

Early Years SENCO

Toolbox

Strategies for including children
with social communication difficulties
and those on the autism spectrum

Index

Foreword

Section 1: a unique child

- 1.1 Sensory difference
- 1.2 Managing behaviour
- 1.3 Health and safety

For more information see Module 1 'Inclusion Development Programme' (IDP) 'Supporting children on the autism spectrum' (Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 2009)

Section 2: positive relationships

- 2.1 Effective communication
- 2.2 Teaching emotional understanding
- 2.3 Teaching social understanding
- 2.4 Working in partnership with parents/carers
- 2.5 Obsessions and passions

For more information see Module 2 (IDP, DCSF, 2009)

Section 3: enabling environments

- 3.1 Organising the physical environment
- 3.2 Dealing with changes in routine
- 3.3 Using visual support materials
- 3.4 Language jigs

For more information see Module 3 (IPD, DCSF, 2009)

Section 4: learning and development

- 4.1 Accessing the early years' foundation stage curriculum
- 4.2 Prioritising personal, social and emotional development
- 4.3 Accessing 'carpet time'
- 4.4 Accessing outside play

For more information see Module 4 (IPD, DCSF, 2009)

Section 5: supporting transition

- 5.1 Transition between settings
- 5.2 Transition Inclusion Support Meetings (TISMs)

Appendix

- 1. Further reading
- 2. Novels, videos and films
- 3. Websites and addresses
- 4. Courses for parents

Foreword

“Teaching children with autism gives you a crucial opportunity to re-evaluate your teaching of all children and to reassert the values and goals that most of us believe should be at the heart of education,” Rita Jordan, Professor in Autism Studies
(IDP, DCSF, 2009)

This toolbox has been developed to help early year’s settings include children with social communication difficulties,(including those diagnosed on the autism spectrum or with Asperger’s Syndrome). It should be used in conjunction with the ‘Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) (DCSF, 2009) materials which will help provide practitioners with the underpinning knowledge to support children on the autism spectrum.

More and more parents are asking for their children to have the opportunity to be educated alongside their peers in their local setting. Some of these children will have a diagnosis whilst others will not. Some may already have a Statement of Special Educational Needs others may be at early years Action Plus. The strategies and ideas in the toolbox are suitable to try in both of these circumstances. The toolbox is organised under the four themes from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, DCSF, 2008) making it easy to use and offering a range of ideas and strategies that are practical and solution-based. All special education needs provision in Wiltshire is made in line with the guidance from Wiltshire Indicators and Provision Document (WIPD) (Wiltshire Council, 2008). If you need any additional support contact your Early Years inclusion adviser.

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 develops, 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 work with a child with social communication difficulties. Joining the child on his learning journey can be exciting and allows you to see the world from a different perspective. The toolbox will provide you with the tools you need to complete that journey successfully. This document is also available on – line at www.wiltshire.org.uk

Angela Everett
Early Intervention Manager
Schools and Learning

Adapted from ‘Primary Teacher’s Toolbox Including Children with Social Communication Difficulties’ 2007, Social Communication Intervention Team

Section 1: A unique child

Early Years Foundation Stage principle

“Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured.” (EYFS, DCSF, 2008).

Children with autism have a different perspective from us; they seem to see the world differently from us. This often causes them to behave differently, so going against the norm. For more details see ‘Inclusion Development Programme’ (DCSF, 2009): Supporting children on the autism spectrum, guidance book page 11.

Included in this section are strategies to manage:

Sensory difference: adapting to a child’s sensory profile.

Behaviour: a positive approach.

Health and safety: minimising the risks.

For more information about ‘A Unique Child’ see Module1 ‘Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2009) interactive DVD.

1.1 Sensory difference: adapting to a child's sensory profile

Children with social communication difficulties (SCD) 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 strategies can be put in place to help.

Case study

Ryan refused to use the toilets in his early years' setting. Observations revealed that this might be due to the noise of the hand dryer being too much for him.

Action

Ryan was accompanied to the toilet and allowed to dry his hands on paper towels.

Examples of the differences in dealing with sensory messages and the reactions that may arise are shown on the table below:

Sensory system	Hyper-sensitivity (high)	Hypo-sensitivity (low)
Tactile (touch)	Refusing to play with the sand because of the sensation	Bangs head on the floor without appearing to feel pain
Visual (sight)	Distressed by the number and intensity of bright colours in the mobiles hanging in the playroom	Enjoys spinning objects to increase the stimulation
Auditory (hearing)	Distressed by the level of noise in the playroom and puts hands over his ears	Does not respond to instructions 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 go into the toilets because of the smell of the cleaning fluids	Licks things that are new to him
Vestibular (balance)	Finds it difficult to make and co-ordinate some movements	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

1.2 Managing behaviour: a positive approach

Children with Social Communication Difficulties (SCD) have a different perspective from the rest of us and 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.

Case study

Kieran always became very distressed when it was time to put away the train set and ended up being aggressive towards practitioners.

Action

The practitioner told Kieran that the train set was going away in three minutes and showed him the sand timer. When the sand ran out she said the sand timer says it is time to put the train away and he did.

Tools

- Use specific praise regularly when he is doing something right. Use phrases such as “good sitting,” or “putting your hand up was a good idea,”
A visual thumbs up or handshake can reinforce appropriate behaviour.
- Be positive eg “bricks in the box,” rather than “don’t throw your bricks 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 mini-beasts will be more motivated when counting woodlice. Others may respond to “puzzles 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, sand timer, or countdown.
Remember he may be engrossed and unaware of time passing. Sudden transitions can be very challenging for a child with social communication difficulties.
- Do not make an issue out of inappropriate behaviour.
Avoid showing shock/disgust. Stress the appropriate behaviour, eg say “Brian, you need to 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 3).

He may respond to: “it says here, puzzles, then coat on to go outside”.

- Identify what triggers inappropriate behaviour, eg by using an ABC chart (antecedents, behaviour, consequences).

Record 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 wagging your finger! It is important to know the rewards that will motivate the child.

1.3 Health and safety: minimising the risks

Children with Social Communication Difficulties (SCD) 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 can be fully included: Risk assessments are vital.

Case study

The early years' setting has an annual trip to the farm. The play leader visited the farm prior to the trip and conducted a risk assessment.

Action

In preparation for the visit a meeting was held with Tom's mum and a book of photos from last year's visit was prepared. Tom's key person discussed issues from the risk assessment and actions agreed to minimise the risks. It was felt that Tom would have difficulties with the group tractor ride and so it was agreed Tom and his key person would spend this time on the stationary tractors in the play area. A language jig was prepared a few days before the visit; this was used at home and in the setting alongside the book of photographs.

Tom's inclusion in the visit was felt to be a great success.

Tools

- Risky situations in setting:

If a child with SCD is putting himself at risk, eg by climbing on top of tables/hall stage etc, or putting others at risk, eg by pushing them off the play equipment, you need a plan to make things safer. This might mean using visual explanations (**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. 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 visiting the local park, mean that children may have to leave the safety of the setting and travel further field. Good, detailed and visual preparation (**language jig**) will reduce the anxiety of the child with SCD 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 on the skate park. Extra numbers of adults 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, for example a map showing where you are going, a plan of the site, the day's activity and the time you will return. An adult assigned to be with the child with SCD lessens risk considerably, as they are available to deal with the unexpected. Visit the site beforehand if you can, so that 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 or the unused onsite classroom.

Section 2: positive relationships

Early Years Foundation Stage principle

'Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.' (EYFS, DCSF, 2008).

For more details about supporting positive relationships, please see 'Inclusion Development Programme, (DCSF, 2009); supporting children on the autism spectrum, guidance book page 21.

Included in this section are strategies to manage:

Effective communication: making your words count.

Teaching emotional understanding: learning to recognise and cope with your own feelings and those of others.

Teaching social understanding: what should I include and what techniques should I use?

Working in partnership with parents/carers: moving forwards together.

Obsessions and passions: how to broaden horizons.

For more information about 'positive relationships' see Module 2 'Inclusion Development Programme, (DCSF, 2009) interactive DVD.

2.1 Effective communication: making your words count

The child with social communication difficulties (SCD) 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.

Case study

Whenever the practitioners said, "OK everyone, listen everyone It is time to go outside," Jordan shouted "I hate outside" and he banged his fists on the table or turned his chair over. The practitioners notice this happened everyday at this time of day.

Action

The practitioners all agreed to be consistent in their approach. They used the visual timetable and simplified their language 'Jordon outside play'.

Tools

- Reduce your language eg: "David, dinner time," rather than "it's dinner time; I want you all to come into the other room and sit down."

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

- Use the child's name at the beginning of the instruction, eg: "Joseph, (pause)..... find a book then 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.

- Use positive rather than negative instructions, e.: "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 3), photographs, written words, symbols etc.

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

- Don't use the 'wh' words eg: what, where, why, when

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

Use of cueing (sentences for children to complete) "Todd, do you want...", while showing an apple at snack time.

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

Re-phrasing often confuses the child with social communication difficulties.

- Use concrete rather than abstract language, eg: “Write Sam here,” rather than: “write your name on the picture.”

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: “Point to the cat,” rather than “Where is the cat?”

He may have the understanding, but may find it difficult to give the answer.

2.2 Teaching emotional understanding: learning to recognise and cope with your own feelings and those of others

Children with social communication difficulties (SCD) often find 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 personal, social and emotional development through targets on an individual education plan (IEP).

Case study

Gary enjoyed the emotional reaction he observed in others. He laughed when they became angry.

Action

Gary's key person made two sets of emotions cards. She used these with Gary to play pairs games helping him to recognise expressions.

Tools

- Learning about their 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.

Use happy or sad faces to help child express feelings.

- Reacting to others.

A child with social communication difficulties may 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, for example to gently pat the child's shoulder, or find an adult to help.

2.3 Teaching social understanding: what should I include and what techniques should I use?

Children with social communication difficulties (SCD) 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 may be delivered as part of personal, social and emotional development or targeted in an individual education plan (IEP).

Case study

Sam, four years old, wanted to play with the group of children playing 'Farmer's in his den' but he always wanted to be the farmer.

Action

Sam was taught to take turns in every activity and given a script to use 'your turn /my turn'.

Tools

- Provide simplified rules in a visual way and teach what these mean.
- Always replace an undesirable behaviour with a positive behaviour.

Replace stop kicking with "feet on the floor".

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

- Teach the child how to behave in social situations.

The child may respond to a language jig. You can use prompt cards, which show a picture of the desirable behaviour and a written instruction. Practice skills, such as lining up safely.

- Teach the child appropriate social approaches.

This will include phrases and actions eg use the other child's name to attract attention. "Would you like to play with me?" Some children may use inappropriate greetings such as attempting to hug a stranger. They will need to be taught appropriate greetings for different people, who can be hugged and whose hand you may shake.

- Language jigs.

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 and preparing a child for change eg the photographer coming into the group. See section 3 **language jigs** for examples and instructions on how to write these.

2.4 Working in partnership with parents/carers: moving forwards together

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

Case study

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

Action

The key person suggested that the mum came in early one day in order to discuss how best they could help James settle into the setting. 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 the setting. 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 when he got home. In addition, pictures and books of his favourite video characters were available in the setting. He was given the opportunity to talk about the characters and to show these to his key person and peers.

Tools

- Use a contact book.

This is a book that is used by parents and setting staff and is transferred from setting to home each day. It is not necessary for both parties to write every day, although some do, but can convey useful information such as 'Joseph has been awake since 4am and so he may be tired,' or 'Ellen had a difficult afternoon. She was upset by the unexpected arrival of a visitor with a new puppy; she may react when she gets home. Perhaps you could get her to talk about it.' This would be helpful.

- Regular informal contact.

This can often take place when the parent/carer picks up the child from setting, but avoid the daily 'was he good today?' type of question. Positive comments help ease the transition from setting 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, as well as 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 child's Individual Education Plan (IEP), but both parents and practitioners must feel able to ask for additional meetings when necessary.

Encourage parents to share with the setting any strategies that they use at home.

Encourage parents to apply the strategies used in the setting at home.

Remember to celebrate jointly any progress made by the child.

The recommendation in the 'SEN Code of Practice' (DFES, 2001) is that IEPs should be formally reviewed at least twice a year but Wiltshire recommends every six to eight weeks as children of this age can change very quickly. Obviously there should be monitoring meetings for the IEPs on a very regular basis.

- Home visits.

A home visit by the key person and/or setting SENCo before the child starts at the setting is invaluable in both understanding the child and establishing a working relationship with the parents/carers. It gives the practitioner insight as to how to adapt the playroom 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. Dinosaurs could be used as a reward for finishing an activity.

- Practitioners and parent/carer sometimes work on issues that are predominantly 'home-based'.

Sometimes children can show dramatically different behaviour at home. For example, a placid, happy child at the setting can be aggressive and show signs of extreme anxiety at home. Practitioners 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 or someone at the setting is having a detrimental effect. Coping with the social aspect of the setting can be very stressful and it is not unusual for children to respond badly once they go home.

- 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. It is a good idea for a third party to attend such meetings and take minutes.

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

Practitioners often see parents at their most vulnerable and they can be seen as someone to confide in. 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. If parents are struggling to cope at home, suggest they might find attending an 'early bird' course' valuable (see appendix 4).

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

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

- Listen, listen, listen. It is worth it.

2.5 Obsessions and passions: how to broaden horizons

Children with social communication difficulties (SCD) sometimes have unusual interests and attachments to objects about which they can be obsessive. The subject can be a source of comfort and pleasure. They can be passionate about their interests/objects and find it difficult to concentrate on other topics. The playroom environment needs to be supportive of the child's needs.

Case study

Lauren, aged four, had an obsession with Barbie and would not leave the house without her doll. When she was at her early years' setting she was unable to play due to the fact that she could not put the doll down.

Action

Her Mum made her a Barbie bag which was used as a bed for Barbie to sleep in when she was at the setting. This allowed Lauren to play freely. By the time she went to school she was happy to leave Barbie at home asleep.

Tools

- Use the child's interest to encourage him to explore the environment, eg if the child is interested in Thomas the Tank Engine, allow him to paint wheels at the painting table.
- Be understanding and incorporate the child's interest into activities, eg if he likes pigs, include this when playing with the construction toys.
- 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, use a sand timer to allow two minutes for talk about Postman Pat once other activities have been completed. If the child forgets the rule, remind him by saying: "**First** sand, **then** Postman Pat." Provide a language jig (see section 4) to explain the rules for visual support. Use the visual timetable to remind the child of the order of the day's events. Reward time spent on desired activities.

- Establish a routine for parting with a favoured toy.

Section 3: enabling environments

Early Years Foundation Stage principle

'The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning,' (EYFS, DCSF, 2008).

For more information about the learning environment please see the Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2009): Supporting Children on Autism Spectrum, guidance book page 30.

Included in this section are strategies to manage:

Organising the physical environment: arranging the playroom to maximise learning.

Dealing with changes in routine: picking up the pieces.

Using visual support strategies: making sure a child knows what to do.

Language jigs: how to make and use.

For more information about 'enabling environments' see module 3 'Inclusion Development Programme, (DCSF, 2009) interactive DVD.

3.1 Organising the physical environment: arranging the playroom to maximise learning

The child with social communication difficulties (SCD) often finds the busy playroom environment overwhelming. He needs to be in an ordered and stable environment where he can be as independent as possible.

Case study

Ben, aged three, had settled well in his early years' setting and could follow the routine of the group with the help of a visual time table. However, he was still having difficulty when it was story time, when he would refuse to sit with the group and often disrupted the session.

Action

He was given his own mat to sit on and allowed to hold his favourite book.

Tools

- Consider the child's first impression of the playroom; if necessary, provide a safe, quiet space near the door where the child can observe what is happening.
- 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
 - lighting
 - noise level.
- Consider an individual table.
This minimises distractions and enables the child to keep on task.
- Keep the workspaces as uncluttered as possible
- Give prior notice of changes in the day
Provide a **visual timetable** (see section 3 'using visual support materials'). Routine is important to him and he will need to know what is going to happen.
- During group activities, other children can be encouraged to be friendly and helpful.
- Use visual techniques such as visual signs, colour coding and clear marking of areas eg a coloured carpet square for the child to sit on during story time, a photo of the child beside his coat peg, on his tray etc.

3.2 Dealing with changes in routine: picking up the pieces.

Children with social communication difficulties (SCD) usually learn best in a structured environment where routines are learned and followed. They may be slow to develop the ability to understand and accept change. In any early years setting, changes in routine are inevitable and can throw a child 'off track'. A visual timetable (see section 3 'using visual support materials') and careful preparation to warn the child of any change can minimise difficulties and have a positive effect on behaviour at home and in the setting.

Case study

The practitioner at Jamie's setting explained that later that week they would be going on a wellie walk around the playing field. Jamie became inconsolable and screamed repeatedly, "not going!"

Action

The practitioners prepared Jamie for a walk with a friend. They wore their wellies in the outside area a few days before. The practitioner made a language jig in which Jamie was depicted wearing his outdoor clothes. Jamie was holding hands with the practitioner and returning to the setting where his mum was waiting. Jamie showed his dad the language jig. Jamie enjoyed the walk with the others.

Tools

- Be friendly and reassuring. When the photographer or other visitors come into the setting say to the child: "I will help you, it will be OK."

This approach shows the child we understand any change in routine may make him feel anxious and therefore difficult for him to accept.

- Use **language jigs** (see sections 3) as a visual representation of the expected sequence of events.

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** with the child eg when introducing a language jig for the first time use a familiar routine before using it for a new event.

Introducing a language jig either in the setting and/or at 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** with their child.

- 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.

The child may like number sequences, and respond well to this strategy.

- Make a special photograph book as preparation for transition, for example, moving to a new room or setting. (See section 5 supporting transition)

Arranging extra visits and taking photographs of 'faces and places' in the new room/setting can smooth the transfer. Well-planned extra induction will pay dividends by lowering anxiety. Arranging initial visits when no other children are in attendance may help to lower anxiety levels..

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 when all else fails:

- 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 hand and leading him confidently to a pre-arranged place of safety, eg quiet room, bean bag in a corner of the room, or remove other children to another area of the room.

It is often best to say nothing and wait at this stage, until the child calms down.

- Use a calm, emotionless 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 favourite toy.

This allows child and practitioner time to re-adjust.

3.3 Using visual support materials: making sure a child knows what to do

Most children with social communication difficulties (SCD) 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.

Case study

Thomas found it very difficult to wait for his turn to use the slide and would push pass the other children.

Action

Thomas was given a wait card to hold providing him with something to concentrate on until it was his turn.

Tools

- Use of a visual timetable
This could be the timetable for the session displayed in the playroom. If referred to each session, changes in the routine could be illustrated in order to prepare all children.
- Personal timetable
Most children would benefit from their own timetable. This could make use of pictures or symbols illustrating the daily activities such as outdoor play/ drinks time/storytime. It should be permanently displayed so that they can refer to it easily.
- 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 child to go to the toilet, the toilet symbol can be shown to him to reinforce the verbal instruction. Symbols for 'snacktime', 'quiet' or 'waiting' can be used in a similar way.
- 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 this can be three symbols/pictures representing 'table', 'puzzles' and 'trains'. The jig both illustrates and reinforces the desired behaviour. (See section 3 'language jigs'.)
- Use of the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) 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) and cue cards. For more information see appendix 3 'Websites and address.'

3.4 Language jigs: how to make and use

Case study

Peter was having difficulty separating from his mother when he came to his setting.

Action

Mum was given a language jig to use at home. This showed Peter arriving at the setting, hanging up his coat, saying bye to mum, playing with toys, then mum returning. This was kept on the side so he could look at it whenever he needed to.

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 sections, generally four or five. Each section will include a simple drawing with a few words to explain the drawing.

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 that will motivate them to complete the activity.

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

The activity or change in routine is broken down into small steps so that each section in the language jig is one step for the child.

Language jigs usually prepared in advance, but it can be useful to have a blank format with you all so you can quickly produce a language jig to cope with the unexpected.

You can repeatedly refer to the pictures and words, saying: "It says here.... Then... and then you do... that you like," etc.

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 on the next page.

Language jig



Section 4: learning and development

Early Years Foundation Stage principle

'Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected' (EYFS, DCSF, 2008).

For more information on teaching children to play and explore please see Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2009): supporting children on the autism spectrum, guidance book page 41.

Included in this section are strategies to access:

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Carpet time

Outside play

For more information about 'learning and development' see Module 4 'Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2009) interactive DVD.

4.1 Accessing the Early Years Foundation Stage

Appropriate strategies need to be applied based on both the child's present level of functioning and on the practitioner's knowledge and understanding of how social communication difficulties affect the child's learning style.

Case study

Fred was a confident boy. He had made a special friend called Jim. Jim and Fred played together all the time. Fred did not like Jim to play with one else, he was his special friend.

Fred always led their play and staff became worried that Jim was finding it difficult. If Fred could not sit with Jim at snack time Fred would have a tantrum, lying on the carpet and crying.

Action

The practitioners decided that Fred and Jim should not sit on the same table at snack time. They warned Fred before he washed his hands that he and Jim would sit on different tables by showing him their name cards on different tables. The setting carefully chose two other boys to sit beside Fred who shared an interest in dinosaurs so he felt more relaxed and happier sharing facts about dinosaurs.

Tools

- If possible, relate aspects of the activity to the child's direct experience.
If offering cutting and sticking ensure you have resources linked to special interests eg catalogues of washing machines/trains.
- Present a new activity as visually as possible.
The child may find it difficult to imagine/understand what is required and may need to refer to an example of the finished item. Model the language explicitly eg spread glue on leaf.
- Collaborative work in small groups may need to be monitored.
The child may need encouragement to consider the ideas of others and to compromise when necessary.
- Adopt a flexible approach to time allocation of activities.

The key principle is to retain breadth of curriculum whilst adapting time allocation to put more emphasis on personal and social development. In addition, certain subjects can present particular difficulties for the child, but structured teaching and positive behaviour management can really help here.

For additional information on supporting children with autism in each area of learning and development please see 'Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2009): supporting children on the autism spectrum pages 44, 45 and 46.

4.2 Prioritising personal, social and emotional development

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

For inclusion to be successful, the child needs to be accessing the learning opportunities in the setting, in adult initiated learning and within a timescale. Initially, this may involve an emphasis on personal, social and emotional development to enable access to other curricular areas at a later stage.

Case study

Sam is academically very able and entered the early years' setting one year before starting primary school. He was fascinated by numbers and able to name everyday items in French. However, the beginning of the day was generally problematic. Sam arrived during registration time, he rushed into the room, 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 practitioner made a visual sequence to show Sam's routine on arrival, with accompanying pictures.

- 1 Coat on peg
- 2 Lunch box on trolley
- 3 Wave goodbye to mum
- 4 Walk to carpet tile
- 5 Sit on carpet tile

Sam's key person introduced him to the sequence one afternoon in preparation for the next morning and shared the idea with Sam's mum. The setting's early morning routine once again became the gentle introduction to the day, as was intended.

Tools

- TEACCH approach (see section 3 'using visual support materials')

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

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

- Teach 'Activity first then...(reward)'.

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 playroom use, eg windmills, spinning tops or toys that play a tune. Visual prompts to accompany the spoken language can be very effective, eg saying: "puzzle first, then the computer," whilst pointing to symbols of 'puzzle' followed by 'computer'. At this stage we are teaching 'activity first then.....(reward)' - other learning objectives are not the priority. The 'activity' needs to be visually presented and easily achievable.

- Use the 'small steps' approach

Rewarding any small step towards sitting and working, eg sitting on the chair or looking at the puzzle 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 the child, you will be able to sense how frequently and for how long he can be expected to sit and play. Gradually, the working period can be extended from a few seconds to a few minutes over an extended period of time. He may well concentrate on an activity of his own choosing for a much longer period than others in his peer group. Giving specific praise for effort may help to raise his profile in the setting.

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

Ensure you withhold the reward until the activity is completed but assist if necessary, eg, your hand over his hand to complete the puzzle. Once the puzzle is completed he gets the reward. Gradually, adult intervention can be phased out until he can be expected to do the puzzle unaided before getting his reward.

- Individual activity table

This is useful in early stages as a step towards playing alongside others. A carefully selected playmate can be invited to play alongside the child occasionally. Gradually, with support, the child will begin to play alongside others using his individual activity table less frequently.

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

When in use, the timetable may reduce anxiety. The child may lack the imagination to know how long it is until 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 the routine, not you. If changes are necessary, eg rain stops outside play, involve the child in changing the symbols. This can help to gain acceptance. He may be motivated by removing/covering/ticking off activities as they finish.

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

Some children with SCD can be 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 for 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 the child 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 eg 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 a written prompt to teach: 'May I have.....'

Most children with SCD see a playmate 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 'May 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 repeat/or show the card to a playmate before saying it out loud. Priming the playmate beforehand and rewarding him or her for co-operating is essential!

- Explain to playmates 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 practitioner, or ignoring inappropriate behaviour.

More explanation may be needed as to why he needs flexible arrangements. This should be discussed with parents.

4.3 Accessing 'carpet time'

Children with social communication difficulties (SCD) often find it difficult to attend to what is being said. Therefore, time spent on the carpet, listening to practitioners, can be one of the most difficult times for both children and the practitioner.

Case study

Kayleigh found it difficult to sit still and was easily bored. She could not concentrate long enough on the group discussion at carpet time and liked to interrupt the practitioner at every opportunity, usually asking questions about some unrelated topic and prodding the child next to her.

Action

Kayleigh was given her own carpet tile to sit on. The practitioner could see when her attention was wandering and would bring it back by mentioning her name or asking her a direct question. Kayleigh was also given a small length of ribbon to twiddle with which helped maintain her focus of attention.

Tools

- Child to sit close to the practitioner
This minimises distractions and enables the practitioner to give unobtrusive reminders to refocus his attention, eg a touch on the shoulder.
- Use visual material and visual aids to maintain interest
Some children may respond well to the use of a hand puppet. Some children may need to have their own copy of the book being shared, or something else to hold.
- Child sitting in a defined space (chair or carpet square)
This ensures that the child with SCD 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 out for

'Talking' sessions will always be difficult and, therefore, expectations of the child need to be adjusted accordingly. The outcome needs to be kept positive and 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 own area to play with an adult close by.
- For some children it is more helpful to bring them to the carpet for the last 5 - 10minutes. By doing this the child leaves the carpet at the same time as all the other children and has some experience of success. The time then increases as the child becomes more settled.

- 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 other children).

- Flexibility in the use of carpet time

Occasionally, the child's time may be better spent on other aspects of the curriculum during carpet-time. This could be 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 flitting from one activity to another.

- Offer an alternative individual activity

If the child cannot attend to the large group story/circle time 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 topic. That way, he will not be disrupting others on the carpet and will be doing something constructive.

4.4 Accessing outside play

For the child with SCD the outside area is one of the most important learning environments, providing opportunities to teach social skills in a naturally occurring way. People are the most important resource in the outside area, especially those in a position to facilitate interaction with other children and encourage and promote friendships.

Case study

During outside play, Ben liked to stand on the drain cover. The drain cover was slightly away from the main play area, and had an interesting surface. However, the drain cover was out of bounds. Practitioners repeatedly told Ben to come off it. Ben was not aware he was being asked to move away; he appeared to ignore them. This exasperated the practitioners because they felt the other children perceived that Ben was being allowed to stay on the drain.

Action

In a staff meeting the practitioners discussed this and with parental consent decided to tell the other children why Ben liked to stand on the drain cover during outside play. The children began to understand that Ben often felt anxious about joining in the fun and was not quite ready. He needed to familiarize himself with the outside area. It was agreed that allowing Ben to stand on the drain cover was seen as a step towards joining in. At every opportunity, practitioners explained to other children that their example and encouragement to come and join in was helping teach Ben to join in.

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

Type A – may wander aimlessly on his own, often around the perimeter, away from other children.

Tools

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

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

- Have 'be-frienders' (eg an adult and another child) 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 and this enables them to extend the play subtly in a natural way. Choose a child who may already have established a positive relationship with the child, with well developed play skills if possible.

- Help the child become familiar with the outside area by walking around the perimeter with a practitioner.
- Let him go to a quieter part of the outside area.

He may be timid and overwhelmed by the noise and activity of the main 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!
- Give him something specific to do.
This could be sweeping leaves, watering flowers, taking out the outside toy box or holding the door open. 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.
Some children enjoy the physical activity and forget they are holding hands. Other 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.

Type B – wants to be part of the play, but lacks friendship skills.

Tools

- Prepare him for outside using the visual timetable so that he knows what he is going to do eg 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 riding a trike is usually fraught with difficulties, avoid this option).
- Use **language jigs** (see section 3) to teach the child how to join others at play.
These techniques can make all the difference to the child who is struggling to learn how to play appropriately.
- Model appropriate language covering what to say, 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.
- Use the visual timetable outside, eg pictures of toys on offer, then pictures of walking in and then sitting on the carpet.
- Whisper in the child's ear what he could say to another child, for example: "May I have a turn?"
- A practitioner, who knows the child well, can step in like this and avoid potential difficulties.

Section 5: Supporting transition

'A high quality early years experience provides firm foundations on which to build future academic, social and emotional success. Key to this is ensuring continuity between all settings and that children's social, emotional and educational needs are addressed appropriately. Transition should be seen as a process, not an event and should be planned for and discussed with children and parents. Settings should communicate information which will secure continuity of experiences for children between settings' (EYFS, DCSF, practice guidance, page 10, 2008).

For more information on transition between settings please see Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2009): supporting children on the autism spectrum, guidance book page 39. Additional ideas for good practice during transition see the Wiltshire early years transition liaison guide.

Included in this section are strategies for:

A seamless transition: careful planning.

Transition inclusion support meetings process (TISMs)

Transition Inclusion Support Meetings (TISM) and the Wiltshire Early Years Transition Liaison guide (2007) which promotes best practice are both underpinned by government legislation, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995, 2005) and the Children Act (2004). The DDA duties require all providers of childcare and education to make "reasonable adjustments" for children with additional needs. These duties are anticipatory and therefore providers must plan ahead. A multi –agency approach to transition is good practice for children with additional needs. The use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) fully supports this process and is the recommended tool to ensure that the child's needs are fully understood and planned for. This approach celebrates the principles of the EYFS, (DCSF, 2008)

For more information about 'planning for transition' see Module 5 'Inclusion Development Programme (DCSF, 2009) interactive DVD.

5.1 Seamless transition: careful planning

Children with SCD often find the transition from home to an early years' setting, or from setting to setting, difficult. Any transition will need to be very carefully planned and managed.

Case study

Jessica was due to move from the toddler room to the nursery room at the end of the April. She found any transition difficult but responded well to the visual timetable put in place by her key person Amanda.

Action

Amanda met with mum and talked to her about the new routines in the nursery room. They visited the nursery room together to meet the staff and find out where everything was. Amanda made two copies of a photo book of staff and key places in the nursery room such as where to hang coats and the snack area. One photo book was given to Jessica to take home and the other was kept in the toddler room for Amanda to share regularly with Jessica. Amanda also arranged to take Jessica on several visits to the nursery the first was arranged when they were no other children present.

Tools

- Arrange initial visits to new environments when there are no other children present. This helps to ensure the child is not made to feel more anxious by having to engage socially with others.
- Walk the child around the boundaries of the new outside area to help establish where it is permitted to go.
- Pass on copies of familiar picture cue cards to the next setting and other successful strategies that you have found to work.
- The key person should accompany the child on visits wherever possible.
- Build up the time gradually spent in this new and possibly over stimulating environment.
- Provide a quiet, distraction free area where the child can start the day observing before joining other children and where they can retreat to if they feel stressed.
- If possible arrange for the child to share their learning journey with new practitioners.

5.2 Multi-agency Transition Inclusion Support Meeting (TISM) process

Child in early years setting

If possible three new terms before school entry one or more of the following:

- Identified level of need at Common Assessment Framework (CAF) level 2
- Identified level of need through a multi-agency meeting
- Be at Early Years Action Plus
- Be in receipt of inclusion support funding
- Be in receipt of an on-going and regular targeted intervention programme
- Increased vulnerability at transition
- Receiving support from outreach or parenting programme.

Child within first two terms in primary school

- Child has unmet needs, identified at level 2 within a CAF.

With informed parental consent refer to TISM with professional evidence including use of Wiltshire Indicators and Provision Document (WIPD).

Consent forms can be obtained from early intervention team members or nikki.hunt@wiltshire.gov.uk

Possible meeting outcomes

- Personalised induction programme
- Multi agency sharing of successful strategies and outcomes
- Responsibility exchange between professionals
- Transition period agreed maximum of two new terms
- Inform the allocation of resources
- Review training needs of staff
- Undertake a CAF
- Agreed inclusion plan
- Inform school accessibility plan and provision map
- Transition period agreed maximum of two new terms
- Application made for funding as a contribution towards inclusion for 13 weeks
- Agree protocol for review meeting.

TISM REVIEW

- Review of the child's transition plan
- Ensure handover to appropriate services and lead professional
- Child still requires additional support over and above standard provision - resources may be available (see WIPD)
- Evidence of support/progress/regression will be considered at the TISM review and consideration will be given to further actions and in exceptional circumstances continue support

Appendix 1 – 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 and Professionals

Alison Munden and 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 and National Autistic Society 1998

Asperger Syndrome and Sensory Issues - Practical Solutions for Making Sense of the World

Brenda Smith Myles et al 2000

The Autistic Spectrum: A Guide for Parents and 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

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 and 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: DCFS Publications

Creating Circles of Friends: a Peer Support and Inclusion Workbook

Colin Newton and 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 and Assessment in Autism

Schopler, F and Mesibov, GB [TEACCH] (1988) New York: Plenum Press

Educating Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders - a Practical Guide

Martin Hanbury 2005

Emergence: Labelled Autistic

Grandin, T and 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 and 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 and University

Juliet and Claire Jamieson (2004) [includes CD]: London: David Fulton

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

Survival Strategies for Parenting Children with Bipolar Disorder

George T Lynn 2000

Teaching play to children with autism

Nicky Phillips and Liz Beavan 2007

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 and Related Disorders - a Comprehensive Guide for Parents and 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

Appendix 2 - 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 and Colleges

Barbara Maines (Narrated by Rita Jordan)

Lucky Duck (Video) 2002 ISBN-1-873-94289-3

Appendix 3 - Websites and addresses for further information

The National Autistic Society at www.nas.org.uk

Information on Social Stories at www.thegraycenter.org

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

Autism Support (Charity) Alice West
oakview3@wishford73.freemove.co.uk

Oak View
South Street
Great Wishford
SALISBURY SP2 0NR
01722 790571

www.support4autism.co.uk Helpline 01722-792823

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

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

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

Appendix 4 - Courses for parents

EarlyBird and EarlyBird Plus information

The EarlyBird and Early Bird Plus programmes were designed and are overseen by the NAS EarlyBird Centre.

Philosophy

The EarlyBird philosophy is that early intervention is essential for children with autistic spectrum disorders to help maximise their learning potential. The EarlyBird programme supports a positive approach to living with a child with ASD. It gives information, explanation and practical strategies which boost parent's confidence in working with their child. The EarlyBird tutors encourage an informal, friendly atmosphere, which fosters a team approach throughout. Parents and professionals are encouraged to work together and support each other, in small groups

The NAS EarlyBird programme

What is it?

The National Autistic Society EarlyBird programme, is a course run for parents of **pre-school aged** children with (or in the process of being diagnosed with) an autistic spectrum disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome and autism).

The EarlyBird programme explains to parents why people with ASD experience the world differently. The programme then shares with parents ideas about how they can help their child develop. Once parents acquire an understanding of why the child with autism's development is different, they are able to go on working out how to do things differently in order to best help.

Sessions

The programme involves eight group sessions, covering the three content strands – autism, communication and behaviour and four home visits, interspersed between the group sessions, where activities designed and developed within the group sessions, are videoed, to enable feedback to parents and self evaluation.

Families

The course can accommodate up to six families who have pre-school aged children.

The NAS EarlyBird Plus programme

What is it?

The National Autistic Society EarlyBird Plus programme, is a course run for parents of **school aged** children, aged up to and including eight years old, with (or in the process of being diagnosed with) an autistic spectrum disorder (including Asperger's Syndrome and autism).

However, unlike the EarlyBird programme, the parents are invited to bring a professional involved with their child. This is usually a teaching assistant or another member of teaching staff.

The EarlyBird Plus programme, like the EarlyBird programme, explains to parents and teaching staff (teams) why people with ASD experience the world differently.

The programme then shares with the teams ideas about how they can help their child develop. Once the team members acquire an understanding of why the child with autism's development is different, they are able to go on working out how to do things differently in order to best help, both at home and school.

Sessions

The programme involves eight group sessions, covering the three content strands – autism, communication and behaviour and three home visits, interspersed between the group sessions, where activities designed and developed within the group sessions, are discussed, to enable feedback to teams and self evaluation, in addition to further support to apply strategies to individual problems.

How to apply for EarlyBird and EarlyBird Plus courses

Families (not professionals) should contact the EarlyBird administrator at Wiltshire Council on 01225 771677 to request an information pack. This will give additional information and advice on dates of forthcoming information sessions. An application form will also be sent, which can be brought to the information session to secure a place on the course. All places are allocated on a first come first served basis.

The National Autistic Society

Help! Programme: post diagnostic support

The help! Programme offers support for parents and carers of school-age children, young people and adults who have a recent diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Research has clearly highlighted the importance of support for parents and carers of people with an ASD soon after diagnosis. The help! programme was developed to address the initial needs of all parents – no matter the age of their child.

Help!2 seminars are for parents of children and young people with ASD who already have some basic knowledge of autism. The seminars offer practical advice on issues such as managing anger, bullying, supporting siblings, writing Social Stories and using visual supports.

Information can be obtained from: www.nas.org.uk