

# “ Lancashire Teaching and Learning Toolkit

Ordinarily Available Provision  
for Special Educational Needs  
and Disability (SEND)

0 -25 Years ”

May 2022



## TEACHING AND LEARNING TOOLKIT: ORDINARILY AVAILABLE PROVISION

The aim of the Teaching and Learning Toolkit: Ordinarily Available Provision is to support colleagues in meeting the needs and to achieve the best outcomes for Lancashire County Council's Children and Young People (CYP). The additional needs of the majority of children and young people (CYP) can be met by inclusive quality first teaching and reasonable adjustments from the funding and resources that are already or 'ordinarily' available in their mainstream school or setting. This is known as 'Ordinarily Available Provision'.

Where a pupil is identified as having SEND, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place (6.44 [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25-years)). This toolkit fulfils the DfE requirement that each local authority explains the SEND provision it expects to be made from within a mainstream school's or EY setting's budget. It highlights a range of support and expectations that educational settings can 'ordinarily provide' for a CYP, without the need for additional support from an Education Health and Care Plan.

As of 2020/21, 15.8% of all school pupils were identified with special educational needs. A core aim of the SEND toolkit is to provide advice and guidance to help educational settings to continue to build and enhance their offer to some of our most vulnerable learners. We also acknowledge that adapting practice to meet the needs of all CYP does bring its challenges. It is our hope that this accessible resource will be used to prompt discussion and facilitate planning to create more inclusive learning environments and experiences

This guidance starts with the [evidence-based teaching and learning toolkit](#) from the [Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#) describing strands of intervention, their strength of evidence, cost and impact on learning. This is followed by a library of resources describing SEND support actions and strategies for early years, school age and post 16 aged children and young people.

For ease of use, this document is split into the four broad areas of need: [cognition and learning](#), [communication and interaction](#), [social, emotional and mental health](#) and [sensory and/or physical needs](#).



## TEACHING AND LEARNING TOOLKIT ORDINARILY AVAILABLE PROVISION

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## Teaching Learning Toolkit

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is a research organisation to support teachers and senior leaders to raise attainment and close the disadvantage gap. The EEF [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) summarises the best available evidence and generates new evidence of what works to improve teaching and learning. The following table displays the strand of intervention, the relevant SEND curriculum area, the strength of the evidence, cost and average impact.

Strands	SEND areas	Curriculum area	Strength of Evidence	Cost £	Impact average
<b>Arts Participation</b> <a href="#">Arts Participation EEF</a>	Cognition and learning	English, maths, science and spatial ability.	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Very low</b> Costs increase if outside the school day	Secondary <b>+3 months</b> Primary <b>+3 months</b>
Aspiration Interventions <a href="#">Aspiration Interventions EEF</a>	Cognition and learning Social, Emotional & Mental Health	Self-esteem and Motivation.	<b>Extremely low</b>	<b>Very low-Moderate</b> £5-£10 per session	Not known
<b>Behaviour Interventions</b> <a href="#">Behaviour Interventions EEF</a>	Cognition and learning Social Emotional & Mental Health	Social and emotional learning English, maths and science.	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low to moderate</b> Vary widely depending on whole school approaches or focused intensive interventions.	Secondary <b>+3 months.</b> Primary maths <b>+5months</b>
<b>Collaborative Learning Approaches</b> <a href="#">Collaborative Learning Approaches EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English, maths and science.	<b>Low</b>	<b>Very low</b> Requires a small amount of staff time for planning and monitoring.	Secondary <b>+6 months</b> Primary <b>+5months</b> English <b>+3 months</b> Maths <b>+5 months</b> Science <b>+10 months</b>
<b>Extending School Time</b> <a href="#">Extending School Time EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English and maths.	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b> £160 per primary pupil per year.	Secondary <b>+2 months</b> Primary <b>+3 months</b>



				£250 per secondary pupil per year.	
<b>Feedback</b> <a href="#">Feedback EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English, maths and science.	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b> Cost to school is largely based on training.	Primary <b>+7months</b> Secondary <b>+5 months</b>
<b>Homework</b> <a href="#">Homework EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	Reading, maths and science.	<b>Low</b>	<b>Very low</b> Based on staff training and resources.	Secondary <b>+5 months</b> Primary <b>+3 months</b>
<b>Individualised Instruction</b> <a href="#">individualised Instruction EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	Reading, maths and science.	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b> Based on staff training and resources.	Secondary <b>+4 months</b> Primary <b>+3 months</b> Science <b>+4 months</b> Reading and maths <b>+3 months</b>
<b>Learning Styles</b> <a href="#">Learning Styles EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning		<b>Low</b>	<b>Very low</b> Based on staff training and resources.	Not known due to limited studies.
<b>Mastery Learning</b> <a href="#">Mastery Learning EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	Reading, maths and science.	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b> Based on professional development training.	Secondary <b>+3 months</b> Primary <b>+8 months</b> Maths <b>+6 months</b> Science <b>+6 months</b> Reading <b>+3 months</b>
<b>Mentoring</b> <a href="#">Mentoring EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	Reading, maths and science.	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b> Based on training, salary costs and resources.	Positive impact but not sustained when it stops.
<b>Metacognition and Self-Regulation</b>	Cognition and Learning	Reading, maths and science.	<b>High</b>	<b>Very low</b> Based on professional development training.	Secondary <b>+7months</b> Primary <b>+8 months</b>

<a href="#">Metacognition and Self-Regulation EEF</a>					
<b>One to One Tuition</b> <a href="#">One to One Tuition EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	Maths English	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b> 1:1 15 hour block on average is £167-£180 per pupil.	Secondary <b>+4 months</b> Primary <b>+6 months</b> Maths <b>+2 months</b> English <b>+ 6 months</b>
<b>Oral Language Interventions</b> <a href="#">Oral Language Interventions EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	Language skills, vocabulary and reading.	<b>High</b>	<b>Very low</b> Staff training and resources	Secondary <b>+5 months</b> Primary <b>+6 months</b> Early Years <b>+7 months</b>
<b>Outdoor Adventure Learning</b> <a href="#">Outdoor Adventure Learning EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning Social, Emotional & Mental Health.	Resilience, self-confidence and motivation.	<b>Extremely low</b>	<b>Moderate</b> Depending on activity	Not enough evidence
<b>Parental Engagement</b> <a href="#">Parental Engagement EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>High</b>	<b>Very low</b> Staff training and development.	Secondary <b>+2 months</b> Primary <b>+4 months</b> Early Years <b>+5 months</b> English <b>+5 months</b> Maths <b>+3 months</b>
<b>Peer Tutoring</b> <a href="#">Peer Tutoring EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>High</b>	<b>Very low</b> Teacher training costs and resources.	Secondary <b>+ 5months</b> Primary <b>+ 5months</b> English <b>+ 5 months</b> Maths <b>+ 5 months</b>
<b>Performance Pay</b> <a href="#">Performance Pay EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>Very low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>+ 1months</b>



				Related to bonuses or staff salaries	
<b>Phonics</b> <a href="#">Phonics EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English	<b>Very high</b>	<b>Very low</b> Specific resources and staff training.	1:1 support + 5 months Small group + 4 months
<b>Physical Activity</b> <a href="#">Physical Activity EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Very low</b> Staff training and equipment.	+ 1 month
<b>Reading Comprehension Strategies</b> <a href="#">Reading Comprehension Strategies EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English	<b>High</b>	<b>Very low</b> Staff training and resources.	Secondary + 7 months Primary + 6 months
<b>Reducing Class Size</b> <a href="#">Reducing Class Size EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English, maths and science	<b>Very low</b>	<b>Very high</b> Teacher salary	Secondary & Primary similar Reading + 2 months Maths +1 months
<b>Repeating a year</b> <a href="#">Repeating a year EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>Low</b>	<b>Very high</b> Based on the national funding formula	Secondary – 4 months Primary – 2 months
<b>School Uniform</b> <a href="#">School Uniform EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning Social, Emotional & Mental Health.	High expectations Self-esteem.	<b>Extremely limited</b>	<b>Low</b> Relies on parents paying for the uniform.	Not enough evidence
<b>Small Group Tuition</b> <a href="#">Small Group Tuition EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Low</b> Based on salary costs and resources.	Secondary + 2 months Primary + 4 months



					Reading + 4 months Maths + 3 months
<b>Setting and Streaming</b> <a href="#">Setting and Streaming EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English, maths and science	<b>Very limited</b>	<b>Low</b>	Small negative impact.
<b>Social and Emotional Learning</b> <a href="#">Social and Emotional Learning EEF</a>	Social Emotional & Mental Health	Social interaction, English and maths.	<b>Very low</b>	<b>Very low</b> Professional training.	Secondary + 5 months Primary + 4 months English + 4 months Maths + 3 months Social interaction + 6 months
<b>Summer Schools</b> <a href="#">Summer Schools EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b> Staff salary, resources & facilities	Secondary & Primary similar English + 3 months Maths + 2 months
<b>Teaching Assistant Interventions</b> <a href="#">Teaching Assistant Interventions EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Moderate</b> Staff deployment	Secondary + 4 months Primary + 5 months
<b>Whole Class attainment grouping</b> <a href="#">Whole Class Attainment EEF</a>	Cognition and Learning	English Maths	<b>Very low</b>	<b>Very low</b> Additional resources if needed.	Secondary <b>no impact</b> Primary + 3 months Maths + 4 months

## Teaching and classroom organisation approaches

### A summary of the evidence from The Education Endowment Foundation, EEF [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#)

#### Effective use of Teaching Assistants (TA)

The evidence on TA deployment suggests they should not be used as an informal teaching deployment for low attaining pupils. With the expectation being that all pupils will experience high quality classroom teaching with TA's adding value to what the teachers do. Schools should try and organise themselves so that those pupils that struggle the most have as much time with teachers as others do.

Using TAs to deliver brief, intensive and structured interventions can support pupils to access high quality classroom lessons. Research has shown that TA's can effectively help pupils to become independent in their learning through the nature and quality of their talk. TAs should be supported to prioritise helping pupils to develop ownership of tasks than task completion.

Where TAs are used effectively is where schools have provided quality training and sufficient time for preparation and feedback. Positive effects have been observed when TA's deliver structured interventions in one-to-one and small group settings with high quality support and training. TAs can help pupils make the links between the interventions and the learning that takes place within the classroom.

All approaches work most effectively when:

- They are delivered through short sessions (up to 30 minutes) for 3-5 times a week for a set period (up to 10 weeks).
- Interventions need to be additional to and explicitly linked to classroom curriculum.
- Impact is monitored and adjustments made accordingly.

Approach	Evidence Strength	Costing	Impact
Small group teaching	Moderate	Low £70-100 per pupil.	Primary <b>+4 months.</b> Secondary <b>+2 months.</b>



<p>Can be used as a general strategy to ensure progress or teach challenging topics and skills. Small group teaching can support lower attaining learners or those at risk of falling behind. It is most effective when diagnostic assessment is used to target specific needs. When staff receive training in how to deliver the small group intervention there is a bigger impact.</p> <p>Groups that receive targeted teaching to their specific needs, have feedback from the teacher and are engaged make the most progress. When group sizes become bigger than 6 or 7 the effectiveness reduced.</p> <p>The evidence suggests low attaining pupils particularly benefit from small group tuition. It is suggested that frequent sessions e.g., three times a week, lasting up to an hour for about 10 weeks show the greatest impact</p>			<p><b>Reading average +4 months.</b></p> <p><b>Mathematics average +3 months.</b></p>
<p><b>One to One Tuition</b> Can be very effective at improving pupil outcomes if the teaching is closely matched to needs. Effectiveness depends on quality of teaching. Teaching needs to address the gaps in learning with well-planned sessions that provide quality feedback to the pupils</p> <p>Experienced, specifically trained teachers make the biggest impact. When using volunteers or teaching assistants evidence suggests training and a structured evidence-based intervention is required.</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p><b>Moderate</b> £167-£180 per pupil</p>	<p><b>Primary +6 months.</b></p> <p><b>Secondary + 4 months</b></p> <p><b>Maths +2 months</b></p> <p><b>Literacy +6 months</b></p>
<p><b>Reducing Class Size</b> The reduction of children to adult ratio can enable a teacher to implement a wider range of approaches and give each child more attention. The</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>	<p><b>Very high</b> Costing include teacher salary</p>	<p><b>Primary +2 months.</b></p> <p><b>Secondary +2 months</b></p> <p><b>Maths +1 month</b></p>

<p>majority of evidence is based on class sizes of 10 and found a small positive impact of +2 months.</p> <p>Reducing a class from 30 to 25 would unlikely be a cost-effective approach. Where is has the most potential benefits is in the early stages of primary school.</p> <p>A reduction in class size will only have an impact if the teacher is able to teach differently e.g. minimise disruption or have higher quality interactions. Evidence suggests that the gains from this approach are more likely to be from the flexibility of how learners are organized or the quality feedback they receive.</p> <p>Where the evidence suggests this is beneficial is from international research which suggests positive outcomes for young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged populations.</p> <p>An alternative approach would be to change the deployment in teachers and teaching assistants to enable teachers to work intensively with a small group.</p>	<p style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Very low</p>	<p>and additional space to teach.</p>	<p><b>Reading +2 months</b></p>
<p><b>Within Class Grouping</b> Children are grouped within class according to subject's attainment levels to match activities and support. The evidence strength for this area is limited with several factors creating variability. Curriculum content is important to consider attainment grouping have a positive impact for maths but little difference found for literacy, on average.</p>		<p style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">Very low</p>	<p><b>Very Low</b>  Costings would include any additional resources required.</p>



<p>One advantage of this approach is flexibility if appropriate monitoring systems are used to ensure pupils are allocated within the right group. Within class grouping can be used for specific tasks. Reframing questions and lesson content can be used to scaffold, stretch or challenge pupils learning. The evidence suggests the highest impact for this approach is in maths. The cost of this is low however the security of the evidence is low.</p> <p>It is important to consider the impact of within-class attainment groupings on wider outcomes such as confidence. The evidence base suggests that grouping pupils based on attainment may have longer term negative effects on the attitudes and engagement of low attaining pupils. An example of this is by discouraging the belief that their attainment can be improved through effort.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that disadvantaged pupils can suffer from lower teacher expectations and therefore an increased chance of being grouped with lower prior attainers.</p>			
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## COGNITION AND LEARNING TOOLKIT

### Memory: Retention and Retrieval

**Retention and retrieval** refers to the storage and recall of information from the Long-Term Memory (LTM). This is different but closely linked to Working Memory, for which there is a different section in this document. LTM consists of explicit(declarative) memory and implicit memory. This section will address ways in which the retention and recall of information from explicit memory can be supported.

Learning is dependent on memory processes, because previously stored knowledge, functions as a framework in which newly learned information can be linked. Memory consists of three interlinked processes:

- encoding, which is changing input into a form that can be stored
- storage (retention) of the encoded information
- retrieval of the encoded information or remembering.

Problems with memory retention and retrieval can be caused by failures at any of these three stages, such as ineffective encoding of information, too much competition of newly learnt information for storage or a failure to retrieve the relevant information.

Information is retained in children's memory stores in different ways, but it is primarily done so through active learning, repetition and recall. Acquiring and retaining new knowledge relies heavily on linking it to prior learning, so it makes sense that a child's capacity for retention and retrieval of information increases as they get older and make more associations between their learning.



The way in which information is originally encoded and stored plays a huge part in how accessible it is to recall later. When children actively do something with the information they are taught, the easier it will be to recall and the longer it will be remembered for. This could be actively thinking about it, discussing it with others, presenting it in a different way etc. The more of this a child does, the more they remember.

Stress and anxiety can affect how memories are formed, as they interfere with a person's capacity to encode and retrieve information. Therefore, it is important to provide calm, stress-free learning environments and to support children with elements of their lives that are causing stress. If a child is anxious at school, it is essential that this is addressed first, as it will impact on their ability to encode and retrieve information, and therefore learn.

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
Early Years	
<p>Children may seem to struggle to remember daily activities and routines and not seem to understand instructions.</p> <p>They may be experiencing delays in learning and development across prime and specific areas.</p> <p>Their play may appear to be repetitive</p> <p>They may struggle to generalise newly acquired skills across tasks and environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When asking children to recall something, or when teaching a new skill, it is important to <b>initially</b> keep the environment as familiar as possible. This is because research has found that the more visual cues that are similar at time of recall as when the information was first coded, the more information is recalled.</li> <li>• Use cues when presenting information, and then the same cue when asking the child to recall information. Using multiple cues will give the child a better chance of accurate recall. For example, using melody, actions (hand and full body) and visual cues in the same way as when teaching phonics.</li> <li>• Regular repetition in a variety of environments and situations will help the child generalise the knowledge and ability to recall the information. Use the associated cues to scaffold the recall initially, reducing this support as the child becomes more successful and confident with the recall.</li> <li>• Children are more likely to remember information when they have experienced it themselves, consider providing extra opportunities for roleplay, physical exploration and manipulation, and multisensory learning.</li> </ul>



They may not make links between their learning.

- Make connections to prior learning explicit and visual.

### School Age

Children may experience difficulty in understanding abstract concepts and applying prior learning.

They may experience difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing, oral or number skills.

They may struggle to generalise newly acquired skills across tasks and environments.

They may not make links between their learning.

- The actions and strategies for early years children are also relevant for school aged children.
- Use plenty of retrieval-based learning. This could include creating concept maps, flash cards, teaching others, question response. It is essential that there is both a degree of challenge and a high level of success with retrieving the information, so it is important to make the tasks challenging but to also use an appropriate level of scaffolding. For example, questions such as "What do you remember about the Great Fire of London?", could be reframed as "What do you remember about how the fire started?" Well-structured questions that incorporate an appropriate level of scaffolding will increase the recall success, and consequently improve more long-term recall.
- Allow for frequent practice through recall and repetition. When creating new neural pathways (learning new concepts and information), the more frequently the pathways are activated, the stronger they become. This makes both the retention and the recall stronger.
- Use regular small quizzes to prompt the recall of recently learned information. Remember to support this with appropriate scaffolding in order to promote success. It is important to frame the quizzes as tools to help the children remember what they have learnt, rather than tests on what they know.
- Aid schema formation by explicitly demonstrating patterns, connections and relationships between new and old learning. This can be done in many ways and on various levels – from a spiral curriculum to using concept maps to recapping a previous lesson’s content. For children that struggle with retention and retrieval, it is really helpful to receive a re-cap or pre-teach before the actual lesson.
- As with in the early years, use a multisensory approach. Providing visual and verbal information (dual-coding), increases the opportunity for storing that information.



- Introduce new material in a multi-sensory way – show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, write it.
- Making connections – use knowledge organisers or mind maps to visually connect the information that has been learned.
- Encouraging visualisation of concepts – drawing charts or figures to represent the learning.
- Encouraging active learning and reading – this includes formulating their own questions and taking notes. Simply highlighting notes, however, has been found to have little effect
- Allow extra time for processing information, answering, and completing tasks
- Have visual prompts on display
- Encourage peer support
- Encourage the use of spelling strategies, for example: mnemonics, words within words, base words and suffixes etc.
- Use writing scaffolds to support planning
- The use of mnemonics is very effective in the retention and retrieval of information as they work as they facilitate efficient coding by associating new information with knowledge that is already stored in long-term memory
- Children should be taught the necessity of "over-learning" new information. Often, they practice only until they are able to perform one error-free repetition of the material. However, several error-free repetitions are needed to solidify the information.

#### Post 16

- The strategies mentioned for school aged children and early years children are relevant for post-16 young people
- When focusing on life skills it would be helpful to use visual cues and reminders such as mobile phone notifications, sticky notes, visual sequencing cards



## Working Memory

Working memory is suggested to be an important part of a pupil's learning and is required for many aspects of learning (Gathercole, Lamont and Alloway, 2006). Short term memory stores information for a few seconds without mentally manipulating the information. Whereas working memory “refers to the ability to hold and manipulate information in the mind for a short period of time” (Gathercole and Alloway 2004, p2). Working memory is the ability to hold information in the memory while performing complex tasks.

Examples of where working memory is used successfully:

- *When we remember a phone number long enough to make a telephone call.*
- *When we go to the shops and remember what we need to buy without writing it down.*
- *Successfully answering mental maths questions.*
- *Being able to remember a sentence whilst focusing on how to spell individual words.*

Gathercole, Lamont and Alloway (2006) observed memory failure in pupils when they struggled to engage in a challenging processing activity, whilst simultaneously storing information e.g. counting. It was reported that “the most commonly observed memory-related failure was an inability to follow instructions from the teacher” (Gathercole, Lamont and Alloway 2006 p226). They suggested that writing sentences from memory which have been generated by the teacher also places a demand on working memory. Pupils with working memory difficulties are often aware that they cannot remember information. For example, children with poor working memory have reported “I forget everything, me!”, or “The teacher told me a lot and I forgot” (Gathercole et al, 2006, p234).

Examples of what a child with difficulties with working memory may do:

- *Incomplete recall: for example, having difficulty remembering instructions (particularly when spoken).*
- *Write a mixture of the date and title in their books when copying from the board.*



- *Have difficulty with mental maths.*
- *rarely volunteer answers during group discussions*
- *have high levels of distractibility.*
- *show poor academic progress.*
- *often lose their place in complex tasks.*
- *task abandonment – the pupil gives up a task completely.*

Development of working memory

The development of working memory starts in early infancy. When you play with a baby and hide a toy under a blanket, you know the baby is using working memory when they lift the blanket to retrieve the toy. By doing this the baby shows they are able to hold an image of the toy in their heads as well as the memory of what you did to hide it. Children develop nonverbal working memory before verbal working memory because this skill begins to emerge before language. When language develops working memory expands because children are able to draw on visual imagery and language to retrieve information.

Age at which child should be able to perform the task 75%-most of the time	Task
3-5 years	Run simple errands (e.g., gets shoes from bedroom when asked)
	Remembers instructions that were just given
	Follows a routine with only one prompt per step (e.g., brushing teeth after breakfast)
5-7 years	Able to run an errand with two to three steps
	Remembers instructions that were given a couple of minutes earlier
	Follows two steps of a routine with one prompt
8-10 years	Remembers to perform a routine chore after school without reminder
	Takes books, papers, assignments to and from school



	Keeps track of changing daily schedule (e.g. different activities after school)
11-13 years	Able to keep track of assignments and classroom expectations from multiple teachers
	Remembers events or responsibilities that deviate from the norm (e.g. permission slips for field trips, special instructions regarding extracurricular activities)
	Remembers multi-step directions, given sufficient time or practice

Formal assessment of working memory:

1. Standardised methods such as digit span tests with pupils

Individual tests take up to five minutes to administer. Paper and pencil tests are available in the *Working Memory Test Battery for Children*, which is standardised for children aged 4 to 15 years. The *Automated Working Memory Assessment (AWMA)* that can be used from 4 to 22 years. The AWMA is designed for easy administration for classroom teachers and other professionals working in the fields of education, medicine, and health. Test scores are calculated automatically by the computer programme and the child’s performance is automatically summarised at the end of testing. Further information on the Working Memory Test Battery for Children and the Automated Working Memory Assessment is available at Harcourt Assessment ([www.harcourt-uk.com](http://www.harcourt-uk.com)).

2. Teacher reported rating scale/ checklist.

To help teachers identify children who are at risk of having working memory problems there is the Working Memory Rating Scale. This is a rating scale on which teachers judge how frequently a child exhibits problem behaviours associated with poor working memory. A high score on this checklist indicates that a child is likely to have working memory problems. Available at :

<https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/store/ukassessments/en/Store/Professional-Assessments/Cognition-%26-Neuro/Memory/Working-Memory-Rating-Scale/p/P100009240.html>

3. Observations in the classroom:



Teachers can observe for potential working memory failures such those described above and also may include the following;

- a. Incomplete recall
- b. Failure to follow instructions
- c. Place keeping errors
- d. Task abandonment

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

**School Age**

See above

There are two recommended approaches to promoting working memory in schools.

**1: Teachers can modify the classroom environment**

Teachers can “scaffold” and support children with poor working memory; for example by:

- Breaking big tasks into smaller chunks, providing cues,
- Providing memory aids, making external devices that act as memory aids for the pupil available such as number lines and useful spellings. In the early years children are helped by easily handled three dimensional objects that can readily be counted such as cubes, beads and counters, and devices such as abaci and Unifix blocks. For older children multiplication grids, look up devices and calculators are useful. Specific memory needs of the child can be addressed using memory cards to supply information the child is likely to need.
- Establishing routines, for example frequent use and repetition
- Reduce the amount of material. Use actions.
- Providing alternative methods of recording
- Minimise copying from the board – provide copies for the pupil if necessary
- Ask the pupil to repeat back instructions to ensure he/she has understood.



- Be prepared to repeat
- Praise the child if they ask to repeat something
- Pair the child with a pupil with good memory abilities

## 2: Teachers can develop a pupil's use of memory-relieving strategies

Teachers to explicitly teach children strategies. As an example, strategies support working memory by helping an individual to hold information for longer in the short-term memory so that they can manipulate it in their working memory. These strategies include using mnemonic and memorization strategies such as rehearsing and repeating information. Melterz, Pollica and Barziilai (2007) state that strategy instruction is one of the most effective ways of addressing working memory difficulties.

Teachers may support pupils by:

- Teaching pupils to chunk information which involves the sub-segmentation of individual memory items into fewer groups (Miller, 1956; Carr and Schneider, 1991; Bor, Cumming, Scott, Owen, 2004), For example the number 253612 to be chunked into 25 36 12.
- Teaching pupils to visualize the information to be remembered. (De La Iglesia, Buceta and Campos, 2005;).
- Mnemonics, which is using semantics such as creating meaningful links between items (Turley–Ames and Whitfield 2003). e.g. BECAUSE- Big Elephants Can't Use Small Exits).
- Encourage rehearsal of verbal information e.g. repeating the information silently or aloud
- Encourage note taking e.g. encourage pupils to jot down important information to be remembered on their individual whiteboards when performing mental calculations.

Several researchers argue that individuals who use strategies have higher memory spans than individuals who do not use strategies (Turley-Ames and Whitfield, 2003; Dunlosky and Kane, 2007). Both Bjorklans and Douglas (1997) and Gathercole (1998) report that children only appear to use these strategies unprompted from seven years old and onwards. Additionally it is suggested that some children under the age of ten are unlikely to be able to select a suitable



strategy to undertake a task and are only able to utilize simple strategies such as chunking and rehearsal. A study by Mata, Von Helverson and Rieskamp (2011) supports these assertions as they found that children, particularly those under ten years of age, struggled to identify when a strategy would be useful and which strategy to utilize. However Wellman, Ritter and Flavell’s (1979) research found that three year old children could spontaneously use a range of strategies to help them remember which cup a toy was placed under. The children placed their hand on the cup or moved the cups around to help them remember and think about where the toy was placed. Bjorklund, Miller, Coyle, and Slawinski (1997) proposed that young children and children who have cognitive difficulties may not be able to apply the strategy in an appropriate situation. Dehn (2008, p259) argues “students with learning disabilities are less adept at generating and utilizing effective memory strategies”. Flavell (1979) emphasises that it is important for pupils to know how to use strategies and to know that they can use strategies to accomplish a task. Teachers can explicitly teach pupils strategy use.

Post 16

See above

As above, continue to utilise suggested approaches.



## Moderate Learning Difficulties

Learning difficulties covers a wide range of needs including moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties (children with severe learning difficulties are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and have associated difficulties with mobility and communication (SEND Code of Practice, 2015) ) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) have a severe learning disability and other disabilities that significantly affect their ability to communicate and be independent. They may have severe difficulties hearing, speaking and moving. They may have complex health and social care needs due to these or other conditions [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)).

**Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)** is a term generally applied in schools to children who have difficulties resulting in school attainments below expected levels in many areas of the curriculum despite academic support and differentiation. There is an on-going debate about how to identify MLD and whether to classify children according to how much their school attainments differ from others, or whether and how to take account of intellectual functioning as measured by cognitive ability tests. The SEND Code of Practice (2014) describes children and young people who may learn at a slower pace than their peers even with differentiation. The SEND Code of Practice (2014) does not specify the relationship between the MLD definition and intellectual functioning. An historical system has assumed that different degrees of ‘learning difficulties’ are associated with various IQ score ranges and MLD has been seen to correspond to a range of 51–70. Although the cognitive tests are designed to have a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15, with about 2% scoring below 70, this criterion for MLD has been discredited by studies over a long period of time as this does not nationally correspond to the setting a CYP is placed or whether a pupil will have an EHCP (Brahm et al. 2012). The DSM V medical classification of an 'intellectual disability' requires that there is limited functioning in three areas concerned with social skills (communicating with others) conceptual skills (reading and writing skills) and practical ability (e.g. clothing and bathing oneself). These would have onset in childhood.

Children identified as having Moderate Learning Difficulties is high incidence at a SEN level. Over half of children with a primary SEN of MLD have a secondary SEN in order of speech, language and communication needs, social, emotional and mental health and autistic spectrum disorder



(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/people-with-learning-disabilities-in-england/chapter-1-education-and-childrens-social-care-updates>)

Estimated level of academic performance at the need of each key stage for pupils with an IQ score of 70 or less is provided in the table below:

Chronological age (years)	Educational level estimated to equate to an IQ score of 70 or below
7	Working within EYFS
11	Working within Key Stage 1
14	Working within lower end of Key Stage 2
16	Working within upper range of Key Stage 2

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
Early Years	
<p>In the Early Years, children can be described by health services as presenting with a global developmental delay.</p> <p>This generally describes a child who is delayed in all areas of their development including play development, language development, social and emotional development and physical. Though the profile varies across each child.</p> <p>As children develop, it may be that they have a range of strengths and gaps in</p>	<p>The actions and strategies below can be adapted to support a young child with their development of play, language and communication and social and emotional development.</p> <p>A knowledge of play development stages. <a href="http://www.gov.uk">Development Matters - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Modelling, frequent repetition and a descriptive commentary <a href="#">Handouts-for-parents-from-Preschool-Basic.pdf</a> with a balance of meeting the child at their current stage to help consolidate learning and move them to the next achievable step <a href="#">Articles and Handouts for Parents   Incredible Years.</a></p> <p>Differentiation of the adult’s role in supporting and facilitating play, depending on the group/ activity being undertaken, e.g:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing play.</li> <li>• Providing resources.</li> </ul>



developmental areas and are not delayed evenly in all areas.

Estimated level of academic performance is assessment scores at half chronological age.

• [Mediating learning](#)

- Physically positioning an adult nearby
- Modelling skills and feelings.
- Allowing a balance of child-led and free play, as well as adult-directed tasks.
- Questioning and making suggestions.
- Joining in when needed or invited. Being a ‘play partner’ rather than controlling the play.
- Supporting and extending child-led play
- Focusing the child on the task (e.g. using visual and verbal prompts, moving things into their line of sight).
- Using ‘hand over hand’ guidance.
- Modelling how to do the activity/ task first.
- Mediating meaning by focusing the child on relevant features of the task (e.g. feeling objects, demonstrating use, pointing to buttons/ switches).
- Focusing the child on the adult’s role and involvement (turn-taking, modelling, demonstrate trying and failing and asking for the child’s help).
- Assisting generalisation of the skill (e.g. show the child how to use a toy in a different way, or different toys in the same way).
- Helping the child to plan (e.g. making tasks visually clearer by reducing the number of items in front of child, providing non-verbal demonstration, talking through what to do next).
- Helping the child to break down tasks through modelling and demonstration (do one-step at a time and encourage child to copy)
- Helping the child to feel successful (using verbal and non-verbal praise, encouragement and tangible rewards
- Refer to [A Celebratory Approach to SEND Assessment in the Early Years | Pen Green Children's Centre](#) document for further guidance.



- Increased and ongoing use of play-based assessment for children who may require more fine-grained assessment of skills or who may not fit easily into EYFS.
- Fine-grained assessment tools (e.g. Early Support Developmental Journal) [Untitled \(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](#)

### School Age

Children typically have difficulty with reasoning, problem solving, working memory, retention, abstract thinking, academic learning or learning from experience compared to expectations for their age. They have persistently delayed attainments.

Significant difficulty with ‘adaptive functioning’. This means that the child will not meet the expected standards of independence and responsibility for his or her age.

Problems often arise for pupils with MLD when the teacher moves on too quickly before they have had a chance to consolidate what they know.

Staff awareness of the **learning hierarchy** to support their understanding of the stages involved in developing a skill and identifying which stage pupils have reached/ where additional support to progress may be needed. When pupils are struggling with new learning, it can be useful to break the task down into small steps. This will help identify any gaps in essential prior learning and pinpoint the next step towards mastery. Notice when mastery has been achieved. This is when the task is fully learnt and feels like ‘second nature’; pupil has developed a level of proficiency which is not affected by new learning or periods of time without practicing the skill.

- Acquisition (being introduced to a task, such as recognising a phonic sound, and recognising initial components. Focus is on accuracy and getting it right, rather than speed or use of concepts to problem solve).
- Fluency (practice phase and becoming familiar with the task; starting to focus on speed as well as accuracy (e.g. identifying sounds more quickly and automatically). Individuals will make different rates of progress).
- Mastery (task is fully learnt and feels like ‘second nature’; pupil has developed a level of proficiency which is not affected by new learning or periods of time without practicing the skill, such as being able to recognise a phonic sound over time).
- Generalisation (mastered task is now used in other situations; with instruction, the pupil applies the skill with novel materials or under different conditions, such as applying phonics sounds to reading a book with some help. Learning is less prescribed and reinforcement can take place through everyday experiences, enabling simple problem solving).



- Adaptation (the mastered skill is fully generalised and the information can be used in novel ways and for more complex problem solving, such as applying phonic knowledge to new words. Specific instruction in complex or new situations isn't needed and the pupil can ask themselves what skills or knowledge they might need to solve the problem).

Over rehearsal of information to enable pupils to progress through the hierarchy of learning e.g. Precision Teaching (PT) intervention [Precision Teaching | HIGHLAND LITERACY](#), Toe By Toe [Toe By Toe - A highly structured phonics-based reading manual \(toe-by-toe.co.uk\)](#). PT intervention is suitable for those who struggle with working memory difficulties and retaining information and is used as an intensive 1:1 intervention. Also see [A Different View of Literacy and Numeracy - teaching learners with global difficulties | Nasen](#) and [https://www.the-schoolpsychologyservice.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/What-Works-for-Literacy-Difficulties-6<sup>th</sup>-Edition-2020.pdf](https://www.the-schoolpsychologyservice.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/What-Works-for-Literacy-Difficulties-6th-Edition-2020.pdf)

**Mediation:** Different children will require different types, levels and intensity of adult mediation (approaches and strategies used to support during tasks and activities) to maximise their learning of specific skills and to promote increased levels of independence. Mediation may include:

- Regulation of behaviour (finding out what helps the pupil to manage behaviours associated with learning such as attention, impulsivity and distraction);
- Rule teaching (helping and encouraging the pupil to find and apply rules);
- Insight (helping the pupil to use 'what works' and apply these tactics to new and novel situations - generalising)
- Sequencing (helping the pupil to respond in an organised and sequenced way).

Modes of mediation may include:

- Focusing (directing and maintaining attention to a task using prompts such as gesture or verbal and visual cues);
- Motor (drawing, moving objects into pupil's line of sight, hand over hand guidance);



- Verbal (using instructions to guide and direct through questions, step-by-step instructions and feedback on what has gone well).

Mediation should begin at the lowest level needed for the pupil; some will need to begin at a higher level than others. Mediation progresses from higher to lower levels as follows:

- Hand over hand guidance.
- Modelling with initial guidance which is gradually faded.
- Modelling the task using specific examples of rules, concepts and strategies.
- Pointing out general characteristics (but not task specific).
- Asking for further applications of previously used strategies.
- Teaching how to select appropriate strategies using previous input from mediation.
- Pupil applies previous strategies and rules with increasing flexibility.
- Previous mediation internalised and fully self-regulating.

**Ensure explicit connections are made between learning from everyday classroom teaching structured interventions**

Interventions are often quite separate from classroom activities. Lack of time for teachers and TAs to liaise allows relatively little connection between what pupils' experience in, and away, from, the classroom. The key is to ensure that learning in interventions is consistent with, and extends, work inside the classroom and that pupils understand the links between them. It should not be assumed that pupils can consistently identify and make sense of these links on their own

Best use of support assistants [Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#). Where TAs are working individually with low attaining pupils the focus should be on retaining access to high-quality teaching, for example by delivering brief, but intensive, structured interventions. TAs should aim to give pupils the least amount of help first. They should allow



sufficient wait time, so pupils can respond to a question or attempt the stage of a task independently. TAs should intervene appropriately when pupils demonstrate they are unable to proceed.

Adopt evidence-based interventions to support TAs in their small group and one-to-one instruction  
[Small group tuition | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

Schools should use structured interventions with reliable evidence of effectiveness. There are presently only a handful of programmes in the UK for which there is a secure evidence base, so if schools are using programmes that are ‘unproven’, they should try and replicate some common elements of effective interventions:

- Sessions are often brief (20–50mins), occur regularly (3–5 times per week) and are maintained over a sustained period (8–20 weeks).
- Careful timetabling is in place to enable this consistent delivery
- TAs receive training from experienced trainers and/or teachers (5–30 hours per intervention)
- The intervention has structured supporting resources and lesson plans, with clear objectives
- TAs closely follow the plan and structure of the intervention
- Connections are made between the out-of-class learning in the intervention and classroom teaching

High Quality Teaching approaches. Webinars for meeting the needs of MLD [Webinar: High-Quality Teaching - Targeting Areas of Need | SendGateway](#)

Careful assessment of baselines and monitoring of progress will help ensure that their progress.



Assessments are used to identify appropriate pupils, guide areas for focus and track pupil progress. Individual and/ or small group interventions with appropriate pre- and post- measures to evaluate progress. Good starting points for finding out about evidence-based interventions, programmes and approaches are The Education Endowment Foundation’s Teaching and Learning Toolkit and Language and Literacy and Mathematics projects.

[Simplify Pupil Tracking with B Squared Assessment Software](#)

[Pupil Progress Tracking Software | Primary School System \(learningladders.info\)](#)

[Caspa - Comparison and Analysis of Special Pupil Attainment | SGA Systems \(caspaonline.co.uk\)](#)

Using a teaching assistant to pre-tutor a group of pupils can be more useful than having the assistant support them with the work the class have been set. It promotes independence and may enable the pupils to take a fuller part in the lesson.

Encouragement and peer support

**Multi-sensory teaching styles:** Providing lots of examples to help the pupil learn concepts, linking learning to the pupil’s everyday experience – using real-life examples, handling objects, pictures and movement. It is important to provide multiple examples of new concepts and, where possible, to take these examples from pupils’ own real-life experience rather than talking in abstract terms.

**Scaffolding:** Putting in support (like doing part of the task for the pupil or doing it with them) that is slowly withdrawn, repetition, reinforcement and opportunities to practise

**Language:** Adult’s language can often be a barrier to learning. Pupils with MLD need short, clear instructions, repeated if necessary. They can often benefit from ‘pre-tutoring’ – preparation for a



task so that they come to it already knowing the key vocabulary and concepts. Use clear instructions, explicitly teach the vocabulary the pupil will need. Similarly, putting up lists of key vocabulary for a particular topic or lesson and teaching the meaning of each word will give pupils a head start with their subject learning.

Support with understanding instructions and the requirements of tasks and acquiring sequencing skills – for example, when following a recipe or science experiment

Support with personal organisation and with visual and auditory memory for information, processes and instructions.

It is important to remember how difficult it is for some pupils to extract the salient points from information they are given, and to record their ideas using conventional written recording. Use a range of alternatives to writing and make regular use of support systems such as writing frames and other visual approaches.

Awareness of pupils who may benefit from additional support at the acquisition and fluency stages of the learning hierarchy (e.g. strategies such as pre-teaching of key concepts/ vocabulary and increased repetition and over-learning with opportunities to revisit concepts more frequently).

The Early Intervention Foundation guidebook [Home | EIF Guidebook](#) provides information about early intervention programmes that have been evaluated and shown to improve outcomes for children and young people (including the ‘Enhancing school achievement and employment’ outcome).



	<p>Access to targeted intervention time using age-appropriate games/apps (Lucid Memory Booster or Cogmed).</p> <p>Use of technology and ICT-based resources to support planning, organisation and retention (e.g. Microsoft Learning Tools including Immersive Reader <a href="https://youtu.be/Djng9DBB4Ao">https://youtu.be/Djng9DBB4Ao</a> , voice activated software, talking tins/ Clicker 8).</p> <p>Employ strategies to start to encourage pupils’ metacognition and self-regulation <a href="https://www.eef.org.uk/educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk">Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning   EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)</a> (i.e. the ability to monitor, direct and review their own learning, through explicitly thinking about their own learning, setting goals and evaluating progress) and support executive function skills (these are a set of skills and mental processes that develop throughout childhood and adolescence, which support pupils to self-regulate, initiate, attend to and persevere with activities successfully).</p>
<p><b>Post 16</b></p>	
<p>At post 16, young people and young adults demonstrate persistent delay and lack of independence with adaptive functioning skills including communication, literacy, numeracy, daily living skills and socialisation.</p> <p>Adult learning disabilities are defined by 3 core criteria: lower intellectual ability (usually defined as an IQ of less than 70) significant impairment of social or adaptive functioning and onset in childhood (<a href="http://nice.org.uk">nice.org.uk</a>).</p>	<p>See school age strategies are these are relevant. Promote and develop metacognitive talk in the classroom and in interactions with young people. Dialogic teaching, for example, emphasises classroom dialogue through which young people learn to reason, discuss, argue and explain.</p> <p>Gather observational data and conduct targeted assessments to further clarify strengths and needs (e.g. Automated Working Memory Assessment and Vineland 3 Adaptive Behaviour Scales – Third Edition).</p> <p>Explicitly teach young people how to organise and effectively manage their learning independently – provide guided practice.</p> <p>Provide exam preparation and self-study support in small groups for targeted students.</p>



Use of self-evaluation and feedback tools such as ‘exam wrappers’ (a pre and post-exam self-evaluation tool).

Small group/individual intervention to develop targeted skills (e.g. working memory instruction/practice: Cogmed Skills learned during targeted provision should be complimented with strategy - based practice within classes. Teach and model working memory and recall strategies within small groups (rehearsal and chunking of information, visual memory strategies and creating narratives).

Small group-based support around key skills for independence (e.g. time management, self-regulation and self-organisation) to support plans for employment or training.

As above but with an emphasis on independence skills. This might include difficulties in being able to feed or dress themselves, or not being able to manage money independently when they get older, not being able to communicate with others, participate in social events or gain independence. These difficulties occur in different environments, such as at home, school and during leisure time

### References

Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015) DfE assets.publishing.service.gov.uk

Moderate learning difficulties: searching for clarity and understanding Brahm Norwich, Annamari Ylonen & Ruth Gwernan-Jones Pages 1-19 | Received 01 May 2012, Accepted 08 Sep 2012, Published online: 04 Oct 2012

[Chapter 1: education and children’s social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)



## Numeracy and dyscalculia

This toolkit aims to provide easy access to information relating to numeracy development (including dyscalculia) and to enable schools/settings to have a common understanding of numeracy development and current best practice, in order, to achieve the best outcomes for children. Early identification and effective support for these children is essential.

Dyscalculia is defined as a condition that affects the acquisition of numeracy skills. The British Dyslexia Association defines dyscalculia as a 'specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with mathematics'. Mathematics difficulties are best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and they have many causal factors. Dyscalculia falls at one end of the spectrum and will be distinguishable from other maths issues due to the severity of difficulties with number sense, including subitising and ordering. Dyscalculic students seem to have an impaired sense of number size. This may affect tasks involving estimating numbers in a collection and comparing numbers. Dyscalculic students can usually learn the sequence of counting words but may have difficulty navigating back and forth, especially in 2s, 3s, or more. They may also find it especially difficult to translate between number words whose powers of 10 are expressed by new names, such as "ten," "hundred," or "thousand" and numerals whose powers of 10 are expressed by the same numerals but in terms of place value, such as 10, 100, and 1,000. Other areas of difficulty with acquiring maths and numeracy skills may be attributed to maths anxiety, and key adult confidence in using maths skills.

- Characteristic features of numeracy difficulties are: Visual-spatial working memory difficulties, difficulty in suppressing distracting information, incomplete understanding of number concepts.
- Dyscalculia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of executive function skills such as attention and focus, planning and organisation, working memory and switchability.



- A good indication of the severity and persistence of numeracy difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention. (Maths Recovery Baseline assessment [What we do – Maths Recovery Council UK and Ireland](#) and follow up teaching, for example)

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
In the Early Years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with language that expresses mathematical concepts e.g. longer, less than, the same as, difference.</li> <li>2. Use games that consolidate and develop early number skills. Dominoes, beetle, pairs (pelmanism), matching games, sequencing games.</li> <li>3. Use physical and active approaches; water play, construction activities, Lego/Duplo building, matching e.g. socks/chopsticks/, pairing e.g. knife and fork, patterns.</li> <li>4. Use concrete materials; number lines, blocks, dice, and ad hoc materials e.g., socks (matching), buttons (sorting/grouping), ribbons (length, ordering by length, by colour, by width)</li> <li>5. Use Early Number Concepts from the Developing Number Knowledge series</li> <li>6. Refer to Highland Numeracy Blog for ideas and assessment suggestions. <a href="http://www.highlandnumeracyblog.wordpress.com">www.highlandnumeracyblog.wordpress.com</a></li> </ol>
<b>School Age</b>	
School Age	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use the Developing Number Knowledge series to ensure that concepts are understood and internalised.</li> <li>2. Work with adults to make sure that they are confident to support children in numeracy and mathematics tasks. This could be TAs, parents or teachers.</li> <li>3. For children who are under confident pre-teaching and practice may be helpful.</li> </ol>



4. Children with maths anxiety do not thrive in timed tests and 'mental maths'.
5. Make sure that the child is appropriately supported where they are developmentally. If they need to use their fingers/a number line/times square that is okay.
6. Make maths playful and engaging. Maths is about problem-solving. (Jo Boaler The Elephant in the Classroom - helping children learn and love maths )
7. Try the use of apps to consolidate and engage pupils in numeracy tasks. Check out [www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk) for free downloads/webinars around available resources. For older pupils ensure that numeracy tasks are purposeful and relevant.

### Post 16

Post 16

1. Real life experiences, such as shopping, using timetables, managing money, whether through buying items and estimating change.
2. Bank accounts, saving. Understanding bills, income and out-goings.
3. Numeracy skills can be developed through practical activities such as cooking and modifying recipes to make it for more people, gardening, painting and decorating, building.

### References

- Effective Teachers of Numeracy (1997) Askew, M., Rhodes, V., Brown, M., William, D., Johnson, D.
- Dyscalculia Definition – The British Dyslexia Association 2019
- Number Sense series (book series)
- [www.Nrich.org](http://www.Nrich.org) University of Cambridge
- Mathematics Education Centre at Loughborough University [www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/mec](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/mec)
- Camilla Gilmore podcast for TES [www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/mec/news/2020/camilla-gilmore-podogogy-podcast](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/mec/news/2020/camilla-gilmore-podogogy-podcast)
- <https://Highlandnumeracyblog.wordpress.com>
- [www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk)



## Play Development and Learning

There are two types of play which can be viewed on a continuum. At one end of this continuum is free play which:

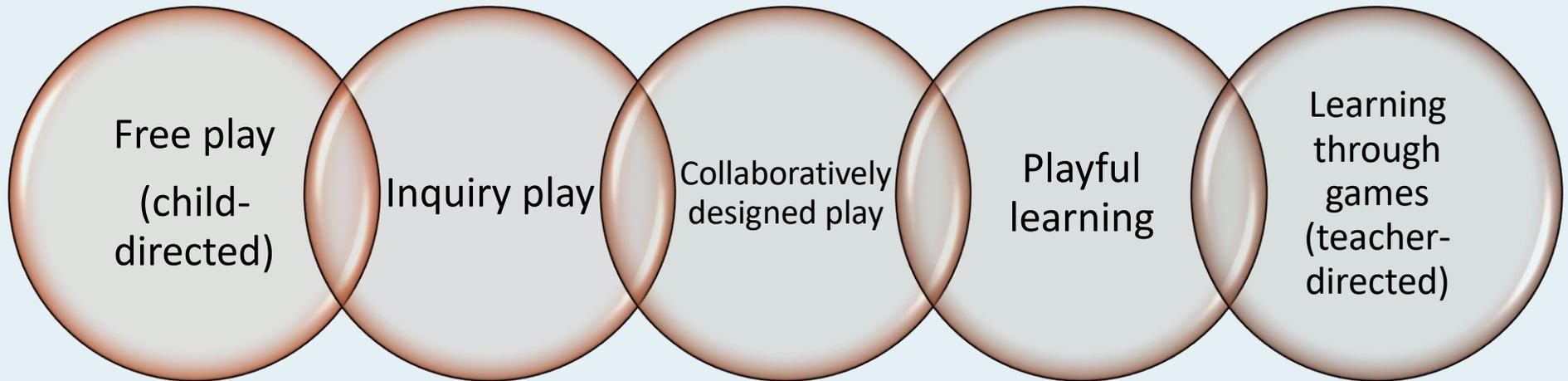
- is initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves;
- takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise;
- is non-compulsory;
- is driven by intrinsic motivation;
- is undertaken for its own sake (non-productivity), (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2013).

Free play can take many forms and is developmentally valuable in itself. All children and young people (CYP) have a right to access free play, and it should be ensured that all CYP have adequate access to free play, e.g. during their break times (British Psychological Society, 2019). For further information on adaptations to the environment to support free play please see [Play Wales | Chwarae Cymru](#).

Structured play is distinctly different from free play in that it is learning which takes place through play-based methods. This type of play has a desired outcome, which is specified by someone other than the CYP (usually the adult). During a typical day, CYP should move along the play continuum (please see figure 1 below), engaging in both free and structured play to meet their wellbeing, developmental and learning needs. Play is explicitly promoted within Early Years educational guidance however it is often absent from educational guidance for older CYP. Although it may (or may not) take different forms to play in the Early Years, play is both developmentally appropriate and important for CYP of all ages.

This section refers to the use of structured play in supporting learning and development.





A play continuum (Pyle and Daniels, 2016)

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

Early Years

Structured play can be used as a vehicle for supporting lots of different areas of learning and development including:

- relationship/attachment building,

- Consider features of an enabling environment as described in Development Matters (July 2021) [Development Matters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Use of structured, turn taking games for the development of joint attention, listening, turn taking skills and promoting positive relationships
- Use of threading, playdough, use of play tweezers, etc. for the development of fine motor skills



- CYP's executive functioning skills, e.g. their focused attention, self-regulation and planning skills,
- CYP's language and communication skills,
- for development of fine/gross motor skills,
- for generalisation of taught material,
- for supporting the development of social interaction skills.

- Picture books for the development of attention, enjoyment of shared activities and language and literacy skills
  - Intensive interaction ([Intensive Interaction - Fundamentals of Communication](#)) for supporting the development of joint attention, promoting enjoyment of shared interactions and increasing communications
  - Nursery rhymes with actions, e.g. round and round the garden for supporting the development of joint attention and language skills
  - Joining and extending the child's play to develop the child's social imagination, language skills and promoting positive relationships
- Outdoor play for the development of gross motor skills

### School Age

- Use of structured, turn taking games, e.g. board games, for the development of joint attention, listening, turn taking skills, mathematical skills, and promoting positive relationships
  - Use of sorting games/matching pairs for the development of attentional skills, e.g. focused attention and attention switching
  - Use of 'Kim's Game' or similar to support identification of working memory strategies
  - Joining and extending child's play during some unstructured times (ensure that the child still has adequate access to free play) to develop the child's social imagination, language skills and promoting positive relationships
  - Lego therapy to develop social communication skills and attentional skills
  - Puzzles to develop problem-solving, attentional and mathematical skills
- Large loose parts play for the development of gross motor skills

### Post 16

- Drama and role play to promote the learning of social communication skills



- Lego therapy to develop social communication skills and attentional skills
  - Use of structured, turn taking games, e.g. board games
  - Puzzles to develop problem-solving, attentional and mathematical skills
  - Quizzes to promote generalisation of taught content
  - Use of technology to promote generalisation of taught content, research and IT skills
- Organised sports to develop social communication skills and for motor skill development

### References

[AET Autism Progression Framework 2.0 - Autism Education Trust](#)

[British Psychological Society \(2019\), \*DECP Position Paper: Children's Right to Play\*. Leicester: BPS.](#)

[Development Matters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Early years SEND toolkit - Lancashire County Council](#)

[Pyle, A. & Daniels, E. \(2016\).](#) A Continuum of Play-Based Learning: The Role of the Teacher in Play-Based Pedagogy and the Fear of Hijacking Play. *Early Education and Development*, (3), 274-289.

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 17 (2013) on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (art. 31)*, 17 April 2013, CRC/C/GC/17, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/51ef9bcc4.html> [accessed 30 July 2021]

[UNICEF-Lego-Foundation-Learning-through-Play.pdf](#)



## Reading Development and Dyslexia

This toolkit aims to provide easy access to information relating to reading development (including phonics and dyslexia) and to enable schools/settings to have a common understanding of reading development and current best practice, in order, to achieve the best outcomes for children. There is considerable evidence that reading difficulties can significantly impact on a person's life chances and outcomes; in particular, in relation to, unemployment, poverty, self-esteem and offending behaviour. Therefore, early identification and effective support for these children is essential.

It is recognised that there are currently many different definitions of dyslexia. The Rose Review conducted by Sir Jim Rose makes recommendations on the identification and teaching of children with dyslexia, and on how to best take forwards the commitment in the Children's Plan. The report can be accessed at [00659-2009DOM-EN.pdf \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/default-report/pdf/00659-2009DOM-EN.pdf) and offers recommendations for schools and local authorities. The review constructed a working definition of dyslexia and its characteristics as follows:

**"Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling."**

- Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed.
- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities.
- It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points.
- Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia.
- A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.

The Rose Report definition acknowledges current research that:



- Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. The definition does not rely on identifying a discrepancy between a child’s ability in one area and his/her abilities in other areas
- There isn’t one specific profile of cognitive strengths and difficulties that needs to be identified in order, to classify a child as having dyslexia
- Based on current research and theory the term dyslexia can be used interchangeably with literacy difficulties (reading/spelling difficulties) at the word level.

In addition, the British Psychological Society (BPS) definition from 1999 (reprinted in 2005) is as follows; “Dyslexia is evident when accurate and fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the “word” level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent when there is not typical progress made despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis of a staged process of assessment through teaching.

Therefore, the biggest question is:

'What is the nature of the child or young person's difficulties and what are the most suitable interventions to support an individual’s particular needs relating to reading, spelling and some wider areas of literacy?

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>Early language and literacy (reading and writing) skills development begins in the first few years of life and are closely linked to the child’s earliest experiences with language, books, stories and nursery rhymes.</p>	<p>All Early Years children should have access to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A language rich environment, where babies and toddlers are talked to and listened to from the earliest age</li> <li>• A wide range of books available to suit their age.</li> <li>• Regular opportunities to explore and play with books (board books, cloth books, plastic books, real books)</li> </ul>



Children usually begin to read with a whole word awareness of visual and spoken words (for example, recognising their name or a shop logo) and then tend to become aware of increasingly smaller units over time.

You may notice children are struggling to show these early signs of reading awareness. Please see strategies for developing pre-reading skills from [familylearning.org.uk](http://familylearning.org.uk)

- Singing nursery rhymes and developing awareness of rhythm, rhyme and syllables in words
- Reading development is supported by exposure to print (regularly reading to children from a very early age, singing nursery rhymes) and vocabulary development (talking to your child)
- Listening to stories and encouragement to look at favourite pictures, point to familiar objects, imitating an action seen in a book, encouraging babbling/ talking in imitation of reading
- Opportunities to recognise whole words e.g. the child's name / logo's
- Scribbling and mark making

Some strategies for developing pre-reading skills can be found on the family learning website. [Pre-reading skills \(familylearning.org.uk\)](http://familylearning.org.uk)

## School Age

Being able to hear and identifying the different sounds in words (phonological awareness) is a key skill and predictor of later reading success. As children learn to read, phonological awareness is used to work out the relationships between parts of words and what they sound like (syllables, onset-rime, phonemes). Children learn to pronounce and identify the whole word. This may occur through breaking down the sounds in words (decoding) or through other approaches such as recognising whole words or rhyme.

### Universal Screening

There are a number of early screening tests available to schools that give an indication of whether children are at risk of dyslexia. Effective assessments highlight areas of strength and difficulties and this information is then used to guide interventions. This should include measures which are meaningful and relevant and reflect assessment over time.

Although there are many commercially available dyslexia screening tests, there are also assessment tools available in schools that can be effectively used by teachers to identify children who are failing to respond to high quality teaching and who are likely to need additional support. The materials below are used to assess the progress of all children in mainstream school and can be used to identify children at risk of dyslexia:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
- Letters and sounds phases



In order to begin to read fluently and efficiently in a way which allows for comprehension (understanding of what has been read), eventually words which have been decoded will need to move into memory so that they can be identified quickly by sight.

Skilled reading is a complex process and it is therefore not surprising that there is a great deal of individual variation in reading development.

Specific learning difficulties affects one or more specific aspect of learning, e.g. literacy, numeracy, co-ordination difficulties or specific language impairment. A small number of children may have a formal diagnosis e.g. dyslexia.

For all areas of need, any provision or support should be provided in line with the needs of the child and is not dependant on any formal diagnosis.

- Year 1 Phonics screening test

In addition, the following are used by some primary and secondary schools:

- Standardised reading and spelling tests

**Universal support (quality first teaching):**

- Identify gaps in learning and provide focussed teaching
- Place yourself where children/young people can see your face clearly and you can see them
- Ensure text and print is displayed using appropriate font and/or colour background
- Keep all distractions to a minimum
- Have clearly differentiated success criteria
- Allow extra time for processing information, answering and completing tasks
- Allow for frequent practice through recall and repetition
- Use a variety of strategies for recording
- Present new information in small chunks keeping language simple
- Ensure that targets are SMART and achievable
- Use colour highlighting for word patterns, prefixes, suffixes etc.
- Introduce new material in a multi-sensory way – show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, write it
- Use technology to support learning
- Encourage peer support
- Provide visual and practical resources to present key information
- Encourage the use of spelling strategies, for example: mnemonics, words within words, base words and suffixes etc.



You may notice persistent difficulties with the following:

- Speech and language difficulties
- Literacy difficulties, e.g. reluctance to read or poor sight vocabulary
- Poor organisation
- Discrepancy between oral and written work
- Difficulty following instructions
- Tiredness due to excessive concentration levels needed
- Social and behavioural difficulties arising from low self-esteem and frustration
  - Attention and concentration span difficulties, leading to poor motivation and resistance to learning
  - Difficulties with sequencing, visual and/or auditory perception, coordination, or short-term working memory
  - Difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing, oral or number skills, which do not fit his/her general pattern of learning and performance

- Use writing scaffolds to support planning
- Use concept maps to plan and identify overall themes and the relationships between ideas
- Pupils may benefit from developing visual mnemonic strategies to support their spelling. Pupils may also benefit from the use of verbal mnemonics (e.g. BECAUSE- Big Elephants Can't Use Small Exits). Pupils should be encouraged to create their own verbal mnemonics; these are often easier for the pupil to remember.
- Pupils may find that they prefer one approach to supporting their spellings and they should be encouraged to use the approach they feel most comfortable with.
- Some children repeatedly muddle letters and would benefit from visual reminders placed around the classroom and referred to throughout the lesson. Often if children create their own visual reminder this can be more powerful than ones created for them.

Schools should plan literacy interventions which are evidence based. What works for Children and young people with literacy difficulties, the effectiveness of intervention schemes by Greg Brooks can be referred to:

<https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/documents/files/What-works-for-children-and-young-people-with-literacy-difficulties-5th-edition.pdf>

**SEND support level:**

Continue with any relevant strategies from the universal level above, plus:

- Provide appropriate small group interventions and resources specific to need with measurable SMART targets
- Provide regular, specific focused teaching which is increasingly individualised from teacher or teaching assistant
- Ensure pre and post assessments are completed for each intervention



- Very specific difficulties (e.g. diagnosis of dyslexia etc.) affecting literacy skills

- Implement, monitor and review advice from external agencies such as the educational psychologists and specialist teachers.
- Try a range of coloured overlays and/or reading rulers
- Use calendars and checklists to structure classroom/homework tasks and enable child or young person to meet deadlines
- Teach keyboard skills daily and provide daily opportunities to record written work on a word processor/l-pad.
- Support children with organisation, working memory and concentration – using strategies in the appropriate sections of the SEND toolkit.

**Provide daily Individual or small group support to teach spelling rules/phonics:**

A possible structure to these sessions could be as follows:

- Start the session by revisiting old learning (words and sounds) - always start the session by going through the sounds or words already learnt.
- New teaching point (introduce new sound – using multisensory links (writing the sound with cursive writing - produce a visual (card with 'ay' sound and the word 'tray' – then the pupil can draw a picture of a tray on the card). The pupil could come up with their own 'ay' word as this would help them to remember better.
- Then read some words with the new target sound e.g. 'ay'
- Read some simple sentences with the target sound e.g. 'ay'
- Then write individual words or simple sentences with the target sound e.g. write the sentence 'the cat sat on the tray'
- Then end the session on a high by playing a game with the target sound and other sounds they know well (snap/matching pairs etc.)

**Distributed practice**



Children may benefit from a distributed practice approach to learning. To do this school would support the pupil with a brief structured teaching session for 10 - 15 minutes in the first session, then the same again before lunch time and then the same again in the afternoon. This approach may support the pupil better than longer sessions.

If a child consistently struggles with learning to read through a phonics approach it may be worthwhile introducing a whole sight word approach to reading. The 100 most frequently used words from Dr Jonathan Solity's research [BBC NEWS | Education | 'Only 100 words' needed to read](#) would be a useful starting point here.

This can be combined with a Precision Teaching approach. [What is Precision Teaching? - Answered - Twinkl Teaching Wiki](#) Precision teaching is a structured teaching method that's designed to improve the accuracy and fluency of reading, spelling and maths. The main goal of precision teaching is to help ensure that students become fluent and accurate in using their words. It aims to develop students' reading and spelling skills naturally by using language more in their everyday learning. Precision teaching is often used with children with SEND who might need additional support. It's an extremely handy intervention that a Teaching Assistant, SENDCo or other support staff can carry out in your classroom.

**How does Precision Teaching work?** Precision teaching is usually carried out on a one-to-one basis between a teacher and a learner. These interactions are normally quite short, for around 10 minutes, and ideally should happen 3 times a week.

Trial the use of the ACE spelling dictionary by David Moseley. Initially adults will need to become familiar with using the dictionary themselves before introducing it to pupil. There are four useful lessons, which support teachers in introducing the dictionary to children at the front of the dictionary. The pupil may



require 2 – 3 additional lessons to work with an adult to explore finding words in the ACE-spelling dictionary. The use of the dictionary should then be encouraged and modelled in class.

Pupils will need access to technology to support their writing particularly when completing longer pieces of work [Digital Learning Tools, Immersive Reader | Microsoft Education](#) (e.g. laptop, iPad).

Pupils would benefit from taking part in activities to develop their typing skills. The following website has a typing game that might be helpful:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr>

When pupils are expected to complete a piece of written work, it would be helpful if they have opportunities to discuss their ideas with an adult beforehand. The adult should also support them to organise their ideas and plan what they are going to write in a visual way e.g. using a mind map or story map. Pupils should also have access to key word vocabulary that they can refer to when writing.

Pupils would benefit from printed copies of presentations where possible to reduce the amount of copying they are expected to do.

Pupils will benefit from additional time to process information and to complete tasks.

Pupils should have additional time to complete tests and homework.

### Post 16

Young people with reading difficulties and dyslexia may present with persistent and moderate difficulties with the following:

- Identify gaps in learning and provide focussed teaching
- Place yourself where young people can see your face clearly and you can see them
- Ensure all text and print is clearly visible – appropriate font, colour background
- Keep all distractions to a minimum
- Have clearly differentiated success criteria
- Allow extra time for processing information, answering and completing tasks



- Literacy difficulties, e.g. reluctance to read or poor sight vocabulary
- Poor organisation
- Discrepancy between oral and written work
- Tiredness due to excessive concentration levels needed
- Social and behavioural difficulties arising from low self-esteem and frustration
- The gap between the young person and that of his/her peers may be significantly wider than would be expected for young people of his/her age
- Attention and concentration span difficulties, leading to poor motivation and resistance to learning
- Difficulties with sequencing, visual and/or auditory perception, coordination, or short-term working memory
- Difficulties in the acquisition of reading, writing, oral or number skills, which do not fit his/her general pattern of learning and performance

- Allow for frequent practice through recall and repetition
- Use a variety of strategies for recording
- Present new information in small chunks and keep language simple
- Ensure that targets are SMART and achievable
- Use colour highlighting for word patterns, prefixes, suffixes etc.
- Introduce new material in a multi-sensory way – show it, listen to it, look at it, hear it, say it, write it
- Use technology to support learning
- Encourage peer support
- Provide visual and practical resources to present key information.
- Encourage the use of spelling strategies, for example: mnemonics, words within words, base words and suffixes etc.
- Use writing scaffolds to support planning
- Use calendars and checklists to structure homework tasks and meet deadlines
- Use concept maps to plan and identify overall themes and the relationships between ideas
- Use the marking criteria as a stimulus when redrafting work

#### SEND Support

Continue with any relevant strategies from above, plus:

- Provide appropriate small group interventions and resources specific to need with measurable SMART targets
- Provide regular, specific focused teaching which is increasingly individualised from lecturer/tutor or support staff
- Consider alternative methods of delivery of teaching and/or recording of learning



- Difficulties with other areas, e.g. motor skills, organisation skills, behaviour, social or emotional skills and multi-agency advice may be required
- Very specific difficulties (e.g. diagnosis of dyspraxia or dyslexia etc.) affecting literacy skills, spatial and perceptual skills and fine and gross motor skills

- Ensure pre and post assessments are completed for each intervention
- Implement, monitor and review advice from external agencies

### References

Brooks, G. (2016) What works for Children and young people with literacy difficulties, the effectiveness of intervention schemes, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Dyslexia-SpLD Trust.

Rose, J (2009) 'Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties: an independent report from Sir Jim Rose to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families,' DCSF

Solity, J. and Vousden, J. (2009). Real books vs reading schemes: a new perspective from instructional psychology. Educational Psychology. DOI: 10.1080/01443410903103657



## Writing

When we talk about writing difficulties we could be talking about different things. Are we talking about the physical production of letters, words with the appropriate spacing or are we talking about the formulation of logically-organised, grammatically correct, punctuated pieces of prose? With the regard to the former we are thinking about handwriting difficulties and the latter to do with planning, sequencing and formulating sentences.

**Co-morbidity:** Visual processing difficulties. Physical, fine motor difficulties, executive function difficulties, dyslexia

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

### Early Years

Delayed shape and letter formation

Children should have **access to multimedia resources** by which they can mark-make. This should include sand, water, paint, blocks, card, pencils, wax crayons (this is not an exhaustive list). Children should build their **visual/perceptual skills** (hand/eye co-ordination) through copying physical movements of other children's adults. This can be through action songs, games and dance and other physical activities.

Children should work on their **fine motor skills** through threading, tracing, dressing up and managing buttons/zips.

Children should be able to **follow** a shared story to understand that what they see is 'writing' and that it uses some punctuation and goes from left to right on a page.

Games and activities that support **visual tracking**, should be encouraged. e.g., this could be done through watching a raindrop down a window, making a paint pattern and tracing it with a finger, using



	<p>pictures with multiple outcomes (e.g., three anglers whose lines get tangled, which hose it attached to which tap etc).</p>
<p><b>School Age</b></p>	
<p>Delayed handwriting          Illegible handwriting          Low production of writing</p>	<p>KS1 and KS2</p> <p>If the challenge is one of producing legible handwriting different supports can be tried such as different types of pencil grips, pencils may have been designed to help left-handed children produce their writing, writing slopes, different coloured paper or colour to write with. An appropriately orientated (for right or left handers) writing mat may help children orientate their paper and form their letters correctly.</p> <p>If the production of writing is the aim of the lesson make sure that the objectives are clear to the children and young (CYP). (I want to see beautiful joins; we're looking to make sure our letters are on the line etc)</p> <p>If children are writing to evidence their learning other means of doing this are available. It is not correct to think that a child who cannot write has not learned anything.</p> <p>Writing difficulties can present in a variety of ways. Handwriting difficulties can occur for a variety of reasons. They can be caused by physical difficulties co-ordination, posture, seating, fine motor skills</p> <p>They may be caused by a child's difficulties with vision, visual field or visual processing. Sometimes writing difficulties maybe part of a wider specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, difficulty with reading, spelling and fluency. They may also occur because of cognition and learning difficulties which means that CYP have difficulties knowing what to write and how to write.</p>

For CYP who find it difficult to get started with a piece of writing it may be that they need an indication of a mark, such as a red dot or a paper clip to indicate where on the page they should start writing. Other CYP may need a prompt such as a phrase. Further differentiation may be through the use of 'cloze' passages where words are provided in a bank for the CYP to choose the appropriate word to complete the sentence.

For CYP writing longer pieces of work in subjects other than English, provision of a writing plan may be helpful. The teaching and modelling of new vocabulary should also be practised. Use of mind-mapping, planning and feedback as well as appropriate differentiation should be evident.

Where the piece of written work does not need to be handwritten by the pupil consideration and provision of alternative methods should be on offer and accessible.

The Write from the Start perceptuo-motor programme by Ion Teodorescu [Write from the start: Unique Programme to Develop the Fine Motor and Perceptual Skills Necessary for Effective Handwriting \(3 volumes\) : Teodorescu, Ion, Addy, Lois, Alexander, James: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#) is a useful way to start building handwriting skills.

Older children may also benefit from the A Hand for Spelling series by Charles Cripps. This programme aims to build spelling skills through the development of a cursive script.

The Grammar for Writing programme has a positive evaluation from the Education Endowment Foundation, (EEF). [Grammar for Writing | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)  
Write Away Together developed by Redcar & Cleveland Council is positively evaluated by the most recent edition of What Works for Children with Literacy Difficulties (2020) 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Lavan, G., Talcott, J.B. [gary lavan what works for literacy difficulties 6th edition - Search \(bing.com\)](#)



Improving Writing Quality is an intervention that is targeted at children in Y6 and Y7 and uses an approach called Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD). This has been evaluated as 'useful' by the EEF [Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

Some suggestions for supporting children's writing difficulties are accessible through the link below. [www.callscotland/downloads/posters-and-leaflets/supporting-writing-difficulties](http://www.callscotland/downloads/posters-and-leaflets/supporting-writing-difficulties)

### **KS3 and KS4**

Writing becomes much more complicated in secondary school. High quality writing skills are required across the curriculum and some of these skills need to be taught in subject areas other than English. History, Geography and other humanities areas of study require specific skill-sets. These could be to do with setting out an argument, writing a report, writing persuasively, writing a cause-and-effect assignment.

For students sitting formal exams at the end of KS4 specific teaching around what a '12-point answer' might require should be considered.

- The use of writing frames for specific types of writing (persuasive, cause and effect, compare and contrast) is helpful for all pupil
- Attention should be given to planning and sequencing an answer appropriately. Feedback to pupils about their strengths and areas of improvement for their writing is crucial.
- There is more acceptance of the use of ICT as a writing tool in secondary schools and students
- Writing on an iPad/computer can improve the quality of written work as CYP are able to edit and revise, move paragraphs around, develop ideas about how paragraphs, clauses and sentences are used.



### Post 16

Preparation for writing extended answers that may be required for university/FE level study. For those continuing in academic education some of the strategies from the previous section will continue to be helpful.

Use of technology to read back written work can help a student hear where their errors lie. Maybe a sentence is too long or it needs to be better punctuated. Grammar errors can be heard and then remedied.

For post-16 pupils use of assistive technology to support daily living should be used. Use writing in context. When does writing need to happen? Note taking, shopping lists, greeting cards, taking down an order e.g restaurant or café. Planning.

#### References

[www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk) [Supporting Writing Difficulties \(callscotland.org.uk\)](http://callscotland.org.uk)

Helping Handwriting Shine Education Endowment Foundation [Helping Handwriting Shine | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

Grammar for writing [Grammar for Writing | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

What works with literacy difficulties? 6<sup>th</sup> Edition [gary lavan what works for literacy difficulties 6th edition - Search \(bing.com\)](http://bing.com)

Write away together (KS2 intervention) [Write-Away-Together-6th-Ed.pdf \(theschoolpsychologyservice.com\)](http://theschoolpsychologyservice.com)



## COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION TOOLKIT

**Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)** [Autism Education Trust](#) offer a wide range of resources and training

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Condition (ASC) is a term used to describe an individual who shows differences in their social communication and how they interact with others. Individuals with autism also show restrictive and repetitive behaviours from their early childhood, which can include sensory preferences. The DSM-5 Manual defines autism spectrum disorder as “persistent difficulties with social communication and social interaction” and “restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviours, activities or interests” (this includes sensory behaviour), present since early childhood, to the extent that these “limit and impair everyday functioning”. The 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11, 2018) notes that: "Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by persistent deficits in the ability to initiate and to sustain reciprocal social interaction and social communication, and by a range of restricted, repetitive, and inflexible patterns of behaviour and interests."

Autism is known as being a spectrum because whilst there are identifiable traits, there is wide variation in how these manifest themselves, and the impact on each individual and how they experience these will be different. Some individuals may refer to ASC as 'Autism Spectrum Condition' or 'Autism' as this supports the notion that autism is a different way of being, not a disorder. 6.29 The SEND Code of Practice describes how children and young people with ASC experience difficulties with social interaction, language, communication, and imagination. This can impact how children relate to others. It is further acknowledged within the SEND Code of Practice (2015) that children with ASC may experience differences and needs across all areas of their development.

It was previously thought that autism was more likely to occur in boys. Our understanding of autism has since developed and there is more awareness around the identification of girls with autism. It is thought that girls with autism often 'mask' their social differences through imitating others and rote



learning conversational phrases. Girls with ASC are thought to be more able to adjust their behaviour, engage in reciprocal conversations, and be more likely to initiate friendships but have difficulty in the maintenance of friendships (Lai et al., 2015).

ASC can often co-occur with other conditions, for example, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Approximately 55% of individuals with ASC also have a learning disability (Charman et al., 2011). In the Department for Education's most recent analysis of data on children and young people with SEND, ASC was the most common primary type of need for children with EHC plans at 30.1% (Department for Education, 2021).

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>In the Early Years, practitioners may notice that a child prefers solitary play. As children develop, they will have a range of strengths and areas that they find more difficult. Often children with autism may show strengths in their physical development but may experience difficulties or show differences in their language development, their social and emotional development, and their play.</p>	<p>Provide visual prompts, including key vocabulary, visual timetables, now and next, and gestures. Labelling the environment, especially motivating objects with words and pictures, and using these frequently can help children to make the association between words and meaning. This will help support a child's understanding of language and routines. Visual choice boards can be used to also develop vocabulary and promote the child expressing their wants and needs.</p> <p>Attention Autism is a group intervention model which aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually based and highly motivating activities.  <a href="http://best-practice.middletownautism.com/approaches-of-intervention/attention-autism/">http://best-practice.middletownautism.com/approaches-of-intervention/attention-autism/</a></p> <p>Intensive Interaction is an approach designed to help develop pre-communication skills such as joint attention through sensory and shared joy activities. The adult take's the child's lead, responding to the things they do. By responding instead of leading we don't make demands they cannot cope with.  <a href="https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/">https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/</a></p> <p>Observation Profile (within Autism in the Early Years) provides tracking and monitoring tools specifically measuring the development of social communication and interaction skills development to develop SMART targets and</p>



monitor progress. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Autism-Early-Resource-Materials-Teachers/dp/0415483735>

School staff understand age-appropriate skills using a checklist such as the free Universally Speaking Age 4-11 checklist, available from The Communication Trust.

<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/professionals/tct-resources/more-resources/primary-school-milestone-poster/>

Black Sheep Press provides a wide range of resources to teach concepts in pictures and language in pictures. These can support a variety of age groups to learn aspects of language including grammar, vocabulary, and sentence construction. <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/> Black Sheep Press has also developed an autism-friendly resource, using basic language and stories to support the development of friendships. <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/friendship-terrace-friendship-skills/>

Provide more time to respond to questions (e.g. 10-second rule) and to complete multi-step tasks.

Support children’s understanding of multi-step activities using task lists/ planners.

Time to Talk is a 40-session programme for children aged 4-8 that teaches and develops oral language and social interaction skills with Ginger the Bear.

<https://www.ldalearning.com/product/communication-and-interaction/speech-and-language/teaching-resources/time-to-talk/agmt00498>

[Autism Education Trust](#) offer a wide range of resources and training

### School Age

Some children with autism may use words and phrases that they have heard others say without

See early years strategies as for some children these may still be appropriate.



understanding the meaning or context of these. Other children may be able to talk about a particular topic at length and in detail but have difficulty in having a reciprocal conversation.

Some children with autism may not use words but may vocalise to show their feelings. If a child does not yet have the tools to communicate their needs and feelings, this can be highly frustrating, and they may show this frustration through their behaviour.

- Daily routines need to be clear and predictable. It is important to ensure there is a range of ways for a child to communicate both verbally and non-verbally. Visuals can help support a child's understanding of language and routines
- Visual Timetables and classroom rules should be clearly displayed. Ensure visuals related to past events are removed from the child's sight (e.g. take down pictures of activities as they are completed or use a clear marker to indicate where you are in the daily routine). The National Autistic Society's guide to visual supports details helpful information and resources <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/visual-supports>
- Use the environment to support the understanding of expectations. The TEACCH approach is a way to provide high levels of visual structure and clarity to support children's understanding of the environment, expectations, and activities (e.g. start and finish trays, use of a workstation). It is not a single method and can be used alongside other approaches.
- Try to avoid the use of non-literal language (e.g. idioms and sarcasm) and explain any abstract concepts in as concrete a way as possible (e.g. with pictures or objects). The book 'IS THAT CLEAR?: Effective communication in a neurodiverse world' by Zanne Gaynor and Kathryn Alevizos may be helpful for adults to read to consider how they use language adjustments that can be made to support more effective two-way communication.
- Ensure access to a range of communication opportunities, so children can contribute in different ways or across contexts and in relation to different topics (e.g. including those they are more confident/ interested in).
- **Social stories** (or social comic strips) to discuss hidden social rules and problem solve. Personalise social stories to the difficulty the child is having. Use ABC chart to identify social situation in which a social story may be needed. Wherever possible, include the child in the writing of social situations. For older students, consider supporting students to developing social stories using computer animation packages. Staff/parent training will support the effective use of social stories and social comic strips. Also consider the use of **scripts**. [What Is A Social Story? - Carol Gray - Social Stories \(carolgraysocialstories.com\)](#)
- [Autism Education Trust](#) offer a wide range of resources and training



Young people with autism may need support and intervention to understand the more complex layers of language, e.g. inferencing and idioms.

It may also be helpful to consider language within different contexts, e.g. within the workplace and interacting with health professionals to make a medical appointment.

Support to better understand inferencing, idioms, and metaphors (e.g. using resources such as and My Favourite Idioms can be helpful [https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0863889832/ref=dbs\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_hsch\\_vapi\\_taft\\_p1\\_i2](https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/0863889832/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_taft_p1_i2))

Provide Visual Timetables/Written schedules. Tell young people in advance about any significant changes to the daily routine and illustrate this with the visual timetable/written schedule. The visual timetable can also demonstrate the timings of lessons. Adults provide a range of methods for a young person to communicate. If a young person is dysregulated, they may have difficulty in communicating what they need or asking for help. Visuals should be put in place for the young person to use to access break rooms or ask for help (e.g. “I need a break”).

Independence through communication and social skills- A pack of activities, ideas, and sessions for learners who need visual structure and may be non-readers or speakers. <https://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/product/social-skills-independence-communication/>

Language Builders provides detailed advice and practical activities to support the communication skills of children and young people. There is a post-16 book that covers verbal reasoning skills, exploring non-literal language, learning vocabulary, and the use of communication in the workplace.

[https://s3.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language\\_Builders\\_series/Language\\_Builders\\_for\\_Post\\_16s](https://s3.elklan.co.uk/Shop/Language_Builders_series/Language_Builders_for_Post_16s)

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## Attention and Concentration

Children who appear to find it challenging to attend to the adult during focussed activities may struggle to apply their attention and concentration skills. A description of how children may present when they experience these challenges is detailed within the table below.

Children with limited attention and concentration may be delayed within their learning.

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>The child may be unable to attend to activities for extended periods of time.</p> <p>The child may move quickly from area to area and from activity to activity with limited engagement and learning taking place.</p> <p>The child might move from one activity to the next without completing any given activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the child with consistent adult prompting and a high level of reinforcement to extend their attention during adult led activities e.g., "good listening / looking / sitting" etc.</li> <li>• New learning needs to be broken down into small steps, and repetition and over learning is required for progress to occur and outcomes to be met. In addition, so that praise for attending can be given at very regular intervals.</li> <li>• The child would benefit from frequent contact with a key adult, with the aim of encouraging them to remain 'on task'. Frequent attempts should be made to approach the child while he or she is 'on task' so that adult attention is used to reward desired behaviour, rather than becoming available when the child is 'off task'.</li> </ul>



The child might avoid group activities and may be unable to engage in group activities.

The child may present as slightly disruptive to others during focussed learning activities.

The child may present with delays in reaching milestones.

There may be evidence that the child has difficulties in retaining concepts over time.

The child may begin to lose skills over time.

Due to significant difficulties with attention, the child may require a high level of support to maintain focus and promote learning through play.

The child may present as having limited play interests.

- Consider the environment
  - Help the child to focus by keeping distractions to a minimum, e.g. support play in a quiet area within the setting.
  - During carpet time, position the child so that their back is towards a good proportion of the group to limit distractions. It may be useful to allocate the child their own space / chair and seat them close to the teacher to minimise distractions.
- Staff awareness of typical developmental patterns for children, to establish realistic expectations, set goals and identify difficulties.
- Training to develop an understanding of play development and the importance of play for developing cognitive and learning skills.
- Targeted small group support and interventions to develop skills for learning, such as sustained, focused and joint attention.
- Ensure there are plenty of opportunities to repeat activities.
- Encourage children to use a range of stimulating open ended resources that encourage children to use all their senses.
- Continue to create interesting experiences that develops a child’s curiosity and motivation to explore.
- Develop ‘joint attention’ by following the child’s interests, joining them in their play, and modelling language appropriate to the child’s level of development



- Provide a language friendly environment offering regular, focused support and prompts from an adult, including cues to support all children’s understanding and participation in play and activities. These cues should be multi-sensory. For example: visual (e.g., signs, objects and symbols), audio (e.g., songs), and smell (e.g., spraying different scents on different days of the week).
- Provide structure to the day through the use of a visual schedules e.g., now and next boards (using photographs or pictures to show the routine of the day), gestures or sign along, to ensure all children’s understanding. Adults should use consistent language for equipment and routines, for example, all staff use the same term at mealtimes (e.g. dinner or lunch) rather than different terms being used. Activities that require more focus should be followed by activities that are less demanding.
- Adults simplify and repeat instructions to ensure they are understood. Adults promote joint attention, for example stating the child’s name before giving information or asking a question and place themselves where the child can see their face clearly.
- Provide a Total Communication Environment that uses a range of teaching and learning styles with emphasis on use of gestures, signing, Objects of Reference, key visuals and concrete examples to support spoken language.
- Adults prepare children for any changes in routines, for example, signal a change in activity using songs or a musical instrument to gain the children’s attention first; talk to children in advance if there is going to be a change in the daily routine or staffing; include photos of adults on notice boards or linked to activities on the daily timetable.



- Adults slow down the pace of delivery to allow for extra time to process information.
- Encourage children to repeat out loud the information back to themselves (verbal rehearsal) to help them remember key instructions.
- Adults model good interaction skills and physically get down to the child’s level when communicating with them.
- Use of Circle Time to help children develop their social, attention and listening skills. Additional adult support should be used to support group work (e.g. one adult leading, with another adult supporting the children’s engagement).
- Find out what gains the child’s interests and attention and use this information to plan next steps for learning. Consolidate learning by ensuring that the activities that the child enjoys remaining available and are easily accessible. Extend and adapt activities as children’s interests and thinking develop and change.
- Provide developmentally appropriate activities and ensure that the child is able to access them at his/her own pace, thereby enabling the child to achieve.

**School Age**

The child appears distracted from structured activity.

**See 'Early Years' strategies as for some children in school these may still be appropriate**

- Provide appropriate small group interventions and resources specific to need with measurable SMART targets.



The child appears not listen or appears to not have understood a task.

The child may present as 'on the go' and fidgeting throughout structured times of day.

The child may be disruptive towards other peers by talking during lessons etc.

The child may present with what appears to be a behavioural issue.

The child may appear to have low self-esteem / low mood.

The child may display challenging, disturbing or disruptive behaviour during lesson time.

- Provide regular, specific focused teaching which is increasingly individualised from teacher or teaching assistant
- Provide the child with opportunities to engage in short bursts of focused attention (a realistic amount of time should be agreed dependent on the child's needs).
- Ensure differentiation of learning tasks (e.g., break down tasks into small steps) so that they are more accessible to the child and will support them with extending their attention.
- Provide the child with opportunities to access learning breaks that include heavy muscle activity rather than breaks sitting at their desk / table. E.g., walks / runs in the school yard or movement activity in sports hall.
- Consider gaining access to additional resources to support concentration and distraction e.g., fidget toys / TheraBands / wobble cushions etc.
- Consider using technology to support a child's learning skills in lessons that they appear most distracted within. E.g., use apps for mental maths and SPaG / laptops for writing tasks etc.
- Ensure children are given appropriate time to process and respond to information. Not all children will process information at the same speed and children with lower concentration levels will take even longer than most.
- Adapt the environment to ensure that distractions within the classroom are kept to a minimum. E.g., remove any unnecessary and distracting notices / notice boards. Consider where in the room the child is seated e.g., sitting by a window or next to the door can be very



distracting for children with limited concentration. Consider sitting a child close to the teacher however ensure that they have a good view of everything that is within the room e.g., having sight of the door and not sitting with their back towards the rest of the class.

- Children may need a key person to speak to / a 'safe space' to go to as their limited attention and concentration skills may affect their mood and overall well-being if they are keen to learn and feel like they are struggling.
- The use of visual schedules (e.g., a now and next board) will support children with understanding the structure to their day. This will support their 'on task' behaviours if they know what activity they are to complete and what will be coming up next. Activities that require more focus should be followed by activities that are less demanding.
- Ensure that the child's interests are incorporated in their learning activities; this will support their motivation for learning tasks.
- Playing memory/concentration games can help students to learn to focus better and for longer.
- Include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities within lessons to ensure that children are able to learn using a multi-sensory approach. Some children with limited concentration may respond better and learn more effectively with visual as well as verbal information.

**Post 16**

**See 'Early Years' and 'School Age' strategies as these are appropriate and relevant for post 16.**



## Expressive Language

6.28 The SEND Code of Practice outlines that children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Expressive language is any important aspects of early development. A study by Manning et al (2019) looked at relations between toddler expressive language and temper tantrums in a community sample . More than 2,000 parents who had a toddler between the ages of 12 and 38 months were surveyed, with questions about their children’s number of spoken words and their tantrum behaviours. It found that late talkers have nearly double the rate of tantrums compared to their peers. The study identified a relationship between emergent language and mental health risk, with implications for early intervention

Expressive Language difficulties can fall into two areas : Difficulties producing language and difficulties with speech sounds

### **Difficulties with Producing Language**

Planning, organising and saying what we want to say involves many different skills. A child may have difficulty in one or more of the following areas. This will affect how well they express themselves.

#### Difficulties with vocabulary (semantics)



We need to put the right words in the right order to express ourselves clearly. We also need to have enough words and the 'right' ones to say what we want. Some children find it hard to learn or recall words. Some have difficulty choosing the right word to use. This is sometimes called 'word-finding' or 'word-retrieval difficulties'.

#### Difficulties with forming sentences (grammar or syntax)

We need to know how to put words together so they make sense. Some children find it difficult to put words together in the right order. Some can miss words out of a sentence e.g. saying, 'playing ball' instead of 'Doggy is playing with the ball'. We need to know how the endings of words change when talking about the past or talking about more than one thing. Some children can have difficulty adding the right endings to words to show a different meaning e.g. saying 'I runned' instead of 'I ran'.

#### Difficulties with organising sentences and ideas

We need to link our sentences together in a logical order to make sense to other people. Some children find it difficult to organise their ideas. Their speech may not follow a logical order. They may talk about lots of different topics in the same group of sentences. Some may find it difficult to plan what they want to say. They may need more time to organise their thoughts and language.

#### Difficulties with Speech Sounds

This can include: Muscles used to create different sounds. This can be due to muscle weakness and may be linked to conditions such as cerebral palsy. Sending messages from the brain to make different speech sounds. This may sometimes be described as 'dyspraxia'. Learning and using different sounds to make words. This can be called 'phonological difficulties'.

ICan is a children's communication charity and provides information about all areas of communication <https://ican.org.uk/> see ICAN's Talking Point page <https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>. They also provide progress checkers. They will provide short questions you can answer to see how your baby or child is getting on with their speech, language and communication development.

<https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/progress-checker-home/>

Also see [Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust | Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service \(lscft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.lancashireandcumbria.nhs.uk/childrens-speech-and-language-therapy-service/)



Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>Expressive language is about being able to communicate with others and talk.</p> <p>You should be concerned if by 2 years if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow to follow simple instructions</li> <li>• Not saying 25 recognisable words.</li> </ul> <p>By 3 and a half years old a child should be understood by people outside the family. You should be concerned if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are struggling to turn ideas into sentences</li> <li>• The language they use is jumbled and difficult to understand</li> </ul>	<p>The actions and strategies below can be adapted to support a young child with their development of expressive language</p> <p>Age 0- 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults give babies and children their <b>attention when interacting</b> with them, getting down to their level.</li> <li>• When interacting with babies, adults <b>copy the sounds the babies make back to them</b>, to develop a two way flow as if in conversation.</li> <li>• Adults <b>attach meaning</b> to babies and children’s vocalisations, through watching their actions and saying out loud what they might be thinking ‘Oh you’re sad, I wonder if you’re hungry?’</li> <li>• Adults copy the facial expressions babies make during interactions. Adults <b>exaggerate their own facial expressions and change the pitch and tone of their voice</b> to capture the baby’s interest.</li> <li>• Adults keep their spoken language simple and comment on their own, as well as, the children’s play (running commentary), reducing the number of questions.</li> <li>• Adults give the <b>babies and children time to process</b> language and then respond</li> <li>• Adults encourage use of gesture (e.g. pointing) and, if/when appropriate, encourage use of accompanying language by <b>modelling</b> using objects, e.g. ‘Which one, ball or box?’ and saying back the correct language.</li> <li>• Adults model language and <b>extend children’s phrases</b> by one word at a time. When using language extensions, instead of adding colour/size try to model use of verbs too (e.g. “push the car” ...”the car’s stopped”).</li> </ul>



- If a child mispronounces a word, adults model a correct form of the word rather than directly correcting, (e.g. If the child says ‘tar’ say, ‘Yes, that is a star.’)
- Adults support the development of **sharing and turn-taking** in small groups and on an individual basis as needed. are supported to contribute during group activities (e.g. give clear routines for showing who’s turn it is during group work such as a using a ‘**talking object**’; children are prepared in advance by practising or being introduced to key vocabulary before being expected to use it in a group situation).

#### Age 3-4

- Have a special time to talk about the day. Talking about what has happened that day will help their memory skills. It will also help them to talk about things they cannot see and things that happened in the past which is an important skill for learning in school
- Wherever possible, use pictures, objects, puppets, acting, gestures and facial expressions. This will keep a child’s interest
- Talk about or play games involving opposites like 'on and off' or 'big and little'
- Join a child in pretend play. Let them take the lead. This will help their language and creativity. Talk about what they are saying and doing rather than asking lots of questions. Your commentary helps their language skills and shows you are listening and interested
- Reversing roles can be great fun for a child. Let them be the 'mummy' or the 'teacher'. This helps them to talk about new situations
- Play with and talk about sequences of coloured bricks or shapes, numbers and days of the week.

#### Activity ideas and resources:

**Small Talk** is a guide to find out what helps children learn to talk, including developmental milestones and strategies for parents and carers.



Wellcomm (Early Years) – allows practitioners to screen a child’s speech and language skills from 6 months to 6 years. Associated ‘Big Book of Ideas’ gives lots of targeted activities to use once levels assessed.

BBC’s **Tiny Happy People** site offers loads of simple, fun and free activities that parents / professionals can try with babies, toddlers and young children [www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people).

**Hungry Little Minds** has great ideas for children aged 0-5yrs  
<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>.

**Toddler Talk** is an activity pack to promote communication development of toddlers from 18 months to 3 years old. **Chatting with Children** promotes communication development of children from 3 to 5 years old. Both are available from ICAN.

Adults **teach specific, functional vocabulary** (e.g. more, hello, please, toilet) using appropriate Early Years strategies e.g. pairing words with a visual, using Signalong.

**Adults offer children choices** (e.g. for food, songs, stories, activities) making sure that a choice is supported visually with objects, pictures or symbols.

**Adults model and support skills to promote communication and language with peers** (e.g. support to join group games, use of musical instruments/ actions to allow inclusion in circle time, structured physical games during outdoor play such as races and chase games which don’t depend on spoken language skills).

**Provide alternative ways to record learning** (e.g. photos or video recording) so children can share their ideas and progress can be captured.



Adults provide regular access **to small group interventions to develop skills**, for example: Talk Boost is a targeted intervention that narrows the gap between 4-7 year olds with language delay and their peers.

### School Age

- Just by having good conversations with children, you are supporting their language. So, talk to them. Ask them how their day at school was and how their friends are. Hopefully they don't need too much encouragement to talk. Try to encourage conversations rather than just you doing the talking.
- Provide a range of planned communication opportunities in a range of settings, with enough time given for processing (e.g. 10-second rule), thinking and responding to verbal information and new vocabulary (e.g. see ELKLAN Language Builders book for activity ideas).
- Use of a range of whole-class or whole-school intervention programmes, for example providing consistent visual support to structure or record ideas (scaffolds or templates). Use word webs and vocabulary maps as a whole class when learning new vocabulary and story planners when re-telling or story or giving a personal narrative.
- Provide opportunities for communication throughout the school day in a range of lessons. Including opportunities for discussion around books and narratives.
- During group work, allow the child to answer after other children and adults have modelled the answer a few times.
- Talk for Writing is a teaching framework that enables children to imitate the language they need for a particular topic orally, before reading and analysing it and then writing their own version.
- Provide an environment in which children are surrounded by spoken and written words and inspired to learn them using multi-modal approaches (e.g. key words highlighted on the board and in worksheets to remind the children to check their vocab sheet).



- Ensure access to a range of communication opportunities, so children can contribute in different ways or across contexts and in relation to different topics (e.g. including those they are more confident/interested in).
- Pre-teach key vocabulary and support generalisation to the classroom (e.g. have worksheets with key vocabulary on their desks, which they can refer to, use of word webs to promote experiential language learning).
- Teach specific vocabulary, such as ‘word of the day/ week’ in smaller groups and support vocabulary use and understanding within the classroom.
- Consider the three tiers of vocabulary:
  1. Every day, basic words.
  2. More complex words (e.g. using ‘combine’ for mix) or words with more than one meaning.
  3. Subject specific e.g. Galapagos.
- Focus on developing the children’s understanding and use of words in Tier 2. These words have the highest utility in helping to close the language gap for those children with limited vocabulary.
- Use of vocabulary checklists/word maps. Create personalised dictionaries, vocab cards or knowledge organisers.
- Use the STAR approach in content-rich subjects: Select the really useful vocabulary that is from the topic or class text. Teach the selected vocabulary in a structured manner. Activate the meaning by using the words in context and linking the word to the child’s existing knowledge. Review the taught words to ensure they are retained.
- Use of intervention programmes within a small group, such as:
  - Listening and Speaking and Oral to Written narrative packs from Blacksheep press. To support children’s structure of oral stories and the transition to a written narrative.
  - Colourful Stories (ELKLAN) a visual support strategy which helps children to learn about the structure of stories and to become more confident about telling and writing stories.



	<p>Colourful Stories encourages oral-narrative skills and introduces written words only when the child is confident about how to structure and tell a story orally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Talk Boost KS2 a targeted intervention for 7- to 10-year-olds with a language delay, which aims to narrow the gap between them and their peers.</li> <li>○ Colourful semantics an approach aimed at helping children to develop their grammar by linking the word to the child’s existing knowledge. Review the taught words to ensure they are retained.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) – programme for 4-5yr olds in reception which has been found to improve language and early literacy skills. <a href="https://www.teachneli.org/what-is-neli/">https://www.teachneli.org/what-is-neli/</a>.</li> <li>● Wellcomm (Primary) – for ages 6 years to 11 years. As above.</li> <li>● The National Literacy Trust have put together <b>Words for Life</b>. This site has some great ideas for very young children but also older teenagers <a href="https://wordsforlife.org.uk/">https://wordsforlife.org.uk/</a>.</li> <li>● Stoke Speaks Out has step by step resources and approaches <a href="#">Resources &amp; downloads   Stoke Speaks Out</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Post 16</b></p>	
	<p>Use strategies from above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use technology to support learning.</li> <li>● Young people will need support to identify functional language outcomes which are appropriate for their own contexts and aspirations.</li> </ul>



## Receptive Language

Receptive language is the understanding of information that is provided in a variety of ways such as sounds, words, movement, gestures, signs and symbols. Receptive language can also be demonstrated in a person’s body language and tone of voice. The environment and the situation also add to a person's understanding of what is being communicated.

Children and young people with limited receptive language skills may find it challenging to understand and respond appropriately to social situations. The difficulties experienced can impact on the development and maintenance of friendships or relationships. Children and young people with limited receptive language skills may be delayed within their learning

See [Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust | Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service \(lscft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.lscft.nhs.uk/)

<b>Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?</b>	<b>Actions and strategies</b>
<b>Early Years</b>	
The child may find it difficult to identify objects.	There should be a focus on developing early communication skills, e.g., shared attention, listening, turn-taking and comprehension.
The child may find it challenging to follow instructions.	There should be a focus on encouraging all vocalisation and non-verbal communication.  Activities should be aimed at developing listening and attention skills.



The child may find it difficult to follow directions.

It may appear as though the child finds it challenging to understand a conversation.

The child may find it difficult to answer questions accurately and appropriately.

The child may find it a challenge to understand a story.

The child might use incorrect verb tenses, pronouns, plurals, etc, when communicating with others.

The child may find it difficult to organise thoughts for speech.

The child may find it difficult to organise thoughts for writing.

The child may respond to a conversation, off topic.

Activities should aim to develop some shared attention with a familiar adult, whereby an adult and the child focus on the same thing, even for very short periods of time. This can then gradually and sensitively be extended.

Use simple, precise, very short language, e.g., up to three words, to support the child's understanding.

Use alternative methods of communication e.g. Makaton, ICT, communication books and boards. You may also wish to consider use of a symbol communication system such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) - please seek advice from your SENCO if needed.

Support verbal communication with the use of objects of reference.

Support verbal communication with the use of gestures.

Support verbal communication with the use of visual cues/picture prompts.

Give the child 'thinking time' to allow them to process the information given to them.

Consistent use of the same objects of reference to communicate with the child.

Consistent use of the same picture prompts to communicate with the child.

Introduce a variety of language through rhymes, songs

Use the Blank Level of questioning to encourage development of general language and vocabulary as well as skills in comprehension, reasoning, inferencing, predicting and problem solving (Blank, 2000).



<https://salda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SALDA-Blanks-level-of-questioning.pdf>

Consider how many information carrying words a CYP can manage when giving instructions – adapt use of language and method, e.g. simple choices, reduce complexity and sentence length.

Be aware of your own body language: 70% of what we communicate is non-verbal.

Have an awareness of what would be an appropriate tone of voice (calm, not too loud), what would be an appropriate environment (noise, temperature, lighting, layout), use of language (some children may need a language rich environment; others may need it to be kept simple).

Model language - reflect back correct speech rather than correcting.

Other resources include

- Wellcomm (Early Years) – allows practitioners to screen a child’s speech and language skills from 6 months to 6 years. Associated ‘Big Book of Ideas’ gives lots of targeted activities to use once levels assessed.
- [Resources & downloads | Stoke Speaks Out](#)
- BBC’s **Tiny Happy People** site offers loads of simple, fun and free activities that parents / professionals can try with babies, toddlers and young children [www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people).
- **Hungry Little Minds** has great ideas for children aged 0-5yrs <https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>.
- **EYBIC** is a great resource for developing understanding and use of information carrying words with preschool children (available from ELKLAN).
- ICAN’s Talking Point page <https://ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/>



School Age	
<p>See 'Early Years' section for 'impacts of learning' as for some children in school these may still be appropriate.</p> <p>The child may find it difficult to carry out a reading comprehension task.</p> <p>The child appears not to listen.</p> <p>The child appears not to have understood a task.</p> <p>The child appears not to have understood an instruction or a direction.</p> <p>The child appears not to have understood the story.</p> <p>The child may appear to have low self-esteem.</p> <p>The child may appear to have a low mood.</p>	<p>See 'Early Years' strategies as for some children in school these may still be appropriate</p> <p>Provide appropriate small group interventions and resources specific to need with measurable SMART targets.</p> <p>Provide regular, specific focused teaching which is increasingly individualised from teacher or teaching assistant.</p> <p>Ensure differentiation of learning tasks (e.g., break down tasks into small steps) so that they are more accessible to the child and will support them with extending their attention.</p> <p>Consider using technology to support a child's understanding skills in lessons, such as using apps for mental maths.</p> <p>Ensure children are given appropriate time to process and respond to information. Not all children will process information at the same speed.</p> <p>Playing memory / concentration games that can help students to learn to focus better and for longer, which will support the development of receptive language skills.</p> <p>Include visual, auditory and kinaesthetic activities within lessons to ensure that children are able to learn using a multi-sensory approach. Some children with limited receptive skills may respond better learn more effectively with visual information as well as verbal information.</p>



It may appear as though the child finds it challenging to understand a conversation.

The child may find it difficult to answer questions accurately and appropriately.

The child might use incorrect verb tenses, pronouns, plurals, etc, when communicating with others.

The child may find it difficult to organise thoughts for speech.

The child may find it difficult to organise thoughts for writing.

The child may find it difficult to play games that require instructions.

The child may look towards peers to support their understanding of what to do.

The child may wait to see what other peers do before acting.

Adapt the environment to ensure that the child has access to all forms of information being provided. For instance, ensure that they have a good view of everything that is within the room e.g., not sitting with their back towards the rest of the class. The child may rely on cues from other children to support their understanding.

Children may need a key person to speak to / a 'safe space' to go to as their limited receptive language skills may affect their mood and overall well-being if they are keen to learn and feel like they are struggling.

The use of visual schedules (e.g., a now and next board) will support children with understanding the structure to their day. This will support their 'on task' behaviours if they know what activity they are to complete and what will be coming up next. Activities that require more focus should be followed by activities that are less demanding.

Ensure that the child's interests are incorporated in their learning activities; this will support their motivation for learning tasks.

Support the student in understanding words at different levels. Determine what words the child understands and the amount of information carrying words the child can understand in one instruction. Use the information to work on increasing the child's ability to attach meaning to words and understand instructions with increasing amounts of information.

Consider how many information carrying words a child can manage when giving instructions – adapt use of language and method, e.g. simple choices, reduce complexity and sentence length.



The child may only complete half or part of a task.

The child might ask for someone to repeat themselves, such as repeat an instruction.

The child may have a limited vocabulary, in comparison to their peers.

Build on the child's development of information carrying words (ICW) so that the child can then move on to understanding words and information in different sentence structures, paragraphs and long narratives.

Play following direction games, in order to encourage listening skills through play.

Pre-teach topic vocabulary and provide opportunities to re-visit understanding and use of words.

The following are online resources that may support speech, language, communication and interaction skills in children:

<https://salda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SALDA-Blanks-level-of-questioning.pdf>

<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/receptive-language-delay/>

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-free-speech-language-communication-and-send-resources-for-schools-and-parent-carers>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?q=receptive+language>

<https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/assessments/products/wellcomm/>

[Resources & downloads | Stoke Speaks Out](#)

Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) – programme for 4-5yr olds in reception which has been found to improve language and early literacy skills. <https://www.teachneli.org/what-is-neli/>.

Wellcomm (Primary) – for ages 6 years to 11 years. As above.

The National Literacy Trust have put together **Words for Life**. This site has some great ideas for very young children but also older teenagers <https://wordsforlife.org.uk/>.



Post 16

See 'Early Years' and 'school age' sections for 'impacts of learning' as for some young persons these may still be appropriate.

The young person may have trouble understanding a joke.

The young person may misinterpret a friendly conversation as being rude or misinterpret a conversation and take things the wrong way.

The young person's self-esteem and confidence may be impacted.

The young person may find it difficult to follow group conversations.

The young person might rarely ask questions or make comments during conversation or discussions.

See 'Early Years' and 'School Age' strategies as these are appropriate and relevant for post 16.

Teach metacognition approaches (how we learn e.g. by trying to understand the young person's difficulty and asking them what helps).

Use a variety of specialist strategies for effective communication – e.g. Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Widget, visual supports, Makaton, objects of reference, symbols, signs, switches, voice output communication aids.



The young person may remember details, without understanding the wider context.

The young person might misunderstand what's been said.

The young person may take things literally.

The young person seems uninterested in conversation.

The young person may seem shy or withdrawn.

The young person may avoid social gatherings.

### References

<https://sltforkids.co.uk/speech-clinic/speech-language-and-communication-problems-we-help/receptive-language-difficulties/understanding-words-at-different-levels/>

<https://salda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SALDA-Blanks-level-of-questioning.pdf>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/receptive-language-disorder>

<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/signs-of-receptive-language-disorder>



## Selective Mutism

'Selective Mutism, sometimes called Situational Mutism, is an anxiety-based mental health disorder which usually begins in early childhood. Children and Young People presenting with selective mutism speak fluently in some situations but remain consistently silent in others. They may have a blank expression or appear 'frozen' when expected to speak. With early intervention the prognosis for recovery is good, but in some cases, it may persist and last right through a child's school life and sometimes even into adulthood. It is important to understand that those with SM want to speak but find themselves physically unable to do so due to their anxiety' [Selective Mutism Information & Research Association \(SMIRA\)](#)

The essential feature of selective mutism is the persistent failure to speak in specific social situations (e.g., at school, with peers and/or the teacher), despite being able to speak in other, more familiar situations. DSM V definition of selective mutism (pg. 195) states there is a consistent failure to speak in certain social situations where speaking is expected, despite speaking in other situations.

- Has persisted for at least one month, not including first month in a new social situation
- Not due to unfamiliarity or discomfort with the spoken language required
- Cannot be accounted for by a communication disorder (e.g., stuttering, ASD)

Children with this disorder:

- Sometimes use non-spoken or non-verbal means to communicate and may be willing or eager to perform/engage in social encounters when speech is not required.

For unknown reasons, Selective Mutism appears to be more prevalent amongst girls and more cases are reported from migrant and multi-lingual families. Children with EAL (English as an additional Language) are at higher risk of also developing selective mutism.



Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>Observed difficulties with the following:</p> <p>Difficulties speaking in specific locations and with specific people.</p> <p>Difficulties reading aloud to certain adults and in certain situations. (The child may be happy to read at home but not in school).</p> <p>Difficulties interacting with peers verbally which can impact on the development of social skills and development of reciprocal friendships.</p> <p>Always remember that the non-speaking <b>may</b> hide other educational or physical problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have an awareness of selective mutism and understand it is an anxiety-based need.</li> <li>• Key staff have access to information about how to support children with selective mutism for example from the SMiRA website. <a href="#">Selective Mutism Information &amp; Research Association (SMIRA)</a></li> <li>• Check the Dos and Don'ts Guide to providing an anxiety-free environment at Pre-School and               <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Dos-and-Donts-Pre-Primary-School.pdf</p> <p>Nursery Guidelines</p> </div> </li> <li>• Teachers to understand their role and approaches to supporting a child with selective mutism – please see: <a href="#">The-Selectively-Mute-Child-in-School-v2.pdf (selectivemutism.org.uk)</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Provide a communication safe environment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key adult for the child to build rapport and confidence with.</li> <li>• Focus on discovering their interests and strengths and having fun together.</li> <li>• Be patient. Provide opportunities to speak without putting pressure on the child to speak and do not 'over' react if the child does speak.</li> <li>• Make comments rather than ask questions.</li> <li>• Provide non-verbal ways to respond and join in during group activities (e.g., using music instruments or actions alongside words).</li> </ul>



- Encourage participation through ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’.
- Use of question starters such as ‘I wonder....’
- Encourage joint activities with a quiet child.
- Provide traffic lights or ‘ask for help’ cards to allow support to be requested non-verbally.
- Use informal ways to support the child’s confidence to speak
- For further ideas and strategies please see nursery and play group staff guidelines: [Nursery-guidelines-v2.pdf \(selectivemutism.org.uk\)](https://selectivemutism.org.uk/guidelines-v2.pdf)

### Multiagency working

- Seek multi-agency support from outside services and work with the child’s family to devise an individualised support plan.
- Refer to speech and language therapy service for assessment of core speech and language skills if concerned/unsure of skills
- Liaise closely with parents and carers to develop an understanding of the child's strengths and needs. Use assessment tools such as the talking map (selective mutism resource manual) which can highlight where the child is happy to speak and whom with. Over time the aim is to increase the places the child feels confident to speak and increase the number of people the child is happy to speak in front of.
- Use of the ‘Sliding in Technique’ detailed in The Selective Mutism Resource and included on the SMiRA website: <http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/info-the-sliding-in-technique-and-progress-charts/>.

This involves an adult (parent or staff member) as the child’s talk partner. Activities from the selective mutism manual focused on the correct level (for the child) are completed on a regular basis within the child’s talk partner in a safe and quiet area of the setting. The activity should be simple and involve something that the child enjoys and is familiar with (e.g., a



favourite game or book from home). As the child becomes confident, their tolerance to another person gradually coming closer and joining the activity ('sliding in') is increased.

[PARENT-Game-ideas-for-sliding-in.pdf \(selectivemutism.org.uk\)](#)



Small Steps Programme.pdf

- Seek advice from the small steps program when problems occur – for instance if the child become stuck at the whisper phase.
- Carefully support the child’s transition to school, please see Preparing to change School, Class or Teacher or start at school or nursery [APPENDIX TO CARE PATHWAY FOR SELECTIVE MUTISM](#)

### School Age

- Use of questions such as ‘I wonder...’
- Encouraging joint activities with a quiet peer.
- Identifying a key adult for the pupil to build rapport and confidence with.
- Providing traffic lights or ‘ask for help’ cards to allow them to access support non-verbally.

Seek multi-agency support from outside services and work with the pupil’s family to devise an individualised support plan.

- Liaise closely with parents and carers to develop an understanding of the child's strengths and needs. Use assessment tools such as the talking map (selective mutism resource manual) which can highlight where the child is happy to speak and whom with. Over time the aim is to increase the places the child feels confident to speak and increase the number of people the child is happy to speak in front of.



- Use of the ‘Sliding in Technique’ detailed in The Selective Mutism Resource and included on the SMiRA website: <http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/info-the-sliding-in-technique-and-progress-charts/>.

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The activity should be simple and involve something that the child enjoys and is familiar with (e.g. a favourite game or book from home). As the child becomes confident, their tolerance to another person gradually coming closer and joining the activity (‘sliding in’) is increased. [PARENT-Game-ideas-for-sliding-in.pdf \(selectivemutism.org.uk\)](#)



Small Steps Programme.pdf

- Seek advice from the small steps programme  when problems occur – for instance if the child become stuck at the whisper phase.

Carefully support the child’s transition to school [APPENDIX TO CARE PATHWAY FOR SELECTIVE MUTISM](#)  
Preparing to change School, Class or Teacher or start at school or nursery



**Post 16**

Observed difficulties with the following:  
Difficulties speaking in specific locations and with specific people.

Difficulties reading aloud to certain adults and in certain situations. (The child may be happy to read at home but not in school).

Difficulties interacting with peers verbally which can impact on the development of social skills and development of reciprocal friendships.

Always remember that the non-speaking **may** hide other educational or physical problems.

- Staff have an awareness of selective mutism and understand it as an anxiety-based need.
- Key staff have access to information on how to support young people with selective mutism for example, from the SMiRA website.
- Check the 'Helping Students in Secondary School Staff Guide' and 'the Older Children and Teens guide' [Older Sm Child with refs \(selectivemutism.org.uk\)](http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk) by [www.selectivemutism.org.uk](http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk) The website has a range of information, resources and advice to support those with selective mutism, as well as their families and carers.

**Establish a communication safe environment that includes:**

- Providing unpressured opportunities for the young person to speak.
- Don't react if the young person does speak.
- Use of questions such as 'I wonder...'
- Encouraging joint activities with a quiet peer.
- Identifying a key adult for the young person to build rapport and confidence with.
- Providing traffic lights or 'ask for help' cards to allow them to access support non-verbally

Seek multi-agency support from outside services and work with the young person and their family (in line with the young person's wishes) to devise an individualised support plan.

**References**

[www.selectivemutism.org.uk](http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk)

Johnson. M. & Wintgens. A. (2016). [The Selective Mutism Resource Manual: 2nd Edition \(A Speechmark Practical Sourcebook\)](#).

Maskell. C, (2017) [The Loudest Roar: A book about selective mutism](#).



## Social Communication

### Social Communication

Social communication refers to the way in which language is used in social situations. Social communication is a broad term which encompasses social interaction (e.g. social reasoning, cooperative play / learning), social cognition (e.g. joint attention, inference, the ability to connect emotional states to oneself and others), pragmatics (e.g. understanding/use of body language, gaze, positioning) and language processing. Based on research, the ASHA (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association) provide a summary of the different skills involved in social communication.

[Components of Social Communication \(asha.org\)](https://www.asha.org)

Children and young people with social communication will have difficulties using language socially both expressively and receptively. They may also have difficulties understanding the implicit rules within a social situation. Due to the wide range of skills encompassed by social communication, the difficulties experienced will vary. The difficulties experienced can impact on the development and maintenance of friendships or relationships. Below are examples of difficulties or differences that a practitioner may recognise if a child or young person has social communication needs:

- Initiating, maintaining, repairing and closing conversations.
- Understanding the needs of the listener e.g. not providing context or sufficient information for the listener to understand.
- Recognising non-verbal communication cues (e.g. body language, facial expression) and using non-verbal communication (e.g. eye contact, intonation of voice).
- Understanding the social behaviour or feelings of others.
- Sharing joint attention.
- Working or playing co-operatively in a group.



- Understanding and following routines.
- Understanding inference (both in written work/reading and in conversations).

Social communication is a high incidence SEND. Social communication needs may become particularly apparent during transitions to new settings or during adolescence / secondary school where social rules and norms can become more complex.

Social communication difficulties are a characteristic of a range of conditions including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, developmental coordination disorder and autism spectrum disorder. As a central difficulty experienced by children and young people with ASD, many of the strategies used to support children with ASD will also support children with social communication difficulties. However, not all children with social communication difficulties have ASD, for example they might not have ritualistic or repetitive behaviours. Children with social communication difficulties also often experience differences in sensory processing.

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

**Early Years**

In the Early Years practitioners may notice that the child frequently engage in solitary play. Solitary play may be the child's preference, or the child may attempt to have interactions with their peers but know the right way to initiate these. The child may find it difficult to share or take turns with others. The child may find changes to their routine upsetting.

To support the development of interaction and play skills:

With adults: **Allow specific time for interaction with adults** during each session. Examples of specific techniques used to support the development of early interaction skills:

**Intensive Interaction:** An approach which was developed to help people who are at an early stage of communication skill development enjoy being with other people and interact with them. The approach supports children to know, understand and practice communication routines.

[Intensive Interaction - Fundamentals of Communication](#)

**Identity play:** An approach that is used to help establish shared focus in play and supports the development of skills.





School Age

At school age practitioners may notice that the child:

- Experience difficulties understanding unwritten social cues / rules such as others body language/facial expressions
- Difficulty moderating the volume of intonation of their voice.
- Find group work challenging
- Avoidance of social situations or have high level of social conflict
- Appears more unsettled following breaks and lunchtimes

For some children, early years strategies may continue to be supportive.

I CAN provides information and intervention strategies across Key Stage 1 and 2.

[I CAN, the children's communication charity](#)

To support the development of social communication skills:

**-Use of structured interventions to support social communication skills. Incorporate these into students' individual education plan.** For example, **R Time** is a structured programme that builds and enhances children's relationships. This is aimed to children from Early Years until the end of primary school. I CAN database provides a summary of evidence based interventions for School Age children with speech, language and communication needs. [What works database \(ican.org.uk\)](#)

Remain mindful that children may need support to **generalise** the skills that they are learning in targeted interventions.

Talks About Activities: Developing Social Communication Skills 225 practical activities to develop social communication skills.

[Talkabout Activities: Developing Social Communication Skills : Kelly, Alex: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

Lego therapy (LeGoff et al 2014) is an evidence based approach that aims to develop social communication skills in young people who have ASD.



**-Provide clear roles during group work** (e.g. Kagan Co-operative Learning groups. This is a teaching style in which one student supports another student with their learning. This provides a clear social rule).

**Provide alternative methods of communicating** e.g. a private hand signal, 'I need a break cards', placing a pencil on the desk to communicate that a break is needed. Work together with the young person to develop these alternative ways of communicating.

**To make the implicit explicit:**

**-Use of visuals e.g. visual timetables** which may communicate lesson timings. Involve the child in deciding the visuals. Visuals could be whole class or personalised for the individual. As children get older consider the use of **schedules**. Provide staff training on the use of visuals to support communication. **Provide prior warning of upcoming changes to routine** and represent this on personalised visual timetable/schedule.

**-Set clear expectations around behaviours and work.** Discuss boundaries for upcoming activities. Social stories can support with the clear communication of expectations.

**-Use the environment to reinforce clear rules and expectations.** e.g. written rules, clearly labelling the environment. The TEACCH approach can support with this.

[Home | TEACCH® Autism Program](#)

**To support social relationships:**



-**Social stories** (or social comic strips) to discuss hidden social rules and problem solve. Personalise social stories to the difficulty the child is having. Use ABC chart to identify social situation in which a social story may be needed. Wherever possible, include the child in the writing of social situations. For older students, consider supporting students to developing social stories using computer animation packages. Staff/parent training will support the effective use of social stories and social comic strips. Also consider the use of **scripts**.

[What Is A Social Story? - Carol Gray - Social Stories \(carolgraysocialstories.com\)](http://carolgraysocialstories.com)

Peer mentoring and interventions to support social inclusion e.g. **circle of friends**. This is an approach in which a young person's peers provide support and engage in problem solving with the young person to solve difficulties.

[Circle of Friends | Inclusive Education \(inclusive-solutions.com\)](http://inclusive-solutions.com)

**Monitor** at break times / lunchtimes and intervene where necessary e.g. teaching and modelling of **structured playground games** that will support peer interactions.

Consider providing access to adult support and / or a quiet space during unstructured times of the day such as break times and lunchtimes. Consider setting up clubs e.g. chess clubs that are centred around the child/young person's interest to provide opportunities to develop social communication skills.

Check in's following lunch and break times to give children and young people an opportunities to talk through social situations that may have occurred.



Ensure **all staff** who work with the child have an understanding of strengths and needs (e.g. One-page profile can support to communicate this, staff briefings).

**SCERTs** provides a model for providing targeted social skills intervention and monitoring progress.

[The SCERTS® Model](#)

### Post 16

At post 16 practitioners may notice that the young person:

- May have difficulties developing positive social relationships with peers.
- May appear to isolated or on the periphery (and doesn't want to be).
- May take things literally

For some young people, strategies used in secondary school will continue to be helpful and supportive.

**As above, make the implicit explicit** encouraging the use of **visuals** to communicate routine (e.g. written or visual structures), **make rules and expectations clear** e.g. learning environment contract, establishment of group norms. Encourage young people to take ownership of the schedule if a visual schedule is used.

To support the development of friendships, relationships and community inclusion:

**Have flexibility** within the organisation of the learning/college environment, particularly at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Provide a quiet, non-stimulating place that individuals can go to. Consider facilitating clubs centred around the young person's interest.

Use approaches such as **Circle of Friends** (supports the development of problem solving skills) and **peer mentoring** sessions.

**1:1 weekly mentoring sessions:** During sessions problem solving and future planning can take place. **Social stories/scripts** (as discussed above) may continue to be supportive. If more frequency than weekly meetings is needed, **schedule agreed check ins**.



To support the development of social communication skills:

**Continued** incorporation of social skills learning and group work / collaboration skills into the curriculum. **Provide clear roles during group work** (e.g. Kagan Co-operative Learning groups. This is a teaching style in which one student supports another student with their learning. This provides a clear social rule).

Where relevant **provide social communication groups** which focus on the explicit teaching of social skills in a small group learning environment. The focus of social communication groups may be on: reading social cues, body language, gestures, facial expressions, intonation. Involve the **young person** in the focus of the social communication group and the identification/monitoring of SMART targets.

**Provide alternative methods of communicating** e.g. a private hand signal, 'I need a break cards', placing a pencil on the desk to communicate that a break is needed. Work together with the young person to develop these alternative ways of communicating.

Using the Preparing for Adulthood Tools to support young people to develop friendships, relationships & community inclusion.

[Friends, relationships and community inclusion \(preparingforadulthood.org.uk\)](http://preparingforadulthood.org.uk)

Ensure **all staff** who work with the child have an understanding of strengths and needs (e.g. One-page profile can support to communicate this, staff briefings).



## Social Imagination

Social imagination, sometimes referred to as Theory of Mind, can be defined as the ability to imagine what another person may be thinking or feeling where this is not explicitly stated. Social imagination can be observed through children and young people's (CYP's) interactions with others and through their pretend play. Some CYP can present with difficulties with social imagination and this might present as them struggling to understand:

- what others may be thinking or feeling based on non-verbal cues, e.g. facial expressions,
- how others may respond in different situations,
- predicting what might happen next in a scenario based upon non-verbal and social cues,
- difficulties in deducing the meaning from idioms.

Difficulties in this area may be particularly apparent in CYP with neurodevelopmental differences, e.g. Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V, 2013). It is important to stress that although a CYP may have difficulties in deducing others' thoughts and feelings from non-verbal cues, it does not mean that they do not wish to have fulfilling and mutually beneficial social interactions.

CYP might have differences in:

- making and maintaining friendships with other CYP,
- understanding unspoken verbal communications, e.g. facial expressions, different tones of voice,
- expressing themselves during interactions in a culturally accepted manner,
- predicting what might happen next in a scenario
- engaging in pretend play.



Identify CYP's existing skills in social imagination through completion of 'communication and interaction', social understanding and relationships' and 'emotional understanding and self-awareness' on the Autism Education Trust (AET) Progression Framework (2019) or similar document.

Form a targeted learning plan (TLP) or similar alongside the CYP's parents/carers and/or the CYP (dependent on their age) to plan small steps and intervention based on their goals. Review this every half term with their parents/carers and/or CYP. The targets on this plan should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited (SMART).

Promote close communication with the CYP's parents/carers to support positive outcomes ([Parental engagement | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)).

As all people are different, we all have different levels of desire for social interactions. For example, some CYP may wish to be with their peers every break time, whereas others may wish to play with a peer once a week, or not at all. It is important to consider the CYP's views with respect to their desired level of social interaction when planning intervention.

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
In the Early Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An adult to join and extend their play, incorporating new imaginative play actions</li> <li>• Use of Social Stories where developmentally appropriate</li> <li>• Modelling play actions for children to watch and copy</li> <li>• Think about using play resources which children have a particular interest in to encourage imaginative play</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Observe, comment on and wonder aloud about other children's play</p>
<b>School Age</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations <a href="#">social stories and comic strip conversations (autism.org.uk)</a></li> </ul>



- The Incredible 5-point Scale (Kari Dunn Buron & Mitzi Curtis, 2012)
  - Use of role play for teaching of initiating interactions and responding in social situations
  - An adult to join and extend play, incorporating some imaginative play
  - Lego therapy for teaching of scripts and social interaction skills
  - Teach scripts for different social situations in real-life scenarios
- There are computer games available which claim to increase CYP's social imagination skills

### Post 16

Use of Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations [social stories and comic strip conversations \(autism.org.uk\)](#)

- Use of role play for initiating interactions and responding in social situations
- Teach scripts for different social situations in real-life scenarios
- When idioms are used in natural conversation, explain their meanings
- The Incredible 5-point Scale (Kari Dunn Buron & Mitzi Curtis, 2012)
- Lego therapy for teaching of scripts and social interaction skills

There are computer games available which claim to increase CYP's social imagination skills

### References

[AET Autism Progression Framework 2.0 - Autism Education Trust](#)

American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. 5th ed. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association; 2013.

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[BOOKS - THE INCREDIBLE 5-POINT SCALE \(5pointscale.com\)](#)



## Social Interaction

A social interaction is an exchange between two or more individuals. It is the process by which we act and react to situations involving others around us. Persistent social interaction between two or more individuals leads to the formulation of social relationships.

Some children find forms of social interaction difficult which may impact their ability to form healthy and long-term relationships with others and can also impact their attainment.

Social interaction difficulties are a characteristic of a range of different needs including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), language difficulties / delay, low self-esteem and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

### Early Years

Observed **emerging, fluctuating** or **persistent** difficulties with the following:

Difficulties with interpersonal communication or relationships, regularly reluctant to share materials or attention and/or participate in social groups

Often engages in solitary play

- Ensure the child experiences regular, positive interactions with an adult, including children who appear to prefer solitary play.
- Determine the child's level of language development. The language ability will have an impact on their ability to socially interact with others (if necessary, follow strategies to support expressive/receptive language development).
- Reduce language used / questions asked. Follow the child's lead and join in with their play.
- Establish the child's joint / shared attention skills. To support joint attention, provide **Intensive Interaction** strategies:
- Play alongside the child and imitate their actions. Do not interfere in, or try to guide their play; instead, copy what they are doing. Follow the child's lead rather than directing them and join



Playing alongside other children without initiating interaction

Lack of communication with adults and peers

Difficulties building and maintaining relationships with others in the setting.

Lack of social empathy

in where there are two sets of the chosen activity/object to allow modelling and copying to take place. This will make them more likely to pay attention to you and focus on the same thing as you.

- Continue to encourage joint attention through engaging in simple social games that encourage anticipation such as 'ready, steady, go' games; ball games; and nursery rhymes. WAIT and pause to see if he communicates 'go' or 'more'. Accept any intentional communication as a request for more (e.g., vocalisation, word or looking).
- Use adult led 'fun' activities to improve the quality of interaction between the child and adults. Motivating activities should be used as specific intervention.
- See [An-Introduction-to-Intensive-Interaction-2019.pdf \(leedsandypft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.leedsandypft.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/An-Introduction-to-Intensive-Interaction-2019.pdf)  
[Intensive-interaction-Handout.pdf \(hallsville.newham.sch.uk\)](https://www.hallsville.newham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Intensive-interaction-Handout.pdf)
- Allow a balance of child-led and free play, as well as adult-directed tasks, this may be implemented through a 'first work, then play' strategy.
- Adults model positive relationships and social skills. Use turn-taking games and circle time on a regular basis.
- Provide opportunities to develop interactive play skills via:
- **Commentary** – Describe aloud what the child is doing (at their language level) by giving a running commentary. This supports children’s language development and play skills.
- **Imitation** – where you tune into the child and copy their actions and vocalisations as an introduction to bringing your actions and vocalisations to their attention.
- **Play routines** – e.g., simple anticipation games which build to a conclusion using songs, rhyme and social surprise games.
- **Early turn-taking games** – e.g., rolling a ball; peek-a-boo.
- Play simple turn-taking activities that encourage anticipation e.g., 'Ready, steady, go' games; ball games; and games with bubbles, etc. Use a stimulus-response approach to model turn-taking interaction for short periods of time.



- Social interactions (e.g., sharing and turn-taking skills) to be taught explicitly, through a small steps approach and consistent adult modelling of skills. Where possible provide small group input, gradually increasing the number of peers involved over time as skills progress. Focus on one specific skill (e.g., sharing) and provide opportunities for overlearning
- Provide opportunities for the child to engage in parallel play / paired activities – sharing equipment, and resources (e.g., during water play /construction), playing board games and playing with toys of interest.
- Plan opportunities to learn and practise social and emotional skills during structured activities (e.g., role playing).
- Use stories that generate problem solving around different social situations during circle time. Model and support children to practise the use of these skills (e.g., home corner, shop role play area).
- Use role play/verbal rehearsal before activities to reinforce behavioural expectations and reduce anxiety (e.g., how to ask for a turn on the bikes).
- Use of whole group/class interventions to support social and emotional development (e.g., carpet time).
- Ensure the child is offered positive feedback (e.g., praise and reward) stating exactly what they have done well, praise should be given frequently throughout the day
- Use structured and predictable rule-based action games to encourage and practice turn-taking and sharing skills.
- Environmental considerations to the organisation of the space, seating and group dynamics.
- Access to a range of social opportunities and extra-curricular activities.

### School Age

Observed **emerging, fluctuating** or **persistent** difficulties with the following:

- Ensure the child experiences regular, positive interactions with an adult, including children who appear to prefer solitary play.



Difficulties with interpersonal communication or relationships, regularly reluctant to share materials or attention and/or participate in social groups

Appears withdrawn and isolated. Regularly appears on the fringe of activities.

Removal of self from social environments

Often engages in solitary play

Difficulties initiating social interaction with peers

Inability to interpret social cues correctly

May not respond appropriately to initiations by peers

Lack of appropriate social conversational skills

Lack of social empathy

- Determine the child's level of language development. The language ability will have an impact on their ability to socially interact with others (if necessary, follow strategies to support expressive/receptive language development).
- Adopt a planned PSHE curriculum to support social and emotional development that involves whole class discussion and activities that explore different relationships.
- Adults to model positive relationships and appropriate social skills throughout the child's day, during structured and unstructured times.
- Follow the child's lead and use the child's preferred activities / interests to create opportunities to join in with their play.
- Set up structured and co-operative learning activities (e.g., the use of turn-taking games) during subject lessons.
- Social interactions (e.g., sharing and turn-taking skills) to be taught explicitly, through a small steps approach and consistent adult modelling of skills. Where possible provide small group input, gradually increasing the number of peers involved over time as skills progress. Focus on one specific skill (e.g., sharing) and provide opportunities for overlearning.
- Provide planned opportunities within activities for children to interact with one another at the level appropriate for that child to learn and practise social and emotional skills during structured activities, e.g., role playing.
- Use stories and other stimuli that generate problem solving around different social situations, modelling and practising the use of skills.
- Use social stories to support children to understand the nuances of interpersonal communication and support them to make progress with their social interaction skills.

[Home - Carol Gray - Social Stories \(carolgraysocialstories.com\)](http://carolgraysocialstories.com)

[Microsoft PowerPoint - Social Stories Presentation0308 \(haringey.gov.uk\)](http://haringey.gov.uk)



<p>Lack of or unawareness of others' personal space</p> <p>Difficulties maintaining appropriate eye contact</p> <p>Inappropriate use of facial expression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote interaction with a child's peer group through small group interventions:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Socially Speaking</li> <li>- Lego Therapy</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><a href="#">lego-therapy-pack.pdf (cornwall.gov.uk)</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide reinforcement and ensure the child is offered positive feedback (e.g., praise and reward) stating exactly what they have done well, praise should be given frequently throughout the day.</li> <li>• Ensure the child has opportunities to practise and overlearn skills over an extended period of time.</li> </ul>
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Post 16

<p>Observed <b>emerging, fluctuating</b> or <b>persistent</b> difficulties with the following:</p> <p>Difficulties with interpersonal communication or relationships, regularly reluctant to share materials or attention and/or participate in social groups</p> <p>Appears withdrawn and isolated. Regularly appears on the fringe of activities.</p> <p>Removal of self from social environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the young person's level of language development. The language ability will have an impact on their ability to socially interact with others (if necessary, follow strategies to support expressive/receptive language development).</li> <li>• Adopt a planned PSHE curriculum to support social and emotional development that involves group discussion and activities that explore different relationships.</li> <li>• Create learning opportunities by introducing classroom routines to teach friendly behaviour and positive relationships. For example, model giving compliments and then set up situations where young people can practice giving and receiving them.</li> <li>• Adults to model positive relationships and appropriate social skills throughout the day.</li> <li>• Set up structured and co-operative learning activities (e.g., the use of turn-taking games / mutual help activities) during subject lessons. Rotate groups, so that young people work with different group members, helping to build a range of social skills and fostering inclusiveness.</li> </ul>
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<p>May appear shy</p> <p>Difficulties initiating social interaction with peers</p> <p>Difficulties taking part in conversation</p> <p>Inability to interpret social cues correctly</p> <p>May not respond appropriately to initiations by peers</p> <p>Lack of appropriate social conversational skills</p> <p>Lack of social empathy</p> <p>Difficulties maintaining appropriate eye contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide planned opportunities within activities young people to interact with one another to learn and practise social and emotional skills during structured activities, e.g., role play.</li> <li>• Use questions and strategies to guide and encourage young people to find mutually satisfying solutions e.g. understanding the other’s position, saying sorry, looking for solutions that meet each young person’s needs, for example, using a solution circle approach.</li> <li>• Use stories and other stimuli that generate problem solving around different social situations, modelling and practising the use of skills.</li> <li>• Use social stories to support young people to understand the nuances of interpersonal communication and support them to make progress with their social interaction skills. <a href="http://carolgraysocialstories.com">Home - Carol Gray - Social Stories (carolgraysocialstories.com)</a> <a href="http://haringey.gov.uk">Microsoft PowerPoint - Social Stories Presentation0308 (haringey.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• Provide reinforcement and ensure the young person is offered positive feedback (e.g., praise and reward) stating exactly what they have done well, praise should be given frequently throughout the day.</li> <li>• Avoid the use of non-literal language (e.g., idioms and sarcasm) and explain any abstract concepts in as concrete a way as possible (e.g., with pictures or objects).</li> <li>• Provide social communication opportunities through wider sports, leisure and community activities which also encourage positive self-esteem.</li> <li>• Set up peer mentoring or ‘buddy’ systems for use during unstructured times.</li> <li>• Environmental considerations to the organisation of the space, seating and group dynamics</li> <li>• Clear pathways to access further support within the setting are known to young people and displayed around the setting including information about services that they can access.</li> <li>• Access to a range of social opportunities and extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Offer social time support, for example, setting up a club around a young person’s interest (e.g., gardening or gaming).</li> </ul>
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## Transition

We as adults can often find change difficult and it is therefore unsurprising that many children can struggle with transitions at different points in their lives. The term transition is used to describe moves, shifts or changes within educational contexts. The transition between phases of education (such as primary to secondary education) are significant milestones for all children and all would benefit from some support. However, there are some cohorts of children who may require further support and intervention to manage the transition, such as children with Communication and Interaction or SEMH needs. In education, the term 'transition' may also refer to changes or shifts which occur within the school day such as those which occur between activities, lessons or classrooms. Some children may struggle with these transitions which happen as part of their daily routine.

Transition can be stressful and lead to children feeling unsettled or anxious as they are faced with uncertainty and unfamiliarity. Stress arising from transition can impact upon children's social and emotional wellbeing and their academic achievement. It is important that children and young people receive appropriate support during transition so that they feel safe, confident and have the best possible experience as they move through school

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that:

5.47 SEN support should include planning and preparing for transition, before a child moves into another setting or school. This can also include a review of the SEN support being provided or the EHC plan. To support the transition, information should be shared by the current setting with the receiving setting or school. The current setting should agree with parents the information to be shared as part of this planning process.

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
In the Early Years	<p>Transitions within the setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a plan for all staff to follow to support the child who finds transitions unsettling;</li> <li>- Give warnings and use environmental cues to prepare child in advance such as songs, music or visual cues;</li> <li>- Use of 'Now and next board';</li> <li>- Use of sand-timer or traffic light system to prepare for the activity to end;</li> <li>- Monitor which transitions the child finds challenging. This could be done through completing an ABC Chart over a period of time.</li> <li>- Prepare for any changes well in advance.</li> <li>- Provide key adult support at specific times which have been identified as challenging;</li> <li>- Use of transition objects between environments (for example, when the child struggles with the transition from home to the setting).</li> </ul> <p>Transition to new Early Years setting or Primary School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation should start several weeks in advance;</li> <li>- Transition meeting with all parties including staff, parents/carers and the receiving setting;</li> <li>- Carefully structured transition plan agreed with all parties working together. This should include actions: What? Who? By when?</li> <li>- Additional visits to new setting, and vice versa. Familiarity is important to reduce uncertainty;</li> <li>- Share what works well with the receiving setting through a Transition Handover and/or Pupil Passport;</li> </ul>



- Personalised transition books with photographs of the new environment and the key adults there;
- Watch videos of the school, talking about possible sounds, smells and sights;
- Facilitate positive relationships between the child and the key staff who will be supporting them.
- Identify a key worker will help to provide a 'secure base' as they navigate their new environment.
- Complete a Story Board with the child which provides key information to reduce uncertainty such as 'At lunch time X will help me with my lunch' and 'At the end of the day X will take me home?'
- The transition may be worrying for parents/carers and they themselves may need support and reassurance during this time, encouraging positive discourse around the child's transition.

Example of Transition Handover: [SENCO in Nursery Pre-School to Reception Handover Transition Sheet \(twinkl.co.uk\)](#)

The following link includes a Checklist for Transition and other ideas to support transition to school : [Section-10-Transitions.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](#)

### School Age

Transitions within the school day:

- Consider transitions between rooms and how to plan and prepare for these e.g. opportunities to walk with an adult and practicing this several times before moving gradually towards independence.
- Transitioning between unstructured and structured times may be challenging. Follow transitions with a calming or mindful activity such as colouring or breathing exercises.

- A visual timetable or 'Now and Next' board to prepare the child for the day ahead, providing predictability. Involve the child in removing each activity once complete.
- Prepare for any changes well in advance.
- Provide key adult support at specific times which have been identified as challenging.
- Having a secure attachment with a key worker is important to support transitions.
- Children should be consulted in what helps them.

Transition to Secondary School:

- **For many children, the suggestions made for *Transition to new Early Years setting or Primary School (above)* tailored to their developmental level, will remain appropriate.**
- Identify the children who may struggle more with transition so that appropriate targeted intervention can be put in place. This resource could be used to guide you [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/start\\_questionnaire.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/start_questionnaire.pdf)
- Provide a safe space for the child to ask questions and share their feelings, this could be done as a whole class or in a small group intervention. Using scenario cards such as these may help structure conversation ([Year 6 Transition Scenario Cards and Action Plan Activity Pack \(twinkl.co.uk\)](#))
- Social stories. Stories may include talking about and normalising their feelings about the transition or exploring other situations the child may encounter;
- In Secondary School, children will be required to make more choices and organise themselves independently such as reading a timetable, choosing where to sit and choosing lunch from a menu. They may need some intervention to prepare them for this.
- Transition is regarded as a journey rather than an event and children should be supported throughout this as needed (rather than just before or just after). For example, children may require intervention in Year 6 and also into Year 7 following the move.



Information for teachers: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/teacher\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/teacher_booklet.pdf)  
 Booklet for pupils: [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/feedback\\_to\\_pupils.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/feedback_to_pupils.pdf)  
 The following link includes a Checklist for Transition and other ideas to support transition to school :  
[Section-10-Transitions.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](#)  
 Education Endowment Foundation Schools Transition Tool [Transition tool.pdf](#)  
[\(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](#)  
 Questionnaire for pupils about transition: Thomasson, R., Field, L., O'Donnell, C., & Woods, S. (2006). School Concerns Questionnaire. Buckinghamshire: Buckinghamshire County Council.  
[https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/stars\\_report.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/sites/pals/files/stars_report.pdf)

### Post 16

Transition to Post-16 settings:

- Actively involve the young person in decisions and planning through person-centred approaches, focusing on what helps and what works for them.
- With the young person's consent, share relevant information with the appropriate staff in the new setting.
- Identify an adult who will be a port of call in the post-16 setting. It will be important there are opportunities to build relationships with the adult.
- Additional visits to the setting to develop their familiarity with the environment. It may be useful to do this when the setting is quieter. Make explicit note of the people and places which will be important to the young person, such as where the toilets are and who to go to for help.
- Create safe opportunities for the young person to ask questions and discuss any worries.
- Work closely with the parent/carer.
- The young person may need some intervention to develop or build their confidence in self-help and independence skills in order to prepare them for increased independence in post-16 environments and beyond.



## SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

### Attachment

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

#### Early Years

In the Early Years

Some of the following behaviours may be seen:

Reluctance to engage with activities, shown by frequently withdrawing, frequently refusing to participate or through frequently challenging behaviour

Significant difficulties regulating their own emotions and recognising those of others which may be demonstrated by

Whole setting approach:

- Inclusive and positive school ethos around behaviour
- Being attachment aware i.e. valuing the power of relationships and understanding behaviour in context and having a relationship-based approach to inclusion
- Recognise that responding to social, emotional and mental health needs is everyone in the school's responsibility
- Have an emphasis on wellbeing for all members of the school community
- Promote strong relationships between staff, children and young people and their parents/carers
- Provide predictable routines, expectations, and responses to behaviour. Adults understand that behaviours that seem inappropriate often occur when a child feels threatened and their basic needs are not being met. They think about, 'What has happened to the child?', 'What is the story?' and not 'What is wrong with the child?' They also reflect on situations and think about what they (the adults) or the system could have done differently

persistent, significant difficulties in turn taking, sharing and social interaction

Have an overwhelming need to be in control

Hypervigilant

Significant difficulties staying focused on activities

Significant separation difficulties from parent/carer that might persist

Significant and frequent unusual behaviours requiring adult intervention

Highly needy of adult attention

May react to unseen triggers

Very distrusting of adults

Inappropriately affectionate and familiar towards strangers

- Arrange relevant training for staff from external support services where needed (e.g. attachment, resilience, trauma, whole staff mental health training, Emotion Coaching)

#### Actions and strategies

- Identify a key adult(s) in school
- Use attachment aware practices and tune into the child’s feelings and world (attunement). Attunement involves the adult initially recognising the emotion that the child is feeling. The adult acknowledges this emotion by naming it, and then empathises with the child about how they are feeling. Remaining attuned to the way a child is feeling promotes positive attachments
- Ensure that a child's physiological and emotional needs (Maslow’s Hierarchy) are met and understand that these need to be met before a child feels safe enough to relax, play and learn
- Provide opportunities for children to talk about their feelings and needs often, using the children’s own experiences
- Differentiate response and expectations based on emotional age so that expectations are realistic and understand that behaviour can indicate the developmental stage of the child
- Model and teach good emotional control
- Listen with empathy, acknowledge their difficulties, and validate their worries
- PLACE attitude (Dan Hughes – attachment therapist): Be playful, Liking, Accepting, Curious, and Empathic
- Where possible, try not to respond to unwanted behaviours designed to gain adult’s attention unless they are harmful to the child or others
- Provide specific praise e.g. 'I saw you help put the toys away. Thank you'
- Use rewards that are meaningful from the child's perspective; some rewards may need to be personalised



***It is very important to note that the whole context needs to be considered and if a child demonstrates the above behaviours it does not necessarily indicate that they have difficulties with attachment.***

- Consequences that follow certain unwanted behaviours should be logical and made explicit, without the need to enforce sanctions that may shame and ostracise children from their peers, school community and family
- Hold the child in mind e.g. 'I thought of you yesterday when...'
- Provide a structure around free time, as well as during structured time
- Use restorative approaches, including problem solving and find solutions together
- Help to build positive attachments between the young person, their family and school, through feeling connected (e.g. good news booklets)
- Time in rather than time out
- Maintain predictable routines and schedules
- Celebration assemblies
- Emotion Coaching
- Restorative approaches – ensure you reconnect with the child following a conflict and initiate repair
- Plan for transitions
- Holistic support, such as Early Help and TAF processes
- SEND support, assessment and intervention
- Forest School
- Measure the impact of interventions using assessment and monitoring tools/toolkits, such as: - The Boxall Profile <https://boxallprofile.org/> (ages 4-18) and <https://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf> (index of instruments P43)
- Offer interventions and attachment focused programmes to support relationships between children and adults (early years practitioners and parents/carers) such as: a) Five to Thrive - a training package based on attachment theory. Resources are available online. b) The Baby Room project: A programme to support baby room practitioners' and parents' understanding



	<p>of babies’ brain development in the first year c) Theraplay activities which are based on building attachments, self-esteem, trust and joy. The activities are centred around structure, engagement, nurture and challenge</p>
<p><b>School Age</b></p>	
<p>Some of the behaviours listed above may be seen.</p> <p>The child may be underachieving and show a poor understanding of cause and effect.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above, take a whole setting approach and follow the actions and strategies listed as appropriate</li> <li>• Continue to implement appropriate interventions for children for their individual needs</li> <li>• Provide peer support e.g. through peer mediation approaches, Circle of Friends.</li> <li>• Nurture Groups</li> </ul>
<p><b>Post 16</b></p>	
	<p>Continue to implement appropriate interventions for young people for their individual needs.</p>
<p><b>References</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heather Geddes; Attachment in the Classroom (2006), London, Worth Publishing.</li> <li>• Niels Rygaard; Severe attachment disorder in childhood a practical guide (2006), New York, Springer-Verlag.</li> <li>• John Bowlby; A secure base (1988), Oxford, Routledge.</li> </ul>	

## Emotional Literacy

### What is emotional intelligence/literacy?

Daniel Goleman highlighted two corresponding processes within emotional intelligence. (The terms emotional intelligence and emotional literacy tend to be used interchangeably)

The first area is about **how we manage ourselves** (feelings)

- How aware are we of our own feelings, thought patterns and behaviour?
- Are we able to manage these emotions appropriately, or are we at times overcome by them – in other words can we self-regulate effectively?

The second area is about **how we manage our interactions with others** (people)

- Can we put ourselves in other people’s shoes? This is related to being able to show empathy or another way of describing this is ‘theory of mind’.
- Can we form relationships with others and maintain these?
- Are we willing and able to adapt our behaviour to take account of other people’s feelings and attitudes?

A high EI score is linked to increased ability to communicate, reduction in anxiety and stress, ability to defuse conflicts, improved relationships, ability to empathize with others etc. Goleman has made significant claims that EI is more important than IQ in determining success.

Speech and language difficulties are common in children with SEMH but often are not identified until much later (e.g., when excluded from school/ in youth justice system). Also, children that have identified SLCN also are likely to have social and emotional difficulties. These links can develop at a young age, Cohen & Mendez (2009). A child that has poor or limited vocabulary may appear quiet or withdrawn in the classroom. Conversely, they may engage in disruptive or destructive behaviours or seem angry, possibly due to frustration over not being able to make their wants and needs known. There are strong links between the ability to understand and manage emotions and positive behaviour (Ensor & Hughes, 2005) therefore emotional literacy skills are important to teach.

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>A child that has a limited vocabulary may appear quiet or withdrawn in the classroom.</p> <p>A child may engage in disruptive or destructive behaviours or seem angry, possibly due to frustration over not being able to make their wants and needs known.</p> <p>Displaying challenging behaviour, e.g., refusal to follow instructions, aggression, damage to property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use assessment through teaching – e.g.: Are there parts of the curriculum that the child finds easier to manage than others? Use these to develop confidence.</li> <li>• Analyse informal observations; frequency observations and other observation sheets.</li> <li>• Discuss with colleagues and your SENCO, check if there are staff members who seem to get a more positive response. What are the strategies or approaches they use with the pupil? Can these be more widely replicated?</li> <li>• Differentiate tasks to ensure that all children experience success in the classroom.</li> <li>• Include explicit teaching of behaviour expectations.</li> <li>• Try small group work e.g., friendship or social skills, nurture groups.</li> <li>• Give the young person responsibility for looking after someone else.</li> <li>• Use a backward chaining approach – bringing the child in at the end of assembly or school day.</li> <li>• Use play based activities.</li> <li>• Establish the child’s interests. Build on these interests to support the child.</li> <li>• Additional individual/small group intervention could include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Play a game to match pictures of facial expressions with individual emotion words.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



- Make a mask or draw pictures to demonstrate different emotions
- Make facial expressions relating to these emotions in a mirror
- Take photographs of the student making facial expressions for display
- Make a booklet of ‘My Book of Emotions’ focusing on different emotions on different pages, e.g. “I feel happy when”, “I feel angry when...”

### School Age

Difficulties participating and presenting as withdrawn or isolated.

A child that has poor or limited vocabulary may appear quiet or withdrawn in the classroom.

A child may engage in disruptive or destructive behaviours or seem angry, possibly due to frustration over not being able to make their wants and needs known.

Displaying challenging behaviour, e.g., refusal to follow instructions, aggression, damage to property.

- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made such that we differentiate for SEMH in the same way that we differentiate for learning.
- Ensure learning needs are being met.
- Understand the basis for the behaviour e.g., what is the history/context?
- Continue to implement strategies that are reassuring.
- Offer clear guidance – explicit messages letting the pupil know what is expected of them. › Offer a ‘Get out with Dignity’ clause letting the pupil leave the situation.
- Monitor so that you have a good understanding of the frequency and location of triggers – frequency charts; ABCC observation sheets; informal observations can be carried out to inform understanding.
- Understand that behaviour is a method of communication e.g., what purpose is the behaviour trying to achieve for the CYP? What are they trying to tell us with their behaviour/ is there an unmet need? Help the CYP learn to substitute other, more acceptable, behaviours.
- Devise a risk management plan which includes pro-active strategies, early interventions to reduce anxiety/harm and reactive strategies to ensure a consistent approach.
- Use reintegration plans to support the CYP in returning to full time schooling. A gradual reintegration is most effective.



- A Risk Assessment must be in place if the CYP is causing a risk (to themselves and/or others).
- Teach the CYP different ways to get their needs met, such as developing social skills or strategies to self-regulate emotional states.
- Use readiness to learn strategies and routines (after breaks or between tasks for example).
- Consider the impact of the timetable and how you prepare CYP for transitions.
- Plan for transition between year groups / phases of education / from activity to activity
- When CYP are displaying SEMH difficulties it's important to consider their language skills.
- SLCN can often go unrecognised as behaviour and emotional difficulties may 'mask' these needs.
- There is a need to identify this as early as possible and refer on for further assessment and support if there are concerns e.g. SALT.
- The communication trust 'universally speaking' resources are helpful to support children with SLCN.

<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/resources/resources/resources-for-practitioners/universally-speaking.aspx>

- In addition, in cases where SLCN have been identified as an area of need, support should be put in place as early as possible to help children to develop their emotional literacy skills so that they are able to better understand and manage their feelings and behaviour.
- Anyone working with children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties should also consider the possibility of them having communication problems.
- When working with children with communication needs, one should be alert to the possibility of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental health issues.

#### **Emotion Coaching**

- Based on research by John Gottman (1997).



- Emotion Coaching is helping us understand the different emotions we experience, why they occur, and how to handle them.
- An emotion coach uses emotional moments as a time to listen to the child, empathize with soothing words and affection, help the child label the emotion he or she is feeling, offer guidance on regulating emotions, set limits and teach acceptable expression of emotions, and teach problem-solving skills.
- It is a technique and an approach that uses moments of heightened emotion and behaviour to guide and teach the child about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child’s emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling ‘seen and felt’.
- EC supports relationship between children and key adults, with the goal of improving children’s competencies to manage difficult feelings. These relationships support the development of empathetic responses and thought constructions promoting better self-management and regulation.

EC helps CYP to understand different emotions they experience, why they occur and how to handle them.

- Step 1: Recognising the child’s feelings and empathising with them.
- Step 2: Validating and labelling with the emotion the person is feeling in the moment.
- Step 3 (if needed): Setting limits on behaviour
- Step 4: Problem-solve with the child

**Therapeutic stories** are also a useful way to support children to develop their emotional literacy skills:

- Read a story and talk about the feelings of the characters. Here are some examples:



- Angry Arthur
- Owl babies

There are also books that talk more generally about a range of different emotions and are a useful way to introduce key emotions vocabulary

- How are you feeling – also contains strategies that might be helpful when experiencing different emotions
- Colour monster – a monster who is feeling confused about his emotions and uses colour to help him to explore them.
- Films and TV shows can also be a useful way of talking to children about different feelings – Inside Out (Disney) is a good example of this.
- 'My Huge Bag of Worries' by Virginia Ironside,
- 'Ish' and 'Dot' by Peter Reynolds are helpful to explore making mistakes and being proud of our own work/creations
- Beautiful Oops! By Barney Saltzberg
- 'Only One You' by Linda Kranz

Looking at photographs of people expressing different emotions can be really helpful – ask children to describe how the person might be feeling and get them to reflect on whether they have ever felt that way.

- Cartoon face resources also available – The bears/ emoji faces but real faces are probably better for teaching about emotions.



- Using mirrors is also a good idea – get children to practise displaying different emotions so they can see how they look.
- [Mirror](#) is an activity for developing self-esteem whereby students must come up with five compliments to give themselves.
- Transporters DVD – vehicles with real human faces – mini-series exploring different emotions – evidence that it can help children to recognise different emotions, particularly pupils with ASD.
- [Strengths card activities](#): Strengths Cards are a useful resource to consider their gifts and talents.
- ‘Self-esteem book’. The [ELSA Support website](#) provides free resources around ‘All about Me’ activities which can be used to develop a section of the book called ‘This is Me’. Characteristic cards, strength cards and affirmation cards can all support with exploring the young person’s perception of themselves to contribute to the ‘This is Me’ section. A further section of the book can explore the young person’s achievements and things they are proud of. The idea is that they can be used by the young person, supported by adults where necessary, to increase their self-esteem. The book can be used in times of difficulty to remind the young person of their strengths.
- Resources such as the [Bear Cards](#) offer support for emotional literacy intervention

Drawing is a useful activity for exploring and expressing feelings. Draw on Your emotions by Margot Sunderland is a very useful photocopiable manual which aims to help children express and deal effectively with their emotions through drawing.

The feelings art book by Ruby Radburn is a fantastic resource aimed at KS2 which helps children to develop emotional literacy skills through drawing and artwork – there are three main sections in the resource and the section on emotions is particularly helpful.



**Emotional Literacy Assessment and Intervention tools:** these offer assessment measuring pupils' emotional literacy and providing ideas for intervention and are available for purchase through GL assessments: <https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/products/emotional-literacy/>

Other useful resources include

[Mental health and behaviour in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[MindEd Hub](#)

[The strengths and difficulties questionnaire \(SDQ\) : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)

[https://www.sdqinfo.org/py/sdqinfo/b3.py?language=Englishqz\(UK\)](https://www.sdqinfo.org/py/sdqinfo/b3.py?language=Englishqz(UK))

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/4612/mwb-toolki-final-draft-4.pdf> (index of instruments P43)

### **Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)**

ELSAs are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. They are teaching assistants in schools who have received specific additional training from educational psychologists from whom they receive on going supervision following training. Their role is to support children and young people in school to understand and regulate their own emotions whilst also respecting the feelings of those around them. Examples of topics covered on the course are social skills, emotions, bereavement, social stories and therapeutic stories, anger management, self-esteem, counselling skills such as active listening. Educational psychologists provide on-going professional supervision to help maintain high quality in the work undertaken by ELSAs, thereby helping to ensure safe practice for ELSAs and pupils alike. Further information is available on the [ELSA Network website](#)

ELSA training and supervision is available to schools in Lancashire from the Lancashire Educational Psychology Service. To find out more about this course, contact the Educational Psychologists leading on this in [Lancashire](#).

### **ELSA Support**



[ELSA Support](#) is a website which provides a large range of downloadable resources that support the teaching of emotional literacy or emotional intelligence by ELSAs. A lot of the resources on this website are perfectly suitable for all teaching professionals to use and there is also a parent section with resources suitable for parents to use. The interventions are ready to go, all you need to do is print them out and deliver the lessons.

### Post 16

Displaying challenging behaviour, e.g., refusal to follow instructions, aggression, damage to property.

Difficulties in forming and maintaining reciprocal peer and adult relationships leading to significant social isolation and disengagement.

Verbal and/or physical aggression to peers or adults which does not cease with de-escalation techniques and/or requires time out from the situation.

Will not communicate feelings appropriately. More likely to be communicated through negative behaviours/ withdrawing / refusing to participate

- Identify what is not working well through engagement with the CYP as early as possible.
- Consider what the behaviour may be reflecting – is there an unmet communication, or social, emotional and mental health need?
- Look at the history, when did the behaviour start to change? Can you identify triggers?
- Liaise and collaborate with home to understand the wider picture.
- Keep a note of concerns, liaise with designated professional (SENCO, pastoral or safeguarding lead) within your school/college
- Be aware if CYP have been prescribed medication, feedback any changes or concerns to your SENCO so that he or she can suggest or request referral to a GP to rule out health issues.
- Unpick the behaviours – negative and positive behaviours – what lies behind them?
- Facilitate the implementation of specialist advice, e.g., substitutes for self-harming behaviours such as elastic bands or marbles.
- Obtain and record updated young person’s views – make amendments to support the CYP based on these views.
- Obtain and record updated parents’ views - make amendments to support the CYP based on these views.
- For older students, the following activities may be useful:
- Use ‘Body Mapping’ exercises to explore physical sensations linked to different emotions



- Create and keep an ‘Emotions Journal’. This can be used as a daily record for the student to become more attentive to their emotional experiences. Time can be protected within the educational setting to complete this. This could also be shared between home and school.
- Present pictures of facial expressions and ask the students to recognise and name these, give reasons why someone might feel this emotion, give examples of times they have felt this emotion, etc.

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## Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is defined as a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school (West Sussex EPS, 2019). In the UK, 10.2% of pupils are classed as persistent absentees (missing at least 10% of sessions in 2018/19) (Square Peg). The Covid-19 pandemic is understood to have exacerbated this problem. In a survey conducted during the academic year 2020-21, 97.2% of Lancashire educational settings reported some level of concern about this issue within their setting.

The onset of EBSA behaviours is perceived to be gradual (Gulliford & Miller, 2015). Research suggests that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to experience attendance difficulties (Gee, 2018). Young people who experience difficulties around attending schools are also seen to be more likely to experience emotional and mental health difficulties. Anxieties experienced by individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder put them at increased risk of EBSA. This can be attributed to difficulties these individuals experience around aversive social situations, the sometimes unpredictable nature of schools and anxiety around the school environment. Key transition points within education have been noted as periods where school avoidance behaviours are likely to occur, between 5-6 years and 11-13 years (Pellegrini, 2007). Therefore, pupils who have associated risk factors for EBSA within these educational stages are seen as priority groups.

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

### Early Years

Younger children may display the following difficulties:

- Ensure regular, open and collaborative **home-school communication** with parents/carers. It is essential that parents/carers, feel listened to and understood. Identify a **key person** for family contact.



- Separation anxiety (i.e., difficulties with the morning home-school transition)
  - Fearfulness, anxiety, tantrums or expression of negative feelings, when faced with the prospect of attending school.
- Consider how to make the school day as predictable as possible for the child through use of strategies such as '**Now and Next**' boards or '**Visual Timetables**'; this can have the effect of containing their anxieties.
  - Assign a '**key adult**' who can offer the child a sense of reassurance and containment within the educational setting. Consider provision of 'special time' for the child with this key adult (10-15 minutes of engaging/preferred activities) to promote a positive, trusting relationship. This time should be non-contingent on behaviour (i.e., distinct from rewards; the child does not have to 'earn' this). See Anna Freud for further guidance on [Relationship with Key Person in Early Years settings](#)
  - For children who experience **separation anxiety/difficulties with morning transition**, consider the following:
    - Use of a *Transitional Object*: A transitional object is something, usually a physical object, which represents the child-caregiver bond. Common examples include dolls, teddy bears or blankets. It can be something of significance from the home or belonged to the parent/carer which reminds the child that they are being 'held in mind' during periods of separation and that the caregiver will return. Parents/carers can leave their child with a little reminder of them, e.g., a photo, a little toy that they can keep with them. These can offer security and comfort to a child when making transitions from home-school.
    - *Encourage a positive 'Goodbye'*: Encourage parents to be positive and decisive when saying goodbye to their children. It is important for parents to tell children that they are leaving, and to do so confidently and in an upbeat way. This will boost children's confidence (even if not at first!) that it is safe to be left, and that their parent will return.
    - '*Soft Start*'/*Meet and Greet*: This involves the child accessing enjoyable, preferred activities (e.g., for 10-15 minutes) when they arrive to school. This can involve



'choosing time' where the child is empowered to select a favoured activity (e.g., from a 'menu' or list). This can also include the 'key adult' (see above).

- See Anna Freud for further guidance on [Separation Anxiety in the Early Years](#)
- Provide a 'safe space' within the educational environment where the child can access activities for self-soothing and self-regulation at times when they are seemingly overwhelmed.

### School Age

School aged children may display the following difficulties:

- Complain of anxiety symptoms that include a racing heart, shaking, sweating, difficulty breathing, butterflies in the tummy or nausea, pins and needles. Symptoms are typically worse on weekday mornings (often on a Sunday night or a Monday morning), and absent at weekends and school holidays
- May complain that they have abdominal pain, headache, sore throat, often with no signs of actual physical illness
- Expression of anxiety and negative feelings when faced with the prospect of attending school

- The *Lancashire EBSA Guidance (Strategy & Toolkit)* to support schools in responding to this issue is now available on the Local Offer. The guidance includes an EBSA Toolkit of resources/strategies for schools and incorporates the views and experiences of Lancashire pupils, parents/carers and educational settings. It also contains information about our local strategy and multi-agency working to support. [Emotionally based school avoidance \(EBSA\) guidance - Lancashire County Council](#).
- **Emotionally Based School Avoidance Training** for educational settings in Lancashire is recommended.
- **Graduated Response:** It is essential that schools apply a graduated response to identified EBSA issues and implement [Plan-Do-Review Cycles](#) based on the Lancashire Multi-Agency Flowchart for Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (See Appendix A in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#)).
- **Whole-school approaches:** Teacher approaches, peer connections and the whole school context have also been identified as prominent factors in supporting the successful reintegration of students experiencing EBSA. Intervention at the whole school/universal level as well as the individual/child level is therefore essential. Use of audits for whole school practice is recommended to work at the preventative/universal level (See Appendix B in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#)).



- Refusing to get ready for school
- Difficulties sleeping on school nights

Although the child may show such difficulties at home, these may not be evident in school and school staff may perceive the child to be 'fine at school'

- **Multi-agency working:** Collaborative working between professionals with clear professional roles and responsibilities, as well as professionals' knowledge and skills are supportive of increased attendance levels. The Lancashire Multi-Agency Flowchart for Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) sets out the professional roles and responsibilities of schools and external agencies within Lancashire in supporting with and responding to this issue. (See Appendix A in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#))
- **Understand complexity:** EBSA is often complex and multi-faceted. Research typically shows that EBSA is the result of a combination of predisposing factors which are largely unique to the individual child, their family and school context, and which interact with a particular trigger. Triggers commonly include: transition between primary and secondary school; loss or bereavement within the family; a change in friendship groups or bullying. Many pupils may find it harder to return to school following a prolonged absence, due to illness or a school holiday. The signs and associated behaviours of EBSA can present in a variety of ways for different pupils
- **Home-School Communication:** ensure ongoing, open communication between school and parents/carers, as well as school and the pupil. It is essential that pupils, as well as parents/carers, feel listened to and understood. Identify a key person for pupil and family contact.
- **Understand Barriers to School Attendance:** It is essential to understand the factors contributing to a pupil's school non-attendance. Lack of understanding around a young person's needs can lead to delayed or inappropriate support. A plan to support a young person experiencing EBSA must be based on families and professionals first understanding the function, i.e., the purpose, of the behaviour. Assessment which seeks to recognise risk and resilience factors, as well as push and pull factors, is necessary to support effective intervention which should have the aim of reducing risk and increasing protective factors. A range of resources is contained in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#) (See Appendix D: Card Sort: Function of School Avoidance; Appendix E: Mapping the Landscape).



- **Early identification & intervention:** The onset of EBSA behaviours is often perceived to be gradual. Therefore, early identification & intervention is essential. Baker and Bishop (2015) advocate a quick return to school alongside intervention, support and adaptations within the school and home environment. Implementation of an individualised support plan, informed by an analysis of the factors influencing EBSA, and developed collaboratively by families, school staff and the CYP has been shown to have positive outcomes.
- **Pupil views:** Working with each individual child or young person to ascertain their views as part of the assessment and intervention process is important as means of increasing understanding of risk factors and supporting factors. A range of resources is contained in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#) Additional resources include the [School Wellbeing Cards](#) to reflect key risk factors associated with school avoidance or unhappiness at school, as well as strength and protective factors that promote school attendance and wellbeing. Through a card sorting activity, the young person is empowered to share their experiences of school and any worries or concerns that they might have. The School Wellbeing cards are designed to be used by education, health and social care colleagues and are suitable for children 7+.
- **Flexible, individualised approach:** bespoke interventions should be linked to identified function(s) & needs. Common supportive measures include: a key adult for regular contact/check-ins; flexible timetable; a safe place in school; peer support/buddying; arrangements for transport; sending work home if needed.
- **Gradual, stepped plan:** a rapid return to school should be planned at the earliest opportunity alongside good support and adaptations within the school environment. NB: It is essential that this plan should be gradual and based on incremental, small steps, taking parent/carer and pupil views into consideration. Beware attempting ‘too much, too soon’ as this can cause setbacks for the pupil in the reintegration plan. This may include use of 'laddering' approaches (See Appendix F in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#))



- **Set individualised targets** using a Target Monitoring Evaluation approach (See Appendix C in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#))

**Punitive measures:** Use of punitive actions against non-attendance have been noted as a barrier to effective intervention.

### Post 16

Older young people may display difficulties listed above and may particularly display the following:

- Risk of becoming 'NEET' (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- Becoming withdrawn, spending increasing amounts of time in their bedroom, avoiding trips outside of the home
- Engaging in self-harming behaviours

- See strategies above
- It will be important to identify young people who may be 'at risk' of EBSA as soon as possible so that links can be made with the family to collaborate on a transition plan to Post-16 settings. This cohort of students might include:
  - Student who had a school re-integration plan previously
  - Student whose school attendance was below 90%
  - Student with a history of attendance difficulties; anxiety; social communication and interaction difficulties; pupils whose parents/carers have expressed concerns
- Identify a **key person** for pupil and family contact.
- Provide opportunities for a **daily check-in** with a key person (e.g., keyworker sessions)
- Ensure access to **safe spaces/calm areas** for pupil to access within the setting during times when they feel overwhelmed
- Consider a gradual, stepped approach to supporting pupil's transition to college. This may include use of 'laddering' approaches (See Appendix F in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#))
- Strategies for Transition Support are available (See Appendix G in the [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#))



- Mentally Health Schools offer guidance on supporting pupils with [Leaving School and Future Plans](#)

## References

### [Lancashire EBSA Guidance \(Strategy & Toolkit\)](#)

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## Resilience

Resilience is a quality which is demonstrated when a person can achieve 'good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development' (Masten, 2001, p. 228). This means that the term 'resilient' can be used to describe a person's positive response in any circumstances that might present them with a challenge to their academic, social or emotional goals. Positive responses can include trying out new strategies, making a greater effort, seeking peaceful ways to resolve conflict and being able to keep going despite setbacks.

Negative responses could include narrow or uncreative thinking, giving up in the face of a setback, stirring up conflict or aggression and lack of belief in one's own ability. Many factors contribute to a person's resilience, including their environment, the quantity of adverse circumstances they are required to face, especially in the case of children who have been exposed to difficult circumstances in their early years (sometimes referred to as ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experiences) and the resources they have at their disposal (sometimes referred to as 'protective factors') (Masten, 2001; Yeager & Dweck, 2012).

It is not only the presence of challenges and protection that determine how a person will react in adversity but also their own view of the adversity, with some seeing difficulties as a challenge to be overcome and others seeing them as reasons to give up (Olson & Dweck, 2008).

It is important, too, that children and young people especially understand what resilience is not, for example, it is not about staying silent in a situation which is unacceptable and where it is appropriate to seek support, such as where they are experiencing emotional or physical harm. Teaching resilience is about supporting young people to use different tools and strategies to help them in difficult circumstances. It is not about teaching them to face such circumstances on their own. True resilience is the result of enhancing and protective factors, not a personality trait that is present in some people and not others.

Resilience describes a person's capacity to cope with changes and challenges and to bounce back during difficult times. The more resilient someone is, the better they are at getting through tough times, and the better their chances at recovering from experiences of adversity and trauma (Gilligan 2004). Supportive factors include being accepted by people whose relationship you value, from completing tasks you value,



having the qualities of optimism; ‘stickability’ and believing that one’s own efforts can make a difference. A secure attachment relationship creates a secure base from which a young person feels safe to explore the world

**Risk Factors for Resilience**

It is more challenging for a young person to develop resilience if there are a number of risk factors apparent in their life. There are many different factors that affect a young person’s resilience

INDIVIDUAL	Difficult temperament/Risky behaviour/ Drug / alcohol misuse. Criminal involvement. Psychological problems
PEER	Lacking friendships Insufficient relationships with peers Association with delinquent / high risk young people Relationship break ups
FAMILY	Absence of warm and healthy attachments between a child and parent/Low connectedness to family and its members/Violence, abuse or neglect/Family dysfunction Moving away from family / friends
SCHOOL	Low achievement Poor attendance Low connectedness to school Transition from primary to secondary, college / university
COMMUNITY	Poverty Instability of accommodation Low connectedness to community

Edith Grotberg of the International Resilience Project defines resiliency in terms of three sources. For a young person to be resilient, s/he needs to have more than one of these strengths

**Social and interpersonal supports**

- Awareness of those who support them
- Inner strengths
- Trusting and loving relationships with others: parents, siblings, teachers, friends

- Structure at home Clear rules and routines, comprehensible and fair sanctions when breached, praise when followed
- Role models, parents, other adults, peers, siblings, who model good behaviour and morality
- Encouragement to be independent - people who offer praise for growing autonomy
- Access to health, education and social care
- Consistent direct or indirect protection for physical and emotional health
- Loveable - the young person possesses, or is helped to develop qualities that appeal to others
- Loving - the young person is able to express affection to others, and is sensitive to their distress
- Proud of myself - the young person feels they have the capacity for achievement and resists discouragement
- Responsible - the young person accepts and is given responsibilities, and believes their actions can make a difference
- Hopeful and trustful - the young person has faith in institutions and people, is optimistic for the future and is able to express their faith within a moral structure

#### **Interpersonal and problem solving skills**

- Degree of confidence they have in their own abilities 'what I can do'
- Communicate - the young person is able to express feelings and thoughts and listen to those of others
- Solve problems - the young person can apply themselves to problems, involve others when necessary and be persistent
- Manage my feelings -the young person knows and understands emotions, recognises the feelings of others and controls impulsive behaviour
- Seek out trusting relationships -the young person has the ability to find people, peers or adults, in whom they can confide and develop mutual trust
- Understand my temperament -the young person has insight into their personality and that of others

**10 questions to help you get started with a young person**



Why are you worried? What sort of behaviour is causing the problem? Who is being affected, how, when and where? When did it start? What factors are in the child’s background? (e.g. divorce / illness ) What are the present and past risk and protective factors? Which risk factors are decreased? Which protective factors can be increased? What are the strengths in the child, family, community, school and how can they be built on? What is the worst thing that could happen?

**Characteristics of cohort identified**

Resilience is an area of concern for all CYP with SEND and can be a part of quality first teaching for all children in primary and secondary schools. Resilience teaching will be particularly relevant for CYP who have more risk factors than others in their peer group, where having SEND is itself a risk factor, but it is important for all children and can therefore be addressed through whole-school approaches and the PSHE curriculum.

**Co-morbidity where relevant**

CYP who need particular or targeted support with resilience include those who are eligible for pupil premium, Children Looked After, children adopted from care, children who are also carers, children with more than one area of SEND, children who have experienced the death of a parent or sibling, children who have experienced domestic violence even when the situation is now resolved, refugee and asylum-seeking children, children of armed forces personnel and children from minority ethnic communities.

All children have some capacity for resilience but for those who struggle in this area, their difficulties may include any or all of the following:

- Low opinion of self and/or others
- Lack of positive relationships in their life and/or difficulty in forming new relationships
- Difficulty with social interaction
- Difficulty with regulation of emotions
- Lack of understanding of how to behave as part of a group
- Lack of confidence in their own ability to bring about change

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
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## Early Years

In the early years, children have the following characteristics which are normal and natural:

- Usually contented
- Can argue/make bargains but cannot reason
- Can have fears e.g. of the dark or of seeing certain objects, which may seem prolonged
- Fear loss of parent/carer but not always needing to be physically close to them
- May use physical as well as verbal aggression or behave badly to get a reaction
- Can blame others or deny involvement

The following approaches may be used to promote resilience in young children:

- Provide opportunities for the containment of strong emotions: the adult receives and understands the emotional communication of the child without being overwhelmed by it and communicates this back to the child, restoring their ability to think about the situation.
- Model reciprocity in relationships e.g. by playing with a child and following their lead, as well as supporting them to follow adult-led activities.
- Emotion Coaching can be used effectively with very young children: be aware of the child's emotion as well as your own reaction to it, connect with the child, listen to the child, name the emotions for the child, find good solutions together.
- Use emojis or photographs of expressions on a 'fan' attached to a lanyard and carried by all adults in the setting, so that emotional language can be at the forefront on interactions with children, supported by a visual cue each time (The Emotion Face Fan is available from [www.thesensorytouch.co.uk](http://www.thesensorytouch.co.uk)).
- Use therapeutic stories as a way in to talking about resilience, such as those by Margot Sunderland.

## School Age



- Use the Resiliency Wheel as a model to assess the school environment and culture: Provide opportunities for meaningful participation, set and communicate high expectations, provide caring and support, increase pro-social bonding, set clear and consistent boundaries, teach 'life skills' (Henderson & Milstein, 2003 and see [www.ncedsv.org](http://www.ncedsv.org) for an overview).
- Use Classmap surveys to assess resilience at the class level (Doll et al, 2009)
- Use a Growth Mindset Approach as a whole-school or class level intervention, promoting the notion that ability is not fixed and can be developed with practice and determined effort, that mistakes are an opportunity to learn and that everyone can succeed through increased effort (Carol Dweck, 2006; Shirley Clarke, 2016; Matthew Syed, 2019; Savvides & Bond, 2020).
- Train a member of staff as an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant – training available through LCC EP Service), to carry out specific, targeted interventions with 'at risk' children.
- Use a resource such as the Zones of Regulation to frame a whole-school response to resilience ([www.zonesofregulation.com](http://www.zonesofregulation.com)) (Kuypers, 2011).
- Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)) is a children's mental health charity which has resources, including ready-made lesson plans, such as the Beano Resilience Lesson Plans, available free online; they recommend a whole-school approach to wellbeing, to teach children what to do when they 'don't feel right'.
- Be especially aware of the increased wellbeing needs of children as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.
- A whole-school programme to promote resilience can be part of the PSHE curriculum but works best if it is embedded in school culture and referred to regularly through reward systems such as 'attitude to learning' grades and the promotion of rewards for effort and overcoming challenges (see Savvides & Bond, 2020)



Promoting resilience amongst young people can help them to be more optimistic, have confidence in their own abilities and to have a good opinion of themselves, even when they are facing difficulties. They are more likely to overcome challenges, be more willing to accept support when they need it and will have strategies that will support them to face challenges when they leave school or college.

- Research demonstrates that 'one good adult' can make a noticeable difference to the ability of a child or young person to overcome challenges; further information about this is available at the PCI College website: [www.pcicollege.ie/articlerelationshipsandmentalhealth](http://www.pcicollege.ie/articlerelationshipsandmentalhealth) and a short film aimed at young people: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=b79KV7kqwNI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b79KV7kqwNI)
- Encourage good sleep hygiene for young people e.g. limiting alcohol and caffeine especially around exam time, using an app such as f:lux on their devices to reduce blue light and having a 'screen break' for at least an hour before bedtime, use a red-toned night light if one is needed, remove devices such as laptops and phones from the bedroom at night (buy a separate alarm clock).
- Provide additional, visible support for young people at times of transition, such as when they first start their post-16 studies and during exam or university/job application periods.
- Identify vulnerable young people and provide a regular check-in opportunity once a week or once a fortnight, depending on timetables, as they may not seek out the support of an adult when they most need it.
- A resilience programme for young people could include the need to stay calm and focused in stressful times, examining how our thoughts can affect our ability to cope with stress and challenges; the book, 'Think Good, Feel Good' has some CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) approaches that can be effective for young people to use as tools to guide their thinking and to challenge thinking that hinders resilience.

## References



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## Self-Esteem



Self-esteem relates to the way we feel about ourselves. It is based on our self-image (how we perceive ourselves to be valued by others) and our ideal-self (what we consider to be ideal attributes or characteristics). Self-esteem is a value judgement about ourselves which is dependent upon the discrepancy between our self-image and our ideal-self: if our self-image is poor, then there is little hope of ever attaining our ideal-self and our self-esteem is low. However, our self-esteem will be high if our self-image comprises acceptable physical appearance and competence in areas and attributes we feel are important and valued. Together, our self-image, ideal-self and self-esteem contribute to our self-concept (Lawrence, D. 2006).

Self-esteem begins to develop in early childhood and it is influenced by the way other people treat us and how they behave towards us. Being made to feel loved and wanted is fundamental in enabling healthy levels of self-esteem to develop. Conversely, if a young child feels unlovable or incapable, he or she is more likely to have low levels of self-esteem. As a child gets older, peers and teachers become significant contributors to self-esteem levels particularly as the educational setting is one in which personal messages and feedback are being given frequently.

Self-esteem has a major impact on behaviour towards oneself and towards others. Although there are many variations among individuals, it has been found that a child or young person with low self-esteem is more likely to:

- Have problems in learning, (which may be related to several of the points below)
- Be reluctant to try new things, in order to avoid failure
- Be reluctant to express opinions
- Be reluctant to make decisions
- Over-react to failure (which may be an “acting out” behaviour, such as getting angry, shouting, verbal abuse; alternatively, it could be an internalised reaction such as deep distress)
- Find it difficult to accept criticism
- Find it difficult to cope with change
- Have a low opinion of self and own competences
- Be negative, mistrustful, hostile
- Have difficulties maintaining friendships

- Experience a need to hurt or feel superior to others, which may result in bullying
- Unlikely to achieve potential.

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
	<p>Playing board games with younger children is an effective way of teaching children how to play cooperatively and get along with others and that it is ok to lose. Focus on the effort made or the enjoyment of the game / activity rather than winning or losing.</p> <p>Maintain good links between home and school so that all achievements can be shared and celebrated. This can be done via a texting system, a phone call or by using a 'Good News' book with comments being added by parents / carers and school staff.</p> <p>Several resources are available commercially for both group and/or individual interventions; for example, the 'Talkabout for Children' series by Alex Kelly, ELSA resources (for use by trained ELSAs), SEAL resources, etc.</p>
<b>School Age</b>	
	<p>An ethos of mutual trust, respect and care amongst the staff; such emotions and behaviours characterise strong relationships and in turn create a positive and empowering ethos within the whole school.</p>



Reasonable limits and rules which are made explicit and are regularly and consistently applied.

Take time to find a pupil's strengths and praise these – ensure that the pupil has opportunities to demonstrate their skills to maintain self-confidence.

Praise is more effective if it is directed towards what a pupil has done. Use 'I' language rather than 'you' language. For example, 'I am really pleased that the sentence has a full stop and a capital letter' or 'I was really pleased when I saw you sharing your toy with Sam'. Praise needs to be given 'little and often'. Some pupils with low self-esteem may find it difficult to accept praise when it is given publicly as it can increase anxiety, particularly if there is a discord between their self-image and the message being given.

Meet and greet pupils by name every day if possible.

Foster a 'growth mindset' among pupils so that they are more willing to take risks with their learning and thus adopt an 'I can' rather than 'I can't' approach to tasks. Encourage them to try again when things don't go to plan the first time. For further information about growth mindset, see work by Carol Dweck.

To encourage pupils with low self-esteem to feel a sense of belonging to a school, and feel they are valued by the people within it, provide opportunities to take on a position of responsibility. For example, older pupils could spend a half day or a day being “seconded” to the office staff, perhaps taking visitors to the room they need to find, taking messages, answering the phone etc.

Several interventions can be used to specifically target self-esteem: for example, Circle Time, use of a whole- class posting box in which positive comments about one another are posted, a 'Hall of Fame' wall.

Allow pupils to work either alone or in pairs to work on sentence completions activities: e.g.

I was pleased when...

I like it when...

I made someone laugh when...

I like it when my friend...

I know I was a good friend when...

I am good at...

Post 16

See above



## Self-regulation

Emotional and self-regulation relates to the ability to understand and manage your own emotions. This may involve a person rethinking a situation they are finding difficult to reduce frustration or anxiety or hiding visible signs of emotions. Having good self-regulation means that a child or young person (CYP) is able to manage their thoughts, feelings, and actions so that they can respond in a calm and positive way in difficult and stressful situations. Our ability to manage our emotions affects our life in many ways; for example, it affects our physical and emotional wellbeing and our ability to form meaningful relationships. There is also research to suggest that young children with poor self-regulation skills tend to make less academic progress (e.g. McClelland et al., 2014).

Adults have an important role in supporting children to develop their emotional regulation. Children do not learn on their own to self-regulate and at first their behaviour is driven by impulses; they need the support of adults to help them to co-regulate. Co-regulation is where a caregiver meets the child's physical and emotional needs and soothes/calms the child when they are experiencing big emotions. This is done through the adult being attuned and responsive to the child's needs; for example, through soothing the child through words and actions when they are experiencing stress. This then helps the child to feel secure. It is only once children have internalized and conceptualized strategies for self-regulation and self-soothing that they can begin to learn to self-regulate and therefore manage their own emotions.

Self-regulation is a skill we can improve upon, and it is a skill which is easier for some than for others. It is dependent on our experiences, personality, and environment. Some children may have had little guidance about how to manage their feelings well, may have experienced prolonged stressful life events, or may have additional needs (e.g. social communication difficulties) which makes self-regulation more difficult.

As our brains also experience major change during adolescence, children of any age will benefit from self-regulation interventions.



The SEN Code of Practice 6.32 states that, 'Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour.' When a CYP struggles with their self-regulation, this can be displayed through externalising behaviours (e.g. shouting or hitting out) or internalising behaviours (e.g. becoming withdrawn). When a CYP presents with challenging to manage behaviour, this may be due to poor self-regulation, so it is helpful for us to keep this in mind when thinking about how to support them.

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

**Early Years**

Difficulties in self-regulation, may be shown through the following:

- Quick and significant changes in personality or behaviour.
- Changes in mood (sadness, withdrawal, mood swings).
- Difficulties regulating emotions.
- Emotional outbursts.
- Intense feelings (worry or fear).

Children learn how to self-regulate through their interactions with the adults around them. Children’s ability to self-regulate in their early years is limited. During their early years, children are developing their skills to manage their

The actions and strategies below can be adapted to support a young child with their self-regulation.

- Adults discussing and modelling feelings.
- Adults modelling the regulation of their own emotions in positive and calm ways.
- Adults having a warm and responsive relationship with the child and co-regulating i.e. the adult needs to get alongside the child/young person in their time of distress, reassure them and acknowledge their feelings, using a soothing voice and calm manner. It’s important to focus on the emotion and not on the behaviour. Co-regulation is the first stage of supporting children to develop the skills required for managing feelings independently (coregulation leads to self-regulation).
- Adults labelling feelings for the child when they are experiencing them.
- Adults creating a calm, nurturing and positive environment.
- Adults validating and empathising with a child's feelings – all feelings are ok, even if a child is angry, upset or frustrated. Adults should use 'attunement' which is where the adult initially



own feelings and understand the emotions of those around them.

NB. 'Toddler tantrums' are a normal stage of development. They usually start at around 18 months and are very common in toddlers. They are far less common by the age of 4. One reason for the tantrums is that children want to express themselves but find it difficult to do so. Tantrums can also occur due to children's behaviour being driven by impulses.

recognises the emotion that the child is feeling, acknowledges this emotion by naming it and then empathises with the child about how they are feeling.

- Adults talking about emotions using story books, puppets, TV programmes etc.
- Adults using and labelling a variety of feelings and emotions words.
- Providing displays that feature emotional vocabulary and associated visuals.
- Whole group approaches to teaching emotional regulation strategies (e.g. yoga and mindfulness)
- Small group activities to develop emotional awareness and emotional regulation skills to support the development of emotional literacy skills, for example:
  - Discussion of emotions during stories/puppet play/sharing of feelings visuals etc.
  - Mirror play to help recognise, label and understand emotions in self and others.
  - Using 'I' messages i.e. a form of communication that focuses on the feelings or beliefs of the person speaking, rather than the personal qualities or behaviours of the child. Adults can use 'I' messages with children to try and diffuse a situation in a non-threatening way. For example, an adult might say, "I feel very scared and worried when you try to climb on the table"
  - Practising self-calming strategies in a smaller group e.g. breathing activities, yoga.
- Adults providing teaching and support to develop self-calming techniques such as breathing, visualisation or repetitive, soothing or calming activities (e.g. playdoh, colouring). Some children may benefit from having their own individual 'calm boxes'. Adults should provide praise when children attempt to use their strategies.
- Adults providing 'reset' breaks at varying intervals throughout the day e.g. movement breaks, use of sensory resources/rooms etc.



- Providing safe space areas, which children can access to support their emotional regulation on an as needed basis.
- Adults completing appropriate assessments to develop a greater understanding of individual children’s needs. For example, observe and record the child's interactions across a range of contexts across the day to understand whether a particular need is dependent on a certain context/situation. Think about what the child may be trying to communicate through their actions, so as to inform strategies as needed (ABCD Charts can be helpful for this).

### School Age

Children may still require adult support to co-regulate their emotions.

The actions and strategies above remain relevant. In addition, the following will be helpful:

- Adults creating calm, positive and nurturing classroom environments.
- Adults using whole class approaches to teaching emotional regulation strategies,
- Adults developing further the child's vocabulary of feelings and emotions words, including through the use of displays.
- Adults further teaching children self-calming techniques, such as breathing, visualisation or repetitive, soothing or calming activities (colouring, play dough, card sorting). Some children may benefit from having their own individual 'calm boxes'.
- Adults providing lots of specific praise when children manage their emotions effectively and/or use self-calming strategies.
- Assigning a key adult(s) for daily check ins.
- Adults using Emotion Coaching, which uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child about more effective responses.
- Adults using scales such as The Incredible 5-point scale to aid children in their emotional self-regulation.



- Adults using interventions such as the Zones of Regulation (4 years plus) is an intervention that supports the development of self-regulation and emotional control.
- Adults using appropriate assessments to establish greater understanding of the child's needs. Two assessments which may be helpful are The Boxall Profile and The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).
- Adults using workbooks or programmes on an individual or small group level to support emotional awareness and regulation such as 'Think Good, Feel Good', 'Starving the Anxiety Gremlin'.
- Adults creating an individual profile of the child's needs and triggers as well as identifying what works well to support the child and what approaches staff should use to support the child. Creating the profile should involve working with a group of key staff.
- Adults employing strategies to start to encourage pupils' awareness of self-regulation skills, through encouraging them to think about their own learning, setting their own goals and evaluating their progress.
- Having a support plan in place which is developed with the child and regularly evaluated according to what they feel helps them to feel calm. This should include how to reflect upon and learn from incidents that occur.

#### Post 16

As above but with an emphasis on the young person increasingly being supported to think about their own learning, setting their own goals and evaluating their progress in terms of self-regulation. Some young people may still require adult support to co-regulate their emotions.

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## Wellbeing: Anxiety, depression & self-harm

### What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear – it is an understandable reaction in children to change or a stressful event. But for some children/young people, anxiety affects their behaviour and thoughts on a daily basis, interfering with their school, home and social life.

### What is depression/low mood?

The [Anna Freud Centre](#) outlines that low mood can mean an absence of feeling, irritability, lack of pleasure, and/or lack of motivation. Most people have experienced this at times. However, low mood means that people feel this way persistently. Doctors define low mood as feeling this way for over two weeks. It is not always easy to spot low mood. Signs include changes in behaviour and relationships with friends and school staff, becoming more withdrawn and fluctuating attendance. Low mood may be related to range of factors, including challenging home circumstances, bullying or difficult peer relationships.

### What is self-harm?

According to the [NICE guidelines for self-harm](#), self-harm is defined as intentional self-poisoning or injury irrespective of the apparent purpose of the act. Prevalence statistics are unreliable because it is a problem that is sometimes hidden. Although people of all demographics self-harm, it is particularly common among adolescents. Prevalence estimates suggest that about 17% of young people have self-harmed in their lifetime, with the average age of onset around 12-13 years of age, and peak prevalence during mid-adolescence. While reasons for self-harm are unique to individuals, many people self-harm to manage distress or emotional dysregulation. But worryingly, few young people seek professional help for their self-harm or mental health.

**Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?**

**Actions and strategies**

Early Years



Anxiety may manifest in a number of ways in younger children, including:

- Separation anxiety, (e.g., difficulties with morning transition, poor attendance)
- Internalising/Withdrawn behaviour
- Emotional dysregulation/ Externalising behaviour (e.g., verbal and physical aggression)
- Difficulties forming peer relationships
- Difficulties with aspects of the school day (e.g., making transitions)

Poor frustration tolerance (e.g., difficulties with making mistakes, taking risks in learning)

- Consider how to make the school day as predictable as possible for the child through use of strategies such as '**Now and Next**' boards or '**Visual Timetables**'; this can have the effect of containing their anxieties.
- Assign a '**key adult**' who can offer the child a sense of reassurance and containment within the educational setting. Consider provision of 'special time' for the child with this key adult (10-15 minutes of engaging/preferred activities) to promote a positive, trusting relationship. This time should be non-contingent on behaviour (i.e., distinct from rewards; the child does not have to 'earn' this). See Anna Freud for further guidance on [Relationship with Key Person in Early Years settings](#)
- For children who experience **separation anxiety/difficulties with morning transition**, consider the following:
  - Use of a *Transitional Object*: A transitional object is something, usually a physical object, which represents the child-caregiver bond. Common examples include dolls, teddy bears or blankets. It can be something of significance from the home or belonged to the parent/carer which reminds the child that they are being 'held in mind' during periods of separation and that the caregiver will return. Parents/carers can leave their child with a little reminder of them, e.g., a photo, a little toy that they can keep with them. These can offer security and comfort to a child when making transitions from home-school.
  - *Encourage a positive 'Goodbye'*: Encourage parents to be positive and decisive when saying goodbye to their children. It is important for parents to tell children that they are leaving, and to do so confidently and in an upbeat way. This will boost children's confidence (even if not at first!) that it is safe to be left, and that their parent will return.



- *'Soft Start'/Meet and Greet*: This involves the child accessing enjoyable, preferred activities (e.g., for 10-15 minutes) when they arrive to school. This can involve 'choosing time' where the child is empowered to select a favoured activity (e.g., from a 'menu' or list). This can also include the 'key adult' (see above).
- See Anna Freud for further guidance on [Separation Anxiety in the Early Years](#)
- Provide a **'safe space'** within the educational environment where the child can access activities for self-soothing and self-regulation at times when they are seemingly overwhelmed.
- Activities to support **frustration tolerance**: providing regular opportunity to experience small, 'safe' risks is essential to students developing coping skills for the big risks. For pupils who demonstrate poor frustration tolerance and risk-taking tolerance (e.g., making mistakes, losing games), board games that require small-scale risk can support the development of skills in accepting both reward and failure. Resilience-building games and activities which incorporate elements of safe risk-taking (e.g., Jenga, Buckaroo) can be supportive of this.
- Consider ways to promote the child's peer relationships. [R time](#) is a structured programme that builds and enhances relationships for children from Early Years to the end of Primary School. Each R time session lasts 10 - 15 minutes and takes place once a week. There are 30 planned sessions for each year group. There is no educational challenge in any of the activities. They are designed to foster and develop pupil relationships.
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) is a curriculum resource to help primary schools develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills. It includes assemblies and follow-up ideas for work in class. It can be used by schools that have identified the social and emotional aspects of learning as a key focus for their work with the children. Resources are



available for download including the [SEAL curriculum](#) , the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) Curriculum [resource introductory booklet](#) and [further information on SEAL](#)

### School Age

Anxiety may manifest in a number of ways in school aged children, including:  
 Externalising/Disruptive behaviour which interferes with learning outcomes  
 Emotional over-reactions  
 Verbal/physical aggression  
 Internalising/Withdrawn behaviour  
 Social anxiety  
 Peer relationships difficulties  
 Bullying or Victim of bullying  
 Performance anxiety/Exam anxiety  
 Poor frustration tolerance  
 Low self esteem  
 Obsessive behaviour or rituals

Resilience: The importance of a universal and whole-school approach is cited within government guidance on supporting mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, 2018): Schools are in a unique position, as they are able to help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school approach that is tailored to the needs of their pupils (p.8).

[Boing](#) advise that school leaders engage in a whole school audit in relation to promoting Academic Resilience. This offers a systematic approach to understanding your school and identifying where and what you might do to better promote resilience.

[Boing Boing’s Interactive Resilience Framework](#) summarises a range of ideas to supporting different areas of an individual young person’s resilience. It is based on the resilience research evidence base. The Resilience Framework is designed to be user-friendly and visually shows ideas under five headings – Basics, Belonging, Learning, Coping and Core Self – to help us think strategically and practically about doing things resiliently to support a young person. Within each of these is a selection of evidenced based ideas to draw on when trying to make a resilient move with a student.

[Mentally Healthy Schools](#) helps school staff understand the many risk factors that may challenge and undermine children’s mental health. It also helps schools understand what they can do (on their own and working with partners) to help build good mental health and resilience and reduce the risks that can harm children’s mental health.



Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Additional strategies to address resilience are in the [Emotional Resilience toolkit from West Sussex](#)

There are lots of useful resources focused on resilience for secondary schools, including:

- [DEAL: Building resilience lesson plan from Samaritans](#)
- [Digital resilience lesson plan](#)
- It is helpful to consider the [NHS 'Five Steps to Wellbeing'](#) to guide discussion and help consider aspects of the young person's life for example:
  - Connect – Who is in their support networks? Are they valuable and appropriate?
  - Learn – What do they enjoy doing? How are they achieving and progressing? What are their motivations?
  - Active – Do they get regular exercise?
  - Notice – Are they living in the moment?
  - Give – Do they feel that they makes a positive contribution to their surroundings, family and peers? Are they able to give themselves time to relax and feel better about themselves?
- [Anna Freud Centre: Supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools](#) This booklet aims to support all staff working in school settings to understand how best to help the students in their care. It covers a range of mental health concerns, describes signs you might recognise and offers straightforward and practical guidance about what to do if you are worried about a student. It explains how school staff can support by identifying mental health problems and by measuring and monitoring the mental health and emotional wellbeing of their students. It offers specific focus on the following:
  - Anxiety



- Attachment
  - Looked after children
  - Low mood
  - Self-harm
  - Engaging with families
  - Mentalisation in the classroom
  - Measuring mental health and wellbeing in schools
- [Schools in Mind](#) is a free network for school staff and allied professionals which shares practical, academic and clinical expertise regarding the wellbeing and mental health issues that affect schools. The network provides a trusted source of up-to-date and accessible information and resources that school leaders, teachers and support staff can use to support the mental health and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care. Their mental health experts have also developed a booklet series aimed at supporting all staff working in school settings. [“Talking Mental Health” resources](#) are available to support school staff. To keep informed of the Anna Freud Centre’s latest resources for schools, you can join their free [Schools in Mind network](#)
  - **Young Minds** is the UK’s leading charity for children and young people's mental health. They have a range of resources for schools on their [website](#)
  - Other **whole school approaches** may include:
    - Use of Emotion Coaching techniques
    - Provision of a nurture group
    - Access to safe spaces/ calm areas.



- Post box for children to post their name and worry, to be picked up by learning mentor (or similar)
- Use of worry monsters
- For information on specific outcomes and experience measures and how to measure children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing, a range of tools are available from [Child Outcomes Research Consortium \(CORC\)](#)
- **Responding to self-harm:** It can be hard to know how to respond to self-harm in young people that you work with. [Young Minds guide](#) has information, tips and concrete steps school staff can take to help.
- The [NICE Guidelines for Self-Harm](#) (update July 2022) highlight that addressing self-harm is the collective responsibility of all professionals working with young people, including and school staff. For schools, the key new guidance includes:
  - When a young person is found to self-harm, the professional (e.g., teacher) should (a) treat the young person with respect, (b) address any immediate physical health needs, (c) seek advice from a health or social care professional, (d) ensure the young person is aware of sources of support, and (e) address any safeguarding issues.
  - Education settings should have guidance for staff to support students who self-harm and a designated lead responsible for ensuring that self-harm guidance is implemented.
  - All education staff should be aware of the guidance for identifying and assessing the needs of students who self-harm.



- For students who have self-harmed, the designated lead should seek the advice of a mental health professional to develop a support plan with the student and their carers (as appropriate) for when they are in the educational setting.
  - Education staff should consider how the student’s self-harm may affect their close friends and peer groups and provide appropriate support to reduce distress to them and the person.
- **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA):** EBSA is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. EBSA is often complex and multi-faceted. The *Lancashire EBSA Guidance (Strategy & Toolkit)* to support schools in responding to this issue is now available on the Local Offer. The guidance includes an EBSA Toolkit of resources/strategies for schools and incorporates the views and experiences of Lancashire pupils, parents/carers and educational settings. It also contains information about our local strategy and multi-agency working to support. [Emotionally based school avoidance \(EBSA\) guidance - Lancashire County Council](#).
  - **Understand the behaviour:** Observe and record the child’s presentation (e.g., using an ABC – antecedent, behaviour, consequence – chart or STAR - situation, Trigger, Actions and Rewards/Avoidance) across a range of varied contexts/times during the school day to understand what unmet need(s) the behaviour may be communication and to inform possible strategies.
  - Assign a **key adult/ team of adults for daily check ins** and/or at specific times that have been identified as challenging for the child, e.g., unstructured times. 1:1 time to build up a relationship between a child and key adult to be built into the child’s timetable. Key adult



characteristics: nurturing yet able to hold firm boundaries, resilient, patient, empathic and able to seek and accept support from another adult. The key adult should be part of the team around the child, kept informed of their targets and the provision in place to meet these.

- Teach **self-calming techniques**, such as breathing, visualisation or repetitive, soothing or calming activities (colouring, play dough, Theraputty). Ensure access to these activities at all times through use of a ‘calm box’.
- **Cognitive Behavioural (CBT)-Based Approaches:** CBT-based approaches are widely used as a therapeutic intervention for anxiety difficulties and help young people link their thoughts, feelings and behaviours together, and recognise how they all influence the others.

Mentally Health Schools have developed some resources which draw on CBT techniques which schools can use with students:

- [Catch it, check it, challenge it, change it](#)
- [Problem solving worksheet](#)

Resources such as [‘Think Good, Feel Good’](#) by Paul Stallard offer valuable activities and materials. The ‘Think Good, Feel Good’ workbook covers the core elements used in CBT programmes but conveys these ideas to children and young people in an understandable way and uses real life examples familiar to them. The practical series of exercises and worksheets introduce concepts that can be applied to each unique set of problems. The materials cover the following topics:

- Thoughts, feelings and what you do
- Automatic thoughts
- Thinking errors



- Balanced thinking
- Core beliefs
- Controlling your thoughts
- How you feel
- Controlling your feelings
- Changing your behaviour
- Learning to solve problems

- **Positive Psychology**

Positive Psychology involves the study of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that emphasise strengths instead of weaknesses and seeks ways to optimise our mental health. Approaches can include the following:

**Relaxation & Mindfulness:**

- *Relax Kids:* [Relax Kids](#)
- *Cosmic Kids:* [Cosmic Kids](#) and [Zen Den](#)
- [Relax. Catherine O’Neill. Child’s Play](#): this resource helps to recognise the causes and signs of stress in children's lives, and ways to deal with them, using simple and enjoyable exercises.

**Positive journaling** has been found to help improve feelings of well-being and self-esteem. With this [self-esteem worksheet](#), students will be asked to record three daily statements related to their successes, good qualities, and positive experiences. This worksheet is great for students who have difficulty generating ideas for positive experiences to journal about. Some examples of prompts within this handout are: "I felt proud when..." "Today I accomplished..." "Something I did for someone..."



- [Kooth](#) is an online mental wellbeing community which offers online counselling, advice and wellbeing support. Kooth also offer a free online app offering advice, counselling and wellbeing support to 10-18 year olds. It includes magazine articles written by young people, journal and goals pages, discussion boards, chat and messenger services.
- **Additional resources:** Use of other programmes/books such as:
  - [My Hidden Chimp](#) (Peters)
  - [Starving the Anxiety Gremlin](#) (Collins-Donnelly)
  - [Starving the Anger Gremlin](#) (Collins-Donnelly)
  - [Starving the Depression Gremlin](#) (Collins-Donnelly)
  - [Starving the Stress Gremlin](#) (Collins-Donnelly)
  - [Starving the Exam Stress Gremlin](#) (Collins-Donnelly)
  - [Worry Box](#) (Mortimer)
  - [Dealing with Feelings](#) (Rae)
  - [How to be Happy](#) (Viegas)
  - [Social Media and Mental Health: Handbook for Teens](#) (Edwards)
  - [The Incredible 5-Point Scale](#)
  - [Anxiety Thermometer](#) (Mentally Healthy Schools)

### Post 16

At Post 16, young people may particularly experience the following:

- Social anxiety
- Withdrawn/isolation
- Relationship difficulties
- Performance anxiety/Exam anxiety

- Provide opportunities for a **daily check-in** with a key adult / team of adults (e.g., keyworker sessions).
- Allow engagement with a **neutral task** or complete an assigned “job” of responsibility to reduce feelings of anxiety.
- Ensure access to **safe spaces/calm areas** for pupil to access within the setting during times when they feel overwhelmed



- Low self esteem
- Fear of independence
- Low mood
- Stress
- Obsessive behaviour or rituals
- Poor attendance/Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

- Mentally Health Schools offer guidance on supporting pupils with [Leaving School and Future Plans](#)
- Teach **self-calming techniques**, such as breathing, visualisation or repetitive, soothing or calming activities and [positive psychology techniques](#) (e.g., gratitude diaries, one selfless act, etc.)
- Consider **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy-based approaches** to small group/individual work provided over a specified period of time, e.g., resources such as [‘Think Good, Feel Good’](#) by Paul Stallard
- **Promote Self-Care:** Self-care is about the things we can do to look after our own mental health. Anna Freud report that when young people are struggling, they are usually told to see a professional and often do not get much advice about how they could help themselves. Anna Freud provide a list of [self-care strategies](#) young people use to help them to manage their wellbeing.
- [Kooth](#) is an online mental wellbeing community which offers online counselling, advice and wellbeing support. Kooth also offer a free online app offering advice, counselling and wellbeing support to 10-18 year olds. It includes magazine articles written by young people, journal and goals pages, discussion boards, chat and messenger services.
- **Mobile apps** are a great way to support teenagers to work on their wellbeing issues in an accessible way – an overview of the selection on offer dealing with aspects of wellbeing, including anxiety, self-harm and stress is available on this [link](#)

#### References

[Anna Freud Centre: Supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools](#)

[Child Outcomes Research Consortium \(CORC\)](#)

[Emotionally based school avoidance \(EBSA\) guidance - Lancashire County Council.](#)

[Kooth](#)

[Schools in Mind](#)

Stallard, P. (2002). *Think good, feel good: A cognitive behaviour therapy workbook for children and young people*. Chichester: Wiley.

[Young Minds](#)



## SENSORY/PHYSICAL TOOLKIT

### Developmental Co-ordination Disorder

A small number of CYP may have a formal diagnosis of developmental co-ordination difficulties (previously known as dyspraxia). For all areas of need, any provision or support should be provided in line with the needs of the CYP and is NOT dependant on any formal diagnosis

This toolkit aims to provide easy access to information relating to developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD) (previously known as dyspraxia) and to enable schools/settings to have a common understanding of DCD and current best practice, in order, to achieve the best outcomes for children. Professionals in the field have referred to these types of difficulties as dyspraxia, clumsy child syndrome, sensory integration disorder and developmental coordination disorder. However developmental coordination disorder (DCD) is currently the preferred term for those displaying more severe levels of motor co-ordination difficulties (Bond, 2008).

The development of motor control and coordination is an important part of general development (Bond, Cole, Fletcher, Noble and O'Connell, 2011) and it is widely acknowledged that children do not grow out of motor skills problems and will require intervention if difficulties are present (Hill and Barnett, 2011).

Prevalence of DCD is 1.7% of seven- to eight-year-olds, with a further 3.2% having probable DCD (Kirby, Sugden and Purcell, 2014), and it is more common in boys (Kadesjo & Gillberg, 1999). As many as 10% of children may have a milder degree of motor skills difficulties which can affect their academic progress and social inclusion (Bond, 2008). Poor motor skills can impact on self-esteem and psychosocial wellbeing (Lodal, K. & Bond, C., 2016).

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>Lack of coordination of physical skills in comparison to peers e.g., the child may bump into things, fall over easily etc.</p> <p>The child may not have developed hand dominance</p> <p>The child may have difficulties with fine motor skills e.g., holding a crayon, pencil</p> <p>The child may avoid activities which involve fine motor control e.g., using tweezers, small pegs etc.</p> <p>Muscles in the child’s hands may appear to lack strength and control is delayed</p> <p>Child may lack co-ordination during two handed activities</p> <p>Some difficulties with self-help skills, for example, dressing, mealtimes etc.</p> <p><b>In some instances, difficulties might include:</b></p>	<p>Provide appropriate indoor and outdoor equipment that provides children with the appropriate level of support, risk and challenge focussing on gross and fine motor skills:</p> <p><b>Gross Motor Skills</b></p> <p>Ensure there is sufficient floor space and provide the child with plenty of opportunities to walk, run and crawl on different surfaces – grass, carpet, vinyl</p> <p>Provide outdoor equipment that encourages children to balance, climb, jump, slide, lift, pull, push, hang, spin and swing; for example, steps, logs, planks, wheelbarrows, tyres, tunnels, large balls, large blocks etc.</p> <p>Create a path with things to step onto and paths with defined sections to step into (hoops, ladder on ground, tiles)</p> <p>Introduce an obstacle course with items at different heights and promote a range of movements such as climbing, crawling, tummy wriggling, rolling and sliding</p> <p>Provide opportunities to use bikes. As the child builds skill and confidence in riding a bike, introduce obstacles to peddle round and traffic lights to encourage stopping and starting</p> <p>Play parachute games and chasing games such as Musical Statues and ‘What’s The Time Mr. Wolf?’</p> <p><b>Fine motor skills</b></p> <p>Provide builder’s trays with a range of messy play opportunities and large surfaces to mark with paint, water and shaving foam using brushes and hands</p>

Physical difficulties that require equipment and adapted resources and a higher level of support

physical independence is impaired and requires input and/or programmes from relevant professionals

Physical difficulties that require close monitoring to ensure wellbeing and safety

Provide a range of resources to build hand coordination, control and dexterity such as playdough, clay, finger and brush painting, tape, ribbons, string, rope and pulleys, water play equipment, pegs, threading, construction equipment and small world resources

Introduce ‘Start Stop’ games to develop fine motor skills with musical instruments (fast/slow, loud/quiet): drumming using two hands and alternate hands, spoons and sticks on pots.

**Continue with any relevant strategies from above, plus:**

If there are concerns regarding a CYP’s mobility, the family should contact their GP.

Where relevant follow the strategies advised by a physiotherapist and/or occupational therapist

Provide an environment that supports a child’s developing independence e.g., position furniture to enable children to access resources, activities etc.

In addition to the quality first teaching expectations, additional provision and interventions maybe required.

Please see below link for useful information sheets on supporting CYP with dyspraxia:

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk>

[Information Sheets | Dyspraxia Foundation](#)

[Classroom guidelines for schools and teachers | Dyspraxia Foundation](#)



School Age	
<p>The child may have difficulties with fine motor skills e.g., holding a crayon, pencil</p> <p>Deterioration with handwriting and copying tasks.</p> <p>Physical difficulties/delay that may require some adult assistance.</p> <p>The child may find it difficult to keep up with peers in physical play, which may impact on self-confidence and ability to make friendships</p> <p>The child may not have developed hand dominance.</p> <p>Some difficulties with self-help skills, for example, dressing, mealtimes etc.</p> <p><b>In some instances, difficulties might include:</b></p> <p>Physical difficulties that require equipment and adapted resources and a higher level of support</p>	<p><b>Gross motor skills</b></p> <p>Strategies as above.</p> <p>Develop CYP’s core stability e.g., wobble cushion, exercises and games.</p> <p>Ensure correct seating position with appropriately sized table and chairs.</p> <p>Provide physical activities to support development of gross motor skills e.g., throwing, catching, hopping etc.</p> <p><b>Fine motor skills</b></p> <p>Strategies as above.</p> <p>Develop fine motor skills e.g., hand and arm exercises, specialist scissors, pegboard, threading, play dough, pincher grips activities e.g., pegs onto washing line. › Provide sequencing and organisational skills e.g., first / next boards, writing frames, visual timetables</p> <p>Provide support for letter formation e.g., using a multi-sensory handwriting scheme, pencil grips, sloping boards etc.</p> <p><b>Motor skills intervention</b></p> <p>Use of whole setting resources and interventions, such as:</p> <p>Provide access to handwriting and hand strengthening activities for example, elastic bands, typing skills, Theraputty, tweezer and chopsticks games, jigsaws, and threading.</p> <p>Teodorescu <a href="#">By Ion Teodorescu Write from the start: Unique Programme to Develop the Fine Motor and Perceptual Skills Necessary for Effective Handwriting (3 volumes): Amazon.co.uk: 8601404288548: Books</a></p>



Physical independence is impaired and requires input and/or programmes from relevant professionals

Physical difficulties that require close monitoring to ensure wellbeing and safety



MMSP.docx

Manchester Motor Skills Programme

Typing programmes [Writing: Typing - BBC Teach](#) [Computing KS2 - Dance Mat Typing - BBC Bitesize](#)

**How to increase the potential of students with DCD (Dyspraxia) in Secondary School – by Lois Addy**  
ISBN 978-1085503-553-9

Please see below link for useful information sheets on supporting CYP with dyspraxia:

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk>

[Information Sheets | Dyspraxia Foundation](#)

[Classroom guidelines for schools and teachers | Dyspraxia Foundation](#)

**Continue with any relevant strategies from above, plus:**

If there are concerns regarding a CYP’s mobility, the family should contact their GP.

Where relevant follow the strategies advised by a physiotherapist and/or occupational therapist

Provide an environment that supports a child’s developing independence e.g., position furniture to enable children to access resources, activities etc.

In addition to the quality first teaching expectations, additional provision and interventions maybe required.



Post 16

**As above, plus:**

- Difficulties with motor skills, organisation skills
- Very specific difficulties (e.g., diagnosis of DCD or dyspraxia etc.) affecting spatial and perceptual skills and fine and gross motor skills these will likely be impacting on age-appropriate daily living skills.

**Classroom organisation to support children/young people with DCD:**

- Create a ‘clutter free’ environment.
- Equipment in the classroom such as chairs and tables are at the appropriate.
- Provision of accessible materials such as lined paper with spaces that are sufficiently wide enough to accommodate the young person’s needs.
- Provide access to handwriting and hand strengthening activities for example, elastic bands, typing skills, Theraputty, tweezer and chopsticks games, jigsaws, and threading.
- Ensure that there is sufficient availability of space for free movement within the classroom.
- Seating plans and the organisation should be considered to ensure sufficient working space. Positioning within the classroom should be considered to minimise distractions.
- Resources and additional equipment should be provided for young people’s needs such as sloping boards, scissors, pencil grips, chairs and adapted cutlery etc.
- Reduce the amount of copying that the young person is asked to complete.
- Be mindful and take account of the potential fatigue that a young person may experience
- Support the development of sequencing skills for everyday tasks with a focus on increasing and supporting independence, for example, organisational skills, equipment organisation and tasks of daily living such as getting dressed in the morning.
- Should appropriate height tables and chairs not be possible for all activities consider support for the young person’s feet.
- Provide space (such as a locker) for the young person to store and keep their equipment or bag in rather than them needing to carry this around with them during the day.
- Consider access arrangements for assessments and exams, and apply for and implement them, as necessary.
- Consider alternatives to handwriting such as, voice recorders, iPad, laptop or netbook.



- Consider modifying activities that young people with perceptual difficulties may find challenging such as work sheets with lots of information, word searches or crosswords.
- Allow the young person to leave lessons early when travelling between rooms or buildings to avoid large groups in corridors and enable extra travel time.
- Additional time is provided to complete tasks. Teach strategies to improve self-organisation, including use of diaries, planners, and checklists of daily equipment needed.

#### **SEND Support**

- Incorporate fine and gross motor skills practice, development and targets into daily aspects of the young person’s curriculum.
- Consider any additional support for self-care tasks.
- Access to support from an additional key person in the setting to facilitate access to the curriculum, support the young person to manage their condition or move safely around the environment. This should be discussed with the young person.
- Provision of flexible support in the setting for personal needs as necessary and required whilst encouraging as much independence as possible.
- Plan activities during unstructured times which are inclusive and promote the young person’s independence.

Please see below link for useful information sheets on supporting CYP with dyspraxia:

<https://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk>

[Information Sheets | Dyspraxia Foundation](#)

[Classroom guidelines for schools and teachers | Dyspraxia Foundation](#)



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Bond, C., Cole, M., Fletcher, J., Noble, M. & O’Connell, M. (2011) Developing and sustaining provision for children with motor skills difficulties in schools: the role of educational psychologists. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 27(4) 337-351.

Bond, C. (2008). *The Manchester Motor Skills Programme: a theory driven evaluation* (unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Manchester.

Bond, C. (2011) Supporting children with motor skills difficulties: An initial evaluation of the Manchester Motor Skills Programme. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 27(2), 143-153.

Hill, E. L., & Barnett, A. (2011). Movement Difficulties in children. *The Psychologist*, 24(1), 34- 37.

Lodal, K., & Bond, C. (2016). **The Relationship between Motor Skills Difficulties and Self-Esteem in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Literature Review.** *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 32(4), 410-423.

Lodal, K., & Bond, C. (2017). An exploratory product evaluation of the Manchester Motor Skills Programme. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 33(2), 149–166.

## Sensory Processing

An individual's sensory system helps them to understand the world around them. Humans process information through their senses and based on this information, they decide on how to respond to the things they are experiencing. The sensory systems that absorb such information are:

- Sight
- Taste (gustatory)
- Smell (olfactory)
- Hearing (auditory)
- Touch (tactile)
- Proprioception (using one's muscles to understand where one's body is in space)
- Vestibular (how one's body moves against gravity)

The sensory systems of touch, proprioception and vestibular are key to helping an individual feel 'in tune' with their world and feel grounded.

Learning how to process sensory-based information as it is received can be challenging for some individuals. For children and young people with learning needs, social communication needs, language and communication difficulties and physical needs, processing such information can be even more difficult. Humans are required to filter out irrelevant sensory information and be able to identify what is needed and what is not. For example, a child may hear their name and respond to this, however we would expect them to be able to filter out the sound of the projector or of the lawnmower outside. For some children, this apparently simple discrimination is difficult.

Whilst sensory processing needs are not uncommon, they can, at times be persistent and impact an individual's quality of life. Some examples of this are:

- Difficulties with busy places when there are lots of visuals and/or sounds
- Seeking physical movement throughout the day
- Sensitivity to light touch
- Seeking heavy touch
- Difficulty with posture and co-ordination

Whilst sensory processing needs can affect a range of individuals, there is a higher incidence in children and young people who demonstrate a neurodivergence such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Similarly, genetic conditions such as Fragile X Syndrome and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) demonstrate a higher incidence of sensory processing differences (as reported in Hutton, 2013). Often children and young people with a diagnosis of the above also present with social communication and/or language and communication difficulties, making the communication of sensory processing needs and difficulties with adults/caregivers more challenging. In these instances, it will be key to remain aware of how to support a child or young person to communicate their wants, wishes and needs around sensory processing, as well as being aware of how behaviour may communicate what a child or young person feels unable to communicate using language and/or other communication means.

Impact on Learning. What are their difficulties?	Actions and strategies
<b>Early Years</b>	
<p>In the Early Years children are less able to communicate using language how they are experiencing the world. Often sensory processing difficulties are identified alongside a social communication and/or speech and language difficulty.</p>	<p>At this age a child may not be able to communicate their difficulties with an adult. It will be key to share information and ensure regular observation of a child to determine potential sensory needs. Continue to provide regular opportunities for the child to express their needs using a communication method appropriate to the age and communication/language stage.</p> <p>The following are possible provisions and/or strategies for supporting an Early Years child to communicate and share their sensory processing needs within the Early Years setting:</p>



A child of this age may typically communicate their sensory differences via behaviour. At times, it may be challenging for a setting to determine what a child is attempting to communicate as often speech and language is delayed additionally.

Behaviour often seen, includes (not an exhaustive or determinative list):

- Seeking unusual sensory experiences and/or exploring their environment in a developmentally immature manner (e.g. mouthing objects)
- Not recognising when they are hot or cold and therefore not wearing a coat/taking a coat off
- Removing themselves from certain situations
- Using sounds and noises to communicate sensory distress
- Becoming withdrawn

Self-soothing or self-stimulating behaviours such as flapping, rocking and covering their ears

- Awareness that all behaviour is communication.
- Awareness that communicating challenging experiences is difficult at the best of times, even more so if a child experiences a speech and language delay.
- If appropriate, complete initial sensory processing audit (e.g. Autism Education Trust’s Sensory Assessment and/or environmental audit checklist) to highlight sensory issues impacting on communication and interaction with others. Use of a Sensory Checklist and subsequent environmental adaptations can be used to minimise impact of sensory distractions and sensory processing differences (e.g. opportunities to work in quieter spaces with reduced distractions when completing focused activities, access to tailored sensory activities or resources).
- Ensure any advice, support and guidance given by professionals is incorporated into your planning for the child.
- Ensure close partnership working with parents. This includes sharing SEN support plans, and strategies and interventions to use in the setting and at home.
- Consult with parents to identify potential trigger times and activities- share this information with setting staff as the child may not always be able to communicate their difficulties with you.
- Access staff training (such as sensory integration) through CPD, if needed.
- Identify activities which help the CYP regulate. Ensure to consult with the child if possible, to determine their views/preferences.
- Consider the impact of break times, dinner time and transitions. Provide ways to help the child communicate difficulties (e.g. visuals, signals).
- Ensure all adults are aware of the signs a child is experiencing sensory challenges.
- As long as a sensory seeking or soothing behaviour is safe, do not try to regulate or remove it.



### School Age

At school age a child may have developed their language skills, although it is possible that identification of sensory needs and their resulting challenges make it difficult for a child to articulate their needs to an adult due to complexity in identifying such difficulties.

Children at school age experiencing sensory processing difficulties may find social situations difficult to navigate, as these often occur in busy environments (e.g. playtime, the canteen) and as such, children of school age may be more socially isolated than their peers. They may find this difficult to communicate to both adults and peers, causing frustration and emotional distress.

Children may continue to require alternative communication methods to express their difficulties to adults and peers. This may include the need for signing or visual resources.

Children may have more expressive language ability and yet may continue to find identifying and expressing sensory needs difficult. Continue to provide regular opportunities for the child to express their needs using a communication method appropriate to the age and communication/language stage. Remain aware of the impact of sensory processing needs on communication ability and importantly, social communication ability.

The following are possible provisions and/or strategies for supporting a School Aged child to communicate and share their sensory processing needs within the school setting:

- Awareness that all behaviour is communication.
- Awareness that communicating challenging experiences is difficult at the best of times, even more so if a child experiences a speech and language delay.
- If appropriate, complete initial sensory processing audit (e.g. Autism Education Trust’s Sensory Assessment and/or environmental audit checklist) to highlight sensory issues impacting on communication and interaction with others. Use of a Sensory Checklist and subsequent environmental adaptations can be used to minimise impact of sensory distractions and sensory processing differences (e.g. opportunities to work in quieter spaces with reduced distractions when completing focused activities, access to tailored sensory activities or resources).
- Ensure any advice, support and guidance given by professionals is incorporated into your planning for the child.
- Ensure close partnership working with parents. This includes sharing SEN support plans, and strategies and interventions to use in the setting and at home.
- Consult with parents to identify potential trigger times and activities- share this information with setting staff as the child may not always be able to communicate their difficulties with you.
- Access staff training (such as sensory integration) through CPD, if needed.



A child at school age may continue to use behaviour to communicate their sensory processing difficulties, including (not an exhaustive or determinative list):

- Appearing 'defiant' in certain lessons/situations that are they find challenging
- Demonstrating aspects of emotionally based school avoidance
- Social isolation
- Behaviour deemed challenging
- Self-soothing or self-stimulating behaviours such as flapping, tapping and making noises

Appearing unconcentrated or lacking in attention

- Identify activities which help the CYP regulate. Ensure to consult with the child if possible, to determine their views/preferences.
- Consider the impact of break times, dinner time and transitions. Provide ways to help the child communicate difficulties (e.g. visuals, signals).
- Ensure all adults are aware of the signs a child is experiencing sensory challenges.
- Provide alternative socialising opportunities, such as a small group at break or lunch.
- Consider practical timetabling needs, such as an early lunch pass.
- Provide opportunities for the child to communicate what they find difficult.
- As long as a sensory seeking or soothing behaviour is safe, do not try to regulate or remove it.
- Consider supporting a child's peer group to understand their sensory processing needs.
- Plan in movement breaks if needed or sensory 'down time'.
- Have a range of sensory equipment available if necessary.
- Ensure staff are aware of lighting in the room e.g. use of natural light, glare from the board, who is facing the light, where you stand in relation to the light.
- Ensure staff are aware of smells and noise in the room and any particular individuals who may be impacted by these. E.g. classroom is next to the canteen or music room.
- Ensure staff are aware of the sensory impact that floor surfaces may have on CYP and alternatives are offered.

### Post 16

At post 16 a young person's sensory needs may be better identified. At this stage it is paramount to enable a young person to communicate their sensory needs with potential training placements and employers.

Whilst a young person's needs may be well known by familiar people, advocacy will be required to ensure those within the wider community are aware (whether the young person themselves informs them or this information is shared more formally). Remain aware of the impact of sensory processing needs on communication ability and importantly, social communication ability. Continued discussion with the young person will be key to ensuring their needs are updated and they are confident in communicating their needs with others.



Young people may continue to find articulation of sensory difficulties difficult when overwhelmed and may continue to require support to pre-empt and express their needs.

Young people are likely to be alone much more than when they are in the school and early years range. Consequently, it will be key to ensure that a young person is confident in knowing what to do during times of sensory difficulty and how to appropriately communicate this to individuals and members of the community (e.g. medical professionals, police and transport staff).

The following are possible provisions and/or strategies for supporting a Post 16 young person to communicate and share their sensory processing needs within the training/education/work setting:

- Awareness that all behaviour is communication.
- Awareness that communicating challenging experiences is difficult at the best of times, even more so if a young person experiences a speech and language delay.
- If appropriate, complete initial sensory processing audit (e.g. Autism Education Trust’s Sensory Assessment and/or environmental audit checklist) to highlight sensory issues impacting on communication and interaction with others. Use of a Sensory Checklist and subsequent environmental adaptations can be used to minimise impact of sensory distractions and sensory processing differences (e.g. opportunities to work in quieter spaces with reduced distractions when completing focused activities, access to tailored sensory activities or resources).
- Ensure any advice, support and guidance given by professionals is incorporated into collaborative planning with both the young person and individuals supporting the young person.
- Ensure close partnership working with the young person and their caregivers, if appropriate.
- Consult with the young person and their caregivers, if appropriate, to identify potential trigger times and activities- share this information with setting staff as the young person may not always be able to communicate their difficulties with you.
- Access staff training (such as sensory integration) through CPD, if needed.
- Identify activities which help the young person regulate. Ensure to consult with the young person.
- Consider the impact of unstructured times and transitions. Provide ways to help the young person communicate difficulties (e.g. visuals, signals).
- Ensure all key individuals supporting the young person are aware of the signs a young person is experiencing sensory challenges.
- Provide alternative socialising opportunities, such as a small group at break or lunch.



- Consider practical timetabling needs, such as working from home/ use of a private vehicle/early lunch.
- Provide opportunities for the young person to communicate what they find difficult.
- As long as a sensory seeking or soothing behaviour is safe, do not try to regulate or remove it.
- Consider supporting a young person's peer group to understand their sensory processing needs.
- Provide time for movement breaks if needed or sensory 'down time'.
- Have a range of sensory equipment available if necessary.
- Remain aware of lighting in the room e.g. use of natural light, glare from the board, who is facing the light, where you stand in relation to the light.
- Remain aware of smells and noise in the room and any particular individuals who may be impacted by these (e.g. classroom is next to the canteen or music room).
- Remain aware of the sensory impact that floor surfaces may have on young person and alternatives are offered.
- Spend time supporting the young person to have a script to access support or explain their sensory difficulties if out in the community unsupported.

### References

[Sensory Processing — CAMHS \(camhsnorthderbyshire.nhs.uk\)](http://camhsnorthderbyshire.nhs.uk)

[2013HuttonPDEdPsy.pdf.pdf \(cardiff.ac.uk\)](http://cardiff.ac.uk)

[Sensory Integration Education Home](#)

[sensory differences \(autism.org.uk\)](http://autism.org.uk)

The ordinarily available provision was written by Lancashire Educational Psychology Service