



Inclusion and Engagement Support Team GEMs- Good Engagement Methods

GEMs have been put together to demonstrate good engagement methods to support CYP with SEND.

As Inclusion teachers, we wanted to produce a package to address and support some of the core challenges that professionals will encounter within their classrooms with CYP with children with SEND.

Here you will find activities which have been designed to approach some of the most sensitive subject areas that arise, such as self-esteem, anxiety, anger, and bereavement.

This package is versatile and offers activities to primary and secondary settings to suit your school's needs. Activities can be used to support individual children or may be suitable in a small group or within a whole class setting.

We have signposted a lot of resources within this package from the following:

- Twinkl website - <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>
- ELSA website - <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/>
- [Friendship Archives - ELSA Support \(elsa-support.co.uk\)](#)
- [Making friends - supporting your autistic child \(autism.org.uk\)](#)
- Comic strip conversations by Carol Gray
- [Top tips for making friends | Childline](#)



Friendship

Making and keeping friends can be very difficult at any age for CYP. It can be tricky to understand the code of friendship and associated behaviours that go with it. Making friends and learning how to play are an important part of growing up, but it can be hard for children with special educational needs to learn crucial social skills such as how to share and interact, how to take turns and how to negotiate with others.



Most children can respond to abstract language and questions such as "How do you know?" or "what would happen if?". But for a number of CYP this does not occur naturally.

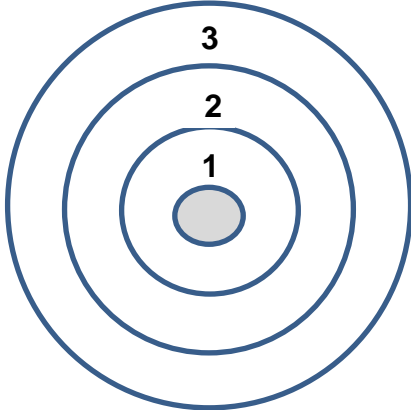
There may be several different reasons for this, which may include:

- **Not being able to identify a socially appropriate solution/response**
- **Not understanding the language or meaning of words**
- **Not being able to remember verbal information**
- **Not able to empathise with others or understand what others are thinking**
- **Not be able to formulate a response, including words or grammar**
- **Limited life experience to respond/react to social situations**

Some CYP with speech, language and communication needs may have delayed language skills, impaired language, ASD, or moderate learning difficulties which can make friendship even more challenging. CYP may struggle to form friendships whilst others may lack confidence or have communication difficulties, which makes social interaction harder.

Activities	Resources
<p>Turn taking</p> <p>Playing board games is a great way of introducing turn taking, patience and understanding. Choose a game that is of interest to the small group or 1-1. Emphasise the rules before the game and stress the importance of listening, patience and turn taking.</p> <p>It is important that you model turn taking. Make the language of turn taking familiar and usable for your children. Routinely use simple language to describe turn taking: My turn, your turn.</p>	<p>For example:</p> <p><i>Connect four</i> <i>Snakes and ladders</i> <i>Noughts and crosses</i> <i>Snap</i> <i>Bingo</i></p> <p>early-turn-taking.pdf (oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)</p> <p>7 Great ways to encourage turn-taking (earlyyearscreators.com)</p> <p>Turn Taking Games and Support - Autism Games SEN Resources (twinkl.co.uk)</p> <p>Taking Turns and Sharing - YouTube</p> <p>Being a good listener Slide 1 (autismteachingstrategies.com)</p> <p>Initiating a conversation (for older children) Initiating Conversation - YouTube</p>
<p>Start with a social story</p> <p>You can begin to teach turn taking with a social story. There are many examples available online.</p>	<p>Taking Turns at School Social Situation (twinkl.co.uk)</p> <p>Social stories and comic strip conversations (autism.org.uk)</p> <p>Personalized Teaching Story: Taking Turns Autism Speaks You can edit and add your own photos and script</p> <p>Benny's Social Story For Taking Turns and Sharing by Rachel Cameron (prezi.com)</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">Home - Carol Gray - Social Stories (carolgraysocialstories.com)</p>
<p>Role play Use puppets/toys/small world to act our social situations with the CYP such as playing on the playground, lunchtime, or other unstructured times.</p> <p>Buddy system/Big friend Little friend</p> <p>Older children can make friends and spend time with younger children. Sharing stories or playing together at playtimes. CYP can have a "buddy" to support them at playtimes and demonstrate how to interact.</p> <p>Rehearse initiating friendships</p> <p>Many children can feel shy when they first meet new people but finding a way to start talking can help to overcome the barrier. Rehearse introducing yourself to a new friend e.g., Hello, my name is Jane and I have a dog called Sid. Do you have any pets? Practice body language i.e., holding your head up, making eye contact, smiling ...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Small world Puppets Toys Role play area</p>
<p>What makes a good friend?</p> <p>For older children- ask each child to contribute their own ideas. Write ideas on a whiteboard.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Flipchart and pens</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What makes a good friend? (kidscape.org.uk)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What Makes a Good Friend? Worksheet / Worksheet (twinkl.co.uk)</p>

<p>Think about their own attributes and times when they have been a good friend or shown kindness to others.</p>	<p>What makes a good friend? - Bing video</p>
<p>Be positive. In a group of 3-5 (for older children)</p> <p>Think of 10 positive statements and put into a list e.g.</p> <p><i>1 You are always kind</i> <i>2 You are good at PE.</i> <i>3 You have a lovely smile</i> <i>etc</i></p> <p>Give each CYP the list and ask them to cut each statement out. Ask each CYP to give one of the statements to each person in the group. Discuss how they felt receiving the positive statement about themselves.</p> <p>Then ask them to write their own statements to give to each other.</p>	<p>Write a list of positive statements onto paper</p> <p>Scissors</p>
<p>Friendship Circles (for older children)</p> <p>Older CYP in a small group</p> <p>Give each child friendship circle and ask them to write the name/s of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ their best friend in circle 1 ○ their close friends in circle 2 ○ the hardly friends at all in circle 3 	<p>Complete the friendship circle</p> 

<p>Then think about the qualities of the friends in each of the 3 circles</p> <p>Write-</p> <p>Circle 1 qualities include.....</p> <p>Circle 2 qualities include...</p> <p>Circle 3 qualities include...</p> <p>Do they share of any these qualities?</p> <p>How would your friends in circle 1 describe you?</p>	
<p>Boosting positive emotions</p> <p>To boost self esteem (for younger children)</p> <p>Follow me and be a leader! One child is the leader and the others in the small group have to copy their actions. (on the spot)</p> <p>These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clapping to start ○ Touch the floor ○ Jump in the air ○ Crouch down ○ Humming <p>Maybe choose 5 actions and then the CYP chooses someone else to be the leader.</p>	<p>Copy Me Song 3-7yrs - Bing video</p> <p>Tweenies Copy Me Do - Bing video</p>
<p>Reading nonverbal behaviours</p> <p>Non-verbal behaviours are a huge part of communicating with others. Take the time to talk about different non-verbal situations and behaviours to help the</p>	<p>Free Printable Asking for Help Social Scripts for Kids And Next Comes L - Hyperlexia Resources</p> <p>Social Scripts Mini Flip Books Bundle Social scripts, Mini flip book, Flip book (pinterest.co.uk)</p>

<p>CYP become more aware of them when talking with others. Ways you can practice these skills are through visuals with either picture cards or through videos.</p> <p>Body language charades</p>	<p>Give a child a piece of paper with an emotion or brief scenario written on it (it may even have an image for the child to copy). Ask that child to act out the feeling or situation using only his or her body. Another child/other children should try to interpret the feelings being conveyed. Leave time after each enactment for children to talk about what they notice, which might include the fact that not all people use body language in the same way.</p> <p>Communication & Body Language for Kids - Bron Hogan</p>
<p>Understanding emotions</p> <p>Many CYP are not able to express how they feel. Some expression of happy, sad or angry are the main reactions to situations.</p> <p>Using comic strip conversations incorporates simple drawings which illustrate an ongoing communication between 2 people. Feelings and colour are explored. For examples- yellow is frightened and purple is proud.</p> <p>Give the child a mirror. Ask the child to look in the mirror and e.g., smile to make a face that is friendly. Practice making facial expressions that show different emotions.</p>	<p>Comic strip conversations by Carol Gray Social stories and comic strip conversations (autism.org.uk)</p> <p>Paper, pens, whiteboards and pens</p> <p>Mirror</p>
<p>Friendship stops</p>	<p>Friendship stop signs Friendship benches</p>

<p>Some schools have Friendship stops or benches where children can meet. This can help CYP who struggle to interact or instigate play/friendship.</p>	<p>Friendship Stop - Signs2Schools Buy Friendship Stop Playground Sign TTS (tts-group.co.uk) The Friendship Bench by Wendy Meddour (5-7 years)</p>
<p>Friendship soup If friendship was a soup, what ingredients would you put into it? The video shows what the children would put into friendship soup.</p>	<p>Video Lesson - Friendship Soup Recipe: A NED Short - YouTube Recipe for a Good Friend Resource Pack (twinkl.co.uk)</p>
<p>Developing Friendships Starting secondary school brings lots of opportunities to make new friends. However, it can be stressful starting conversations with new people all the time and trying to make friends as quickly as possible. The animations below are set in the fictional Phoenix Academy for superhumans, where four super-powered students look at how to develop friendships, from that very first conversation to making up when friendships wobble.</p>	<p>Developing friendships - BBC Bitesize How to start a conversation Quick Friends/Slow Friends When Friendships Wobble Being yourself Making new friends Starting secondary school - BBC Bitesize</p>
<p>Friendship activities Support in the classroom for those children who may not yet have the necessary skills to make and nurture friendships</p>	<p>Friendship Activities and Lessons to Build Classroom Relationships (proudtobeprimary.com)</p>
<p>Making Friends Autism and Social interaction</p>	<p>Making friends - supporting your autistic child (autism.org.uk)</p>

Ideas to teach social skills and practical ideas for developing different social skills at home. There is information about turn taking and conversational skills.

Recommended reads

No one to play with: Social side of learning difficulties by Betty B Osman (some ideas are relevant although terminology is dated-1989)

It's my turn! By David Bedford and Elaine Field
[It's My Turn! | Read Aloud Children's Book - YouTube](#)

Comic strip conversations by Carol Gray

Dealing with Feeling by Tina Rae

The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister (2-6 years)

Lost and Found by Oliver Jeffers (2-6 years)

Can I join your club? by John Kelly (2-6 years)

Cyril and Pat by Emily Gravett (4-8 years)

All about friends (Usborne) by Felicity Brooks and Mar Ferrero (9-12 years)

Peanut Butter and Cupcake by Terry Border (2-5 years)

The Friendship Bench by Wendy Meddour (5-7 years)

Circle Round by Anne Sibley O'Brien (3-6 years)

Don't Hug Doug (He doesn't like it) by Carrie Finison (2-7 years)

In a Jar by Deborah Marcero (3-7 years)

Be a Friend by Salina Yoon (3-6 years)

Sophie Washington MY BFF by Toya Duncan Ellis (8-12years)

