having fun!

A Complete Guide for Using Prompts to Teach Individuals with Special Needs

<https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/04/22/a-complete-guide-for-using-prompts-to-teach-individuals-with-special-needs/>

Years of research has demonstrated prompts to be an effective teaching tool for Autistic people.

Prompts can be equally useful for helping people both with and without special needs. Have you ever pointed your finger to direct a person's gaze in the right direction? If so, you've prompted someone. And have you ever used an alarm clock to wake up or set a timer to remind you to take something out of the oven? Consider yourself having been prompted!



What is a prompt?

Prompts have been defined by world-renowned behaviorists, Lynn McClannahan and Patricia Krantz of [Princeton Child Development Institute](#) as: "Instructions, gestures, demonstrations, touches, or other things that we arrange or do to increase the likelihood that children will make correct responses."

Why use prompts?

Prompts usually go hand-in-hand with errorless teaching. There are many benefits to this approach:

- The utilization of prompts is a positive way of teaching and therefore encourages learning because students continually make progress and aren't thwarted or discouraged by hearing the word "no" time and time again.
- When the word "no" is overused, learners can easily become desensitized to it. Using an errorless approach, "no" is infrequently used and therefore still retains its meaning which is especially important in potentially dangerous situations like quickly stopping someone from touching a hot stove, running in front of a moving vehicle, etc.
- Because there are so many different types of prompts, there is a wide selection from which to choose to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. Learners who are excellent readers can benefit from written prompts; those who are visually impaired can be assisted with hand-over-hand prompts, etc.

9 Types of prompts

As mentioned, there is a wide range of prompts from which you as a teacher, parent or therapist can choose. You can base your selection on how much assistance your learner requires as well as by taking into consideration his unique learning style or challenges:

1. Gestural prompt

A Gestural Prompt can include pointing, nodding or any other type of action the learner can watch his teacher do.

Example: Teacher asks learner, "What is something you drink from?"

Teacher prompts learner by pointing to a cup.

2. Full physical prompt

A physical prompt is where the teacher provides physical contact to guide the learner through the entire requested activity.

Example: Teacher asks learner, "Clap your hands."

Teacher prompts learner by holding each of the learner's hands in his and then moving the learner's hands through the entire action of handclapping.

3. Partial physical prompt

The teacher provides some assistance to guide the learner through part of the requested activity.

Example: Teacher asks learner, "Clap your hands."

Teacher prompts learner by gently touching each of the learner's two hands and gently nudging the learner's hands toward each other.

4. Full verbal prompt

The teacher provides the learner with a spoken, complete response to the question just asked.

Example: Teacher asks learner, "What comes after Thursday?"

Teacher prompts learner by stating "Friday."

5. Partial verbal prompt or phonemic prompt

The teacher provides the learner with part of the response to the question asked or just says the first 'phoneme' or sound.

Example: Teacher asks learner, "What comes after Thursday?"

Teacher prompts learner by stating "Fr"

6. Textual or written prompt

This can be in the way of a list or some other type of written instruction.

Example: Teacher asks learner, “Do your chores.”

Teacher prompts learner by presenting him with a written checklist of his chores.

7. Visual prompt

A visual prompt can include a video, photograph or drawing on a medium like paper, a whiteboard, or an electronic device.

Example: Teacher asks learner, “Clap your hands.”

Teacher prompts learner by playing a video of a person clapping his hands.

8. Auditory prompt

This can include any type of sound the learner can hear like an alarm or timer.

Example: Teacher asks learner, “Clean up your toys in 5 minutes.”

Teacher prompts learner by setting a timer to go off in 5 minutes.

9. Positional prompt

This type of prompt involves the teacher putting the correct response closest to the learner.

Example: Teacher shows the learner three objects... a ball, a shoe and an apple and asks learner, “Point to the one that you eat.”

Teacher places the apple closest to the learner.

Important Prompting Tips

Always **use the least amount of prompting necessary** to get the job done. This is important in order to avoid having your learner become “prompt-dependent,” meaning that he relies on prompts too much. When this happens, prompting becomes counterproductive as it diminishes a learner’s independence by making him only respond with the assistance of a prompt. For example, if you feel that he knows a word but just needs a bit of help, use a phonemic prompt instead of a full verbal prompt.

For this same reason of avoiding prompt dependency **use prompts that are the least intrusive** whenever possible. A gestural prompt, for example, is much less intrusive than a physical prompt so if you feel that a gestural prompt will do the trick, use it. Resort to the more intrusive prompts only when absolutely necessary.

Be sure to **fade prompts** as quickly as possible to try to reduce prompt-dependency. For example, if you make a request for your learner to clap his hands and need to follow it up with a full physical prompt, the next time you ask him to clap his hands, go with a partial

physical prompt. Hopefully the time after, you'll need no prompt at all. The situation will vary from learner to learner in terms of just how quickly you can fade your prompts but just keep in mind the basic rule that your goal should always be reduce and ultimately eliminate the need for prompts.

Use prompts when your learner:

- is **about to respond with an incorrect response** (e.g. you see him reaching for the wrong object, start uttering the incorrect answer, etc.)
- responds with an **incorrect** response
- **doesn't respond** at all (we usually give my son about 3 seconds to respond before intervening with a prompt)

Vary your praise and rewards:

- Give some praise and a smaller reward for a correct response that is achieved with a prompt
- Give a huge amount of praise and a much greater reward for a correct response that is achieved without a prompt

Avoid saying "no."

- If your learner errs or makes a mistake, get in there with a prompt and assist him, and then repeat the request while fading your prompts as much as possible until they become unnecessary.
- Whenever possible, **try using mechanical prompts instead of human prompts.** Research has demonstrated that for Autistic people, mechanical prompts are easier to fade and are less likely to create prompt dependency than those that are delivered by a person. An example would be to choose an alarm instead of your own voice as a reminder to clean up.

What is sensory play? And why is it great for your child's development?

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist Alys Mathers

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/what-is-sensory-play/z6whxbk#:~:text=Sensory%20play%20is%20any%20activity,that%20involves%20movement%20or%20balance.>

Whether at nursery, chatting to a health visitor, or looking online for activity ideas - sensory play is one of those terms that you might hear quite a lot when you have a young child.

But what does sensory play actually mean? And why does everyone keep going on about it? We've been chatting to Specialist Speech and Language Therapist Alys Mathers to find out.

What is sensory play?



Sensory play is any activity that stimulates at least one of your child's senses. This could be hearing, sight, touch, smell or taste. It also includes play that involves movement or balance.

You might have seen other parents using play dough, cold pasta or making their own sensory box. But sensory play can be a lot simpler than that.

Painting with your fingers, splashing in the bath and even jumping in piles of leaves during a trip to the park are also examples of sensory play.

Exploring the world through their senses can have many benefits for young children.

It doesn't even have to be something that you need to think about too much. "Babies, from when they are very little, are already using all of their senses to investigate and explore their environment," explains Alys.

"So it's something that children naturally do without parents having to set it up. What we can do, is make sure we allow and encourage our children to keep exploring using all their senses."

What age can you start sensory play?

From the moment they're born, your baby is ready for sensory play.

Even in the womb, your baby uses their senses to understand the world. By the time they are born, they'll already be able to recognise your voice and your smell.

With a new-born, sensory play can be as simple as blowing raspberries on their belly, gently tickling or massaging them, or just chatting about the world when you're out for a walk. As babies get older, you will find that these activities develop naturally.

"Maybe you've been playing peek-a-boo with your baby, and they've enjoyed feeling the cloth on their face," says Alys. "But now they've got a bit too old for that, so they might start doing something different with the cloth.

"They might start putting it over both of you at once, and you can change up the activity by letting different amounts of light in, lifting or lowering the cloth, so they experience dark and light."

The more they grow, the more their sensory play will adapt. "So you want to keep following your child's lead in the play," Alys explains. "If they get bored of a certain type of sensory play, they'll soon start exploring it differently."

Water play is a really easy sensory play idea. You can even incorporate it into your everyday routine when your little one washes their hands.

What are the benefits of sensory play?

"It's through all of our senses that we make links between what we see, what we feel and what we hear," explains Alys. "And this, ultimately, helps our children to make sense of the world." Exploring the world through their senses can help children understand lots of different things, such as "cause and effect" (how their actions affect the world) and to develop their emotional awareness.



"Through sensory play, some children will discover which senses are more calming for them," says Alys. "For some, it's music. For some, it's a more tactile feeling, like being

wrapped in a blanket. Then for others, it's having certain smells around them." Understanding what soothes you is a really useful skill for children to have as they grow up.

Sensory play also helps your little one's attention span. When a child is hands-on with an experience, they'll stay engaged with it for longer than if they just listen to someone talking.

How does it help with language learning?

Sensory play helps your child's language learning too, as linking experiences with their senses helps children to remember the words that went with them.

"If I asked you to think of a swimming pool," Alys says. "You would probably think about the smell of the chlorine, the heat of the room and the sound reverberating around the place."

Adults immediately link to all of their senses when recalling a word. So you can see how giving children all of that sensory information helps them learn words more easily.

When your child experiences a word with more than one of their senses, their brain will create more connections to that word. "You want to incorporate the senses together," Alys explains. "Engaging with as many senses as possible is going to give them a much clearer memory link to a word."

Finger painting, completing an obstacle course and getting hands-on with food are all examples of sensory play.

Top Tips for Sensory Play

1. Don't expect your child to play in a set way

Children won't always do the things you expect them to. "Let them do what they want with the activity," Alys explains. "Because they will know which senses are going to help them learn the most and also what they're ready for."

2. Follow their lead

Letting your child take the lead in sensory play is important.

"Little children will want to touch, feel, smell and put things to their mouth," Alys says. "They want to use all of their senses to learn, and this is something that we, as adults, might unconsciously try to interrupt."

Similarly, when it comes to messy experiences, Alys says: "Let them get messy if that's what they want. But some children will not want to get messy or hands-on, so it's about letting your child go at their own pace."

3. Try to link in other senses

“Parents can help with sensory play by talking about what they’re experiencing and labelling that,” Alys says.

“If you are doing some water play, for example and your child is focusing on the noise that the water makes, use words like ‘splash’, ‘drip’. You could also link in other senses, by putting your hand under the splashing or dripping water, which might encourage your child to touch too.”

“By using more than one of their senses in play, your child will make more brain connections. This will really boost their language learning.”



4. Keep it simple

Sometimes the simpler sensory activities can be the most beneficial for your child.

“Being out and about in real situations, where you can actually smell, hear and see things is the best kind of sensory play,” Alys says. “Getting out into nature is a great way for your child to experience new words in real life.”

“Water play is also really great fun. You can incorporate it into your everyday routine, like when you’re washing your hands. When you do that, you can feel the water, smell the soap and see the bubbles.”

Physical challenging behaviour

Sourced from:

<https://www.supportincornwall.org.uk/kb5/cornwall/directory/advice.page?id=NEor-Eeu7gA>

Physical challenging behaviour includes biting, pinching, slapping, spitting and hair pulling.

Causes

There may be medical, sensory, behavioural or communication-related reasons why a person on the autism spectrum does these things.

Physical pain, discomfort or medical issue

The person may feel unwell, tired, hungry, thirsty or uncomfortable. Biting may be due to pain in the mouth, teeth or jaw. Spitting may be related to a difficulty with swallowing or to producing too much saliva. Aggression may be due to adolescent hormonal changes.

Developmental stages

Some biting behaviour may be a continuation of infant mouthing behaviour, or a later occurrence of the mouthing phase.

Seeking sensory input

Chewing and biting provide sensory input to the proprioceptive system, which regulates what different parts of the body are doing at different times. The person may enjoy the way saliva feels.

Communicating

The person may be using this behaviour to communicate that something is causing distress and to get it to stop. They may have no other functional way of communicating their needs, wants and feelings.

Frustration or distress

Life can be exceptionally overwhelming at times for people with autism, and the behaviour may be an expression of sheer frustration or distress in response to a range of different stressors. This can include difficult demands, meeting new people, experiencing unpleasant sensory stimuli, a change in routine, switching activities or having to wait for something – some people have difficulty with the concept of time and sequencing.

Learned behaviour

The person may have learned that the behaviour can be a very powerful way of controlling the environment. A behaviour which was initially a response to physical pain or frustration could eventually become a way of avoiding a demand or ending an undesired situation (e.g. turning the television off, interrupting an argument taking place nearby). The person may have learned that they enjoy the reaction or interaction they get as a result of the behaviour.

Strategies

Think about the function of the behaviour

Complete a behaviour diary, which records what is occurring before, during and after the behaviour, or a functional analysis questionnaire (ABC chart). Make notes on the environment, including who was there, any change in the environment and how the person was feeling.

Rule out medical and dental causes

Visit the GP or dentist and seek a referral to a specialist if needed. Bring along notes about when the behaviour happens (i.e. what time of day and in which situations), how often it happens, when it first started, and how long it lasts.

Provide sensory opportunities

Find alternative activities, or provide a bum bag of alternative objects, that provide a similar sensory experience to that provided by the challenging behaviour, and build these into the daily routine. For a person who bites, you could provide chewy tubes, gum, carrots, raw pasta or sultanas. For a person who pinches, you could provide playdough. For a person who hits, you could do a clapping song/rhyme. For a person who pulls hair, tie long hair back and find something to replicate the pulling sensation, e.g. 'row your boat' game, tug of war, climbing up a rope.

Introduce communication tools

Support the person to use other ways of communicating their wants, needs and physical pain or discomfort, e.g. by using a visual stress scale, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), pictures of body parts, symbols for symptoms, or pain scales, pain charts or apps.

Use social stories to explain why it's not appropriate to bite/spit/hit, and describe alternatives.

Some people use communication boards to indicate how they are feeling. This could be a blackboard or a Velcro board with key emotional words or emotional faces. Every time the person engages in challenging behaviour, encourage them to use this form of communication instead.

Some people may find it easier to communicate by text or email.

Remove physical and sensory discomforts

Provide relief for physical discomfort, e.g. pain killers. Remove unpleasant sensory input, e.g. use ear defenders to block out noise, use sunglasses to reduce light, and reduce strong smells, replacing them with smells that the person prefers.

Prepare for change

Prepare the person for any changes in routine or for meeting new people. You could use visual supports, showing photos of new people and places, introducing them in small stages. A child or adolescent with autism may find physiological changes associated with puberty difficult to cope with, and you may need to prepare them for this.

Structure transition times

The previous activity may have been something the person greatly enjoys, or it may be that once focused on an activity, they find it difficult to adjust to something else. You could:

- use a visual timetable showing the day's activities, or a now-and-next board
- use a timer to indicate when an activity is finished
- encourage the person to put the activity into a finished tray or to put the symbol for the activity into a finished box to signal that the activity is over
- use visual supports to show the steps leading up to each activity
- make the waiting time between activities as short as possible
- have a visual, concrete representation of how long the person needs to wait before the activity is going to begin - this might be an electronic timer, sand timer, or stickers on a clock face
- consider making enjoyable activities available during transition times - a transition box, containing a number of different activities, could keep the person focused during these times, making an unstructured timeframe much more structured.

People with Pathological Demand Avoidance may need a less directive and more flexible approach than others on the autism spectrum. Consider reducing the demands placed on the person at difficult times of the day.

When a particular person is targeted

If a particular family member or support worker seems to be the target for challenging behaviour, think about what might be triggering it. It might be that a perfume scent is overwhelming, or that the other person is associated with a distressing activity.

Maybe the person is upset when the support worker or family member spends time with other people. If so, you could try scheduling some time specifically for them to spend together and showing this on a visual timetable. Very strict boundaries need to be kept as to when this will happen and for how long. It may be useful to have a sand timer so that the person knows that the time is up when the sand runs out.

There may simply be a personality clash between the person and a staff member. If this may be the case, consider whether this staff member could work with other people instead?

Provide support for managing emotions and relaxation

Look at anger/emotions management and create opportunities for relaxation. You can do this by, for example, looking at bubble lamps, smelling essential oils, listening to music, massages, or swinging on a swing.

Challenging behaviour can often be diffused by an activity that releases energy or pent-up anger or anxiety. This might be punching a punch bag, bouncing on a trampoline or running around the garden. If the person has low self-esteem, highlight all of their achievements and strengths in an achievement book of photographs and certificates. Counselling or joining an autism-specific social group may also help. Facial expressions and other displays of emotion, as these may inadvertently reinforce the behaviour. Try to speak calmly and clearly, in a neutral and steady tone of voice.

Redirect

Tell the person what they need to do instead of the behaviour, e.g. "David, hands down". Use visual cues such as picture symbols to back up instructions. Redirect to another activity that is incompatible with the behaviour (e.g. an activity that requires both hands, or that occupies the mouth, such as sucking a sweet) and provide praise and reinforcement for the first occurrence of appropriate behaviour, e.g. "David, that's excellent playing with your train".

Reward appropriate behaviours

Provide frequent encouragement to the person for engaging in appropriate behaviour and for periods in which they did not engage in physical challenging behaviour. This will help the person to learn that other, more appropriate behaviours bring positive outcomes.

Rewards can take the form of verbal praise and attention, preferred activities, toys, tokens or sometimes small amounts of favourite foods or drinks. Ensure that you clearly name the behaviour that you are rewarding, e.g. "Jane, that's good waiting!" and ensure that rewards are provided immediately after the behaviour that you wish to encourage e.g. "You can spend 10 minutes on the computer now".

It should be noted that some people with autism do not enjoy social attention. In these circumstances, verbal praise can cause distress and actually stop the person engaging in the desired behaviour in the future.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If the physical challenging behaviour is presenting significant risks to the person or those around them or is resistant to intervention, try to get specialist help to deal with the behaviour. Arrange an appointment with the GP to discuss the issue and to request referral to a behavioural specialist if appropriate.

RESPOND QUICKLY AND CONSISTENTLY

Respond quickly and consistently, e.g. for spitting, wipe away saliva immediately. Limit verbal comments,

What is autism?

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. One in 100 people are on the autism spectrum and there are around 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK.



What is autism?



What it is ✓



A neurodevelopmental difference (different brain wiring), a natural variation



Affects every aspect of a person's being: how they perceive, experience, interact with and interpret the world



A minority neurology



Lifelong

What it isn't ✗



A learning disability



An illness or disease



Bad behaviour/willful defiance



Bad parenting



Affects only children

<https://www.livingoptions.org/what-is-autism/>

Being autistic

Autism is a spectrum condition and affects people in different ways. Like all people, autistic people have their own strengths and weaknesses. Below is a list of difficulties autistic people may share, including the two key difficulties required for a diagnosis.

Social communication and social interaction challenges

Social Communication

Autistic people have difficulties with interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language like gestures or tone of voice. Some autistic people are unable to speak or have limited speech while other autistic people have very good language skills but struggle to understand sarcasm or tone of voice. Other challenges include:

- taking things literally and not understanding abstract concepts
- needing extra time to process information or answer questions
- repeating what others say to them (this is called echolalia)

Social interaction

Autistic people often have difficulty 'reading' other people - recognising or understanding others' feelings and intentions - and expressing their own emotions. This can make it very hard to navigate the social world. Autistic people may:

- appear to be insensitive
- seek out time alone when overloaded by other people
- not seek comfort from other people
- appear to behave 'strangely' or in a way thought to be socially inappropriate
- find it hard to form friendships.

Repetitive and restrictive behaviour

With its unwritten rules, the world can seem a very unpredictable and confusing place to autistic people. This is why they often prefer to have routines so that they know what is going to happen. They may want to travel the same way to and from school or work, wear the same clothes or eat exactly the same food for breakfast.

Autistic people may also repeat movements such as hand flapping, rocking or the repetitive use of an object such as twirling a pen or opening and closing a door. Autistic people often engage in these behaviours to help calm themselves when they are stressed or anxious, but many autistic people do it because they find it enjoyable.

Change to routine can also be very distressing for autistic people and make them very anxious. It could be having to adjust to big events like Christmas or changing schools, facing uncertainty at work, or something simpler like a bus detour that can trigger their anxiety.

Over- or under-sensitivity to light, sound, taste or touch

Autistic people may experience over- or under-sensitivity to sounds, touch, tastes, smells, light, colours, temperatures or pain. For example, they may find certain background sounds like music in a restaurant, which other people ignore or block out, unbearably loud or distracting. This can cause anxiety or even physical pain. Many autistic people prefer not to hug due to discomfort, which can be misinterpreted as being cold and aloof.

Many autistic people avoid everyday situations because of their sensitivity issues. Schools, workplaces and shopping centres can be particularly overwhelming and cause sensory overload. There are many simple adjustments that can be made to make environments more autism friendly.

Highly focused interests or hobbies

Many autistic people have intense and highly focused interests, often from a fairly young age. These can change over time or be lifelong. Autistic people can become experts in their special interests and often like to share their knowledge. A stereotypical example is trains but that

is one of many. Greta Thunberg's intense interest, for example, is protecting the environment.

Like all people, autistic people gain huge amounts of pleasure from pursuing their interests and see them as fundamental to their wellbeing and happiness.

Being highly focused helps many autistic people do well academically and in the workplace but they can also become so engrossed in particular topics or activities that they neglect other aspects of their lives.

Extreme anxiety

Anxiety is a real difficulty for many autistic adults, particularly in social situations or when facing change. It can affect a person psychologically and physically and impact quality of life for autistic people and their families.

It is very important that autistic people learn to recognise their triggers and find coping mechanisms to help reduce their anxiety. However, many autistic people have difficulty recognising and regulating their emotions. Over one third of autistic people have serious mental health issues and too many autistic people are being failed by mental health services.

Meltdowns and shutdowns

When everything becomes too much for an autistic person, they can go into meltdown or shutdown. These are very intense and exhausting experiences.

A meltdown happens when someone becomes completely overwhelmed by their current situation and temporarily loses behavioural control. This loss of control can be verbal (e.g. shouting, screaming, crying) or physical (e.g. kicking, lashing out, biting) or both. Meltdowns in children are often mistaken for temper tantrums and parents, and their autistic children often experience hurtful comments and judgmental stares from less understanding members of the public.

A shutdown appears less intense to the outside world but can be equally debilitating. Shutdowns are also a response to being overwhelmed, but may appear more passive - e.g. an autistic person going quiet or 'switching off'. One autistic woman described having a shutdown as: 'just as frustrating as a meltdown, because of not being able to figure out how to react how I want to, or not being able to react at all; there isn't any 'figuring out' because the mind feels like it is past a state of being able to interpret.'

Sourced from The National Autistic Society:- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism>

Graphic: <https://www.livingoptions.org/what-is-autism/>

AUTISM - MISUNDERSTANDING FEAR

(Source of article unknown)

It's often said that fear is the number one emotion for autistic kids, because the world around them is a confusing, unpredictable and threatening place to be. But that's only half the reason why they experience fear so often - it's not just that they feel more threatened, but that their reactions to those threats are very often misunderstood.

Autistic kids don't always experience fear in a way that most people expect or understand. This can result in three very common situations in which their fear is overlooked:

It's not recognised

The behaviours don't look like fear and are misinterpreted as something else.

It's not expected

The situation is one in which kids don't usually experience fear, so carers aren't prepared or watching for a fear reaction.

It's not acknowledged

They seem afraid but the object of that fear is not something that most people find scary.

The result of all this confusion is that these kids tend to miss out on receiving protection and comfort when they need it most. Misunderstanding their fear means that they have to experience so much more of it, which is not only detrimental to long-term health but also to the trust they feel in the people who take care of them.

Let's take a look at these situations in more in detail.

MISUNDERSTANDING FEAR IN AUTISM

1. RECOGNISING THE FEAR

We think we know what fear looks like - rapid breathing, pounding heart, sweating, crying, hiding, wanting to run. But what about yelling? Refusing to do something? Ignoring you? Talking back? Standing still?

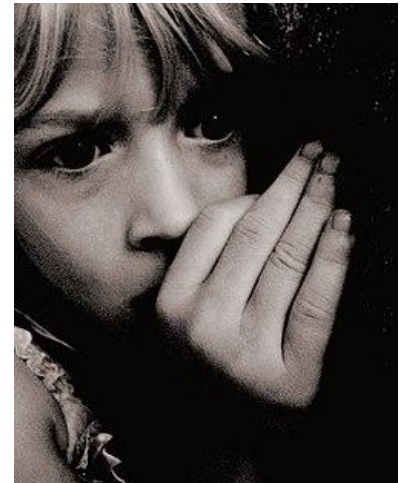
Fear is about escape and avoidance, and these reactions are not always as straight forward as they might seem at first glance. Clinging to routine, stimming, echolalia, aggression, toileting accidents, fidgeting, removing clothes, constant and repetitive questioning... these can also be reactions to feeling afraid.

As our bodies get ready to run or defend we feel dizzy, queasy, fidgety, shaky and tense - this sudden rush of sensations can be unpleasant and overloading for hypersensitive kids. Fear makes our throats tighten and we can have trouble talking or making ourselves understood, which can be uncomfortable and frustrating. It's hard to swallow too, and our digestion starts to shut down which makes it tricky to eat. Adrenaline kicks in - we're suddenly wide awake and our muscles tense up in preparation for battle, which can make settling down or sleeping difficult. The pupils dilate to take in more light, and we might get goosebumps and other sensations which feel weird and uncomfortable to little bodies, even painful for some.

All of these involuntary reactions are propelling the body into "I'm going to do whatever I can to protect myself from this threat" mode - which can look exactly like non-compliance, withdrawal, hyperactivity, aggression or being stubborn, as well as setting the perfect conditions for a meltdown.

2. ANTICIPATING THE FEAR

Kids with autism often experience fear in situations where it's not the usual reaction - sitting in the classroom, visiting the mall, eating a new food, singing Happy Birthday, a windy day at the park, a sudden change in plans.



Situations like these can be scary or even terrifying for them, but it's easy for that fear to be overlooked, trivialized or misinterpreted when it's not the expected response. This is especially true in situations which kids usually enjoy, like birthday parties or getting a surprise or having their achievements acknowledged with a round of applause. We're so accustomed to assuming that everyone loves these things that we're less prepared to notice that some kids might in fact be afraid.

3. ACKNOWLEDGING THE FEAR

I hear these things all the time in reference to autistic kids...

"He has a lot of needless fears"

"She's really scared of things that are harmless"

"Why are they so afraid of things that aren't scary?"

Nobody is afraid of something that isn't scary... to them.

Fear is a natural survival response to things that are painful, confusing, unpredictable or unbearable. And this is one of the reasons fear is such a common reaction for autistic kids - there are many things in their environment that are painful, confusing, unpredictable and unbearable for them. This is evident in how strongly they cling to the things that can help to reduce those fears, like rules and routine.

Kids are expected to respond with fear to 'valid' threats such as moving cars, being separated from a parent, growling dogs and heights. But that same fear response in reaction to bright lights, sensory overload, waking up, smiling faces, lumps in your food, unexpected changes or the shape of a cracker is considered odd simply because these things are not threatening to most people.

The fact that these fears are less common doesn't make the reaction any less real or lessen the distress that they can cause for these kids. Something that seems harmless to one person may still pose a threat to others, and whether the threat is real or only perceived has no impact on the amount of fear that is experienced.

THE COST OF MISUNDERSTANDING FEAR

There are very few people who would ignore a frightened child or respond with irritation, anger, frustration, criticism or discipline... but what about the times when you don't know that they're afraid?

Imagine that a terrified woman runs out of her office, being chased by a bear. Her boss stops her and says "Don't be silly, that's not a bear. Now get back in there or you're fired." This sounds ridiculous, and yet it's exactly the kind of reaction that these kids usually get when their fear is misinterpreted. Instead of comfort and support, their impulse to run, hide, avoid or otherwise escape the perceived threat is met with disapproval, punishment or attempts to modify the behaviour.

Which is not only unfortunate but inappropriate, because fear is not a choice. It's a chain of chemical reactions, and no amount of reward, punishment or willpower is going to change an involuntary survival response. We don't choose to be afraid of threats, and can neither consciously trigger nor shut off our physiological response to them.

Misunderstanding their fear can also be damaging in many other ways:

- * They have to experience it more often than they need to
- * They miss out on much-needed comfort and support
- * They believe that their reaction to fear is wrong or bad
- * They learn that there's no point in getting help when they're afraid (or worse, that they need to keep it a secret) because it will only get them into more trouble
- * They lose trust in the ability of caregivers to protect them

This last one is so important. A kid who is afraid believes that they are in danger - without sharing your knowledge that they're safe, it's easy for them to assume that not only are you failing to protect them but you're actively putting them in harm's way... so now they need to defend themselves against both you and the threat.

All of this can be hugely detrimental to developing trust with autistic kids, especially those who are experiencing fear - they need to know that their caregivers are a reliable and consistent source of protection from the threats around them, whether real or only perceived.

4 STEPS TO HELP REDUCE FEAR FOR AUTISTIC KIDS

1. Learn to recognize what fear looks like for them - It might be different to what it looks and feels like for you.

2. Acknowledge and respect their fear

When you notice what you think might be a fear reaction, let them know that you understand. Reassure them that their reaction is okay, that you're not an adversary and that you're going to help.

3. Provide safety

Your job at this point is not to convince them that their fear is unwarranted or even understand why the thing is scary - it's to protect them from the threat in a way that feels like protection to them. Fears don't disappear merely because we're told to stop being afraid or that 'everything is okay'. We need to believe that there is no threat. We need to feel secure that there is a safe place for us to retreat to and that protection is available to us.

Threats feel scarier when we have no control over them or our ability to protect ourselves. A lot of autistic kids have fears which fall into this category - they'll break a rule they didn't know existed, someone else will break the rules, they'll randomly get in trouble for something, someone will suddenly start a conversation with them... the threats feel constant and unpredictable.

Providing some control over these things where possible can give a reassuring feeling of safety. For example, kids who are afraid that the fire alarm is going to go off may feel safer having both an advance schedule of any planned fire drills AND a response plan in the event that the alarm is accidentally set off by someone.

Oh, and make sure your solution doesn't inadvertently involve another fear. A common example of this is "Go and tell the teacher" or "Find someone to help you" - both of these things can be terrifying in and of themselves, even more so than the original threat that the kid is trying to get away from.

4. Investigate the threat

It can sometimes be difficult to understand exactly what's triggering the fear or why it feels dangerous to them, but identifying and avoiding potential threats will help to reduce the amount of fear that they have to experience. Keeping a diary of times they seem afraid might reveal some clues you've overlooked, or help you to piece together a pattern. Some kids might be able to explain it themselves once they feel safe, but you may also never know why something feels like a threat to them... just remember that this doesn't have to stop you from providing protection from it.

The bottom line

Fear is a common emotion for autistic kids, partly due to the fact that the way they respond to perceived threats is often misunderstood and misinterpreted. It doesn't have to be this way - understanding, respecting and acting on their fear reactions will go a long way towards making them feel safe and reducing the amount of time they spend feeling afraid.

So, the next time you're tearing your hair out because your son runs away from the blue socks and not the red ones, or your student runs out of the classroom at mat time, just remember that all he knows is that his body is trying to warn him about a danger that feels very real to him. He's trying to keep himself safe, and he's looking to you to help him do that.





- **Slough Local Offer**
- **Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
Children & young peoples Integrated
Therapies-Online Toolkits**
- **‘Let’s Talk!’ – Early Years Speech & Language
Enquiries Line**
- **SENDIASS-Slough Special Educational Needs &
Disability Information, Advice & Support
Service**



Slough SEND Local Offer

[Slough Information and Services Guide | Slough Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Local Offer \(sloughfamilyservices.org.uk\)](#)

Slough SEND Local Offer provides information for:

- parents and carers
- children and young people
- professionals.

Parents and carers can check Slough SEND Local Offer for information on:

- [what to do if your child has SEND](#)
- [types of SEND](#)
- [education and training](#)
- [Education, Health & Care Plans](#)
- [family safety](#)
- [help and support services](#)
- [Start for Life offer](#)
- [childcare and leisure](#)
- [health services](#)
- [courses for parents](#)
- [SEND laws and Code of Practice](#)
- [money and benefits](#)
- [how to get involved](#)
- [Slough Children's Disability Register.](#)



[Children and young people can access the SEND Local Offer](#) for information on education and training, health and wellbeing, help and support, travel and transport, becoming an adult, finance and benefits and activities. Practitioners can check the [SEND Local Offer professionals section](#) for useful resources and services, ways to get involved and training opportunities. The SEND Local Offer also has a [News and articles](#) section where you can find out what's new both in the Slough area and nationally, and a [Consultation and feedback](#) section.

If you offer services or events, please [register for an account on the Slough SEND Local Offer and add details of your service.](#)

For further information contact Slough Family Information Service on 01753 476589 or email FIS@slough.gov.uk.

[Slough Information and Services Guide \(sloughfamilyservices.org.uk\)](#)

01753 476 589

The Slough Family Information service website has lots of information about local services; you can select to access the information as a parent/carer, professional or child/young person

The FIS website hosts Slough SEND Local Offer

[Slough Information and Services Guide | Slough Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Local Offer \(sloughfamilyservices.org.uk\)](#)

Slough Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer website provides information for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families.

It gives information and advice about education, health, social care and other services that are available in Slough, neighbouring areas and nationally.



Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT) Children and Young Peoples Integrated Therapies (CYPIT)

Online Toolkit Links



Communication and Hearing

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/communication-and-hearing/>

- [Auditory processing](#)
- [Babbling and baby talk](#)
- [Basic communication strategies](#)
- [Deafness and hearing loss](#)
- [English as an additional language](#)
- [Expressive language](#)
- [Grammar](#)
- [Listening and attention](#)
- [Sequencing and narrative skills](#)
- [Social communication](#)
- [Speech sounds](#)
- [Stammering](#)
- [Steps to talking](#)
- [Toddler talk](#)
- [Typical speech sounds](#)
- [Unclear speech](#)
- [Understanding language](#)
- [Vocab](#)

Child Safety

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/child-safety/>

- [Burns and scalds](#)
- [Button batteries](#)
- [Choking](#)
- [Poisoning](#)
- [Safe sleeping](#)
- [Sun and heat safety](#)
- [Water safety](#)
- [Winter safety](#)
- [Window safety](#)
- [Suffocation and strangulation](#)

Eating, Allergies and Healthy Lifestyle

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/eating-allergies-and-healthy-lifestyle/>

- [Allergies](#)
- [Asthma](#)
- [Coping with lumpy foods](#)
- [Finger feeding](#)
- [Fussy eating](#)
- [Healthy lifestyle](#)
- [Introducing solid foods](#)
- [Using cutlery](#)

Developing Independence

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/developing-independence/>

- [Buttons and zips](#)
- [Dressing skills](#)
- [Organisation and planning skills](#)
- [Putting on socks and shoes](#)
- [Switching tasks](#)
- [Paying attention](#)
- [School readiness](#)

Fine Motor Skills

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/fine-motor-skills/>

- [Fine motor skills](#)
- [Hand skills](#)
- [Handwriting](#)
- [Letter and number Reversal in writing](#)
- [Pre-writing activities](#)
- [Scissor skills](#)
- [In hand manipulation](#)
- [Visual perception](#)
- [Shoulder stability and fine motor skills](#)

Gross Motor skills

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/gross-motor-skills/>

- [Balance](#)
- [Bilateral integration - co-ordinating left and right](#)
- [Catching and throwing balls](#)
- [Confidence and self-esteem in movement](#)
- [Core stability](#)
- [Hypermobility](#)
- [Pelvic stability](#)
- [Planning movement \(motor planning\)](#)
- [Riding a tricycle](#)
- [Standing and stepping](#)

Toilet Training and Bedwetting

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/toilet-training-and-bedwetting/>

- [Toilet training](#)
- [Bed wetting](#)

Sensory Processing

<https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/health-and-development/sensory-processing/>

- [Touch - tactile system](#)
- [Vestibular \(movement\) system](#)
- [Proprioception](#)
- [Auditory \(hearing\) system](#)
- [Visual \(sight\) system](#)
- [Sensory Circuits](#)



Healthier Together

Local advice and support to help manage and improve the health and wellbeing of babies, children, and young people

All information and more can be found at <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/>

Further information about CYPIT services can be found at <https://cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/children-and-young-peoples-integrated-therapies/about-our-therapy-services/>

These documents are to support the promotion of child development and child safety. For more information about all aspects of your child's health please access the Frimley Healthier Together Website <https://frimley-healthiertgether.nhs.uk/>

Concerned about a child's communication skills?



Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

How can I help my child
learn more words?

How can I help them
listen to me?

How can I help them
play with me?

Am I doing this right?



Call our **Enquiries Line** to get advice from
a **Speech and Language Therapist**:

0118 904 3700

Lines are open Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am - 3.30pm.

Available for parents/carers of children aged 0-5 years with a Berkshire GP.

Slough Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support (SENDIASS)

Providing information, advice and support to children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, and their parents and carers.

For Information please call: 01753 787693 Email: sendiass@slough.gov.uk Website: www.sloughsendiass.org.uk

Slough's Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) is a free, impartial and confidential service that provides information, advice and support to children and young people (up to the age of 25) with SEND, and their parents and carers.

How we work?

- SENDIASS has a friendly team of fully trained staff who are experienced in supporting children, and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers.
- The service provided is **confidential and impartial**. This means any personal information you give us will only be shared if we have your consent.
- The service is provided independently by Slough Borough Council and works in partnership with the local parent/carers group. This ensures the information, advice and support given is impartial.

We provide information, advice and support on:

- all aspects of SEND, from initial concerns and identification to ongoing support and provision
- the law on SEND, health and social care
- Slough's local policy and practice
- personalisation and personal budgets
- resolving disagreements and mediation
- the Local Offer

How we do this

- Signpost you to other sources of information or advice.
- Help find, understand and interpret relevant information.
- Support you to make your own decisions.
- Attend meetings with you, support with letters.
- Provide information about mediation.
- Ensure your views are heard and can influence local policies.

What sort of situations can we help you with?

- Supporting a child, young person or their parents following a diagnosis of SEND.
- Requesting an education, health and care assessment.
- Supporting you to work in partnership with your educational setting, Slough SEND service and other services.
- Provide support around exclusions
- Helping to find a suitable education place, including school visits.
- Supporting in SEND appeal processes such as transport, school placement or plans.



Early Years and Prevention

The Early Years Service consists of the following functions: Family Information Services (FIS), Quality, Care and Learning, Children's Centres and Early Help.

Each of these teams, working collaboratively, offering a range of services to the early years sector in Slough.



For further information visit: www.thelink.slough.gov.uk

TheLink Website <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/>

TheLink website for education professionals in Slough. We hope that TheLink will become a powerful tool to strengthen the education system in Slough by supporting the communication of education priorities and facilitating collaboration across schools and settings.

TheLink website is funded by the Education Directorate in Slough Borough Council and is managed by the Business Support Team. It is aimed at current and future education professionals in Slough, particularly teachers and Early Years practitioners.

We have a strong and vibrant education system in Slough characterised by good educational outcomes for children and a growing spirit of collegiality and **partnership working** across schools and between schools and the LA.

TheLink will further strengthen the education system in Slough by improving the communication about provision, services, and local priorities. TheLink is a publicly available site, but staff and governors in Slough schools and Early Years settings are invited to become registered users to gain the full benefits of the website.