Primary Teacher's Toolbox

for Including Children with

Social Communication Difficulties

(including Autism Spectrum Disorders and Asperger Syndrome)

Wiltshire County Council
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Introduction

This Toolbox has been developed to help primary schools to include children with Social Communication Difficulties (including those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders or Asperger Syndrome).

More and more parents are asking that their children have the opportunity to be educated alongside their peers in their local primary school. Some of these children will have a diagnosis whilst others will not. Some will already have a Statement of Special Educational Needs when they start school.   The strategies and ideas in the Toolbox are suitable to try in all these circumstances. The Toolbox is organised into sections that make it easy to use and offers a range of ideas and strategies that are practical and solution-based.

Throughout the Toolbox, 'he/his' is used, as it is recognised that more boys than girls have Social Communication Difficulties. However, these strategies and ideas are equally suitable to use with girls.

Enough time needs to be given to really try a strategy as change often comes over time. If you feel that the problem is not resolved, go back to the Toolbox and try something else. What works in one situation may not in another. As the child grows, something that used to work may not be so effective. Be flexible and make changes that keep pace with the child's needs.

It can be very rewarding to teach a child with Social Communication Difficulties. Joining the child on his learning journey can be exciting and allows you glimpse the world from a different perspective. The Toolbox will provide you with the tools you need to complete that journey successfully.

In addition most positive behaviour management techniques can also be used with these children and excellent teaching methods will be equally effective.

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Novels, Videos and Films

About a Boy
Nick Hornby (novel and film) 1998   ISBN-3-259190-718937
                                                          ISBN-0-140-29345-0

Fever Pitch
Nick Hornby (novel and film) 1992/7   ISBN-5-032519-701937
                                                          ISBN-0-140-29344-2

How to be Good
Nick Hornby (novel and film) 2001   ISBN-0-140-28701-9

High Fidelity
Nick Hornby (novel and film) 1995   ISBN-0-140-29346-9

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time
Mark Haddon (novel) 2003   ISBN-0-099-45025-9

The Ages of Autism (Narrated by Nick Hornby)
National Autistic Society (Video)   ISBN-1-899280-27-8

**Children Can Learn With Their Shoes Off: Supporting Students with
Asperger Syndrome in Mainstream Schools & Colleges**
Barbara Maines (Narrated by Rita Jordan)
Lucky Duck (Video) 2002   ISBN-1-873-94289-3

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SECTION 1

Organising the Physical Environment: Arranging the Classroom to Maximise Learning

The child with Social Communication Difficulties often finds the busy classroom environment overwhelming. He needs to be in an ordered and stable environment where he can be as independent as possible. In addition do you need to reduce or minimise the following:

Tools

- Consider the child's seating position in order to reduce distractions

  Usually, the closer he is to the teacher, the fewer distractions he will encounter. The teacher can give reminders to keep him on task – verbal reminders or a touch on the shoulder.

- Be aware of things he may find fascinating or worrying

  A favourite book on the bookshelf nearby could take all his attention.
  A flickering computer screen in the corner of the classroom could increase his anxiety.

- Consider an individual work table/desk

  Again, this minimises distractions and enables the child to keep on task. It provides consistency and can be used flexibly, eg for numeracy and literacy but not for science and geography.

- Keep the workspaces as uncluttered as possible

  Although this applies to the classroom generally, be aware of items on his work table/desk. If necessary, it is better to remove them than to constantly remind him, not to fiddle with the ruler, for example.

- Give prior notice of changes in the day

  If the time of assembly changes that day or there will be a supply teacher the next day, let him know as soon as possible. Incorporate the change into his personal timetable to give **Visual Support** (see Section 4 on Visual Support).

- If working collaboratively, other children need to be supportive and non-threatening

- Give the child a personal timetable

  It is a good idea for the child to have his own timetable of the day's events. Routine is important to him and he will need to know what is going to happen. A visual timetable (see Section 4 on Visual Support).

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A personal timetable can help him anticipate and predict activities. This will make him more secure, reduce his anxiety level and prepare him for learning. It allows for flexibility within learned routines and enables the teacher to explain changes in a visual manner.

- Use a Buddy system

  A buddy system enables the child's classmates to help him cope in situations which are unfamiliar. The buddy helps the child with SCD/ASD by setting an example, prompting, encouraging etc.

- Use of visual structure and techniques such as visual signs, colour coding and clear marking of teaching areas

  For example, a line on the floor gives visual support to help the child line up.
  A green sticker on his English book helps him identify the correct book more efficiently.

Case Study

Maths was Dominic's favourite subject but the teacher noticed that he was seldom on task and stared across the classroom. This happened every day, just in the Maths lesson. The teacher realised he was watching the computer screen which had been used in the previous lesson.

Action

The teacher made sure the computer was always turned off when not in use, eliminating the distraction and enabling Dominic to concentrate more fully on his Maths.

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SECTION 2

Obsessions and Passions: How to Broaden Horizons

Children with communication and social interaction difficulties sometimes have unusual interests about which they can be obsessive. The subject can be a source of comfort and pleasure. They can be passionate about their interests and find it difficult to concentrate on other topics. The classroom focus should be on 'appropriating' the special interest and making its expression more socially acceptable, rather than extinguishing it completely, which would probably prove impossible!

Tools

- Use the interest to help teach skills in the curriculum

  If the child is interested in windmills for example, motivate him in Maths by providing a worksheet with groups of windmills to add together. If the Learning Objective is about persuasive writing, allow the child with a passion for trains to write a letter to the local railway company, arguing for a better service. In this way, the objective is achieved and the child is better motivated. This is not always possible to achieve, as Thomas the Tank Engine will not help a study of the Ancient Greeks very easily.

- Provide an acceptable outlet

  Allow the child a time to shine by sharing his knowledge eg by giving a presentation on his special interest to the class or sharing a special object during 'Show and Tell'.

- Establish clear rules to limit time spent on obsessive activities

  If the child is obsessed with a computer programme or wants to repeatedly discuss Postman Pat, give clear limits in terms of time, place and context. For example, allow two minutes for talk about Postman Pat just before lunch, once other tasks have been completed. If the child forgets the rule, remind him by saying eg "Maths first, then Postman Pat". Provide a language jig or social story (see Sections 6 and 7) to explain the rules for visual support. A prompt card may also be useful to remind the child that it is time to work, eg it could show a picture of a child writing, with the words 'Work Time'. Reward time spent on desired activities.

- Use permission to talk about or work on a specialist subject as a reward

  This can motivate the child to complete a task as he is aware that he can indulge his passion as a result.

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- Help the child to be aware that others may not be as interested in his subject

  Explain, using a **Social Story** (see Section 7), that other children may not feel like playing a particular game or hearing about a particular subject all the time. Teach a script, eg "Would you like to play/hear about…?" and prepare the child with alternative games/topics to use when the answer is no. For example, the child who always wants to play a particular game could be taught other games and a script to offer them to other children when they say no to the favourite eg "Okay, shall we play…. instead?"

- Give other children a social script (see Section 7 on Social Stories) to use

  This can help to avoid frustration and encourage friendship. For example, the other child might say "James, dinosaurs at playtime. It's time to draw a map now" or "James, we are talking about the Romans now".

Case Study

Michael was fascinated by lights and light switches. He asked repeatedly about the light fittings in other people's houses and was unable to resist pressing the light switches several times on entering a room. This was distracting for Michael and others.

Action

Michael was given a time and context limit for talking about lights and a set time to press the light switches. This was explained in a social story and he was rewarded for keeping to the rules. Other children were taught a script to support him. In time, Michael was able to reduce his obsessional behaviour until he ceased to talk about lights in school and no longer needed to press switches. However, he commented at the end of Year 6 that he was just as interested in lights as he had ever been but had learnt that others were not, so had stopped talking about them.

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SECTION 3

Sensory Difference:
Adapting to a Child's Sensory Profile

Children with Social Communication Difficulties often have problems in understanding how to deal with sensory information. It is hard for them to pay attention to some sensory messages, yet ignore others. They can have hyper (high) sensitivity or hypo (low) sensitivity to sensory information. This can vary in different situations. The impact on learning and daily functioning can be significant but awareness of a child's sensory profile means that interventions can be put in place to help.

Examples of the difficulty differences in dealing with sensory messages may bring are shown on the table below:

Sensory System	Hyper-sensitivity (high)	Hypo-sensitivity (low)
Tactile (touch)	Refusal to do PE in the hall as the sensation of bare feet on the wooden floor is over-whelming.	Stabs any object with a sharp end repeatedly into own arm but appears to feel no pain.
Visual (sight)	Unable to take part in an art lesson as the bright colours are "hurting my eyes".	Looks sideways at objects with peripheral vision and complains that central vision "makes it blurred".
Auditory (hearing)	Concentration is affected because the ticking of the clock is distracting.	Not responding to the whistle to signal the end of play as he does not acknowledge certain sounds despite normal hearing.
Gustatory (taste)	Severely limited diet as many foods have an overpowering flavour and are rigorously avoided.	Eats anything – soil, grass, paper, his pencil etc.
Olfactory (smell)	Being unable to sit next to a particular child because the smell of their shampoo is distracting.	Licks things that are new to him.
Vestibular (balance)	Finds it difficult to make some movements in PE and sports.	Needs to rock, spin or swing his body frequently.
Proprioception (body awareness)	Difficulty with some fine motor skills eg buttons.	Often bumps into people and furniture.

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Tools

- Be aware of the situations that might cause sensory overload

  If a child 'over-reacts', think carefully about what the problem might be. The child can often provide the answer if asked eg, "Sam, you threw the paints in the sink because…?" This information is vital in devising creative solutions for next time.

- Watch out for the signs of impending sensory overload so you can intervene at an early stage

  Some children begin to show signs of anxiety that you can pick up on. Those with autism and Asperger Syndrome may start self-stimulating behaviour (eg hand flapping, humming, rhythmic movements) as a way of over-riding other sensory messages with ones within their control.

- Never belittle the reaction

  We all have different reactions to sensory messages, as illustrated by food likes and dislikes. If a child refuses to wash his hands before lunch because "the water running from the tap feels like needles", accept that this is his experience. Trying to force the child will only result in more distress and telling him not to be "silly" may affect self-esteem. Focus instead on finding an acceptable solution eg putting water in a basin.

- Be creative

  Any solution that works for both child and teacher is worth trying. The answer may be very simple eg putting his hands over his ears when the music is playing in assembly. Other situations will require more complex solutions eg a programme of desensitisation to different foods to promote a healthier diet. Some problems lessen over time as the child becomes better able to deal with the sensory messages.

- Talk to parents

  They will probably have already encountered a similar difficulty at home and may have ideas that will help in school.

- Allow time for the child to deal with sensory overload

  If an experience has caused sensory overload, the child may need some time out in a quiet, non-stimulating environment to calm. Overload causes stress levels to rise, with the accompanying raised heart-rate and production of adrenalin.

- Prepare the child for unusual sensory experiences

  Make sure the child is given warning of, for example, the visit of a group to assembly who will be playing brass instruments. Have a plan ready to deal with sensory overload.

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- Develop the child's skills

  If, for example, fine motor skills are difficult for a child or he stands too close to others, consider setting a target on the IEP to tackle the issue and allow time to teach skills and practise.

Case Study

Ryan refused to use the toilets at school as the noise of the flush was too much for him.

Action

Ryan was given a small radio with headphones to wear to the toilet so he could replace a difficult sensory input (the flush) with one that did not cause problems for him (music).

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SECTION 4

Using Visual Support Materials:
Making Sure A Child Knows What To Do

Most children with Social Communication Difficulties have problems processing, what is for them, too much verbal information. However, they usually respond well to information, when it is presented visually, either in written or picture format. Such children are often referred to as visual learners.

Tools

- Use of a visual timetable

  This could be the daily class timetable displayed at the front of the class. If referred to each day, changes in the daily routine could be illustrated in order to prepare all children.

- Personal timetable

  Most children would benefit from their own timetable. For KS1 children, this could make use of pictures or symbols illustrating the daily activities such as work/assembly/playtime. For other children the usual written timetable, eg 9.00 am – assembly, 9.30 am – numeracy etc may be sufficient. It should be permanently displayed so that he can refer to it easily. Diaries can be used for older children. Some children respond to colour-coding to make the different subjects even clearer.

- Use of symbol cards

  Showing a symbol card to a child at the appropriate time can reinforce the action or behaviour required, eg if it is time for a young child to go to the toilet, the toilet symbol can be shown to him to reinforce the verbal instruction. Symbols for 'worktime', 'quiet' or 'waiting' can be used in a similar way. Older children can be prompted to focus on a task without the need to use words.

- Use of **Language Jigs**

  Language jigs use pictures or symbols to give a visual representation of what is going to happen so that it can be more easily understood, eg for the less able this can be three symbols/pictures representing 'table', 'work' and 'playtime'. The jig both illustrates and reinforces the desired behaviour. (Refer to Section 6 on Language Jigs.)

- Use of '**Social Stories'**

  Social Stories are written and verbal explanations of situations children are going to or have faced; they explain the semantics and pragmatics for children. (Refer to Section 7 on Social Stories.)

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- Written instructions

  Children can find long verbal instructions confusing. A short written instruction outlining the main points gives visual support to help the child gain clearer understanding of what is expected. Such instructions can be presented as numbered points or bullet points and they help the child work independently. Written instructions are particularly helpful when promoting independence and when giving homework.

- Modelling

  Children can imitate ordinary children's behaviour, who act as mentors or peer supporters as in Circle of Friends or Quality Circle Time.

- Use of TEACCH (The Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children) strategies

  Such strategies emphasise the importance of the child knowing:

  what he is required to do
  when he is required to do it
  when he will have finished
  what will happen next

  TEACCH visual support strategies include personal schedules (timetables), cue cards and written instructions (see references).

Case Study

At the end of assembly, Megan was eager to leave the hall and found it difficult listening to the music and waiting for her class to be led out. Assembly had finished and she saw no reason to stay!

Action

At the end of the assembly, the Teaching Assistant gave her a card to hold saying 'Wait' until it was time to go back to her classroom. This provided her with something concrete to do – holding the card – as well as reminding her of what was expected.

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SECTION 5

Teaching Social Understanding:
What Should I Include and What Techniques Should I Use?

Children with Social Communication Difficulties often need to be specifically taught about the meaning of social situations and how to behave within social contexts. They may not learn appropriate social responses instinctively or through observation. This teaching may be delivered as part of a personal and social development programme or targeted in an Individual Education Plan.

Tools

- Provide simplified rules and teach what these mean

  Rules that are applicable throughout society are the most important eg no hurting, no stealing. Rules for the classroom can also be simplified eg look and listen, no breaking. The child will need an explanation of what each rule means in different contexts.

- Teach the child how to behave in social situations

  These will include the corridor, in assembly (see Section 14, Accessing Assembly), on the playground (see Section 16, Inclusion in the Playground), when changing for PE and at lunchtime. The child may respond to a Language Jig or Social Story. You can use prompt cards, which show a picture of the desirable behaviour and a written instruction. Practise skills, such as lining up safely, as part of a social and personal development programme.

- Teach the child appropriate social approaches

  This will include phrases and actions eg using a name to attract attention and a script, such as "Would you like to play tag with me?" Some children use inappropriate touch eg attempting to hug a visitor and will need to be taught who he can touch and how he may touch ie who can be hugged and whose hand you may shake.

- Give the child opportunity to reflect on social situations

  When things have gone 'wrong', the child needs time and help to analyse the situation and reflect on how his behaviour has affected others. The child needs to know what he can do next time to get it 'right'. Keeping a book or file of these reflections and plans can be helpful for future reference.

- Use a 'Befriender' scheme

  Children can learn something from their peers about socially acceptable behaviour and friendship. A specially chosen group of children, sometimes the same age and sometimes older, take turns to partner the child with communication and social interaction difficulties. They act as formal 'guides' through social situations and prompt the child to behave and respond appropriately. Befrienders need to be clearly briefed and rewarded for their efforts.

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- 'Circle of Friends'

  This is a more intensive version of the Befriender scheme. A 'Circle of Friends' supports the child and come together on a regular basis to discuss progress and plan ways forward. Your Educational Psychologist can explain in greater detail if you want to set this up.

- **Language Jigs** and **Social Stories**

  These are visual and written explanations of a social situation. They give specific facts and information. They can be effective in explaining a situation a child finds difficult, preparing a child for change eg a supply teacher, teaching a routine or sequence, eg how to change for PE, and praising a child by detailing exactly what he has done well. (See Section 6 on Language Jigs and Section 7 on Social Stories for examples and instructions on how to write these.)

Case Study

Sam, a year 5 child, wanted to play football at lunchtime but became distressed when the other children 'broke the rules'. He would tell them off and try to pick up the ball, which resulted in scuffles. As a result, the other children were reluctant to let him join their game.

Action

A social story was provided for Sam, explaining that the rules of playground football were different to the games of football he watched on TV. In particular, the number of children on each team could be more or less than 11, there was no referee (decisions were made jointly and negotiated) and the ball did not go out of play. A group of children who regularly played football agreed to take turns to be Sam's befriender during games. As part of Sam's personal and social development programme, a Teaching Assistant supervised football games and debriefed Sam after each one to further his understanding.

Sam was then able to play football at lunchtimes more successfully. He was still concerned that rules were broken but was taught to deal with this by recording his feelings in a private book. Sam found it helpful to give red and yellow cards to individuals in his book but was not allowed to 'tell them off' during the game or to tell them later that he had given them a card.

Most playtime football games were then free from incident and happier for both Sam and his friends.

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SECTION 6

Language Jigs: How to Make and Use

A language jig is a visual schedule that guides a child through an activity or describes a change in routine.

It is a series of small boxes, generally four or five, including a simple drawing and sentence in each box.

A 'tick box' can be included at the bottom of each section, so that the child can tick off each part as it is completed.

At the end, it is often necessary to include something the child wants to do, or is familiar with, to give motivation to progress through the activity.

When telling the child about the activity, use the same words as are written on the language jig to avoid confusion.

The activity or change in routine is broken down into small steps and each box is one step.

They are usually prepared in advance but it can be useful to have a blank with you all the time so you can quickly produce a language jig to cope with the unexpected.

Language jigs are a powerful tool for both adult and child. They allow the adult to describe an activity or change in routine visually and the child is presented with information in a format that suits his learning style.

Examples are included in the Appendices, together with a blank for you to copy and use.

Case Study

Sarah was always last to change for PE. She could not organise the sequence of events to take off and put on her clothes successfully.

Action
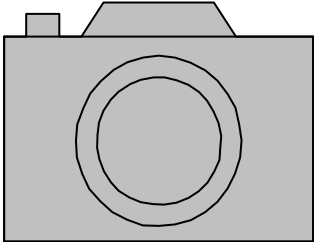
Sarah was given a language jig, showing the order she should remove her clothes and put on her PE kit. The teacher talked her through it, using the same words, the first couple of times she changed - Sarah was then able to be independent, using the jig step by step.

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Appendix

A   Blank Language Jigs

B   Examples of Language Jigs

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Language Jig Blanks

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Examples of Language Jigs

Wednesday **21 March**	Thomas and the children from Willow Class will go on the bus to the zoo at 10 o'clock.	Thomas and the children will look at all the animals. Thomas will eat his packed lunch sitting on the grass.	At 2 o'clock, Thomas and the children will go on the coach back to school. Then it will be time to go home with Mum.

Photographs	Walk to the Hall. ☐	Sit on the chair. Smile! ☐	Back to the classroom. ☐

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SECTION 7

Social Stories: How to Write and Use

Social stories were developed by Carol Gray. As the name suggests, they are simple stories that explain a **social situation.** The social etiquette or rules of a situation may not be obvious to a child with communication and social interaction difficulties and can be made explicit in this visual format.

The **aim** of a social story is to provide the child with very specific facts and information which he may not be aware of in order to help him understand a social situation. You may be anticipating a problem and writing a social story to prevent it occurring. This involves thinking from the point of view of the child. Alternatively you may be writing about an event after it has happened, to explain more about the social context, or you may wish to praise a child for appropriate behaviour.

Accuracy is important as you are aiming to help the child understand a new or potentially difficult situation. Follow these steps to write your social story:

1   Be clear about what you want to achieve. What is the desired end result?

2   Gather information so you have the correct facts. For example, what time a coach will leave for a trip and which adults will be going. Sometimes, you will need to gather information by observation, from the child's point of view eg what happens and why? How does a situation begin and end?

3   Condense the information in simple sentences. There are three types of social story sentences you can use:

- **Descriptive:** Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? These are the indisputable facts about a situation or setting or people.

- **Perspective:** Describing *other people's* thoughts, beliefs, feelings, opinions, physical condition and motivations. This is often an area of mystery for a child with SCD/ASD, as they have difficultly seeing things from another's point of view. For example, a perspective sentence could be 'Young children believe that Santa Claus makes Christmas presents' (belief) or 'Mum will be happy to get a surprise birthday present' (feelings).

- **Directive:** Describing the *expected response* to a situation and gently directing the child towards this. The use of 'I will….' to start a directive sentence is best avoided as it could set a child up to fail. Use instead 'I will try…..' or 'I might try….' eg 'I will try to be sitting quietly at 9 o'clock, ready to start work'.

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Carol Gray recommends a ratio of **descriptive and perspective** sentences to **directive** sentences of 2-5 to 0-1. A social story does not necessarily have to include a directive sentence – it all depends on the purpose of the story. Too many directive sentences and too few descriptive and perspective sentences make for a less successful social story.

Be positive. The title of the social story can set the tone, for example, use 'How to talk to adults at lunchtime' rather than 'Why I must not be rude at lunchtime'.

Examples of social stories can be found in the Appendices.

Handy Hints

- Use the first person for younger children.

- Use the present or future tense.

- Words like 'usually', 'often' and 'sometimes' avoid making a situation that can change appear 'black and white' to the child with SCD/ASD.

- Make positive statements. Do not talk about being 'naughty' eg 'When I make a mistake, I will have time out'.

- Keep your sentences short.

- Try to be clear, accurate and concrete. Abstract concepts can be difficult.

Examples of Sentence Types

Descriptive: I am in Class 3 at school.
The end of term is Friday 24th October.

Perspective: Mum and Dad are proud of my singing in the choir.
Greeting people is a friendly thing to do.
Children don't usually like tidying their rooms.
My teacher thinks I am good at numbers.

Directive: I will try to remember to say 'Hello' when other children say hello to me.
I will try to put up my hand and wait to be asked before answering a question.

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Appendix

A   Sports Day

B   Time for School

C   Washing Your Hands before Cooking and Handling Food

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Sports Day

On Friday afternoon, (date), there will be Sports Day at (name) school.

The children will change into their PE kits first. Then they will go to the field and sit with their team.

There will be races. The children will wait for their turn to race. They will keep their feet behind the line. An adult will say, "Ready, steady, go!" The children will start the race when they hear the word "Go!"

Every child will win points for their team when they finish a race. Children can win points if they sit nicely or are helpful and kind to other children or they try really hard.

You can take your water bottle and wear a hat on Sports Day. You can bring sun cream to school to rub onto your skin.

There will be **no** ICT or Assembly on Friday afternoon because it will be Sports Day instead.

If it is raining, there will be **no** Sports Day. It will be a normal Friday afternoon instead and there will be ICT and Assembly.

Sports Day is a fun time but it is OK to feel worried about the races. If you feel worried, an adult or a teammate will help you. Everyone should try his or her best. It is OK if you don't win a race. Everyone who finishes a race will get points for their team.

When the races are finished, the children will get a drink and go back to their classroom to get changed. Then it will be time to go home.

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Time for School

(Name) goes to school on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

(Name) stays at home on Saturday and Sunday.

School starts at 9 o'clock. Mum or Dad will bring (name) to school.

School ends at 3 o'clock. (Name) will walk home with Nana.

Sometimes, (name) is sad about coming to school.

Feeling sad is OK but (name) still has to come to school.

(Name) will try to be happy about coming to school.

The adults will help (name).

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Washing Your Hands before Cooking and Handling Food

It is important to wash your hands before cooking.

This is so the dirt and germs on your hands do not get into the food.

When germs get into food and you eat the food, they can make your tummy poorly.

You can't see the germs on your hands because they are too small.

This is a good way to wash your hands:

    1 Put the plug in the basin and fill it with warm water

    2 Put your hands in the water

    3 Take your hands out of the water and rub them all over with soap

    4 Rinse the soap off your hands in the water

    5 Dry your hands with a paper towel

It will be OK to touch food and cook when your hands are clean.

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SECTION 8

Teaching Emotional Understanding: Learning to Recognise and Cope with Your Own Feelings and Those of Others

Children with communication and social understanding difficulties often find their own feelings hard to recognise which results in inappropriate reactions. They need to learn to identify emotions in themselves and others so they can learn to deal with them appropriately. This teaching may be delivered as part of a social and personal development programme, through targets on an Individual Education Plan.

Tools

- Learning about their own emotions

  Children with social communication difficulties often seem to move from calm to highly distressed very quickly. This may be because they fail to recognise their own feelings as anxiety grows and only show their emotions once they are out of control. Teach the child about a range of **emotions** and how to recognise them in themselves, using the pack in the Appendices.

- Scales of emotion

  Once a child can recognise what he is feeling, he can communicate this to others. For example, a child who is worrying about his work can say or indicate when he starts to feel worried, rather than screw up his work and storm out of the classroom once he has reached the stage of total frustration. If he has visual support to indicate what he is feeling, eg by pointing to an emotion on a scale, the teacher can then provide the necessary support to allow the child to become calm again and able to carry on with a task. Examples of '**Feelings Scales**' can be found in the Appendices.

- **Feelings Thermometers**

  Feelings Thermometers, a variation of Feelings Scales, (examples included in the Appendices) can provide the child with a way of indicating his own emotional state without using language. The child moves his name up and down the scale. The teacher can then see what is happening for that child and intervene appropriately, eg if a child who is sensitive to noise indicates he is feeling upset when loud grass cutting machines are operating outside the classroom, the teacher may decide it is appropriate for him to go to a quiet room temporarily.

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- Reacting to others

  Children with social communication difficulties often find it difficult to understand that others have different feelings from themselves and to empathise with others. He may laugh when another child falls over, as he enjoys the 'slapstick' element of the fall and fails to appreciate that the child is hurt and feels upset. He needs to be taught to recognise basic facial expressions and body language others display so as to be able to name the emotion they might be feeling, eg tears falling from another child's eyes is likely to indicate he is unhappy. The child can then be taught to react more appropriately, eg gently pat the child's shoulder or find an adult to help. **Emotions Photographs** are included in the Appendices.

  It is useful to explain the emotions of others by providing a bank of social stories that deal with the particular situations that the child finds difficult to understand eg a social story about why others might cry. See Section 7 on **Social Stories.**

- Self awareness

  Some children, particularly those diagnosed with Autism, Autistic Spectrum Disorders or Asperger Syndrome, become aware of their differences to others as they grow older. They can benefit from learning about what it means to have such a diagnosis, so they can identify their own strengths and weaknesses and therefore learn strategies to cope. This should always be done with the permission of, and in partnership with, parents and carers. There are books that are helpful in explaining about Autism, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Asperger Syndrome (see Further Reading).

Case Study

Gary, a Year 5 pupil, enjoyed the emotional reaction he observed in others when he pushed them. He laughed when they became angry.

Action

A social story was written for Gary, explaining that the children he pushed were angry because they were getting hurt and that pushing was an unfriendly thing to do. This was linked to a reward system so that Gary earned a sticker for each playtime he achieved without pushing. If he achieved a row of stickers, he was allowed a five minute session playing with toy cars, in which he was very interested.

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Appendices

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Emotions Curriculum

Children with Communication and Social Communication Difficulties often need to be taught to recognise and how to cope with their own emotions as well as other people's emotions.

Step 1

Define the emotion (in language appropriate to the age and understanding of the child). Record your description on the writing frame. Look at photographs of faces showing that emotion (LDA produce photo card packs and photographs can be downloaded from the Internet). Get the child to try to show the emotion on his own face whilst looking in a mirror. What happens to the eyes? Mouth? Nose? Eyebrows? Skin? Record on the face template. Annotate, eg, 'the eyes are screwed up and the eyebrows are pointing down'.

Step 2

Think about times when you feel the emotion. What happens to make you feel the emotion? Record on the writing frame.

Step 3

What happens inside your body when you feel the emotion? Focus on the feeling in your head and tummy. Use analogy to describe if helpful, eg, "excited feels like lots of people are dancing to loud music inside my head".

Record on the person outline template. Draw and annotate. Use colour if helpful, eg, "excited is the colour …?"

Step 4

Talk about how an emotion causes you to behave. If the behaviour is not acceptable, discuss alternatives. Form an Action Plan to try and behave in acceptable ways in response to this emotion. Link to a reward system. Write a Social Story if helpful.

You may wish to keep this work in a special book or file so that it can be referred to in the future. In time, you can extend the curriculum to cover body language and responses to the emotions of others.

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Emotions Worksheet

Feelings

What is: ……………………………………………………………..?

Today, we are talking about the feeling called: ....

Description

- ……………………………………………………………………………….

- ……………………………………………………………………………….

- ……………………………………………………………………………….

- ……………………………………………………………………………….

Name: …………………………………….   **Date:** ………………………………….

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Emotions Worksheet

My Feelings

Today, I am learning about ……………………………………………

These things make me feel ……………………………………………

-

-

-

-

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Feelings Thermometer

Feelings Scale

I feel ………………………
(move your name up and down the scale to show how you are feeling)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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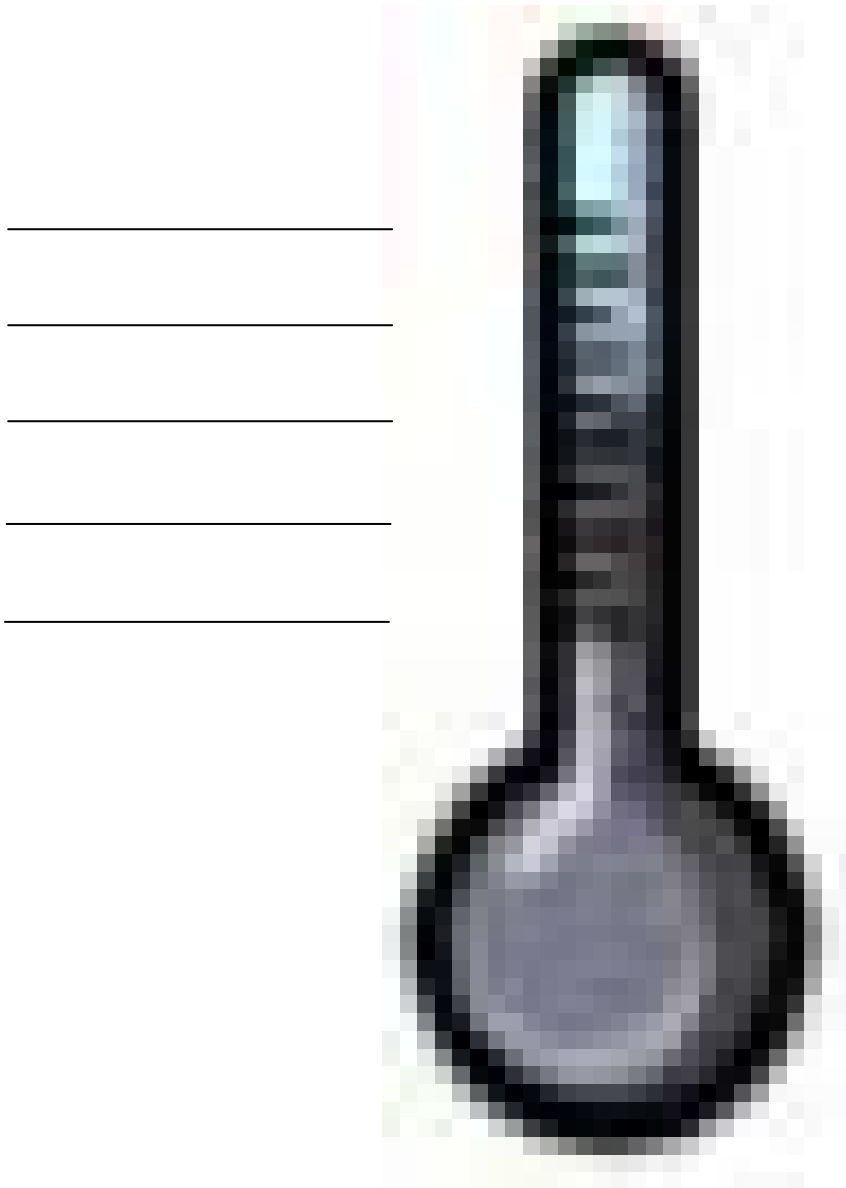
Feelings Scale

Positive Emotions

Fantastic

Excited

Happy

Pleased

Calm

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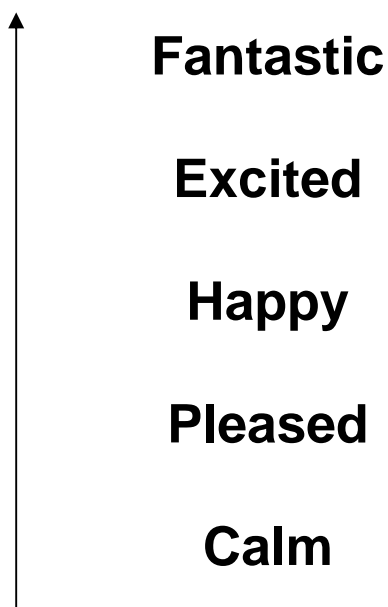
Feelings Scale

Negative Emotions

Awful	Sad	Furious
Stupid	Bad	Angry
Frustrated	Grumpy	Cross
Worried	Glum	Anxious
Calm	Calm	Calm

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SECTION 9

Effective Communication: Making Your Words Count

The child with Social Communication Difficulties finds it difficult to give attention and listen to the spoken word. First get his attention and speak clearly, giving lots of time to make sense of what you have said. The words you use and how you use them can make a huge difference.

Tools

- Be concise, eg "Lunch box on the table" rather than "Would you like to come over here with me and sit next to Ben for lunch?"

  His processing speed can be slower in social situations – missing out unnecessary words in your speech will help.

- Use child's name at the beginning of the instruction. eg "Joseph, (pause)….. find a book and sit down"

  He is likely to be alerted by his name and attend to the rest of the sentence.

- Allow a significantly longer processing time than is usual for most mainstream children. Be patient and wait for a response!

  He may respond in a highly original way, given time. His response can reveal his intelligence and give opportunities to boost his self-esteem and standing in the class.

- Use positive rather than negative instructions, eg "Joshua, feet on the floor" (when he is climbing on the tables!)

  If you say "Don't climb on the table", the danger is he may only process "climb on the table".

- Use visual cues such as Language Jigs (see Section 6), photographs, written words, symbols etc

  Visual support speeds up the processing time; requiring less effort on his part.

- Use of cueing (sentences for children to complete) "Todd, you want…….", "Anna is angry because………", "James, for swimming, you need to take………"

  Answering questions can be difficult. Verbal cueing like this enables him to respond more easily, by finishing off your sentence.

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- Repeat the instruction, as necessary, using precisely the same words and intonation – like a broken record!

  Re-phrasing often confuses the child with SCD/ASD.

- Use concrete rather than abstract language, eg "Write the next word here" rather than "Start a new line"

  He may be confused by abstract language or he may interpret it literally and start drawing an extra line in his exercise book!

- Never use sarcasm, eg saying "Great!" when he has spilt paint

  As above, he may be confused or think you are pleased and do it again!

- Ask specific rather than open-ended questions, eg "What did Roman soldiers wear?" rather than "What do you think a young Roman Soldier felt about going to Hadrian's Wall?"

  He may have considerable general knowledge, giving interesting factual answers but be unable to give an opinion about feelings.

Case Study

Whenever his teacher said, "It is time for Assembly," Jordan shouted "I hate Assembly" and he banged his fists on the table or turned his chair over.

Action

The teacher said, "Jordan, you are angry because………….." After a pause, Jordan responded by saying, "I wanted to finish my picture".

The teacher could than say "OK, go to Assembly first, then you can finish your picture".

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SECTION 10

Managing Behaviour: A Positive Approach

Children with Social Communication Difficulties have a different perspective from the rest of us, so they can seem to see the world differently from us. This often causes them to behave differently, so going against the norm. Specific teaching of appropriate behaviour in different situations is essential.

Tools

- Use specific praise regularly when he is doing something right. Use phrases such as "Good sitting" or "Putting your hand up, was an intelligent idea"

  A visual thumbs up or handshake can reinforce appropriate behaviour.

- Be positive eg "Book in your book bag" rather than "Don't throw your book around" or "Stop that"

  When a child is behaving inappropriately, pause to think what it is you do want him to do (rather than what you want him to stop doing) – then use a concise, positive instruction.

- Use visual prompts to accompany spoken language eg "Andy, bottom on the chair" whilst showing him a picture of a child sitting appropriately

  The child may find it difficult to accept another person's idea - a picture is easier for him to process and takes away the personal element of the instruction ie it is not what the teacher wants but what is shown on the picture.

- 'Speak and Spin' – for example, 'Speak' by saying "Ben, coat on" then 'Spin' by turning away

  This ensures he knows what is required of him and prevents you paying attention to irrelevant talk/ behaviour, which he may use as an avoidance tactic.

- Use his obsessions to motivate

  The child who likes minibeasts will be more motivated when counting woodlice in numeracy. Others may respond to "Writing first, then……*eg a favourite activity*". Obsessive interests can be used creatively to encourage appropriate behaviour.

- Give warnings of change or an end to an activity, eg use clock, timer, or countdown

  Remember he may be engrossed and unaware of time passing. Sudden transitions can be very challenging for a child with SCD/ASD.

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- Do not make an issue out of inappropriate behaviour

  Avoid showing shock/disgust. Stress the appropriate behaviour, eg "Brian, you need to say "Go away, I want to be on my own"" when Brian has pushed a friendly child away.

- Be non-confrontational eg "It is time to …….."

  A friendly adult, sitting alongside, is more likely to be able to 'get through' and keep him on track. You cannot win battles with any child.

- If in a confrontational situation, remove the personal element by referring to a visual timetable or Language Jig (see Section 6)

  He may respond to, "It says here, Science, then PE Time to get changed".

- Use a calm, non-emotive tone of voice when drawing attention to inappropriate behaviour

  Explain that they have made a mistake - "It's OK to make a mistake but it may be a good idea to try to………………..*(appropriate action)"*. Some children may understand the meaning of appropriate/ inappropriate when discussing behaviour. Others may respond better to discussing behaviour, which is OK/not OK.

- Identify what triggers inappropriate behaviour, eg by using an ABC analysis (Antecedents, Behaviour, Consequences)

  A Teaching Assistant records what happens before, during and after an incident. Analysis may indicate how to change circumstances to avoid the problem or how to avoid inadvertently rewarding poor behaviour, eg by getting angry and waggling your finger!

- Use of 'Traffic lights' – circles of laminated card, one green, one orange, one red, usually displayed in the classroom

  The adult puts the child's name on the green to denote 'I am doing the right thing', onto the orange to denote 'I am not doing the right thing and have been warned'' and onto the red to denote 'I am still not doing the right thing and will therefore get a sanction'.

  This technique teaches self-monitoring of behaviour – generally children do not like to be 'on the orange' and, once they have experienced a sanction, they avoid being 'on the red'. As an extra incentive, an extra yellow circle can be added, positioned before green in the sequence, to use at the end of a session to show 'I have been really good and will be rewarded' eg with a sticker.

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Case Study

During Science, Kieran was disrupting the lesson by calling out. He was trying to change turn the conversation to his special interest, minibeasts. He was insistent that the teacher answered his questions, getting more and more agitated when she tried to ignore him.

Action

The teacher calmly said, "Kieran, we are talking about electricity. You can talk to me about minibeasts at 2 minutes to 12 for 2 minutes". She was able to keep her promise and Kieran was rewarded for not interrupting.

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SECTION 11

Dealing with Changes in Routine:
Picking up the Pieces

Children with Social Communication Difficulties usually learn best in a structured environment where routines are learned and followed. In mainstream school, changes in routine are inevitable and can throw him 'off track'. A Visual Timetable (see Section 4 on 'Using Visual Support Materials') and careful preparation for any change can minimise difficulties and have a positive effect on behaviour at home and at school.

Tools

- Be friendly and reassuring. Tell the child you will help him and he will be OK, for example, when there is a supply teacher in class, school trip, new classmate, special Assembly

   This approach shows the child we understand a change in routine is difficult for him to accept.

- Use **Language Jigs** or **Social Stories** (see Sections 6 and 7) as visual representations of the sequence of events to expect

   Understanding of concepts such as before/after and why/because are often problematic. Explicit visual information works best.

- Consider how best to use the **Language Jig/Social Story** with the child, for example, 1:1, during lesson time, for homework

   Studying at school and home, immediately prior to the change and during it is often most helpful. Parents are often in the best position to know the best way to use the **Language Jig/Social Story** with their child.

- Role play can make new routines visual, for example, school photographer's visit

   Classmates enjoy being involved and gain from learning how to give support.

- Use a sand timer placed on a picture of the unexpected event, eg "When the sand has gone through, it will be time for …………."

   This is a useful tool for transition from one activity to the next in a known routine or when there is a change.

- Count down to the end of one activity and the beginning of the next

   He probably likes number sequences, and usually responds to this mainstream classroom strategy.

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- Make a special project book as preparation for transition between classes or schools, for example, secondary transfer

  Arranging extra visits and taking photographs of 'Faces and Places' in the new class/school can smooth the transfer. Well-planned extra induction will pay dividends by lowering anxiety.

When a change occurs without the opportunity for preparation, the child may be unable to cope. He may have what appears to be a tantrum but is best viewed as a panic attack. In which case <u>when all else fails:</u>

- Do not make demands, ask questions or tell him off, eg, avoid "Come here!" or "What's the matter?" or "Don't do that again!"

  He feels overwhelmed; asking more of him can make things worse. Back off, if everyone is safe. This can be the beginning of the cool down period.

- Should he or others be in danger, it may be necessary to intervene by holding his lower arm, avoiding the wrist area, and leading him confidently to a pre-arranged place of safety, eg, quiet room, bean bag in a corner of the corridor

  It is often best to use no words at this stage, until calm descends.

- Use a calm, non-emotive voice to reassure

  This ensures he knows he has a friend alongside.

- Consider allowing some solitary time, doing nothing in particular or a favourite activity, eg, drawing, sharing a book or watching fish in the school aquarium

  This allows child and adult time to re-adjust.

- When the time is right, consider re-visiting the problem scenario, eg, talking calmly, draw the events using stick figures and including speech and thought bubbles

  This may reveal how he viewed the situation and why he behaved differently to his classmates – vital to planning how to prevent a recurrence.

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Case Study

Jamie's teacher explained that later that week they would be having PE in the village hall whilst the school hall was being extended. Jamie became inconsolable and screamed repeatedly, "I'm not going to the village hall!"

Action

The Teaching Assistant prepared Jamie for a walk with a classmate, which involved going inside the village hall to look at a photographic exhibition. She made a Language Jig in which she referred to the village hall as 'another' hall. Jamie showed his Dad the Language Jig, enjoyed the walk with the classmate and accepted that PE could happen in 'another hall' until the building work finished.

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SECTION 12

Delivering the Curriculum

Appropriate teaching strategies need to be applied based on both the children's present level of functioning and on the teacher's knowledge and understanding of how Social Communication Difficulties affect the children's learning style.

Tools

- If possible, relate aspects of the subject to his direct experience

  For example, if discussing Victorians, the child could do a special study of the Victorian railway system (if trains are his special interest). For literacy work, he could be given a choice of subject matter – he will be more motivated if sometimes given the opportunity to write about his special interest.

- Present new work as visually as possible

  He may find it difficult to imagine/understand what is required and may need to refer to an example of the finished item or follow written instructions of each stage, especially in design and technology.

- Collaborative work may need to be monitored

  He may need encouragement to consider the ideas of others and to compromise when necessary.

- Adopt a flexible approach to time allocation of subjects.

  The key principle is to retain breadth of curriculum whilst adapting time allocation to put more emphasis on personal and social development. It may be beneficial to reduce time allocation on subjects the child finds difficult such as humanities and modern foreign languages and increase time spent on the child's curricular strengths.

- Adopt a flexible approach when planning individual work

  Could he be given the option to write factually rather than imaginatively? For example, if the class is writing imaginatively about life in Tudor England, the child with SCD/ASD could be encouraged to write a more factual account of the life of Henry VIII.

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In addition, certain subjects can present particular difficulties for the child, but excellent teaching and positive behaviour management can really help here. By contrast going over past papers is an absolute 'no no' for SCD/ASD and should not even be attempted, as it is a measure of certainty of the condition.

- Literacy

  Difficulties with imagination make creative writing and the reading and writing of fiction in general, more difficult for the child with SCD/ASD. Understanding stories and inferring from text presents further challenge. Use of idiom and metaphor needs to be explicitly taught.

- Numeracy

  The lack of ambiguity in maths means that it is often a strength of the child with SCD/ASD. However, he may not see the need to show how he arrived at the right answer. It needs to be explained that it is an exam rule to show workings out and that may give extra marks, even if the answer is wrong. Computation skills may be advanced but problem-solving skills, estimation and algebra may cause problems.

- Science

  The more open-ended problem-solving approach can be difficult, along with testing out hypotheses and making predictions.

- Religious Education

  There may be difficulty in distinguishing between emotions, religious beliefs, opinions and facts which will make discussions problematic.

- Physical Education

  PE helps release energy and can reduce anxiety levels. The child may have co-ordination problems and this may also affect his dressing skills. The social impairment means that team games present problems and the lack of imagination may inhibit expressive movement in dance.

- History

  The child with SCD/ASD may excel at memorising lists of dates but empathising with historical characters and imagining their experiences, motivations and emotions is much harder. Putting themselves in another's place is almost impossible for them. Real documents are more popular.

- Geography

  While Physical Geography is popular, Human Geography is usually not.

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Case Study

Michael was a popular boy and loved to play football with the boys in his class in PE/games. If Michael got the ball, he tended to monopolise it and head for the nearest goal, regardless of whose team he was on. This meant that no-one wanted Michael to be on their team, as he did not pass to team members and was just as likely to score an own goal.

Action

The teacher agreed that if Michael scored a goal, it would be awarded to his team, regardless of which end the ball ended up. This meant that everyone wanted Michael on his team! After two weeks of this arrangement it was felt that a more appropriate solution would be to simply display his team colours on the goalpost so that Michael could see at a glance which direction he needed to run. In addition, Michael was given the opportunity to practise his passing skills with a small group of boys at the beginning of the PE/games lesson.

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SECTION 13

Accessing Learning:
Prioritising Personal and Social Development

A child with Social Communication Difficulties naturally wants to follow his own agenda, choosing when, what and how to learn.

For inclusion to be successful, he needs to be accessing the learning in the classroom, to the teacher's agenda and timescale. Initially, this may involve an emphasis on Personal and Social Development to enable access to other curricular areas at a later stage.

Tools

- TEACCH approach (see Section 4 on Using Visual Support Materials)

  This approach involves a sharing of control. The adult wants the child to do some work but the child wants to choose what he does. By teaching 'work first then….(reward)' we avoid confronting him, both parties get what they want and things are kept sweet.

  The child needs to be able to <u>see</u> what he has to do, when he has to do it, how much he has to do and what will happen next. If we get this right, we are more likely to gain his co-operation.

  <u>Teach 'Work first then…….(reward)'</u>

  The reward needs to be something which is easy to provide but highly motivating. The most successful rewards are often different to those in general classroom use, eg, drawing windmills, looking at store catalogues, doing your own thing. Visual prompts to accompany the spoken language can be very effective, eg, saying "Work first, then use the computer" whilst pointing to symbols of 'work' followed by 'computer'. At this stage we are teaching 'Work first then……(reward)' - other learning objectives are not the priority. The 'work' needs to be visually presented, easily achievable and not necessarily similar to that provided for the rest of the class.

- Use the 'small steps' approach

  Rewarding any small step towards sitting and working, eg, bottom on the chair or looking at the worksheet for a few seconds can earn a period of sand play, if that is the reward.

  Young children usually gain reward from being allowed a period of following their own ideas before being required to accept another task. As you get to know him, you will be able to sense how frequently and for how long he can be expected to sit and work. Gradually, the working period can be extended from a few seconds in Reception to possibly 20 minutes at Year 2 and maybe 30 minutes at Year 6. He may well concentrate on an academic activity of his own choosing for a much longer period than his classmates. Special projects can raise his profile in school.

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- Insist and persist with 'work first then…..(reward)'

  Ensure you withhold the reward until the work is completed but assist if necessary, eg, your hand over his hand to write his name. Once the work is completed he gets the reward. Gradually, adult intervention can be faded until he can be expected to do the work unaided before getting his reward.

- Individual work table

  Useful in early stages as a step towards working alongside others. A carefully selected classmate can be invited to work alongside him occasionally. Gradually, with support, the child will begin to work alongside others using his individual work table less frequently.

- Personal visual timetable, for example, pictures/symbols with words underneath

  When in use, the timetable allays anxiety because he may lack the imagination to know, for example, how long 'til lunch? yet be unable to use social language to ask. Refer to the timetable and emphasise "It is time to…….." This removes the personal element because it is the timetable that is seen to direct, not you. If changes are necessary, eg, wet playtime, involving the child in changing the symbols can gain acceptance. He may be motivated by removing/covering/ticking off activities as they finish.

- Use of traffic light 'wait' symbols, for example, for lunch or to turn on the light

  Some SCD/ASD children are distressed by the need to wait, seeing no reason for any delay. Laminated large red, amber and green circles with the word 'wait', 'soon' and 'go' on three Velcro pads can be used to teach the concept of waiting. Add a symbol of the desired activity.

  At intervals change the three Velcro pads: first use the red 'wait'; then the amber 'soon'; until just in time the green 'go' can be used. This, demonstrates visually that we know what he wants and that he can have it when the green 'go' symbol is in place.

- Use a sand timer for transition to the next activity, for example, five minutes until carpet time

  This is one of the most useful strategies of all, to which most children quickly learn to respond. It is particularly effective if the timer is placed on top of a photograph of the next activity.

- Use of written prompt to teach 'Can I have…..'

  Most SCD/ASD children see a classmate playing with something they want and take it, lacking the social understanding that it is a mistake to take something from another person. At first, show him the written prompt 'Can I have…..' as you read the words, helping him to follow with his finger. Most probably he will complete the sentence without prompting. He can then read it to a classmate before saying it out loud. Priming the classmate beforehand and rewarding him or her for co-operating is essential!

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- Explain to classmates that we are teaching him to 'do the right thing' and that they are doing a good job of showing him what to do, for example, sitting appropriately, listening to the teacher, ignoring poor behaviour

  More explanation may be needed as to why he needs flexible arrangements (eg he may not attend every assembly because he finds it much harder to work than they do).

Case Study

Sam was academically very able and entered school at Year 2 after a period of home schooling. He was fascinated by numbers and able to name everyday items in French. However, the beginning of the school day was generally problematic. Sam's classmates tried to start their daily early morning task of handwriting but when Sam arrived he rushed into class, still wearing his coat and carrying his belongings. He flitted from playing the piano and climbing the bookshelves to squirting paint in the sink and turning on the taps! Any attempt to intervene caused mayhem.

Action

The teacher made a sequence to show Sam's early morning jobs, with accompanying pictures.

1   lunchbox on shelf
2   book bag in the box
3   coat on peg
4   sit at the table
5   ~~handwriting~~ calculator

Sam's Teaching Assistant introduced him to the sequence one afternoon in preparation for the next morning and shared the idea with Sam's mum. Mum was concerned that Sam did not like handwriting and said it might be better to have something he liked doing. She suggested using a calculator instead so job number 5 was changed to 'calculator'. The class early morning task once again became the gentle introduction to the day, as was intended.

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Appendix

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Target Sheet

Name: ………………………………………..

Date: ………………………………………..

My target: ………………………………………..

                ………………………………………..

When I complete a row, my reward will be:

………………………………………………

When I complete the chart, my reward will be:

………………………………………………

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SECTION 14

Accessing Assembly

Children with Social Communication Difficulties often have difficulty maintaining focus in Assembly. They can find it difficult to focus on what is being said, be anxious about being with a large group of people and find religious concepts hard to understand (corresponding to the three impairments in autism).

Tools

- A short and visual assembly will enable easier access

  The use of power-point or overhead projector will help maintain interest, as will the use of live music/ role play/celebration of good art work.

- Be flexible about attendance

  If he has difficulty in assembly, does he have to attend daily? If not he could spend some of the time working in the classroom.

- Praise children sitting next to him

  Praise those sitting nearby for helping him and for showing him how to behave appropriately in assembly. Give them a reward (such as a sticker) for tolerance, eg, if the child with SCD/ASD lies back on the person behind whilst sitting on the floor.

- Use of something to fiddle with

  Allow the child to have something quiet to fiddle with. This may help lessen his anxiety and enable him to focus on what is being said. For the younger child it helps keep them quiet so that they can be a part of the assembly. A very small piece of Blu-Tac, two pieces of Lego, a picture book or a toy of his choice can be used, as long as it does not prove to be disruptive.

- Sit him on a chair or a carpet square

  A chair will prevent him from moving around on the floor and the carpet square will help define his sitting space.

- Use a Language Jig

  He could take this pictorial representation of the sequence of events with him so he knows what is happening and when it will finish. It can incorporate a reward activity after assembly.

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- Use a Social Story

  This will describe appropriate behaviour and may give an explanation of what is expected. It can be used to reinforce the answer to questions such as 'but why do I have to go?'

- Place the child carefully

  Seat the child at the end of the row, close to an adult, a specially selected 'Buddy' or a responsible Year 6 child.

- Give him a special job

  This could be extinguishing the candle at the end of assembly or holding the door open for everyone at the beginning and end of assembly.

- Prepare for any changes in the usual assembly routine

  This might include changes in vicars, assembly leaders or the playing of instruments such as recorders. If he is to receive a certificate or to be singled out for praise, be sure he knows how to shake hands. Some children find the sound of applause deafening and prefer not to be clapped. Prepare the other children to use a 'silent clap' instead, ie, raising hands above the head and waving.

- Back-chaining

  This can be used to introduce the child to assembly and where the first step is joining in for the **last** five minutes, gradually increasing the length of time the child is expected to be in assembly. This involves 'small positive steps' and can avoid a child learning that if he makes a fuss at the beginning of an assembly he gets taken out.

- Be patient

  Do not expect the anxious child to step up to full assembly by next week; next term is more realistic.

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SECTION 15

Accessing 'Carpet Time'

Children with Social Communication Difficulties often find it difficult to attend to what is being said. Therefore, time spent on the carpet, listening to the teacher or peers, can be one of the most difficult times for both children and teacher.

Tools

- Child to sit close to the teacher

  This minimises distractions and enables the teacher to give unobtrusive reminders to refocus his attention, eg, a touch on the shoulder.

- Use visual material and visual aids to maintain interest

  Younger children may respond well to the use of a hand puppet. Older children may need to have their own copy of the book or text being shared.

- Child sitting in a defined space (chair or carpet square)

  This ensures that the child with SCD/ASD always knows where to sit and is usefully placed away from objects/other children he may find distracting.

- Use of differentiated questions

  The use of cue-ins can be effective, eg, "Jordan, the boy is smiling because...?" and being prepared to give him more time to give an answer.

- Use of checklist of things to listen for and mind-mapping or other visual techniques to make notes

Oral sessions will always be difficult and therefore expectations of the child need to be adjusted accordingly. The outcome needs to be kept positive and so the following tools could be adopted:-

- Shorten the length of time the child is expected to sit and attend

  The younger child could be required to sit on the carpet for possibly the first five to ten minutes and then move to his table to start work. This method relies on a Teaching Assistant being available to get him started. His work is related to the topic being taught at the time. Work may be differentiated or it may be that the child starts the set work. Handwriting is often a difficulty so this would work well for literacy lessons, giving the child more time to complete work.

  It is important that the time the child gets up from the carpet is seen to be controlled by the teacher. It is not for the child to decide that he has had enough!

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- Use of specific targets to keep him on the carpet

  These targets can be linked to the child's own reward system (which may be over-and-above that of the class in general).

- Flexibility in the use of carpet time

  Occasionally, the child's time may be better spent working on other aspects of the curriculum during carpet-time. This could be additional numeracy or literacy work, working on IEP targets or on improving his social skills. This approach requires adult input as it is not acceptable for the child to be 'filling time', eg, playing a game on the computer.

- Offer an alternative individual activity

  If you are on your own during Literacy Hour with a young child who cannot attend to the language and often disrupts the group, it may be more beneficial for him to spend some of the time doing a quiet, alternative activity, preferably linked to the lesson. That way, he will not be disrupting others on the carpet and will be doing something constructive. After the group instruction, there will be time to give individual attention so that he can complete the planned work.

Case Study

Kayleigh found it difficult to sit still and was easily bored. She could not concentrate long enough on the oral teaching and liked to interrupt the teacher at every opportunity, usually asking questions about who was using the hall which was next to the classroom.

Action

Kayleigh was given a chair to sit on. The teacher could see when her attention was wandering and would bring it back by mentioning her name or asking her a direct question. When Kayleigh did interrupt, the teacher used the phrase "we are talking about …" in order to redirect her attention.

In addition, the school hall timetable was displayed in the classroom so that Kayleigh always knew which group was in the hall and when her turn would be. As a reward for not interrupting, she was sometimes asked to help prepare the hall for assembly.

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SECTION 16

Accessing the Playground:
Making the Most of Playtime

For the child with Social Communication Difficulties the playground is one of the most important learning environments, providing opportunities to teach social skills in a naturally occurring way. The most important resource at playtime is people, especially those in a position to facilitate interaction with other children and encourage and promote friendships.

Generally, children with SCD/ASD fall into two groups: A or B, in terms of their patterns of behaviour:

Type A – wanders aimlessly on his own, often around the perimeter, away from others (often High Functioning Autism)

Tools

- Let him do his own thing when he first goes into the playground, for example, standing by the fence, watching traffic

  He is entitled to a break from the demands of the classroom, so be aware of this and take things at the child's pace.

- Have two 'Be-frienders' to walk around with him

  At first he may be oblivious to what is going on but the Be-frienders attract his attention by joining in with **his** chosen activity. Over time, the child gains confidence in the Be-frienders time and this enables them to subtly extend the play in a natural way.

  Many children, usually from Year 6, have the necessary skills and, if briefed and supported, will enjoy the responsibility. Be-frienders can be invaluable to adults on duty who will soon recognise and appreciate their role in improving playtimes for all.

- Let him go to a quieter playground or part of it

  He may be timid and overwhelmed by the noise and activity of the main playground area. With fewer children and less bustle, he may be better able to cope.

- Let him take a chosen toy/game outside to show it to others

  He may not have learned how to join in a game and he may be unsure of what to say. An item to 'show' can attract others and be a good way to start an interaction. The toy needs to be robust and not too precious!

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- Give him something specific to do

  This could be sweeping leaves, watering flowers, taking out the playground box or holding the door open for his classmates. Such jobs can help raise his profile and facilitate interaction. If the job is something he really enjoys, so much the better.

- Hold the child's hand (he may be reluctant to let you do this) and play 'Ready, steady, go!' – running up and down the playground

  Some children enjoy the physical activity and forget they are holding hands. Mainstream children will see you modelling how to relate to the child and be willing to join you both. With encouragement, over time, other children will engage him in chasing and hiding games.

Case Study

During playtime, Ben liked to stand on the drain cover. It was slightly away from the playground, away from the other children and had an interesting surface. However, the drain cover was out of bounds. The midday supervisor told him repeatedly to come off but Ben was not even aware he was being told off so he ignored her. This exasperated the MDSA and she got cross and embarrassed because other children were seeing Ben 'get away with it'.

Action

In a staff meeting and in assembly, the staff and children learnt why Ben liked to be on the drain cover at playtime. They understood that he often felt anxious and would like to join in the fun but was not quite ready. He needed to be more familiar with playtime procedures and what was expected of him. It was agreed that having Ben standing on the drain cover was OK - it was seen as a step towards joining in. At every opportunity, adults explained to other children that their excellent example and constant encouragement to come onto the playground was helping teach Ben to 'do the right thing'.

Type B – wants to be part of the playground action, but lacks the friendship skills to keep things sweet (often Asperger Syndrome)

Tools

- Prepare him for playtime so he knows what he is going to do e.g. play skittles then climb on the monkey bars

  This can prevent him being overwhelmed by the choice of activities on offer. Let him choose his activity (offering forced alternatives, if necessary, eg, "Would you like to play with the stilts or the skipping rope?" This means that, if football is usually fraught with difficulties, you can steer him away from it.)

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- Use **Social Stories** and/or **Language Jigs** (see Sections 6 and 7) to teach the child how to join others at play, for example, the rules of games such as 'Catch' and 'Hide and Seek'

  These techniques can make all the difference to the child who is struggling to learn how to play appropriately.

- Role play in the classroom covering what to say in the playground, for example, "Do you want to play?" when approaching others or "OK" or "No thank you, I want to be on my own", when approached

  He may be suffering low self-esteem because of recent friendship difficulties. Role-play raises confidence by arming the child with a positive way forward – 'I know what to do!'

- Use a script to take outside, for example, "Billy, would you like to play……. with me?" Prepare him for if Billy says "No" or prime Billy beforehand to say "Yes"!

  It works best when you make a point of publicly rewarding Billy for his friendly behaviour – other children will be happy to take Billy's place next playtime!

- Whisper in the child's ear what he could say to another child, for example, "Can I have a turn?"

  An adult, who knows the child well, can step in like this and avoid potential difficulties.

Case Study

Ellie had a COSID. She saw Sophie in the playground eating a packet of crisps. Sophie was friendly, saw Ellie approaching and held out the bag of crisps. Ellie proceeded to help herself, taking a huge handful. Sophie was distraught and Ellie showed no understanding as to why.

Action

Sophie was consoled, praised for her friendly behaviour and given a few more crisps from an 'emergency source'! An adult explained that we were sorry about what happened and we were all trying to teach Ellie to 'do the right thing'. During literacy that week, a Teaching Assistant used a Language Jig to teach Ellie to say "Can I have a crisp, please?" and "Thank you". She also used role-play to teach taking one or two crisps only. During playtime, an adult accompanied Ellie to prompt her to use the Language Jig. Sophie and her friends saw the teaching happening, were reassured and continued to feel positive about their classmate, Ellie.

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SECTION 17

Homework: Getting it Right

The child with Social Communication Difficulties naturally associates school with work and home with play. It can be very time consuming and extremely difficult for the family to cope with the homework issue for three reasons. Firstly, the child is generally mentally exhausted by the school day, secondly his learning style is difficult to accommodate at home and thirdly, it can upset the parent-child relationship. It can be easier to do homework at school.

Tools

- Involve parents/carers - how do they feel about homework?

  Discuss the purpose of homework. Consider giving parents/carers some choice over the type and amount of homework – academic work may not be the priority.

- Use homework to prepare children for upcoming topics/events

  Time spent sharing a **Language Jig** to prepare for the photographer's visit to school or for a shopping trip to buy shoes at the weekend may be the most relevant homework for that child.

- Use homework to generalise skills learned in class

  Parents/carers may be able to support their child in going to the shop to generalise the skill of adding money or queuing at the checkout to generalise the skill of 'lining up.'

- Use homework time to prioritise social skills and community experiences.

  Consider supporting parents/carers who are prepared to accompany their child to Cub Scouts or swimming club, by not setting formal homework, but by producing a **Language Jig** to help prepare the child for and recall the sessions.

- If homework is to be the same type as that set for the class – it is fair to set less

  Suggest parents/carers use a homework diary or contact book (see Section 18 on **Working with Parents/Carers**) to put forward their ideas. Take account of their comments and set the next homework accordingly.

- Take account of his difficulty with planning and organisation.

  Checking he has everything he needs for homework in his bag at home time may be all that is needed. Do not expect him to 'learn the hard way' – he cannot, at least not without considerable help from adults.

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- Take account of his learning style – it is likely to be visual

  Flow charts, mind maps, diagrams and demonstrations of what is required are particularly helpful.

- Avoid setting homework, which is finishing off work set in school

  It is generally more successful to provide extra time during the school day for this.

- Consider setting homework linked to his special interest, for example, listing minibeasts beginning with the letter 's'

  Stand by to be amazed. He is likely to be highly motivated and to produce impressive work with this approach. Be sure to check with parents/carers because it may have been difficult to get him to bed!

Case Study

Matthew and Dad sat down dutifully every night to tackle homework. Dad encouraged, helped with research, massaged Matthew's back, fetched drinks and snacks and then encouraged some more. After two hours, knowing no more work was going to be produced, Dad would 'lose it': angry at Matthew because he felt he could do so much better; angry at himself for being impatient when he was supposed to understand his son's difficulties.

Action

Dad met with the teacher to explain how homework was ruining family life! They agreed that homework once a week would be manageable. Dad and Matthew went swimming when homework was finished on Monday evenings.

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SECTION 18

Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers:
Moving Forwards Together

Parents/carers know their children. A consistent approach, particularly in the home and school environment, is crucial to any education plan. Teachers and parents/carers must communicate and work together as far as possible, in order to create order, security and consistency in the child's life.

Tools

- Use a contact book

  This is a book that is used by parents and school staff and is kept in the child's book bag and transferred from school to home each day. It is not necessary for both parties to write every day (although some do) but information such as 'Joseph has been awake since 4 am this morning so he may be tired' or 'Ellen had a difficult playtime. She had an argument with her friend and although they worked together this afternoon, she may react when she gets home. Perhaps you could get her to talk about it?' would be helpful.

- Regular informal contact

  This can often take place when the parent/carer picks up the child from school but avoid the daily 'was he good today?' type of question. Positive comments help ease the transition from school to home for both child and parents/carers.

  Difficulties during the day can be referred to if necessary and can also be written in the contact book, plus the solutions found. However, if negative comments are written it is advisable to discuss these verbally with the parent/carer to avoid misunderstanding. Time taken explaining the context of an action is usually well spent. If difficulties increase, a meeting can be arranged in order to discuss the matter.

- Regular formal meetings

  There will be regular contact to discuss the pupil's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and school reports, but both parents and teachers must feel able to ask for additional meetings when necessary.

  The recommendation in the SEN Code of Practice is that IEPs should be formally reviewed at least twice a year but Wiltshire recommends at least three times a year. Obviously there should be monitoring meetings for the IEPs on a very regular basis.

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- Home visits

  A home visit by the teacher (and teaching assistant where appropriate) before the child starts school is invaluable in both understanding the child and establishing a working relationship with the parents/carers. It gives the teacher insight as to how to adapt the classroom to help the child settle as quickly as possible, eg, if he is interested in dinosaurs, a picture of a dinosaur can be his coat peg symbol or dinosaurs could be available in the play area, especially on his first visit. Later, they could be used as a reward for finishing work.

- Teacher and parent/carer to sometimes work on issues that are predominantly 'home-based'

  Sometimes children can show dramatically different behaviour out of school, eg, a placid, happy child at school can be aggressive and show signs of extreme anxiety at home. Teachers need to know if this is the situation in order for them to work with parents to address the issue. The reasons for such behaviour are not always apparent and it could be that something at school is having a detrimental effect. Coping with the social aspect of the school day can be very stressful and it is not unusual for children to respond badly once they leave the school gates.

- Agree actions and record them in writing.

  People's memories of meetings and their understanding of situations are open to interpretation. At every meeting agree what the outcomes are and keep a detailed written record. Give a copy to the parents/carers.

- Be sensitive to issues raised by parents. Respect confidentiality and discuss with the parents when information must be shared with others

  Teachers often see parents at their most vulnerable and can be seen as a confidant. Occasionally one parent/carer will say something about their partner in confidence. Accept the confidence but do not agree with the comment as it may come back to haunt you.

- Honour agreements – it is the key to a trusting relationship

  If you say you will telephone on Wednesday, do so even if it only to say that you will not have the information before Friday.

- Listen, listen, listen. It is worth it

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Case study

James' mum was finding it very difficult to get James into school each morning. He would have tantrums at home and when he got to school he would cling to her and refuse to go in the classroom. This was distressing for them both and caused his mum some embarrassment each day. The teacher was spending much of her time coaxing him, unsuccessfully, into the classroom.

Action

The teacher suggested that the mother came in early one day in order to discuss how best they could help James settle into school. In discussion it became clear that James started to be difficult each morning when his favourite video had to be turned off in order to come to school. The first change was that his morning was restructured without the opportunity to turn on the video. Instead, he was allowed to watch the same video on return from school. In addition, pictures of his favourite video characters were available on his work table each morning until registration. He was given the opportunity to talk about the characters and show his drawings of them to the class.

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SECTION 19

Health and Safety: Minimising the Risks

Children with Social Communication Difficulties can be unpredictable. This makes risk assessment more difficult but being prepared can help you overcome any problems. There may be extra considerations and plans need to be made to ensure the child with SCD/ASD can be fully included: Risk assessments are vital.

Tools

- Risky situations in school

  If a child with SCD/ASD is putting himself at risk, eg, by climbing to the top of the bars in the hall, when his class does PE/games, or putting others at risk, eg, by pushing them off the play equipment at break time, you need a plan to make things safer. This might mean using visual explanations (**Social Story/Language Jig**), targeting a change in behaviour and linking to a reward system, providing extra adult support at tricky times or providing an alternative activity at break. You need to be positive and creative in finding a solution that means the child continues to access the activity. Only if these additional and different approaches were not working would a child be removed from a situation.

- Activities that take place off site

  Activities, such as swimming, mean that children may have to leave the safety of the school site and travel further afield. Good, detailed and visual preparation (**Social Story/Language Jig**) will reduce the anxiety of the child with SCD/ASD and allow him to ask questions before he goes. Talk to parents to discover if there are any particular issues of which you need to be aware, eg, he likes to run and jump into the pool. Extra help for the first sessions will ensure there is someone on hand to deal with the unexpected.

- Trips and visits

  Once again, preparation is everything! As for activities off site, visual support is needed, eg, a map showing where you are going, a plan of the site, the day's itinerary and the time you will return to school. An adult assigned to be with the child with SCD/ASD lessens risk considerably, as they are available to deal with the unexpected. Visit the site beforehand if you can, so you can see if there is anything that might be a particular difficulty. Have a backup plan for a situation where the child has become over-anxious. eg, somewhere to retreat to, like the coach.

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- Residential trips

  It's all in the preparation! A child with SCD/ASD will need far more information to reassure them than other children. Make a book about the trip some weeks before you go. Put in photos, maps, daily timetables, details about accommodation, the children he will share a room with, what food we will eat etc. Have some one-to-one sessions with the child to go through the book. Give him the opportunity to ask questions and include the answers in the book. If possible, take him (or ask the parents to take him) to see the place you will be staying prior to the trip. Have backup plan, eg, if he is not coping, a parent/carer or an adult from school can come and bring him home. Send the book home to share with parents. Ask them for as much information as possible, eg, about bedtime routines, fears/phobias, food dislikes, ability to look after his personal hygiene etc. Make plans to cope, eg, an adult to help him pack his rucksack, with a visual equipment list, for a day's outing. The benefits of the child being included will make this preparation very worthwhile.

Case Study

Tom's Year 5 class was going to stay at Braeside Residential Centre in Devizes for five days to complete a local study. He wanted to go but was very anxious about staying away from home.

Action

A meeting was held with Tom's mum and a book prepared. Tom went to visit Braeside with his Teaching Assistant. Despite reassurances, Tom did not want to sleep there so it was agreed that his mum would bring him daily, in time for breakfast, and collect him again at bedtime. Provision was made for Tom to stay on the last night and he managed to get ready for bed, but was too anxious to sleep, so his Teaching Assistant took him home.

Everyone was careful to praise Tom's attempt, so that he did not view this as a failure. His inclusion in the daily activities was highly successful.

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Websites and Addresses
for Further Information

The National Autistic Society   www.nas.org.uk

Information on Social Stories   www.thegraycenter.org

Teaching information   www.teachernet.gov.uk/**sen**

Autism Support (Charity)   Organiser: Alice West
Oak View   01722 790571
South Street   oakview3@wishford73.freeserve.co.uk
Great Wishford   www.support4autism.co.uk
SALISBURY   SP2 ONR   Helpline 01722-792823

Andrew Wakefield's organisation in the USA   www.thoughtfulhouse.org

ask   08457 585072
Wiltshire Children's Information Service
Free advice to parents and carers
Mon-Fri 9.30 am – 5.00 pm

Wiltshire National Autistic Society   0870 0203 569 (ansaphone)
                                                     autismtogether@hotmail.com
                                                     www.autism-together.org.uk

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Supporting the inclusion of pupils with

Social Communication Difficulties (SCD/ASD)

in the mainstream school.

Level 1 Training

Aims of the session

- To develop our understanding of SCD and, in so doing, a sense of empathy for individuals on the autistic spectrum

- To consider challenges we might face in providing for individuals with SCDs

- To consider potential strategies for facing these challenges and ensuring the successful inclusion of a child with SCD

What do you understand about Social Communication Difficulties?

- **On a scale of 0-10……**

  - how much do you feel you understand about Social Communication Difficulties?

  - how confident do you feel in being able to support a child with SCD?

What are Social Communication Difficulties?

Some pupils with Social Communication Difficulties have diagnoses of…

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder
- Semantic/Pragmatic Disorder

Social Communication Difficulties
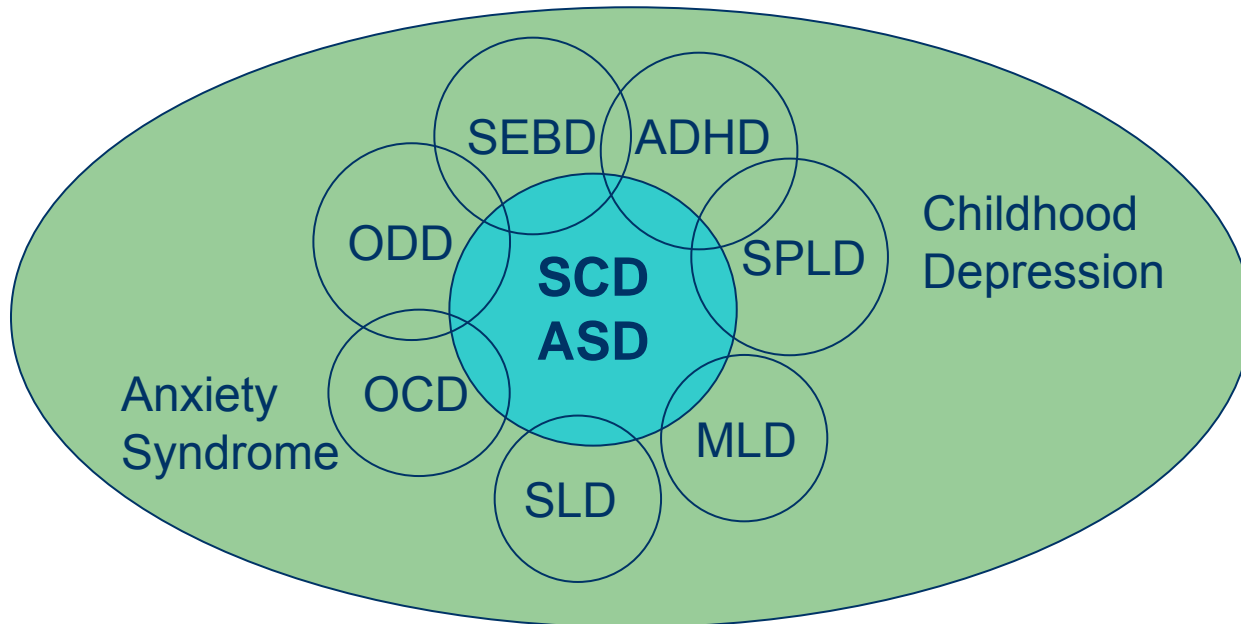
- These difficulties occur on a 'spectrum' or continuum…

strong autistic tendencies

mild autistic tendencies

…and Social Communication Difficulties *can* occur with other conditions

SEBD

ADHD

ODD

SPLD

SCD
ASD

Childhood
Depression

OCD

MLD

Anxiety
Syndrome

SLD

Gary
Mesibov
TEACCH

And some don't!

- Pupils who have social communication difficulties as part of another condition
    e.g. ADHD, SEBD, Tourettes
- Pupils who are further along the continuum and will never get a diagnosis, but still have very particular needs
- Pupils for whom formal diagnosis has not been sought – *perhaps by parental choice*

The Continuum of Social Communication Difficulties includes:

At least one child in your class and every other class in Wiltshire!

The Defining Characteristics of Social Communication Difficulties.

- Lack of social skills
- Speech is odd and pedantic (not delayed)
- Limited non-verbal communication skills
- Poor motor co-ordination up to puberty
- Special interests, often obsessive
- Often intellectually able
- Interactions are often one-sided
- Rigid interpretation of rules

But …………

not **all** pupils with Social Communication Difficulties meet all these diagnostic criteria.

So what other difficulties are we talking about?

Other difficulties associated with Social Communication

Behaviour
- Anger / Anxiety
- Disruptive behaviour
- Obsessions/unusual behaviours
- Changes in routine
- Organisation
- Coping in groups

Attention
- Listening
- Starting a task
- Staying on task
- Fatigue

Sensory and motor
- Under-sensitivity / oversensitivity
- Motor control

Communication Difficulties

Lack of Language and Communication Skills – so there is a need to improve…..

- Language (a child's misunderstanding of what is said; poor processing of information)
- Intonation (the child's own speech is often expressionless; and they are unaware of the voice expression of others)
- Facial expression (children have limited understanding and use of expression)
- Body language (children have limited understanding and use of body language and gesture)

Developing social communication (1):
Practical Strategies to develop conversation

- Create opportunities for child to initiate communication
- Use social stories/conversation cue cards to teach rules of conversation
- Teach the '**wh**' rules of conversation when talking to someone
- Use an object to identify turn in non-verbal and verbal turn taking games
- Use social stories to teach that others will have different points of view
- Use games to teach emotional and physical states
- Use social stories to teach eye contact/looking at parts of face
- Use digital photographs to develop understanding of facial expression and emotional states
- Use neutral tone of voice
- Teach changes in voice by demonstrating happy, sad, angry, frightened tones

Developing social communication (2): Practical Strategies to develop language and communication

- Allow time to talk about favourite subjects
- When the child is echo laic, try to find the reason for the anxiety
- Keep language simple, direct and unambiguous
- Explain non-literal language
- Teach common idioms, e.g. full of beans
- Allow processing time
- Be clear and precise about end goals and expectations
- Say what is to be done, not what is not to be done
- Begin instructions with the child's name
- Avoid other distractions when giving instructions
- Reinforce verbal messages with visual prompts
- Ask child to repeat instruction
- Use a reward system to reinforce desired behaviour

Social interaction

- **Social context difficulties:**
  - home/school relationships
  - Social cues
  - Inappropriate behaviour

- **Interaction difficulties:**
  - Making friends/ Keeping and sharing friends
  - Empathy and emotional understanding

- **Difficulties in understanding others:**
  - Lies and other language uses
  - Jokes
  - Accidents and bullying

  Body awareness
  - stands too close
  - avoids eye contact
  - rejection of normal body contact

Developing social interaction: **Practical Strategies**

- **Social context:**
  - Determine relevance of homework
  - Help child identify types of people and how he should speak to them
  - Use social stories to identify unacceptable behaviour/ teach alternative behaviours
  - Avoid emotional response and give feedback in neutral tone

- **Interaction:**
  - Teach turn taking games
  - Provide role models and buddies
  - Discuss what makes a good friend; focus on child's strengths
  - Name different emotions and talk about situations when they are felt; use stories
  - Teach child how emotions are expressed and appropriate responses

- **Understanding others:**
  - Teach about intentions of lies and categorise situations
  - Teach child forms of jokes and how they work
  - Ensure child is not being bullied
  - Use social stories/drama to teach difference between planned/unplanned accidents
  - Use a mentor for child to discuss incidents he finds difficult

Imagination / Flexibility of thought

- ## Barriers to thinking and learning
  - Not seeing the bigger picture
  - Resistance to change
  - Ritualistic behaviour
  - Obsessional interests
  - Single channel focus
  - Rigidity of thought
  - Lack of generalisation
  - Lack of imagination
  - Inability to distinguish between fact, fiction and imagination
  - Expectation of mind reading
  - Inability to empathise
  - Limited ability to predict or imagine the consequences

Developing Imagination and Flexibility of thought - **Practical Strategies**:

- Learning
  - demonstrate how new material relates to something learned earlier
  - Use mind maps to illustrate connections between concepts and topics
  - Develop progression in small, related steps
  - Keep classroom distractions to a minimum
  - Use exactly the same words when repeating an instruction
  - Use a work station to reduce visual distraction
  - Establish routines/ structures; use individual visual schedule
  - Ensure areas are clearly defined, with visual cues where appropriate

- Thinking
  - Use role play and individual teaching to help understand viewpoints and develop 'mind reading' techniques
  - Use texts to identify fact and fiction; categorise information
  - Use opportunities to encourage prediction, e.g. if it is snowing, what is important to wear, eat, do etc.

What will you see?
Children who...

- Have difficulties with friendships
- Are keen to follow own agenda
- Lack motivation
- Have difficulty with turn taking
- Have poor organisational skills
- Lack understanding of emotional responses
- Pupils with specific behaviour needs

Further practical strategies…..

- **Behaviour**

  - *Remember, behaviour may be serving some function for the child; consider what the function of the particular behaviour is.*

  - Reduce anxiety by using clear, consistent routines
  - Modify the environment and external factors that trigger anger
  - Help child recognise trigger points and teach/plan an appropriate response
  - Use a prompts card/signal to direct the child to use an agreed strategy to manage behaviour
  - Use social stories to re-enforce why we feel angry and what can be done
  - Note when, where and with whom disruptive behaviours occur
  - Maintain a neutral, unemotional tone
  - State explicitly what you want
  - Create a safe, supervised area where the child can go to calm down
  - Use a social story to support change

Further practical strategies…..

- **Attention**

  - Give child something to hold which might help keep his mind on the subject
  - Give the child time to process information
  - Keep information clear and concise; avoid using inference
  - Use circle time activities to promote listening
  - Modify the environment to minimise distraction
  - Use visual strategies to help child organise the task
  - Extend attention by linking reward to small steps (e.g. +20 secs.)
  - Consider the effects of fatigue and adapt tasks accordingly

Further practical strategies…..

- **Sensory and motor**

Under sensitivity…

- Restrict periods of sitting on the carpet to a realistic minimum

- Allow child to handle letters, numbers and objects

- Give the child something to do, e.g. use a stress-squeezer, when required to sit quietly

- Make the child a 'monitor' and give the child physical tasks to do

Oversensitivity

- Be aware of child's sensory sensitivities

- Give a warning of any impending noise

- Create a workstation in a quiet area of the classroom

- Use alternative activities when child is becoming distressed (e.g. during music lessons)

- Use a quiet, 'time out' area

Meeting the Pupil's Needs

How do we fit it all in......?

Meeting the pupil's needs

- There needs to be a greater emphasis on the pupil's Personal and Social Development Curriculum

- Increased social understanding will enable the pupil to access the curriculum and daily school life more fully

- In order to create time for Personal and Social Development, adjustments will need to be made to the pupil's National Curriculum timetable

Can we do this?

"Where progress is not adequate, it will be necessary to take some additional and different action to enable the pupil to learn more effectively."

(SEN Code of Practice 2001 5:41)

General principles

- Be positive!
- Try to understand (behaviour has a purpose!)
- Don't try to work on everything at once
- Maintain IEPs
- Include social target(s) – very important!
- Consider individual profiles
- Use obsessional interests as a tool
- Develop a whole-school approach
- Remember, each pupil is an individual!
- Be understanding; consider what might be going on for the individual
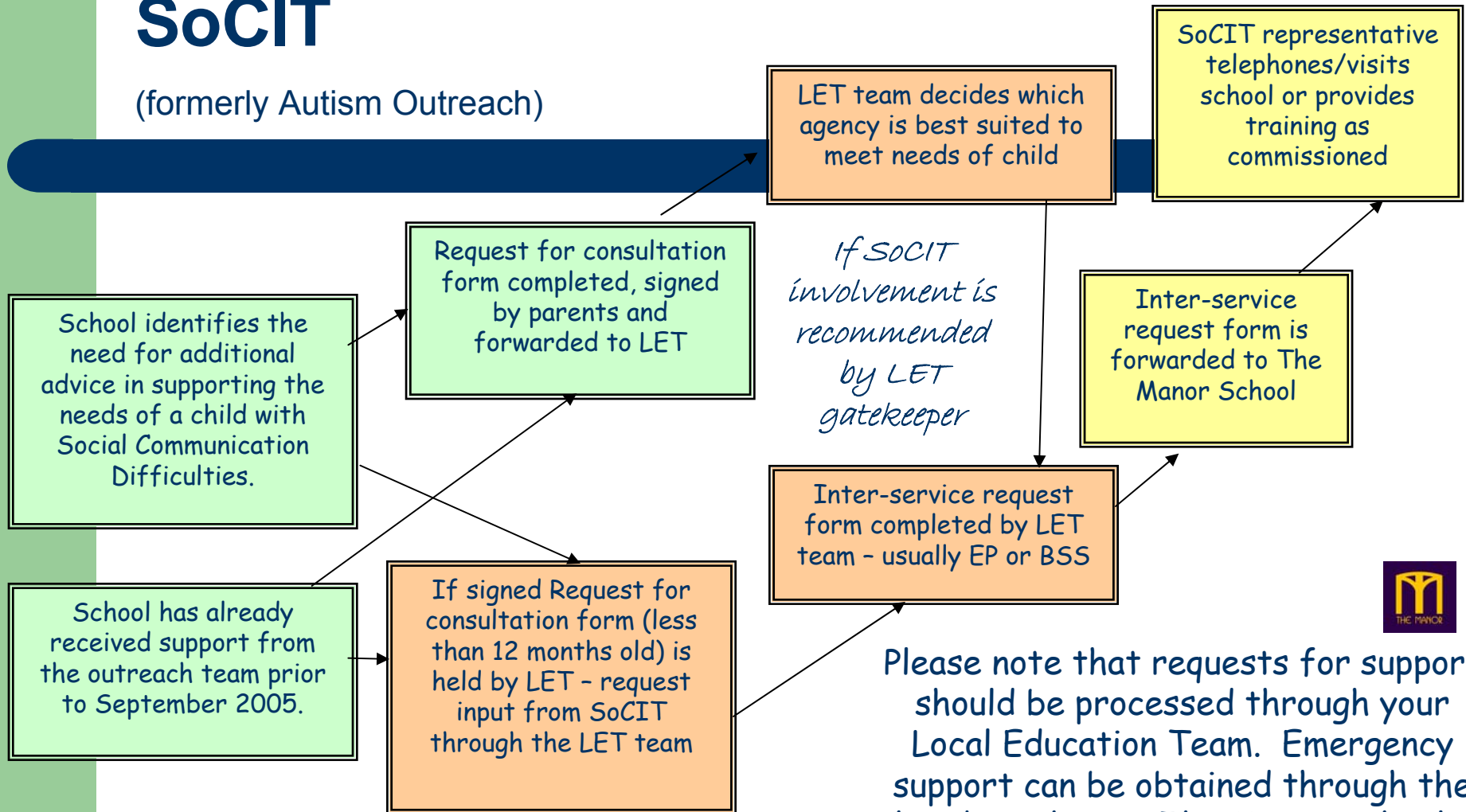
Where can I get further help?

The SCD/ASD Toolbox

- Invaluable source of information
- More practical strategies

SoCIT

(formerly Autism Outreach)

School identifies the need for additional advice in supporting the needs of a child with Social Communication Difficulties.

School has already received support from the outreach team prior to September 2005.

Request for consultation form completed, signed by parents and forwarded to LET

If signed Request for consultation form (less than 12 months old) is held by LET – request input from SoCIT through the LET team

LET team decides which agency is best suited to meet needs of child

If SoCIT involvement is recommended by LET gatekeeper

Inter-service request form completed by LET team – usually EP or BSS

Inter-service request form is forwarded to The Manor School

SoCIT representative telephones/visits school or provides training as commissioned

Please note that requests for support should be processed through your Local Education Team. Emergency support can be obtained through the head teacher at The Manor School – on (01225) 700150.

Further Reading

Accessing the curriculum for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders: using the TEACCH Programme to help inclusion
Gary Mesibov and Marie Howley

The ADHD Handbook: **a Guide for Parents & Professionals**
Alison Munden & Jon Arcelus: Jessica Kingsley: London

Approaches to Autism
National Autistic Society 2001

Asperger Syndrome (book and video)
Tony Attwood 1998/9

Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism
Schopler, Eric (ed.): Plenum: New York: 1998

Asperger Syndrome: a practical guide for teachers
Val Cumine, Julia Leach and Gill Stevenson (1998) London: David Fulton

Asperger Syndrome – practical strategies for the classroom - a teacher's guide
Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council & National Autistic Society 1998

Asperger Syndrome & Sensory Issues - Practical Solutions for Making Sense of the World
Brenda Smith Myles et al 2000

The Autistic Spectrum: A Guide for Parents & Professionals
Wing, Lorna (1996) London: Constable

Autism Spectrum Disorders: Interventions and Treatments for Children and Youth
Simpson, R (2005) California: Corwin Press

Autistic Spectrum Disorders: An Introductory Handbook for Practitioners
Jordan, Rita (1999) London: David Fulton

Autistic Spectrum Disorders in the Early Years: A Guide for Practitioners
Jordan, R (2002) Lichfield: QED

Autistic Spectrum Disorders - Practical Strategies for Teachers and Other Professionals
Northumberland County Council 2004

Autism: An Introduction to Psychological Theory
Happe, F (1999) London: Psychology Press

Autism and Early Years Practice: A Guide for Early Years Professionals, Teachers and Parents
Wall, K (2004) London: Paul Chapman

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Autism: Explaining the Enigma (2ⁿᵈ Edition)
Frith, Uta (2003) Oxford: Blackwell

Autism and Learning: A Guide to Good Practice
Powell, S, and Jordan, Rita (Ed.) (1997) London: Fulton

Autism in the Early Years: A Practical Guide
Cumine, V, Leach, J, and Stevenson, G (2000) London: David Fulton

Autism: Mind and Brain
Frith, U and Hill, E (eds.) (2004) Oxford: Oxford University Press

Autism: Preparing for Adulthood.
Howlin, P (1997) London: Routledge

Autism with Severe Learning Difficulties
Jordan, R (2001) London: Souvenir Press

Bright Splinters of the Mind
Hermelin, B (2001) London: Jessica Kingsley

Blue Bottle Mystery
Kathy Hoopman

Children with Autism: diagnosis & interventions to meet their needs
Trevarthen, Colwyn, Aitken, K, Papoudi, D and Roberts, J (1996) London: Jessica Kingsley

Children with Tourettes Syndrome: a parents guide
ed: Tracy Hearle: 1992: Woodbine House: Rockville: MD: USA

The Costs and Benefits of Earlier Identification and Effective Intervention: Final Report
Papps, I, and Dyson, A (2004) Nottingham: DfES Publications

Creating Circles of Friends: a Peer Support & Inclusion Workbook
Colin Newton & Derek Wilson: Inclusive Solutions: 2003

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time
Haddon, Mark (2003) London: Jonathan Cape/Vintage/Random House

Dealing with Feelings: an emotional literacy curriculum
Tina Rae

Developing pupil's social communication skills
Penny Barrett (and others)

Diagnosis & Assessment in Autism
Schopler, F & Mesibov, GB [TEACCH] (1988) New York: Plenum Press

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Educating Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders - a Practical Guide
Martin Hanbury 2005

Emergence: Labelled Autistic
Grandin, T & Scariano M: Arena Press: Novato: California:

Emotional Intelligence
Daniel Goleman: Bloomsbury: 1995

Enabling Communication in Children with Autism
Potter, C and Whittaker, C (2001) London: Jessica Kingsley

Excellence for all our Children
DfES (1999) DfES London

Every Child Matters: next steps
DfES (2004) Nottingham: DfES

Finding out about Asperger Syndrome, High Functioning Autism & PDD
Gerland, Gunilla: Jessica Kingsley: London

Freaks, geeks and Asperger Syndrome
Luke Jackson (2002) London: Jessica Kingsley

Any book or film by **Nick Hornby**

I am Special: Introducing Children to their Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Peter Vermeulen (2001) London: Jessica Kingsley

I have Autism. What's that?
Kate Doherty, Paddy McNally and Eileen Sherrard

The Incredible 5-point scale: Assisting Children with ASDs in Understanding Social Interactions and Controlling their Emotions
Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis

Life Behind Glass: a personal account of ASD
Wendy Lawson: Southern Cross University Press: Lismore: 1998

Living with the Ups, the Downs and the Things in Between of Asperger's Syndrome
Holliday Willey, Lianne (2003) London: Jessica Kingsley

Loners: The Life Path of Unusual Children
Wolf, Sula: (1995): Routledge: London

Managing Asperger Syndrome at College & University
Juliet and Claire Jamieson (2004) [includes CD]: London: David Fulton

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Martian in the playground
Clare Sainsbury (2000) Bristol: Lucky Duck Publishing

Meeting the needs of children with autistic spectrum disorders
Rita Jordan and Glenys Jones

Mindblindedness: An Essay on Autism and the Theory of Mind
Baron-Cohen, S (1995) Boston: MIT Press

A Mind of One's Own: A Guide to the Special Needs and Difficulties of the More Able Person with Autism
Tantum, Digby (1991) London: National Autistic Society

My Social Stories Book
Carol Gray: www.thegraycenter.org/Social_Stories.htm

My brother is different - a book for young children who have brothers and sisters with autism
Louise Gorrod

Nobody Nowhere
Williams, Donna (1992) London: Transworld/Doubleday

A Positive Approach to Autism.
Stella Waterhouse 2000

Pretending to be Normal-Living with Asperger's Syndrome
Holliday Willey, Lianne (1999) London: Jessica Kingsley

Removing Barriers to Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN
DfES (2004) Nottingham: DfES

The Rising Challenge: a Survey of LEAs on Educational Provision for Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders
Fiona Loynes: All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism 2001 National Autistic Society

Semantic Pragmatic Language Disorder
Charlotte Firth and Katherine Venkatesh. 1999

SCD/ASD: Good Practice Guidance: Guidance on SCD/ASD and Pointers to Good Practice
London: DfES/DOH (2002)

Somebody Somewhere
Williams, Donna (1994) London: Transworld/Doubleday

Supporting a Child with Autism-a Guide for Teachers and Classroom Assistants
Sharon Powell

Supporting Families of Children with Autism
Peter Randall and Jonathan Parker 1999

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Survival Strategies for Parenting Children with Bipolar Disorder
George T Lynn 2000

Search World Wide Web for **TEACCH** sites and references

Teaching young children with autistic spectrum disorders to learn: A practical guide for staff in mainstream schools
Liz Hannah

Thinking in Pictures and other Reports of my Life with Autism
Temple Grandin (1996) New York: Vintage Books

Toilet Training for Autism & Related Disorders - a Comprehensive Guide for Parents & Teachers:
Maria Wheeler 1998

A Treasure Chest of Behavioural Strategies for Individuals with Autism
Beth Fouse and Maria Wheeler 1997

Understanding and Teaching Children with Autism
Jordan, Rita and Powell, S (1995) Chichester: John Wiley

Understanding and working with autism – an insider's view
Wendy Lawson

What did you say? What do you mean? A guide to understanding metaphor
Jude Welton

What is Asperger Syndrome and how will it affect me?
National Autistic Society – Autism helpline

Why does Chris do that?
Tony Attwood (1993): London: National Autistic Society

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