

A guide to supporting your children with special educational needs and/or disabilities

This guide has been created to provide you with a range of strategies and resources to use when supporting your child/children whom may have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The guide will cover the four broad areas of need which include;

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH)
- Sensory and/or Physical Need

Your child/children may have needs which are identified within one or more of the above areas of need.

The guide has been created using the Ordinarily Available Provision document which schools use when planning provision for children and advice that has been sought through various outside agencies.

Communication and Interaction

Communication and interaction needs include:

- Difficulties saying what they would like to say and being understood.
- Difficulties understanding what has been said to them.
- Difficulties in understanding social rules of communication.
- Difficulties with language and communicating.
- Difficulties with social imagination.
- Difficulties with social communication and developing relationships.
- Difficulties with busy and unpredictable environments.
- Sensory and physical needs relating to communication and interaction.

Resources and strategies to support communication and interaction needs

Useful advice and tips

- Model the correct use of language whilst the children is doing different activities.
- Give your child/children time to process and respond.
- Use a variety of ways to explain information e.g. rhymes, songs, poems, and drama.
- Use a multi-sensory approach which supports all types of learners.
- Use of ICT to communicate if needed.
- Use of Makaton, PECS and symbols if appropriate.
- Reduce the pressure to speak and provide alternative ways which you child/children are comfortable with.
- Consider the amount of information you are giving your child/children. Break it down into smaller manageable chunks.
- Ask your child/children to repeat instructions to clarify if they have understood.
- Use of visual resources to aid understanding.
- Limit distractions in their environment.
- Have a hearing check if you are concerned about their hearing.
- Check your child/children are engaged before talking to them.
- Use their name before giving them any instructions.
- Give instructions in the order of completion.
- Use of social stories to develop understanding of social norms.
- Use of a now and next boards to help children process instructions
 - e.g. *"now you are doing this and next you are going to be doing..."*(See example in the appendices).

- Be aware of body language, tone of voice and rate of speech when communicating with your child/children.
- Have an awareness of the use of language (some children need a language-rich environment, other may need it to be kept simple).
- Use of story- telling and videos to develop social imagination.
- Use of written resources like writing frames, story planners, sentence starters, word banks and photos to use when talking about ideas for written work and to record these ideas.
- Opportunities for supported play with other children.
- Use of comic strip conversations to develop social understanding, prepare children for new situations or talk through social situations that have occurred.

Useful links to resources

Speech and Language Carousel

<https://slt.buckshealth.link/communication-carousel/>

Autism Toolbox

https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/advice.page?id=L_mxUn9WDWs

Bucks Speech and Language Therapy Service

<https://slt.buckshealth.link/parents/>

Communication Trust

<http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-parents/>

Chatter Pack

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-free-speech-language-communication-and-send-resources-for-schools-and-parent-carers>

Cognition and Learning

Cognition and learning needs include:

- Limited attention span compared to developmentally appropriate milestones.
- Difficulties with learning and making inadequate progress across the curriculum.
- Working below age related expectations.
- Specific learning difficulties affecting one or more specific area of learning e.g. literacy or maths difficulties or a specific language impairment.
- General learning difficulties in understanding concepts.
- Memory, attention or processing difficulties.

Useful advice and tips

- Regular and short breaks when completing activities.
- Break tasks down into smaller manageable chunks.
- Use of visual timetables and other visual resources to help explain activities.
- Ask your child/children to repeat back what activity they are going to do.
- Use of timers; so they know they only have to focus for a specific amount of time.
- Clear and simple instructions, breaking down longer instructions and giving one at a time.
- Give your child/children time before responding to a question.
- Ask your child/children what helps them.
- Recognise and celebrate successes.
- Use of specific resources to aid learning difficulty e.g. coloured paper, line spacing, lighting in the room, overlays, use of technology.
- Use of short burst activities to practise key skills e.g. spelling, handwriting, maths.
- Use of visual aids to reduce memory load.
- Use of multi-sensory teaching and activities

Useful links to resources

British Dyslexia Association

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/children>

Phonics Books Website

<https://www.phonicbooks.co.uk/advice-and-resources/advice-and-resources-for-parents/>

Dyspraxia Association

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/dyspraxia-children/>

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties include:

- Difficulties participating and presenting as withdrawn or isolated.
- Displaying challenging behaviours.
- Behaviours which may reflect a mental health condition.
- Having physical symptoms that are medically unexplained.
- Attention difficulties.
- Attachment difficulties.
- Low level disruption or attention seeking behaviours.
- Difficulty in making and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Difficulties following and accepting adult direction.
- Presenting as significantly unhappy or stressed.

Useful advice and tips

- Work on developing their social skills and building relationships with others.
- Give them responsibility for looking after someone or something else.
- A consistent message but flexible approach regarding the management of behaviour.
- Understand the basis for the behaviour.
- Give choices to allow them control with the same end result e.g. would you like to talk to me now or in one minute?
- Communication is key.
- Engage with your child/children- what is not right? Why are you feeling this way?
- Build relationships and gain their trust.
- Keep monitoring the situation and keep a log of behaviours or trends to identify triggers for their behaviours.
- Give them time for movement breaks.
- Keep activities short and snappy.
- Have a clear structure to the day.
- Have clear expectations for behaviour and use clear and consistent responses to behaviours exhibited.
- Be aware of times of the day that may be more difficult for your child/children.
- Positive reinforcement.
- Use of time out/quiet area if needed.
- Positive use of language and body language.
- Calming scripts to de-escalate behaviours.
- Limit choices to engage and motivate.
- Use of appropriate rewards.
- Use of a timer to aid understanding of the concept of time e.g. how long left when doing an activity or how long left do I have in time out?
- Provide a quiet/safe place for your child/children.
- Use of social stories to identify triggers and overcome them.

Useful links to resources

CAMHS resources

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>

Bucks MIND

<https://www.bucksmind.org.uk/services/children-and-young-peoples-services/>

Minded

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

<https://www.annafreud.org/mental-health-professionals/our-help-for-children-and-families/>



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Sensory and Physical Needs

Sensory and/or physical needs may include:

- Hearing Impairment
- Vision Impairment
- Physical Disability
- Severe and complex medical needs including a life threatening diagnosis or condition
- Physical sensitivity including hyper and hypo responses and possible Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)
- Sensitivity to sensory stimuli
- Physical outbursts causing harm to others/or damage to property

Useful advice and tips

- Instructions giving to them clearly and ensure they have understood what you have asked them to do prior to completion of the instruction/s.
- Repeat and rephrase information to ensure your child/children understand what has been said to them.
- Some children use lip-reading and visual clues to support their hearing. Be aware of this by ensuring they are face on when you are giving instructions and try not to move around whilst you are talking to them.
- Use of visual resources to aid understanding.
- Consider the environment and the level of noise present when supporting your child. A quiet working environment would be beneficial one in which background noise can be reduced.
- Encourage good listening behaviour: sitting still, looking and listening.
- Encourage your child or children to ask if they are unsure.
- Seek and undertake training such as British Sign Language (BSL) if applicable.
- Use of talking books and books in braille to support your child/children if they have a vision impairment.
- Use of reading apps e.g. audio books to support the development of reading skills.
- Use of equipment to aid learning e.g. talking equipment, voice recorders.
- Use of touch typing programmes on the internet or computer.
- Moving and handling training.
- Use of specialised equipment to aid learning and support your child/children e.g. adapted pencils, pens, rulers, writing slopes, cutlery and scissors.
- Ensure environment is accessible for your child/children and the use of specialised equipment should they have it e.g. walkers, standing frame, specialist seating, hoisting.
- Use of ICT equipment if applicable.
- Use timers to help your child's resilience in a particular environment.

- Reduce the sensory triggers.
- Sensory breaks.
- It is important for your child/children to have access to a safe space.
- Individual workspace for your child/children.
- A consistent approach to managing your child's behaviour.
- Identify the triggers for specific behaviours if possible and reduce these where it possible to do so.

Useful links to resources

National Deaf Children's Society

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/>

RNIB

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/information-everyday-living-family-friends-and-carers/understanding-your-childs-eye-condition>

VICTA – for parents of a child who is blind or partially sighted

<https://www.victa.org.uk/>

Pdnet - A network for those supporting learners with a physical disability

<https://pdnet.org.uk/>

NatSIP Sensory Learning Hub - listings of Sensory Learning Hub resources to support young people with sensory impairment

<https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/slh-home/share/natsip-resources>

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Appendices

1. Communication and Interaction resources

- Now and next boards and visual timetable
- Comic Strip Conversation Information
- Social Stories Information
- Lego Therapy Information pack
- Good listening visual prompts
- Good listening poster
- Attention and Listening information
- Attention Autism document
- Listening and discrimination handout
- Attention and listening resource pack
- Comic Strip Conversation resources

2. Cognition and Learning resources

- Alternatives to writing handout
- Helping your child generate ideas for writing
- Supporting your child with maths difficulties at home
- Supporting your child with reading difficulties at home
- Supporting your child with spelling difficulties at home

3. Social, Emotional and Mental Health resources

- The Anxious child - A guide for parents' carers
- I gotta a feeling - Top tips for feeling good for Upper KS2 pupils
- Coping with Self-Harm A guide for parents
- A good-night guide for children - sleep handout
- Building Resilience in Young Children (Birth to six years) - A guide for parents
- All about ADHD booklet
- Building resilience in children aged 0-12 - A practical guide
- Children and Young People with Anxiety - A Guide for Parents and Carers
- Keeping your cool an NSPCC guide - Advice for parents on managing anger and stress

4. Sensory and Physical Needs

- Fine Motor Activities for home
- Games & Activities to Help Develop Spatial Awareness
- Buckinghamshire NHS OT Service handout
- Pencil grip handout
- EYFS activities for home