

Quality first teaching for children with Social Communication Difficulties or a diagnosis of an ASD in the Early Years

Use a child's name first to get their attention before speaking. Keep language simple. (Be aware that verbal children with ASD can have great difficulties with understanding). Their ability to process language will be further reduced when they are angry or upset. Support your verbal communication with visual prompts for example, objects, photos or symbols.

Model to the child what to do rather than what not to do. Use of gesture and visual prompt helps in all situations.

Teach the concept of finished. Use of the Makaton sign for 'finished' coupled with the word is essential.

Use a visual timetable so the children can see what is going to happen immediately next and thereafter.

Use other visual supports as needed to help the children to cope with situations they find difficult. Help children to select one activity or fruit to eat by using a choosing board. Initially begin with 2 choices and then build up to more.

Warn the children when activities are about to change and support the children at transition times. The use of a sand timer, and an agreed tidy up or garden song is useful.

Allow time for the children's special interests as part of the daily structure. Use them as motivators. The use of a now and next board to request an activity of your choosing followed by a child's special interest activity is a good start.

Work in partnership with parents and work out a way of sharing information on a regular basis.

Analyse difficult incidents and try to see things from the child's perspective. Use of the ABC/STAR approach to identify triggers and to plan effectively is recommended.

Be calm, firm, positive and consistent. Remember that distraction and humour can often diffuse a difficult situation.

Allow a time and a place to be alone-remember that highly stimulating areas can cause a child to be overloaded. Give children opportunities to engage in physical activities particularly if they are going to spend some time on focused activities next.