

# PART 1: Working together to develop social communication

A Session for Parents and Teaching Staff

# Aims of the training



## PART 1:

- Explain what social communication is and how it applies to all of us.
- Talk about what skills we need and why skills might break down

Learn strategies to support 4 different areas of social communication difficulties:

PART 2: Supporting social skills with strategies in everyday situations

PART 3: Helping to understand social situations

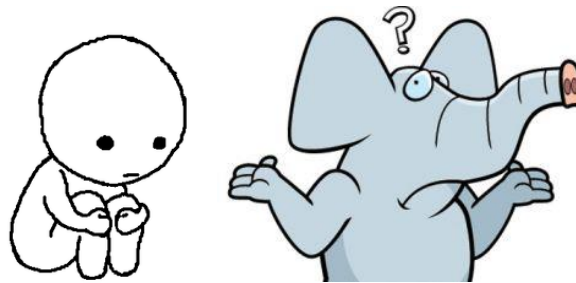
PART 4: Interaction (Conversation and Play) skills

PART 5: Friendships and relationships

# Social Difficulties.... We all get it wrong sometimes!

# What is the result?

- Other people don't see you for who you are?
- Other people reacted to you in a way you didn't intend?
- Other people felt negative towards you?
- Your self confidence took a knock



# Think of someone who has social skills difficulties...

What do you see?

# What do we mean by 'social communication'?

- Social understanding / awareness
- Body language / Non-verbal communication
- Conversational skills
- Flexibility and imagination
- Relationships and play

# Social Understanding / Awareness – It's not all about the talking!





# What is Social Awareness?

Social awareness helps us-

- Predict and understand **what happens** in situations
- Predict and understand people's **expectations or reactions**
- Social awareness is 'Tuning in' to others and situations
- We build up our social awareness skills through gaining new experiences
- Knowing what stage your young person is at may help you understand what he/she has difficulty with
- We can then help to 'fill in the gaps'.





# Non-Verbal Communication Skills



## Our communication

**93% is our non verbal behaviour**

–55% body language

–38% the way we say things

**7% is verbal behaviour – the words we use**

# Body Language (Non verbal)

Distance



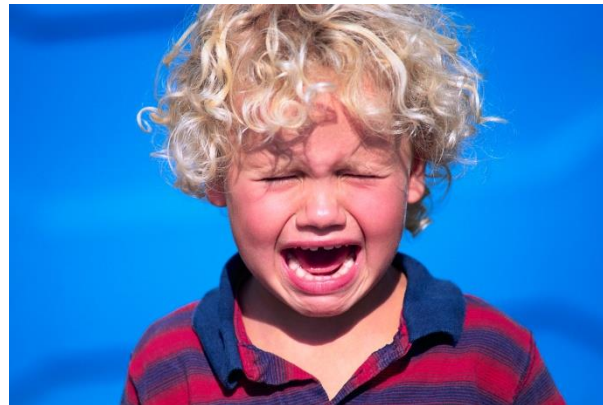
Touch  
Bridgewater Community Healthcare 



Eye contact



Facial expression



Gesture



Fidgeting



Posture and positioning



Personal appearance



# Why might children have social communication difficulties?

- **Speech and Language difficulties**
- **Difficulty processing information**
- **Hearing Impairment**
- **Use of AAC**
- **Learning difficulties or disability**
- **Neurodevelopmental conditions such as ASC, Attention and Listening difficulties or diagnosis of ADHD, children who avoid demands.**
- Family life or trauma
- Low confidence and self esteem
- Medical needs and health
- Emotional health and wellbeing difficulties
- Sensory needs affecting perception/tolerance of environment

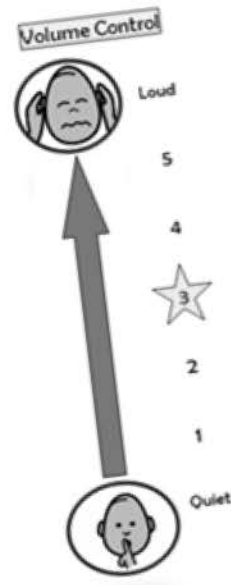



# **PART 2: Working together to develop social communication**



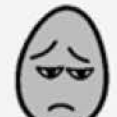
***Supporting social skills with strategies  
in everyday situations***

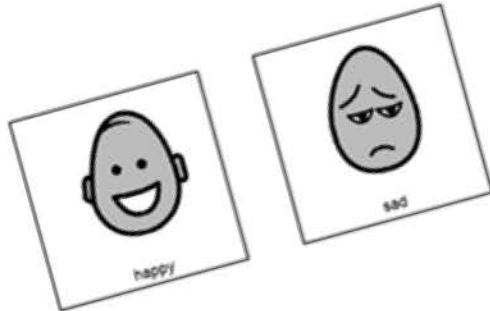


# Strategies



Good Listening 

1		<input type="text"/>
2		<input type="text"/>
3		<input type="text"/>



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# Research summary

- The evidence around supporting children and young people with social communication difficulties suggests implementing strategies in **everyday situations**.
- There is evidence to support the effectiveness of a **range of intervention approaches** but there is no evidence that one approach is more effective than others.
- **Social skills groups can be effective to teach specific social communication skills, but then the children need to be supported within everyday situations to use these skills**



# Supporting social skills in everyday situations

- Modelling / Social coaching
- Use daily opportunities
- Using visual supports

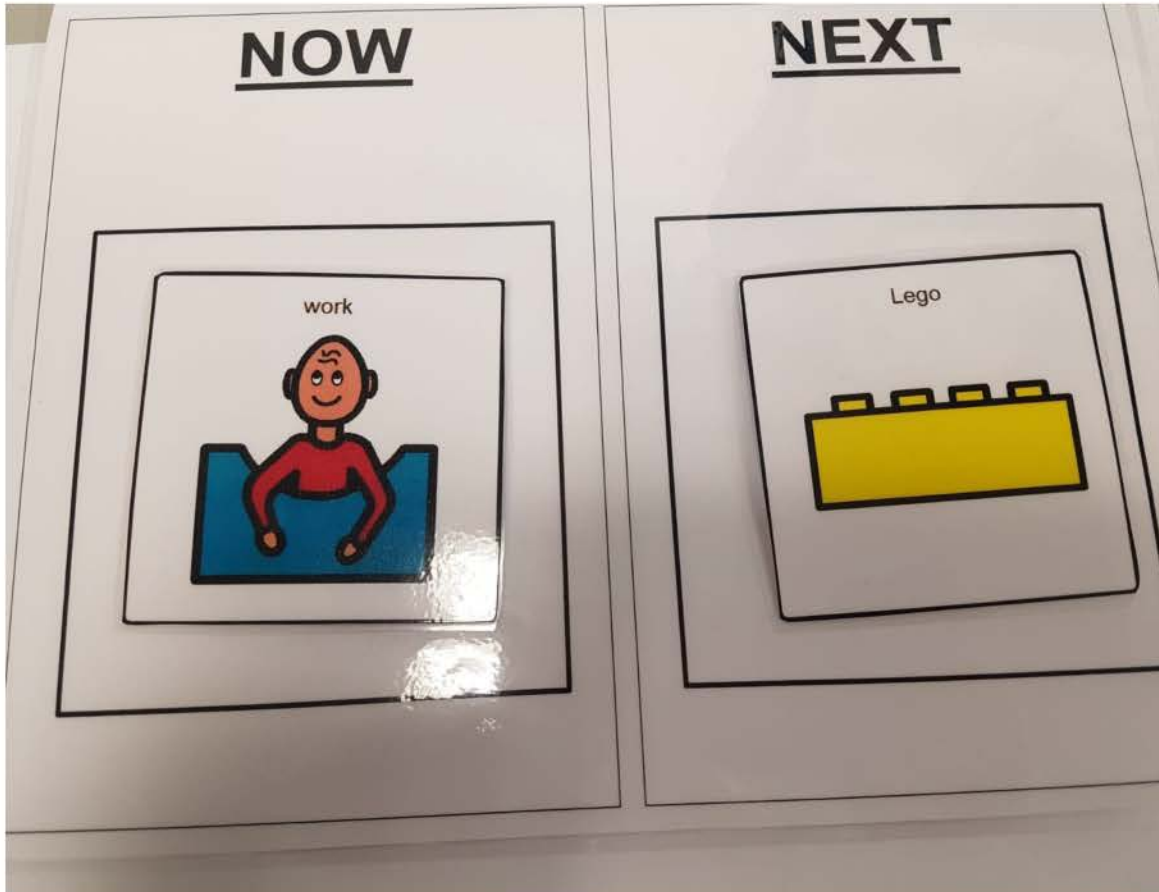
# Visual Supports

- Important for:
  - Reducing anxiety
  - Coping with change
  - Understanding routine
  - Supporting understanding of language
  - Expressing ideas / communicating with others
  - Making choices
  - Attention control
  - Developing independence

TRAFFIC LIGHTS



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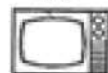





Activity: .....




- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



### AFTERNOON

- Hang up coat and book bag  
- Eat a snack 
- Leisure time 

TV 	Video game 	Music 
Book 	Trampoline 	Swing 

- Eat dinner 
- Take a bath 
- Go to bed 

# VISUAL TIMETABLES

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>school</p> 	<p>school</p> 	<p>school</p> 	<p>school</p> 	<p>school</p> 	<p>swimming</p> 	<p>day out</p> 
<p>surprise</p> 		<p>rainbows</p> 	<p>after school club</p> 	<p>surprise</p> 	<p>shopping</p> 	
<p>football</p> 	<p>tennis</p> 	<p>scouts</p> 	<p>gymnastics</p> 	<p>playground</p> 	<p>restaurant</p> 	<p>McDonald's</p> 
<p>surprise</p> 					<p>cinema</p> 	





## CHOOSE BOARD



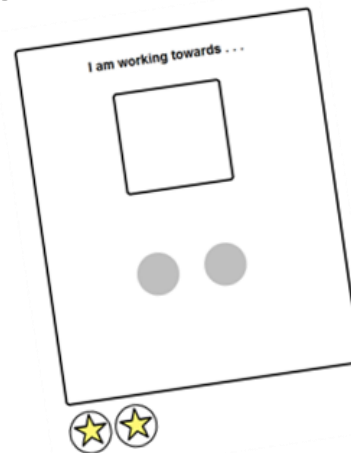
# Visual Supports- examples

- Visual timetables
- Now and next boards
- Weekly planners
- **Symbol instructions**
- **Picture sequences**
- Choice boards
- Home school books
- Help cards, break cards, toilet cards
- Traffic light symbols
  
- (Augmentative Alternative Communication, e.g. Makaton, PECS)



# Visual support – Reward charts

- Motivation is key.
- What will your reward chart look like?
- What does your child need to earn to get their reward?
- Keep the reward chart in sight to keep motivating your child.
- Be specific in what you want your child to do.
- Be specific in your praise.



'I AM WORKING FOR.....' CHART

I am working for:



'I AM WORKING FOR.....' CHART

I am working for:



I am working for





# Supporting emotional regulation

- Clearly **name** and **explain your emotions**, so that the young person does not have to guess how you feel e.g. “I am happy today. I have just got a new tablet for my birthday”.
- Talk about **facial expressions** and **body language** and link them to an emotion and specific situations e.g. ‘She is biting her nails and her eyebrows are furrowed so I can tell she is worried or nervous’.
- Visual supports (e.g. feelings fan, emotions thermometer).

Feelings Chart		
	How I feel	What I can do
<b>5</b>	 I need some help!	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use theraputty <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here] <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
<b>4</b>	 I'm really upset.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use theraputty <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here] <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
<b>3</b>	 I've got a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/> Let a teacher know that you have a problem and need some help <input type="checkbox"/> Play with your squishy thing <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker [if he is here] <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
<b>2</b>	 Things are pretty good.	<input type="checkbox"/> Play with my squishy thing <input type="checkbox"/> Think of my favorite things <input type="checkbox"/> Say "I'm going to be O.K." to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Take 3 or 4 deep breaths
<b>1</b>	 Feeling Great!	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy the feeling! <input type="checkbox"/> Have fun

# Supporting emotional regulation - Incredible 5 point scale

[http://www.5pointscale.com/more\\_sweet\\_scale.htm](http://www.5pointscale.com/more_sweet_scale.htm)

## What is it for

- Helps with regulating aspects of communication and emotional behaviour
- Often has a story attached that you can write
- Visual aid to regulate a specific behaviour e.g. volume of voice

## Example profile

Appendix

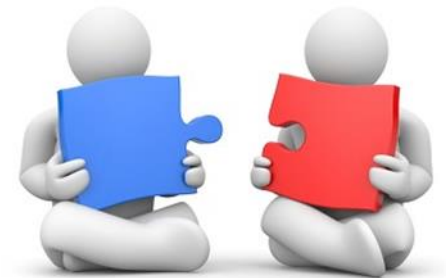
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ My \_\_\_\_\_ Scale

Rating	Looks like	Feels like	I can try to
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			

71

# Preparing for change (transitions)

- Plan together between school and home and share ideas.
- Transition pack.
- Think about what visual support may be useful.
- Have a practice run – you may want to do this multiple times.
- Afterwards.... Celebrate success.



# **PART 3: Working together to develop social communication**

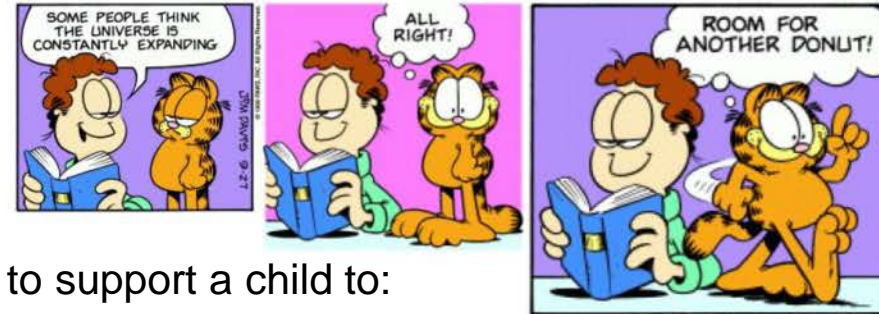
***Helping to understand social situations***

# General activities to support understanding of social situations

- When you pick up on **clues** in situations/ books/ films/ Youtube/ video clips, **point them out** to the young person and support them to make guesses.
- This will help develop their ability to **draw together information** and **understand** what's going on.
- Things to comment on/ ask about:
  - Situations- 'there are lots of children running around and smiling in this picture, where do you think they could be?'
  - Emotions- 'he is wiping his eyes and blowing his nose, how do you think he feels?'
  - Perspectives- 'he's looking at his watching and then is looking at the road, I think he's wondering whether the bus is'.
- Role play- acting out situation together



# Comic Strip Conversations



Comic Strip Conversations are a very visual way to support a child to:

- **Review** a social situation that was unsuccessful
- **Reflect** on what went wrong
- Think about the **emotions** felt by everyone involved
- Understand **why** things went wrong
- Realise that his / her own actions may have been unhelpful
- Work out a **different course** of action for next time
- Successfully negotiate a similar situation in future

A comic strip is drawn collaboratively with the child **after** a situation has happened.

The comic strip will contain speech bubbles and thought bubbles.

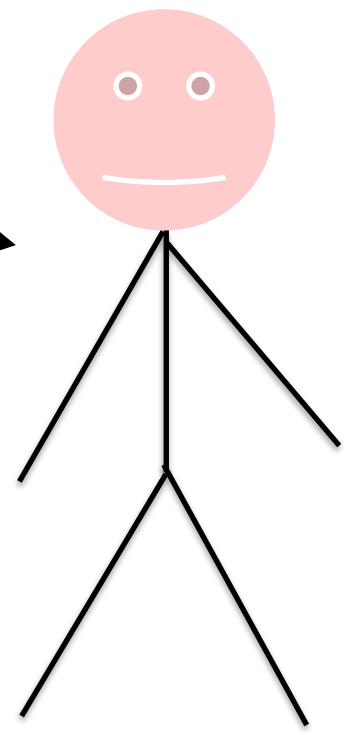
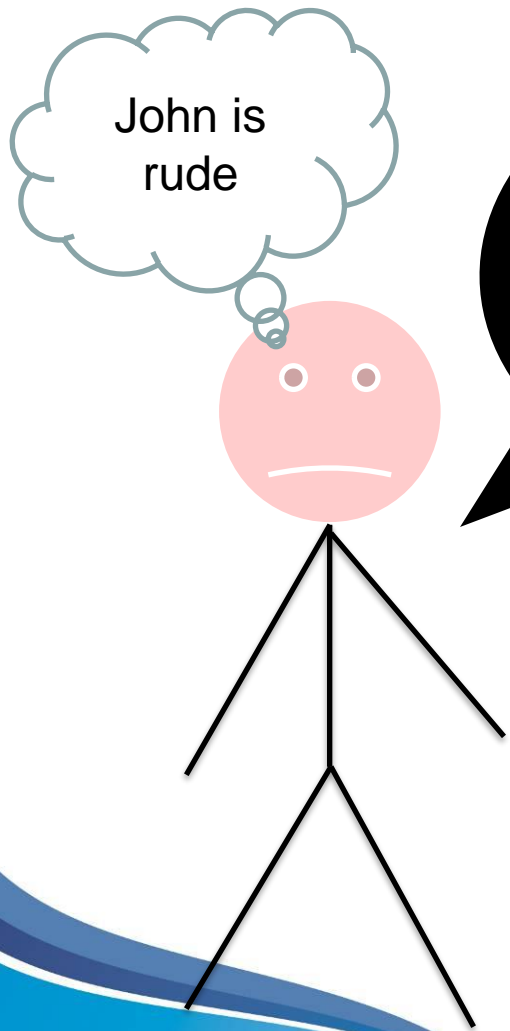
Two comic strips will be drawn for each scenario- what actually happened AND a what could have been done differently version.

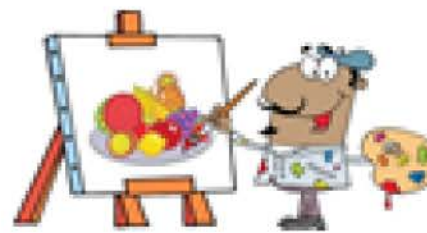
# Comic Strip Conversations



## What to do:

- Sit with the young person and explain that you are going to draw a comic together.
- Each scenario should be broken down into several freeze frames of the situation which has occurred (usually including before the breakdown, during and afterwards)
- Use speech bubbles to indicate what was actually said and also thought bubbles to predict what each person might have been thinking at the time.
- Faces can be used to show emotions
- Encourage them to do the drawing (or at least to provide the information). The more ownership the young person has, the more it will resonate
- Don't worry about the quality of the drawing!! Stick figures are fine.





- In pairs/small groups, have a go at drawing out the following situation using a short comic strip.

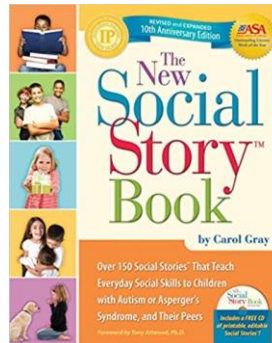
Our young person goes out into the school corridor at the end of the lesson. Someone brushes past them down the busy corridor. They then say something rude and the other person shouts at them.

- Remember. The key is to try and teach the subtle information which our young people may not automatically take into account (e.g. thoughts, feelings, perspectives, intentions of others)
- We are not necessarily trying to tell the young person what they should or shouldn't have done. Instead, we are encouraging them to see the entire situation from a different perspective.



# Social stories

- This tool was create by Carol Gray (1994).
- A social story is a brief written narrative that factually **describes** what happens in a specific situation
- It may explain how people may be **feeling or thinking**
- It may suggest possible **courses of action**
- It can support learning **social rules** and offer suggestions for how to **behave**
- Social stories may help reduce anxiety around unfamiliar situations
- You may need to write a social story for a wide variety of situations



# Social story rules



- Social Story needs to be:
  - Descriptive (explains the information around a situation)
  - Written from the young person's perspective
  - Supportive (tells the child what they can do, not what they shouldn't do.)
  - Not directive (phrases such as "I can" "I will try to", not "I will" or "I must")
  - Explicit – avoid non-literal language. Factual, objective and debate free
- Should always be read before the situation it is planned to tackle (not as a punishment for getting it wrong)
- The young person should take ownership of the story and read it to themselves where appropriate.
- If you would like more information and support to write specifically tailored Social Stories, speak to your named therapist



# **PART 4: Working together to develop social communication**

## ***Strategies to support interaction (Conversation and Play)***

# Strategies to support Interaction (Conversation and Play)

- Role play / Social coaching / modelling (as discussed)
  - To initiate play and interaction with peers
  - To respond to their peers attempts to initiate
  - To take turns in conversation / play to ‘keep it going’
  - To ‘stick to’ a topic of conversation
- Conversation toolkit
- Social skill groups (e.g. “Pre-school Social communication group” / Talk About / Lego Activities)

# ‘Social coach’ to help them join in with others

- Talk about something that a peer is doing / saying  
e.g. “Look, X is colouring a picture”.
- Get them thinking more about what a peer is doing  
e.g. “I wonder/I’m not sure what they are colouring”
- Give a more specific example of what they could do  
e.g. “You could ask them what they are colouring”
- Model what they could say  
e.g. “Say, ‘What are you colouring?’”
  
- Give the child a ‘specific role’

Increasing amount  
of support



# Consider Equipment / Play-space / Use of peers

- Friendship bench
- Buddy system
- Provide specific activities at play time – create options
  - How long will they last /where will they be?
- Use the resources to create opportunities for play activities
  - Consider the child's interests
  - Consider well-defined spaces and groupings, e.g. pairs
  - Provide duplicates

# Turn taking games

## Early turn-taking games

- Cars and trains- take turns to 'drive' round tracks/ roads
- Roll a ball back & forth to each other
- Build towers- take turns to add a block
- Post shapes or pictures into a 'post box' i.e. shoe box
- Use instruments to take turns to make sounds.
- Use finger puppets- take turns at making them say hello & bye bye

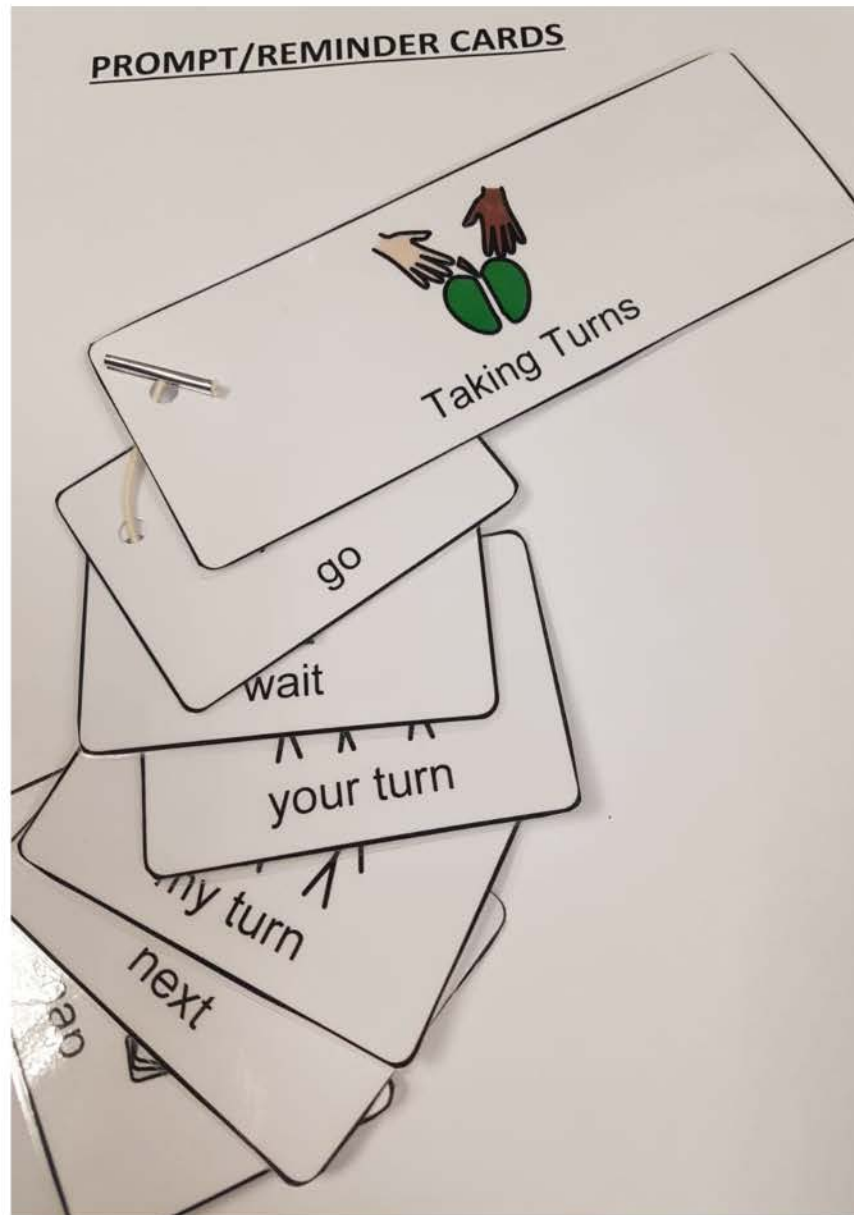
## Later turn-taking games

- Take turns in games such as 'Pop up pirate' / Snakes and Ladders
- Barrier games – Take turns to give instructions to each other

# Visuals to support interaction (Conversation and play)

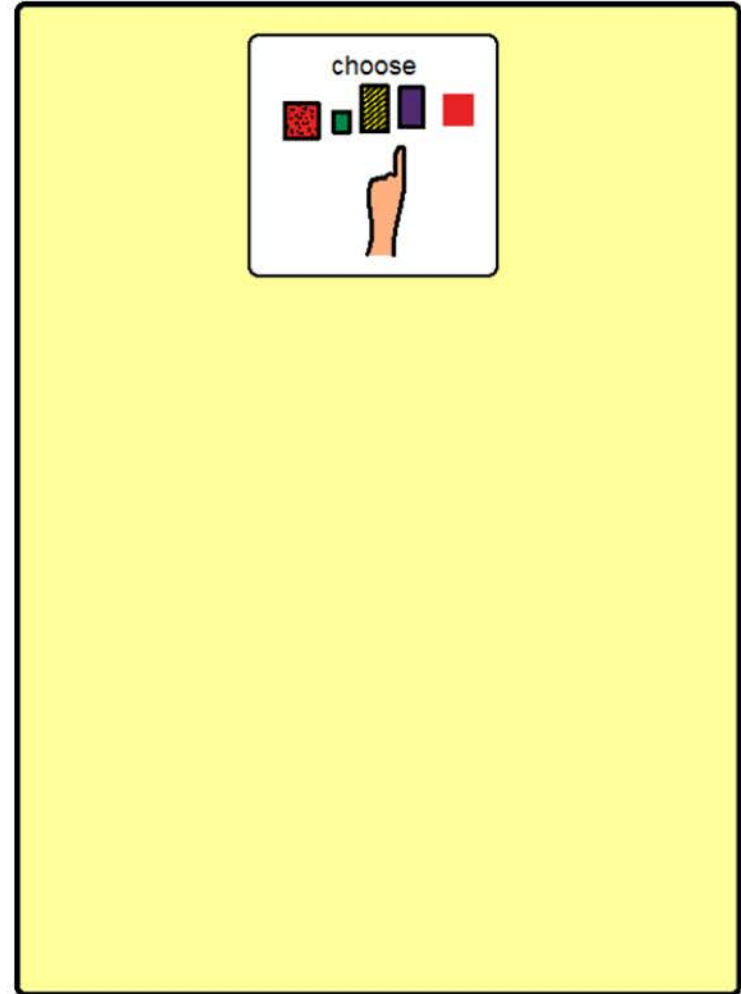
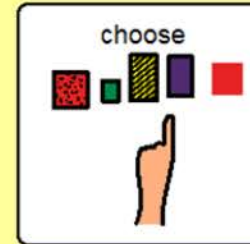
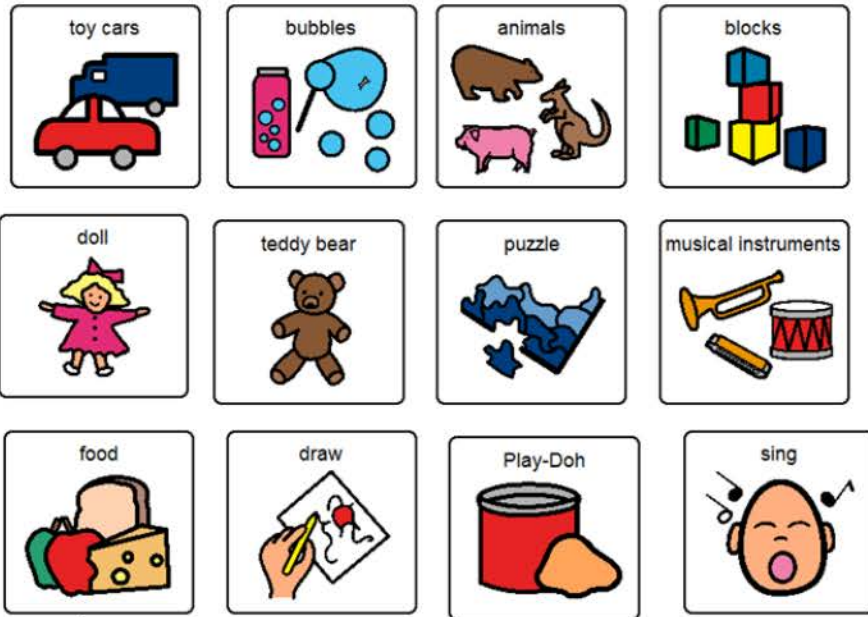
- Turn-taking
- Active listening visuals
- Chat cards
- Choice boards – ideas of what to play
- Discuss rules of games
- Topic maintenance











# Keeping on topic



## On topic:

- Asking a question about the topic
- Making a comment on the topic

## On a tangent:

Getting distracted by a detail  
Needing help to get back to the main idea.

## Off topic:

- Not thinking about the main topic anymore
- Needing help to the topic.



# PART 5: Working together to develop social communication

## *Friendships / Relationships*



# Friendships / Relationships

Specific teaching of friendship skills:

- What is a friend?
- Recipe for a friend
- Choosing a friend
- Starting a friendship
- Being a good friend / What is not a good friend?

Coping with problems

- What to do when things do not go your way
- Teach that friends do not have to be exclusive
- Friends sometimes make mistakes



## FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

- **What do we need to build our friendship skills?**
- **Self esteem**, an understanding of our interests strengths and weaknesses
- An ability to read some **non verbal signals** ...how we say it says more than what we say ... e.g. when it is time to stop, are we too close, have we talked about space for long enough?
- Basic **conversational skills**: listen, take **turns**,**stay** on topic
- **Emotions vocabulary**

### Levels of friendship.

- There are distinct stages to developing friendships.

### Level 1: Approximately 3 to 6 years –

- Understands basic need to take turns
- Your friend (in that moment) is the person who gives you things or someone you play with because they are around or sharing your materials.

Friendship is based on proximity and physical attributes and when asked *Why is \_\_\_\_\_ your friend?* The typical response is *He lives next door!*

### Supporting Level 1

- Opportunity. Being somewhere where kids can be together and play
- Having materials they may be likely to share
- Practice would you like to play with....
- Keep the time **short, mediate** join in if required, model sharing and taking turns
- Set up turn taking protocols x has put the **lego** tower together, your turn to build the wall
- Choice mechanisms and take turns with choices

### Level 2: Approximately 6 to 9 years –

- There is an increasing understanding of the idea of mutual interest.
- There is also a new awareness of the motives, thoughts and feelings of others.
- When asked *Why is \_\_\_\_\_ your friend?* the typical response is *He lets me play the games I want to, Because she comes to my party and I go to hers or She's nice to me.*
- The likes and dislikes of the other person are more likely to be considered.
- Friendship based on how closely each friend matches their self-interest, for example, in liking similar games.

### Supporting level 2

- Discuss who likes which interest. Who to approach to play that game.
- Teach how to ask someone to play
- Encourage your child to act on **another's** instructions take in turns to decide where to look for the next bug.
- Continue to help with listening as well as talking. You may need to say x turn now
- Develop idea of asking for help
- Share a job. Lay the table x does knives and forks and x does plates.

Adapted from "Understanding and Teaching Friendship skills",  
[www.tonyatwood.com.au](http://www.tonyatwood.com.au), retrieved August 2014

# PART 6: Working together to develop social communication

*What happens next?*

# PART 6:

## What happens next?

- Use the strategies we have discussed in this training to help support your child at home and at school.
- See what works best for you and your child.
- Be aware that needs may change over time - use the flow chart on the next slide to help you establish strategies.

# Develop a strategy...

## 4 step plan

1. DIFFICULTY... what is it?



2. RULES... what are they?



3. MOTIVATION... what is it?



4. STRATEGY... which is the best to use?

Next Steps

Name:

D.O.B

School

Step 1- Behaviour:

Step 2- Rules:

Step 3- Motivation:

Step 4- Strategy:

Chief Executive: Dr Kate Fallon | Chairman: Harry Holden | Divisional Director: Carole Huggill

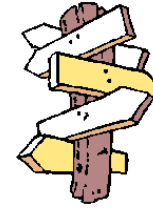
Headquarters: Bevan House, 17 Beecham Court, Smithy Brook Road, Wigan, WN3 6PR



# What happens next?

- Use the strategies we have discussed today to help support your child at home.
- See what works best for you and your child.
- Be aware that needs may change over time.
- Ask School Staff to access the training to support your child in School.
- This training was recommended to you by the Neurodevelopmental Pathway Assessment (NDP) Team.
- If you have ongoing concerns after 6 months of implementing the strategies, or new concerns in relation to your child's speech, language or communication skills arise, you can request a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Team.

# Signposting – who else may be able to help



## **Occupational Therapy:**

- Sensory needs (having a significant effect on young person's ability to function at home or in school)
- Organisational skills (planning, sequencing, dressing)
- Fine/Gross Motor skills (shoe laces, buttons, use of cutlery)

## **Advanced Solutions:**

- Offer coaching and mentoring to families and professionals working with children with neurodevelopmental conditions, sensory processing difficulties and learning difficulties.

## **CAMHS:**

- significant emotional/mental health concerns

## **St Joseph's Family Centre:**

- Counselling, anger management, emotional regulation, anxiety

## **Specialist Learning Disability Nurses**

- Based at CDC. Can offer support for ADHD, ASD and Emotional Health and Well Being

## **Behaviour courses:**

- Speak to School Health Advisors

**Recommended reading :** The Incredible Years by Caroline Webster-Stratton (for parents of children 2-8 years)

# Thanks for listening



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