

SEN Helpsheet 1

Practical Tips for setting up your programme to support children who have Communication Needs

Introduction

A speech, language or communication need describes difficulties in one or many areas of communication. This could be in the production of speech, the understanding of language, the use of language, interacting with other people and in the understanding of non-verbal communication.

Children can display a range of communication and interaction needs. Some of these needs may link to Autistic Spectrum Disorders, a speech, language or communication need or a communication need linked to a profound learning disability.

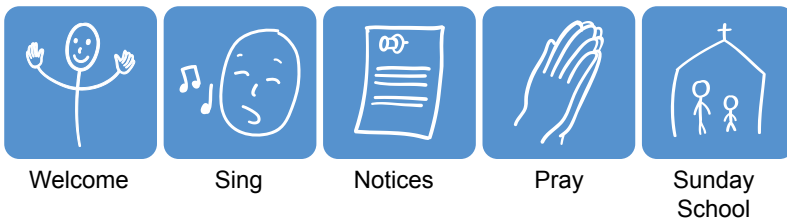
Autistic Spectrum Disorders covers a wide range of developmental disorders from Classic Autism to Asperger's Syndrome. A child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder will have some level of difficulty with social interaction, social imagination (the ability to see an alternative point of view) and social communication. This can impact on friendships, as the child struggles to understand feelings along with verbal and non-verbal communications.

Behaviours are formed around a strong desire for routine and lack of flexibility in thinking. New and unfamiliar situations can be difficult for the child to deal with.

A child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder will struggle with a fixed perspective on life, they will be focused on their own needs, will require structure and routine to be built into their day and will struggle with to engage with others and also may struggle with sensory issues linked to visual stimulation, sound, taste, texture and smell.

Profound learning disability impacts many children and adults and affects the ability to communicate and be independent. The individual may have issues with sight, hearing, speech and movement.

Example of a visual timetable



Example of a help card



Some Practical Tips

- Lay out the learning area with the child being close to adult support
- Provide a visual timetable for the structure of the programme
- The use of "first" and "then" prompts will help with understanding
- Guide the child through transitions into, within and out of the programme
- Use timers to support transitions (changes in your programme routine)
- Be mindful of sensory issues when planning activities
- A quiet space during noisy activities may be helpful
- Use a physical item to pass around to structure turn taking
- Use of visual help cards can help if verbal communication is challenging
- Split up instructions into easy-to-follow points
- Check for understanding
- Don't be easily offended by comments or questions that may be inappropriate
- Use a buddy to support the individual
- Stories and visual clip art can support understanding
- Be sympathetic and supportive when an individual is experiencing sensory overload
- Have a separate cool off area to help deal with dangerous behaviours
- Use of computer or tablet can help the child engage in activities

SEN Helpsheet 2

Practical Tips for setting up your programme to support children who have Learning Needs

Introduction

A learning need describes the discrepancy between an individual's current level of knowledge or skill and the knowledge or skill that is needed to carry out a task. Learning needs cover a wide range of difficulties including severe, moderate and specific learning difficulties. Specific learning difficulties incorporate dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

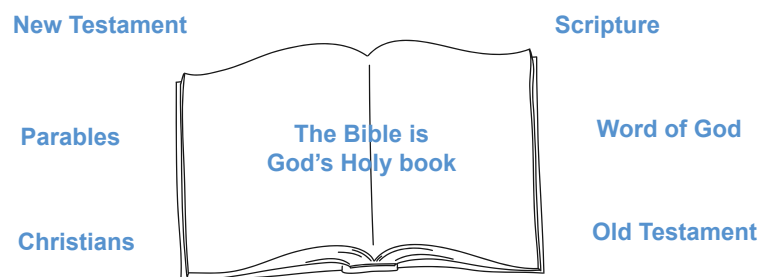
Dyslexia mainly affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent reading and spelling. The individual will struggle with phonological awareness (the sounds of how language is structured), verbal memory and verbal processing.

Dyscalculia affects the ability to acquire mathematical skills, The individual will struggle with simple number concepts and will lack a grasp of number facts, procedures and problem solving.

Dyspraxia affects movement and co-ordination, it has an impact on gross and fine motor control (the use of large and small muscles).

An individual with a learning need may struggle with aspects of attention, memory, problem-solving, reasoning, transfer of learning, language and literacy. Linked difficulties with motivation, self- confidence and social relationships may also present.

Example of a key word display



Some Practical Tips

- Prepare a list of what the individual needs
- Display the programme routine visually
- Prepare a place the child can work in peace if needed
- Seat the individual close to adult support
- Repeat instructions and information frequently
- Make instructions short
- Allow extra thinking time
- Get the individual to repeat the instructions or information
- Diffuse any frustration with tasks through the use of humour
- Be patient
- Prepare key words for display
- Read aloud
- Provide helpful reminders
- Use pictures and visual reminders
- Adapt activities by having words already completed to be stuck into gaps
- Where computer or tablet technology allows, record the written lesson
- Celebrate success

Example of recording a lesson



SEN Helpsheet 3



Practical Tips for setting up your programme to support children who have Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Introduction

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs can fall into two main categories, those who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) and those who have attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

An individual with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) may experience a wide range of emotions and behaviours. These may include a feeling of isolation or being withdrawn, as well as presenting with challenging and disruptive behaviours. These behaviours may be linked to underlying mental health difficulties such as depression or anxiety.

ADHD is a diagnosis that applies to individuals who experience difficulties with attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. In some cases the individual may be medicated to help regulate their behaviours.

Children with SEBD and ADHD will likely find it difficult to cope in your programme. They will require supports designed around their difficulties with the programme allowing for flexibility. When they feel welcomed, respected, safe and secure they will flourish and can make good progress and build strong relationships. A positive response to behaviour will be very important, supported by time out and nurturing times (times of relationship building).

Some Practical Tips

- Develop positive relationships with parents and carers
- Develop positive relationships with the individual
- Provide a positive buddy to work closely with the individual
- Be sensitive to the individual's needs
- Model the acceptable and desired behaviours
- Have an agreed positive approach to dealing with challenging and disruptive behaviours
- Be consistent in dealing with challenging and disruptive behaviours
- Deal with challenging and disruptive behaviours privately
- Stay calm when dealing with challenging and disruptive behaviours
- Explore thoughts and feelings
- Understand that behaviour is a form of communication
- Be consistent with rewards
- Vary learning styles in your programme
- Highlight the positive
- Use non-verbal communication effectively to manage behaviour
- Tactically ignore when possible
- Redirect when possible
- Give choices to reduce conflict
- Involve the individual in planning and decision making
- Debrief parents and volunteers after incidents to help identify triggers for behaviours.
 - Ask What happened?
 - Where did it happen?
 - When did it happen?
 - Who did it happen with?
 - And Why did it happen?

SEN Helpsheet 4

Practical Tips for setting up your programme to support children who have Sensory and/or Physical Needs

Introduction

A sensory need will present when an individual suffers from a visual impairment or hearing loss. Visual impairment can deteriorate from partially sighted, to minimal residual vision and then to total blindness. Hearing loss can be mild or moderate where oral methods of communication are used. When hearing loss is severe or profound sign language may be the preferred mode of communication.

A Physical disability need is long term, it usually lasts a lifetime and may continually change. The disability may be congenital (present from birth) or acquired (as a result of an accident or other health issue).

Some Practical Tips

- Prepare a list of what the individual needs
- Display the programme routine visually
- Prepare a place the child can work in peace if needed
- Seat the individual close to adult support
- Repeat instructions and information frequently
- Make instructions short
- Allow extra thinking time
- Get the individual to repeat the instructions or information
- Diffuse any frustration with tasks through the use of humour
- Be patient
- Prepare key words for display
- Read aloud
- Provide helpful reminders
- Use pictures and visual reminders
- Adapt activities by having words already completed to be stuck into gaps
- Where computer or tablet technology allows, record the written lesson
- Celebrate success

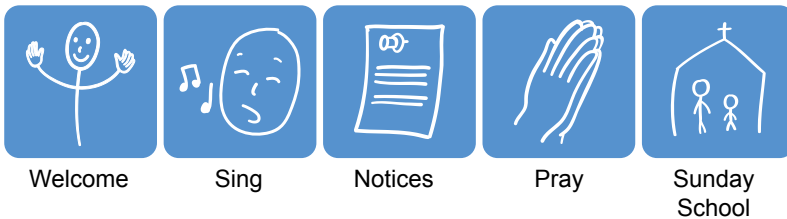
SEN Helpsheet 5

Practical Tips for setting up your programme to meet the needs of all children.

Some Practical Tips

- Develop good relationships with parents and carers
- Foster good relationships with the children and young people
- Develop good routines that are explained visually
- Ensure all individuals are within eye view
- Set clear, positive boundaries that are consistently applied
- Appeal to the children's learning styles
- Use buddies to support less able children
- Manage the pace of the programme, read the children's responses
- Manage transitions effectively through use of timers or songs
- Provide time out opportunities for when a child becomes overwhelmed
- Focus on the children's interests and strengths
- Plan your questions and instructions carefully. Keep them simple!
- Give the children thinking time before response
- Repetition is valuable

Example of a visual timetable



Learning Styles

A child who is a **visual learner** will appreciate:

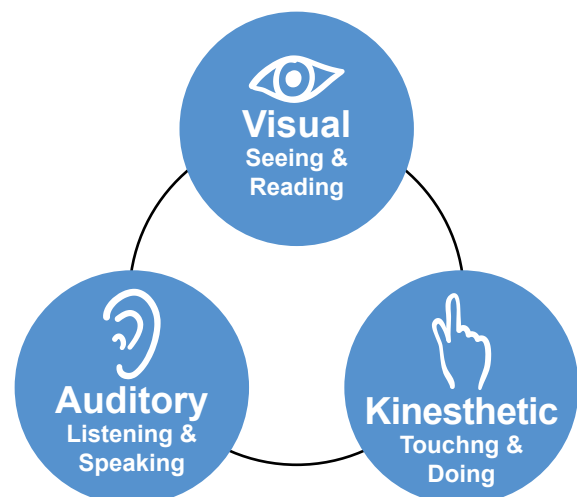
- Use of pictures
- Use of flashcards
- Colouring and drawing
- Tracing
- Board games
- Use of computers and tablets

A child who is an **auditory learner** will appreciate:

- Verbal instructions
- Group discussion
- Listening to stories
- Plays and dramas
- Use of computers and tablets

A child who is a **kinaesthetic learner** will appreciate:

- Practical activities
- Actions
- Plays and dramas
- Using whiteboards
- Cutting and sticking
- Use of computers and tablets



SEN Helpsheet 6



BES training can provide support if you are feeling overwhelmed by the special needs that you are seeking to meet through your programme.

We're here to help you!

How can you get help?



1. Check out our helpsheets



2. Access the BES LMS for training



3. Contact BES training



4. Organise for a BES training session