



**Kingsfield
Primary School**

The *Active Learning* Trust

SEND CPD: Social and Communication Difficulties



Cambridgeshire
County Council

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ANY QUESTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS
TRAINING ON ATTENTION AND LISTENING?



COURSE INTENTION

- ◆ To explain briefly what social communication difficulties are.
- ◆ To look at the components of interaction, and communication young people will find difficult.
- ◆ Review of what helps – SPELL framework.
- ◆ Specific intervention and strategies
- ◆ Graduated approach to Social and communication difficulties.

Please can you rate your current knowledge on a scale of 1 – 10 and post in the chat box with your initials.

Social and communication difficulties can be experienced by many children for various reasons.

Four area of SEND Need (SEND Code of Practice, 2014)

Speech and Language Difficulties:

Autism Spectrum Disorders
Receptive and Expressive Language Difficulties
Speech Disorders

Cognition and Learning:

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD):
Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia and Visual Perceptual Disorder.
MLD, PMLD and SLD – Global Delay

Social and Emotional Mental Health:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Anxiety Disorders, Eating Disorders,
Social Disorders
Trauma /Attachment Disorder
Depression (Mental Health Issues)

Sensory and Physical Needs:

Visual impairment
Hearing impairment
Multi-sensory Impairment
Physical Disability: Cerebral Palsy
Sensory Processing Difficulties

Having social and communication difficulties does not mean the young person has Autism.

Social Communication Needs

- ◆ Social understanding and information processing
- ◆ Imagination
- ◆ Literal interpretation
- ◆ Inflexibility – restrictedness/repetitiveness: the need for sameness and routine
- ◆ Lack the ‘intuitive map’ of social concepts/skills
- ◆ Inability to sift out relevant information
- ◆ Problems making inferences and applying information

All of these needs can have a direct impact on learning within the classroom environment.

Social issues

- ◆ Can speak inappropriately to staff or peers
- ◆ Ignore people
- ◆ Interrupt
- ◆ Speak only on chosen subject
- ◆ Behaviour which is socially unacceptable
- ◆ Need for control of situations and people

Unstructured times of the school day, like dinner time, can be the most challenging times of the day for these young people.

Interaction

I really want to have a friend.....

I need to be able to

- ▶ Put myself in someone else's shoes
- ▶ Understand emotions
- ▶ Use different rules, in different contexts
- ▶ Listen to others interests
- ▶ Give eye-contact, use gestures and facial expressions
- ▶ Working with others in a group
- ▶ Sharing enjoyment with others
- ▶ Seek comfort or ask for help



So.....?

- ▶ Teach basic rules about turn taking, sharing
- ▶ Teach how to play structured games
- ▶ Model appropriate social interaction
- ▶ Reinforce and praise appropriate social skills
- ▶ Encourage but do not force eye contact
- ▶ Break social skills into small chunks: teach and practice strategies with adults first, then children
- ▶ Use visual supports eg: Social stories and/or social scripts to teach what to say/do (www.carolgraysocialstories.com)
- ▶ Explain what you mean... be aware of sarcasm

It is also important to rehearse what to do if something goes wrong.

Communication

Verbal and non-verbal communication

May struggle with:

- ▶ social use of language, eg conversations, turn-taking, asking for and offering appropriate information
- ▶ facial expressions and body language (understanding and using)
- ▶ literal interpretation of speech, eg not understanding jokes and sarcasm
- ▶ Unusual or repetitive language
- ▶ Tone of voice



So.....?

- ▶ Be clear: use clear language
- ▶ Explain things in different contexts. Do not assume understanding
- ▶ Teach what to say in different contexts eg, asking for help or when he/she needs a break: (social scripts and social stories)
- ▶ Use visual support to help with understanding and communication
- ▶ Develop vocabulary and understanding around a wide range of topics including emotions
- ▶ Practice having simple conversations around different topics
- ▶ **Remember that even children with 'good' language may have difficulties with the social use of language in different situations**

Restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviours, activities or interests

"My mind was constantly whirring with thoughts, worries and concerns. The time spent with my obsession was the only time in which I had a clear mind - it gave me that much sought-after relaxation."

Young person with Autism

- ▶ Provide structure, order and predictability, and help people cope with the uncertainties of daily life
- ▶ Give someone a way to start conversations and feel more self-assured in social situations
- ▶ Help someone to relax and feel happy



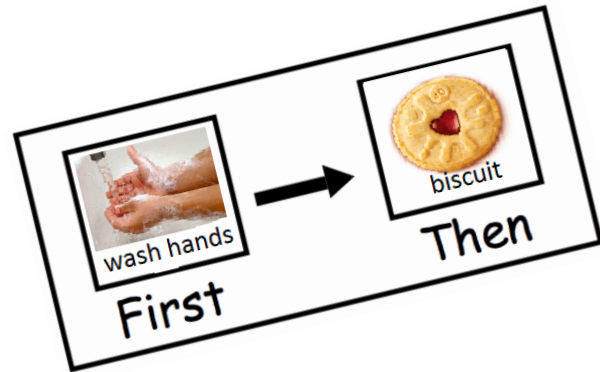
What helps?

SPELL framework: principles for support

www.autism.org/about/strategies/spell.aspx

- ▶ Structure
- ▶ Positive approaches and expectations,
- ▶ Empathy (Understanding)
- ▶ Low arousal (Managing environment)
- ▶ Links (Working together)

Structure



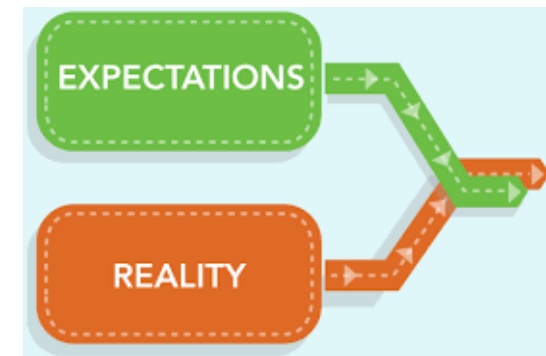
Why use visual supports?

Words “disappear” right after we say them, visuals hold time and space.

- Visuals direct attention to them and hold attention.
- Visuals allow more time to process the information.
- Visuals assist in remembering.
- Using the same words every time a visual is shown, teaches the child those words.

Positive (approaches and expectations)

- ▶ Build on strengths, interests and abilities
- ▶ Be realistic about expectations



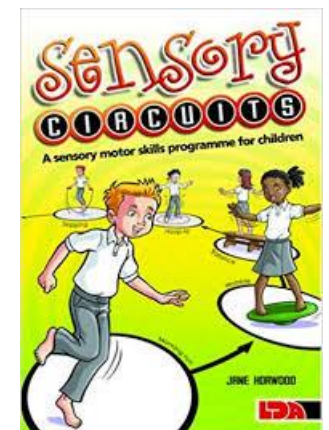
Empathy – understanding

- ▶ We must try to see the world from the standpoint of the child with social and communication difficulties, knowing what it is that motivates or interests them but importantly what may also frighten, preoccupy or otherwise distress them.
- ▶ Making efforts to understand, respect and relate to the experience of the young person must underpin our attempts to develop [communication](#) and reduce [anxiety](#). The quality of the relationship between the person and supporter is of vital importance.

Effective supporters are calm, predictable, good humoured, and empathetic.

Low arousal

- ▶ Calm environment – Reduces distraction and anxiety: noise levels/colour schemes/smells/lighting/clutter
- ▶ This does not mean ‘no arousal’
- ▶ Plan for new experiences, prepare the young person
- ▶ Explore relaxation and arousal reducing strategies – sensory rooms, sensory diet, music, yoga and massage
- ▶ <https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/cambridges-hire-children%27s-occupational-therapy>



Other Strategies

What is LEGO®-Based Therapy?

- Play based social skills intervention, for children with ASC and related conditions
- Social skills are taught and modelled through collaborative, small group play
- Children are given roles to play in the group
- Social skills and social problem solving facilitated by an adult
- Group members can work towards certificates
- Group rules



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Aims of LEGO®-Based Therapy

- To promote the development of social, communication & play skills
- Uses children's strengths to develop areas of difficulty
- To improve social competence, helping children to make and sustain lasting friendships



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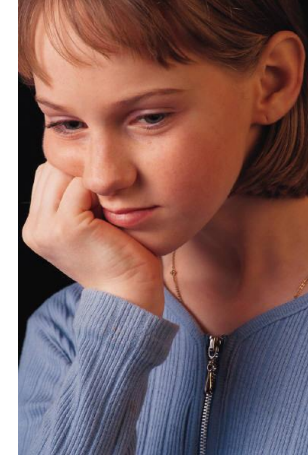
Structure of sessions

1. Initial greeting (with names)
2. Discussion of activities for session
3. Overview of rules
4. Role assignment and task assignment
5. Building with instructions
6. Freestyle building
7. Children tidy up
8. Summary/certificates/goodbye



Strategies to support social issues

- ◆ Social Sentences/social scripts
- ◆ Social Stories™
- ◆ Comic Strip Conversations™
- ◆ Social communication /Social use of language groups



Anxieties

- ◆ Pupils with social communication difficulties and/or Autism feel anxious if they do not feel in control of the situations
- ◆ Structure such as Social Stories™ and Comic strip conversations can reduce anxiety by giving understanding and control
- ◆ Anxiety can lead to behavioural problems, such as depression or socially unacceptable behaviour

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What is a Social Story?

- ◆ A short story written in a specific style and format
- ◆ It describes what happens in a specific social situation, what the usual responses are
- ◆ It describes what is obvious to us, but not obvious to those with impaired social understanding
- ◆ Originally developed by Carol Gray in 1994 for use with children with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- ◆ More recently with Caroline Smith (2001)
- ◆ The goal is to teach social understanding not rote compliance

Social Stories

Match the needs and skills of the child

They are:

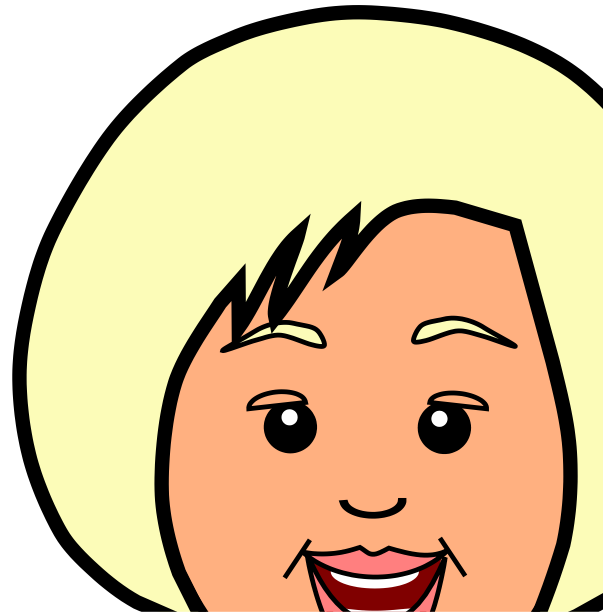
- ◆ Visual
- ◆ Pictorial
- ◆ Permanent
- ◆ Adaptable

Why Social Stories?

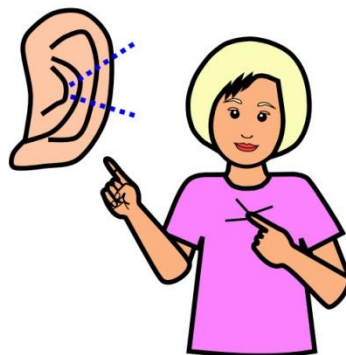
- ◆ Help cope with change, can reduce difficult behaviour
- ◆ Can limit ritualistic behaviour
- ◆ ASC pupils need direct instruction to develop self-awareness, self calming and self management skills
- ◆ For non readers adults can read, tape, video and help rehearse the stages
- ◆ They include statements about people's feelings and link to behaviours

I enjoy playing with Velcro.

Sometimes I undo my shoes and I pull the Velcro, it makes a lovely noise

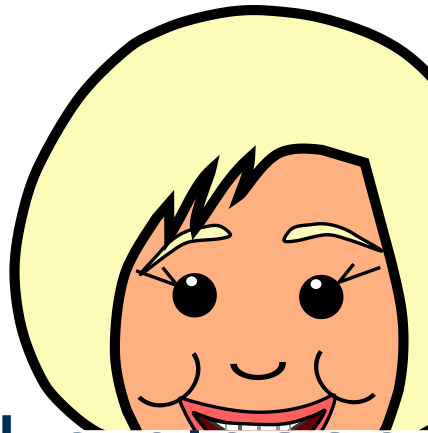


The sound is OK but when my teacher is talking it stops the children in my class from listening.



I am going to try and stop from pulling the Velcro on my shoes when the teacher is talking.

I can play with the Velcro on my shoes at break time and at home, when I do this my teacher will be pleased and all the children in my class will be able to listen.



Everyone will be pleased with me.



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Activity

- ◆ Think of a pupil that you work with.
- ◆ Think of a social situation that you want this pupil to begin to understand.

Comic strip Conversations

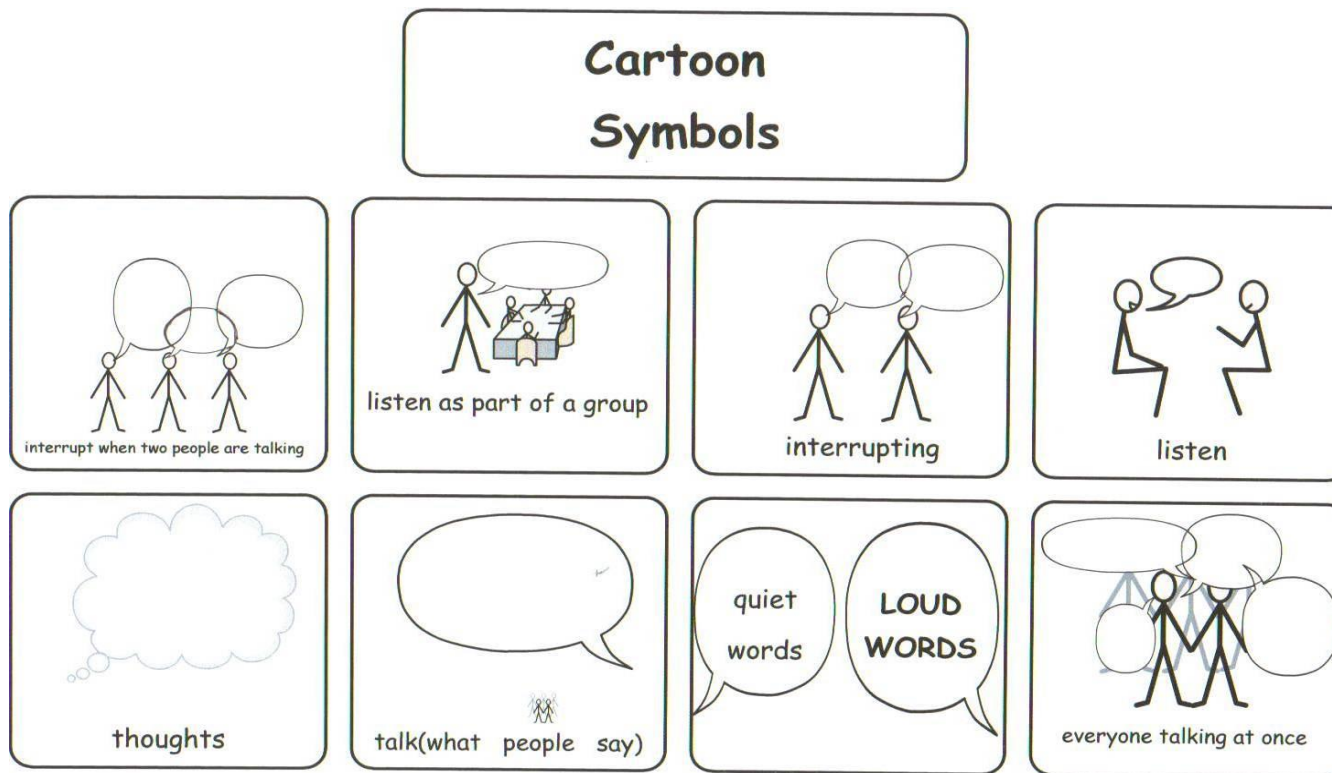
- ◆ Comic strip conversations are a technique developed by Carol Gray to help people develop greater social understanding; originally developed for children with AS
- ◆ Comic strip conversations provide visual representations of the different levels of communication that take place in a conversation, using symbols, stick figure drawings and colour. By seeing the different elements of a conversation presented visually, some of the more abstract aspects of social communication (such as recognising the feelings and intentions of others) are made more 'concrete' and are therefore easier to understand.

Conversation Cartoons

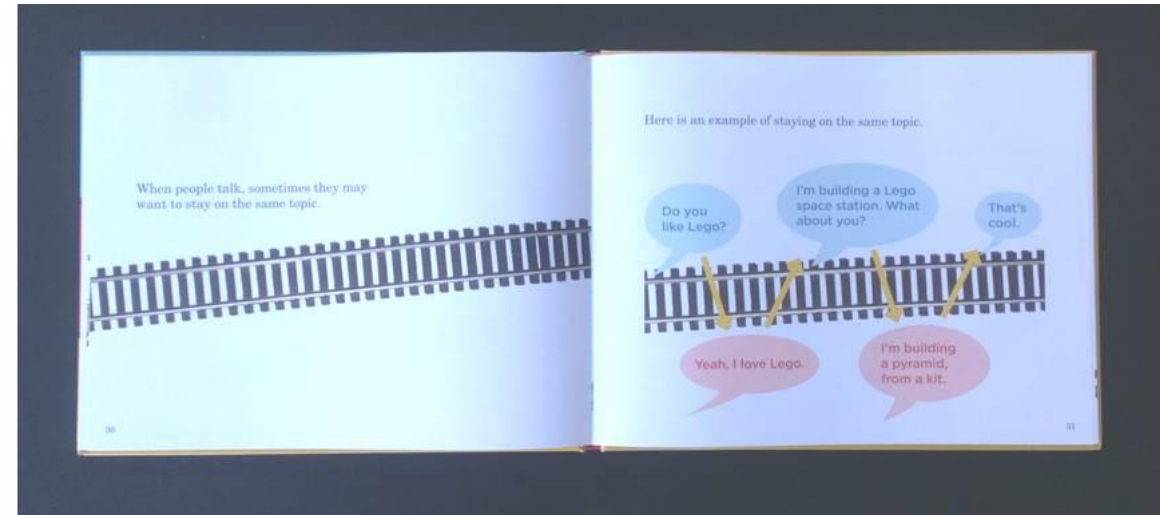
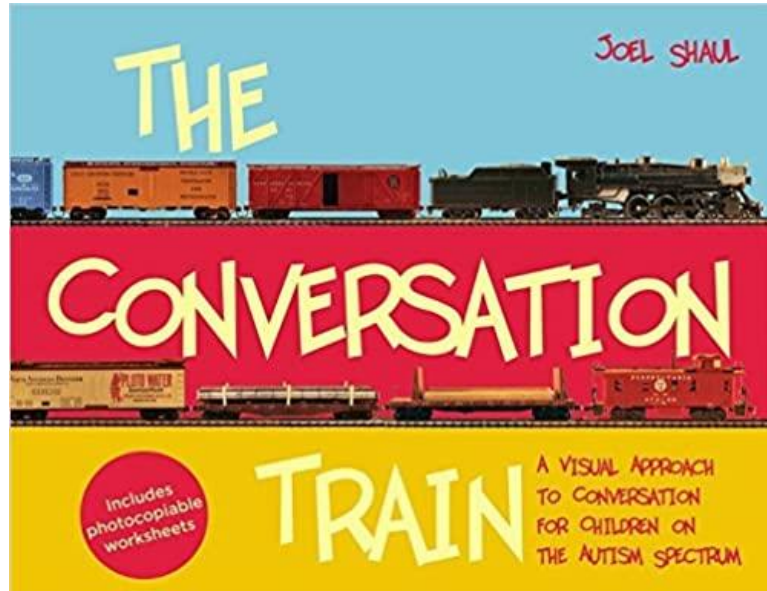
Help the child to:

- ◆ Identify what people say or do
- ◆ Emphasise what people might be thinking
- ◆ Represent conversational skills through pictures
- ◆ Use colour to represent emotions
- ◆ Help children understand their own motivations
- ◆ Help children understand the motivations of others

Cartoon symbols



Conversation Train



This inventive colour picture book uses the metaphor of a train to teach basic conventions of conversation to children with social and communication difficulties. Engines are like greetings; they get the train going. Freight wagons are like different speakers' turns; it is good to have at least a few when you are in conversation. A set of points guiding a train from one track to another is like a tactful change in the topic of conversation. When a conversation veers off-topic it is like a derailed train. As well as attractive colour photographs of trains, the book contains engaging photocopiable worksheets and colouring pages to help promote skill generalisation. This highly visual approach to conversation is ideally suited to children aged approximately 5-13.

["This is a really clever and helpful book aimed at giving autistic children a better understanding of how everyday conversations work, using the analogy of a steam train... It's very appealingly done, and there are photocopiable worksheets at the back for reinforcement and assessment. This is a very high-quality resource, confidently recommended."](#)

Social Communication Difficulties Checklist

NAME OF CHILD:

DATE OF BIRTH:

Social communication difficulties are emerging from the second year of life and during the process of assessment and possible diagnosis of autism will change and become clearer as they develop. However the main impairments for children with social communication difficulties are within the following areas: Social Interaction; Communication; use of imagination /flexibility of thought regardless of their language levels or their cognitive levels.

Common Language levels of need /concern	SEVERE & COMPLEX	Comments
Communication/ Language and Literacy <i>Using language</i> <i>Non verbal communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mostly <u>non verbal</u> with significant difficulty understanding spoken language and gestures. ● If spoken language is present it is limited and tends to be <u>echolalic</u> or learnt. ● May use augmentative communication e.g. PECS / Makaton. ● Child appears uninterested and unaware of responding socially to another person. Child is not able to initiate an interaction. ● Extreme difficulties with understanding <u>non verbal</u> communication – e.g. body language/facial expressions. Extremely limited use of non-verbal signals (e.g. eye gaze,) to socially interact with others. Profound lack of social language or gestures such as waving "bye bye", or giving a greeting. 	
Personal Social and Emotional development <i>Capacity to share attention and interact with others.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a marked lack of awareness of others. Intensive attempts and or familiarly structured activities needed to gain their attention. Capacity to share attention with others or socially respond is extremely limited. ● Tends to avoid interactions with peers. Self-chosen activities are solitary and actively avoids physical proximity to others ● Unable to respond to group activities and demonstrates little awareness of being part of a group. However at times may watch others, running with them, showing excitement at others singing or noisiness. ● Unaware of feelings of others or ability to interpret feelings of others 	
<i>Responding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approaches others in odd or unusual manner (e.g. from behind / with poor eye contact). ● Persistence may be needed to get the child's attention .When interaction is unavoidable, it is usually on the child's terms Responses to others are mostly unusual, negative or absent. They may respond in very unusual ways and repeat the type of response despite a negative response from others. They show little awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others. 	
<i>Initiating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approaches to adults or children are severely limited and unusual for their age or absent completely. Approaches to adults are limited to having their needs met e.g. will take an adult by the hand to something they want. 	
<i>Imitating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The child does not spontaneously imitate or repeat an adult or child's actions. Unable to imitate spontaneously themselves, but may show some response when an adult copies their actions. 	
<i>Engaging in adult-led activities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unaware or highly resistant to any adult led activity on a 1:1. A high level of exposure adult persistence is needed for joint attention. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatively can be unusually passive and accepting of adult direction and hand over hand guidance without purposeful engagement with task or activity. 	
<i>Managing Change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot manage change in routines/ staff without support needs prompts such as a representational objects to support co-operation e.g. car keys to signal a journey. Obsessional and/or ritualistic behaviour interferes with learning and can be all consuming. 	
Problem solving and reasoning	<p>Learns through inbuilt reflexes and reactions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to sensory stimuli, e.g. light. Is difficult to distract when engaged in inappropriate activities <p>Explores objects in immediate environment :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be preoccupied with using toys/objects in a strange or repetitive way (e.g. focusing on an insignificant part, showing fascination making repetitive movements or playing exclusively with one object) 	
Knowledge and Understanding of the world	<p>Follows moving object and responds to sensory stimuli:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to familiar voices/sounds by moving head to locate Explores objects in immediate environment but in a very limited way: Touches and examines things especially objects which move e.g. wheels turning, buttons or switches. Will only watch preferred TV programmes or DVDs e.g. Thomas the Tank Engine 	
Sensory Issues (See Graduated Response for SEN Early Years for full list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has unusual responses to certain sensory stimuli with some behavioural reactions or signs of stress - may seek sensory feedback such as rocking, mouthing objects. New sensitivities to taste, touch, sound, or smells are emerging. Unable to tolerate certain sensory experiences, e.g. certain noises (loudness or particular sounds), extreme food intolerance (consistency, colour, variety) 	
Behavioural development. (Behavioural difficulties are a consequence of difficulties in communicating, coping with sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely difficult to motivate- can be totally absorbed in own interests. Responds very negatively to changes in their environment and can become very upset and challenging when stress levels increase Difficult or inappropriate behaviour that is very difficult to manage, including extremely withdrawn or passive behaviour. 	
issues or accepting change)		
Self Care skills and Independence skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child has significant and persistent difficulties in organising self, to e.g., collect items for a task or follow daily routines, without visual cues/ objects and adult modelling. Unaware of the need for help for a task and will often reject help if offered. Requires close supervision and / visual/verbal prompts. 	
Creative Development imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-chosen play is severely limited in scope for their age and lacks any creativity or imagination. Patterns of interest may be unusual in terms of intensity or focus e.g. more interested in the functional elements of a toy e.g. wheels turning. Child may engage in sequences of play with toys but these are learnt and inflexible. 	
Family Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siblings or close family with SCD/ASD <p>Comments:</p>	

An alternative is the social communication descriptors.

Graduated Approach

1 APDR cycle = 6 weeks

Using teacher assessment, data, cycles of APDR, parent/child involvement. Refer to SENCO

SENCO discussion with parent when more specialist involvement is required.

SENCO makes a request for EHCP if applicable

Wave 1

High Quality Teaching (1)

Wave 2

Short term intervention (2)
SEN Caseworker – Teacher led

Wave 3

SEND register (K)
Long term intervention
Involvement of SENCO

Wave 4
EHCP (E)

Student's can move up and down based on the provision they are receiving

- What every child receives
- All staff responsible for ensuring Wave 1 provision is delivered
- Teacher standards
- Reasonable adjustments
- Class teacher has implemented HQT classroom strategies (pupil profile) and followed 2 cycles of Assess/Plan/Do/Review.
- Student recorded as (1) on EduKey

- Not making expected progress despite reasonable adjustment at wave 1.
- HQT and Short Term specific intervention required. (specialist, class or curriculum)
- Baseline assessments to be completed with recommendations.
- Student recorded as (2) on EduKey

- In-depth assessment to establish area of need.
- Ongoing, specific support to address child's SEND. Evidenced based intervention monitored by SENCO.
- Young person will have individual learning plan, measurable targets, provision outlined.
- Specialist support from outside agency.
- SENCO involved in coordinating provision, assessment, measuring impact and liaising with outside agency.
- Student recorded as SEND support (K) on SIMS

- Support over and above, additional and different.
- Highly personalised and closely monitored specialist provision.
- Specialist support form external services.
- Student recorded as EHCP (E) on EduKey

Graduated Approach for Attention and Listening

Using teacher assessment, data, cycles of APDR, parent/ child involvement. Refer to SENCO

Wave 1

High Quality Teaching (1)

- What every child receives
- All staff responsible for ensuring Wave 1 provision is delivered
- Teacher standards
- Reasonable adjustments
- Class teacher has implemented HQT classroom strategies (pupil profile) and followed 2 cycles of Assess/Plan/Do/Review.
- Student recorded as (1) on EduKey

Assessment:

Teacher observation:

- Minimal eye contact
- Difficulties making and maintaining friendships
- Likes to talk own interests
- Can ignore some instructions
- Difficulties in asking for help

Reasonable Adjustments for children with attention difficulties:

- Use their name to ensure you have their attention.
- Reduce language to keep it focused. **Focus on what they need to do.**
- Recap with them to ensure they have understood learning task.
- Whole class visual schedule.
- Visual scaffolding
- Schedule regular check-in times
- Use a visual timer to support focused learning
- Seating in class with minimal distraction around them – front near teacher
- Dedicated time to supported rehearsal of social skills.
- Encourage participation in dinner time clubs, where adults can facilitate social interactions.
- Dedicated time to build self-esteem – Praise when pupils are following instructions.

Example of APDR target:

Tom will use a visual aid to support turn-taking during structured games. Tom will move the arrow to whose turn it is during the game three times out of five without adult prompting.

Graduated Approach for Attention and Listening

SENCO discussion with parent when more specialist involvement is required.

Wave 2

Short term intervention (2)
SEN Caseworker –
Teacher led

- Not making expected progress despite reasonable adjustment at wave 1.
- HQT and Short Term specific intervention required. (specialist, class or curriculum)
- Baseline assessments to be completed with recommendations.
- Student recorded as (2) on EduKey

Assessment and observation:

- Prefers own agenda and talks about own interests
- Inappropriate social behaviours
- Increasing need for control
- Social Communication descriptors
- Sensory Checklist
- Language Links Infant and Junior
- Anxiety mapping / Roots and fruits – Step On tool
- Boxall Profile

Intervention:

- Social stories
- Comic Strips
- Structured social games which encourage turn-taking
- Recommendation from Language links
- Emotional Literacy programme
- Talk Time (SEMH focus) – Big Books of Blobs
- Sensory circuits
- Sensory Diet
- Yoga / Mindfulness activities

Example of APDR target:

Tom will use a social story to help him understand when he can and cannot play with his Velcro on his shoes. This will be read before every carpet time daily and the time Tom plays with Velcro will reduce during teacher input.

Graduated Approach for Attention and Listening

SENCO makes a request for EHCP if applicable

Wave 3

SEND register (K)
Long term intervention
Involvement of SENCO

Wave 4 EHCP (E)

- In-depth assessment to establish area of need.
- Ongoing, specific support to address child's SEND. Evidenced based intervention monitored by SENCO.
- Young person will have individual learning plan, measurable targets, provision outlined.
- Specialist support from outside agency.
- SENCO involved in coordinating provision, assessment, measuring impact and liaising with outside agency.
- Student recorded as SEND support (K) on SIMS

- Support over and above, additional and different.
- Highly personalised and closely monitored specialist provision.
- Specialist support from external services.
- Student recorded as EHCP (E) on EduKey

Diagnostic Assessment:

- British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS)
- Conners Assessment for assessing ADHD
- Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)
- Referrals:

Community Paediatrician

Link Speech and Language Therapist

SEND 0 – 25 Educational Psychologist or Specialist Teacher

Intervention:

- Specific targets set by external professionals which feed directly into the APDR cycle
- Review of targets 6 weeks later by external professionals or SENDCo.
- Zones or regulation
- Sensory diet toolkit

Example of APDR target:

Tom will begin to identify how he is feeling through his zones of regulation visual at three key points in the day, after transition (assembly, break and lunch time). He will independently follow the agreed strategies, two out of three times, to help him be ready to learn. An adult may need to assist if Tom is unsure which strategy to use.

Thank you for listening please ask any questions.

It would be great if you could let us know on a scale of 1 – 10 where your knowledge / confidence is on now for meeting the needs of pupils with attention and listening difficulties following the presentation.



- ◆ DFES “Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Good Practice Guidelines” 2003
www.dfes.gov.uk/sen/documents
- ◆ Inclusion Development Programme Primary and Secondary Supporting pupils on the Autism Spectrum
<http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>
- ◆ Social Communication Descriptors responses to need

Books of Interest

- ◆ The New Social Story Book by Carol Gray
- ◆ I Can't Do that John Ling
- ◆ Writing and Developing Social Stories Caroline Smith
- ◆ Comic Strip Conversations by Carol Gray