



Parent Information Sheet

Supporting Social Communication Difficulties

1. **Liaise** - Liaise with your child's Speech & Language Therapist & your child's Class Teacher / SENCO.
2. **Be Clear** - Use straightforward, unambiguous language and simplify if necessary. If you think it, 'goes without saying', it may not!
3. **Prepare** - Be aware that new situations and people may upset your child. Explain forthcoming events in simple language, e.g. "We are going to... and then... and then we'll come back". Don't assume your child will know or understand without preparation. He/she may be reassured by being told the structure or plan.
4. **Good Listening** - Focus your child's attention before speaking - say his/ her name to cue them in for listening – Good Listening.
5. **Time** - Give the child time to process and respond.
6. **Model** – Model saying what your child needs to say e.g. (you say), "Can you help me please?", so your child has a model and guide of what to say to ask for help.
7. **Be Calm & Consistent** - Use a low key, calm approach, be consistent and encourage routine and structure. You might want to use a visual timetable or NOW/NEXT/THEN prompt cards.
8. **Statements NOT Questions** - Use commands and be clear – If you ask, "Would you like to sit down?" this may be met by the response, "no". Instead say, "Sit on this chair".
9. **Truth** - Be aware of the amount of non-literal language that you use. The child might take things literally. E.G. "Wow, I flew here today" or "Now if you cast your mind back, we did some work in our heads last time...". The child might think you flew!
10. **Be clear** - Do not use metaphors, sarcasm and irony, without explaining what you mean - it may be misconstrued or your child might not understand. Your child might also not be able to read between the lines.
11. **Use Positive Speech** - State information in the positive, e.g. "walk!" don't say, "Don't run" - your child may not be able to understand what it is they have to do.
12. **Expressions** - Your child may find it difficult to read facial expression, body language and tone of voice. Use a selection of flash cards with a variety of

different facial expressions to practice understanding what different facial expressions mean.

13. **Promises** - Say what you mean and mean what you say. Carry out all promises – your child will not forget!
14. **Visual Clues** - Visual cues may help your child understand, such as pictures, photographs or visual timetables.
15. **Be Specific** - Avoid vague terms such as 'maybe', 'later', 'sometimes', 'soon' or 'over there'. Instead change these to more specific terms such as 'in 5 minutes', 'next to the chair' and 'first,...next ...last'
16. **Be Empathetic** – Don't assume your child is being tactless or difficult. He/she may not understand social conventions, but it is ok to guide, model and explain how to be appropriate.
17. **Praise** - Don't forget to praise your child for their efforts.