

# SLCN Training

Central Primary Outreach

# Speech Language and Communication Needs

A child with SLCN needs may have:

- Speech that is difficult to understand
- Struggle to say words or sentences
- Not understand words that are being used or instructions
- Have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others in a conversation

A child may have some or all of these difficulties

Receptive Language	The ability to understand information. It involves understanding the words, sentences and meaning of what others say or what is read.
Expressive Language	Being able to put thoughts into words and sentences, in a way that makes sense and is grammatically accurate.
Speech	The expression of ideas and thoughts by articulating vocal sounds.
Pragmatics	These are the skills that we use in our daily interactions with others. They vital for communicating our personal thoughts, ideas and feelings.

# Is SLCN common?

Speech, Language and Communication Needs, or SLCN, is quite common.

It is estimated that around 10% of children starting school have SLCN – that's approximately 2-3 in every classroom. (Afasic 2020).

In some disadvantaged areas 50% children start school without the requisite language skills. (ICAN, 2020)

For more information please watch this video:



Introduction to  
**Speech, Language and Communication Needs  
(SLCN)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZmArof-vgg>

# Speech Language and Communication Needs

- Vocabulary at 5 is a powerful predictor of GCSE achievement.
- 2/3 of 7-14 year olds with behavioural problems have a language impairment
- 40% of 7-14 year olds referred to child psychiatric services have an undiagnosed language impairment
- 47% of employers say they can't get recruits with the communication skills they need
- 65% of young people in young offender institutions have communication difficulties
- Children from low income families are up to 16 months behind in vocabulary development at school entry



# Attention and Listening

Listening and Attention are essential for the development of speech, language, communication skills and learning. They enable us to focus on information and process it. If these skills are insecure, then what we build on them will be patchy and inconsistent as it lacks a stable base.

## Strategies to promote listening and attention skills

- Make it easy for them to look at you
- Use the child's name so that they know that you want them to listen
- Consider the class seating arrangements
- Give learning/movement breaks-these only need to last 2 minutes e.g. go and get a drink or put something in the bin
- Explicitly teach children 'good listening skills'
- Keep language simple.
- Use visual support
- Check information has been understood
- Refocus the child by saying their name
- Give specific praise e.g. great looking



# Receptive Language Needs

Children with receptive language difficulties often struggle to understand words, sentences and the meaning of what others say.

This includes:

- vocabulary
- grammar
- semantics (word meanings and connections)
- instructions
- questions
- stories
- inference
- implied meaning
- idioms and jokes
- remembering information



# Receptive Language Needs

A child with receptive language difficulties may:

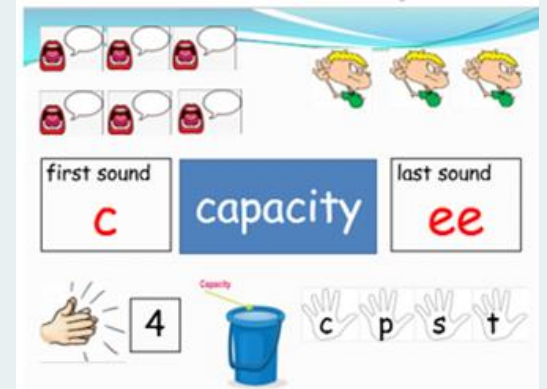
- avoid work by using distraction techniques e.g. going to the toilet or sharpening their pencil
- look blank, giggle, pull faces, cry, hide or hit out
- respond inappropriately
- echo or parrot other people's speech
- copy others
- change the subject
- present with literacy difficulties
- have poor listening and attention skills
- be unlikely to ask for help



# Receptive Language Needs

## Strategies

1. Ensuring the child is attending to you before speaking.
2. Cue the child in using their name.
3. Be aware of the complexity of language you are using with the child
4. Be aware of the language demands of the whole class
5. Simplify instructions, repeat them using the same language and use visual support/gestures
6. Allow pauses between sequencing commands (to allow processing time)
7. Encourage children to use strategies to process information e.g. explaining what they have to do to an adult or peer
8. Encourage children to tell you when they don't understand
9. Emphasise key words by using slight stress
10. Use multi-sensory approaches to teach vocabulary





# Expressive Language Needs

Children with expressive language difficulties find it hard to use words, sentences, speech and writing to convey meaning.

This includes:

- Knowing/finding the vocabulary
- Putting words together into a sentence
- Using grammar correctly
- Constructing a narrative or story.
- Relating an event so that the listener understands what happened.
- Explaining and describing
- Using language to reason
- Generate novel utterances
- Difficulties saying what they mean
- Talking about an irrelevant topic



# Expressive Language Needs

A child with expressive language difficulties may:

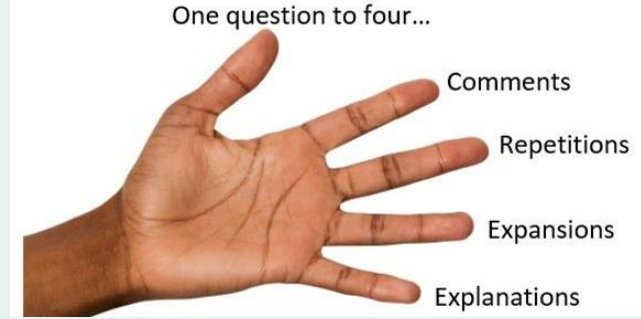
- Talk; too loudly, too quickly, too slowly or not at all
- Use few words
- Lots of gestures
- Miss out words
- Invent words
- Muddle or misuse syllables
- Muddles pronouns, tenses or questions
- Difficulties recounting events (sequencing)
- Lack of understanding of conversational rules



# Expressive Language Needs

## Strategies

1. Wait- give the child time to say what they mean
2. Comment more than question
3. Ask open ended questions e.g. what did you do at the party?
4. Help children with word finding difficulties by promoting- forced alternatives, what does it look like? Can you show me? What do you do with it?
5. Use turn taking games
6. Barrier games
7. Opportunities to talk to peers (partners/group work) e.g. sharing weekend news
8. Ensure children can achieve success at tasks that don't rely on spoken language (gestures, drawings, drama)
9. Visual strategies
10. Manage the child's turn so they hear models of good language first



	<i>Child says</i>	<i>You say</i>
Comment	"Bike"	"You like the bike"
Repetition	"Big truck"	"Big truck"
Expansion	"Green apples"	"Yum, juicy green apples"
Explanation	"She is happy"	"She is happy because she is playing with her friends"

# Speech Sounds

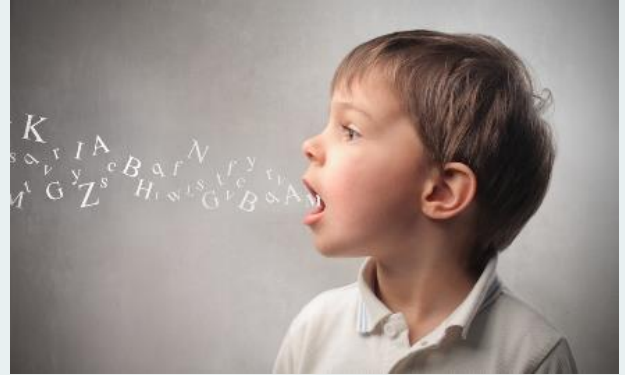
## Speech

Speech difficulties are a type of speech, language and communication need (SLCN).

Children may take longer to develop a range of speech sounds and need some help with their unclear speech.

This may present as:

- Difficulty with telling the difference between sounds
- Difficulty with the articulation (making) of sounds
- Difficulty with combining sounds in words
- Difficulty saying longer words
- Difficulty with the rhythm, flow or 'tune' of speaking



# Speech Sounds

## Strategies

1. React to what the child says; not how clearly he/she speaks

*Often children don't realise that they are mispronouncing words so correcting them is confusing*

1. Repeat what the child says correctly so the child hears good examples e.g. *I like toys at cool- yes you like stories at school*
2. Don't make the child repeat words-children need to feel relaxed and confident to experiment with sounds
3. Build self esteem

*If part of the child's conversation is understood, repeat back. That way the child will feel some success (it may encourage them to tell you more).*

1. Don't pretend to understand- ask the child to show you and encourage gestures/mime

*Sometimes you have to admit that you don't understand. Play a game where a child has to act out the word without saying it to encourage this strategy-this could be fun as a group or whole class.*

1. Children may be able to articulate a sound but not use it in a word- this is quite normal

*The best strategy is to repeat the words correctly. Sometimes SaLT is needed.*



# Pragmatics

Some children have difficulties with the social use of language, communicating with others and with interaction and play skills. Pragmatic skills include:

- Intelligibility and how a child uses their voice e.g. pitch, volume and intonation
- Non-verbal communication
- listening skills
- Awareness of the needs of the listener
- Turn taking
- Initiating, maintaining and completing a conversation



# Pragmatics

A child with pragmatic difficulties may:

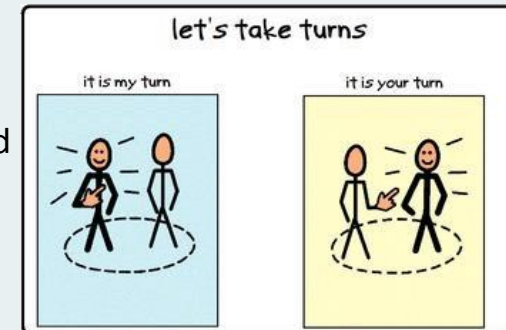
- find it hard to understanding social language and the social rules of conversation
- struggle to make and maintaining friendships
- find it hard to understand/infer other people's feelings
- have difficulties understanding and using non-verbal communication e.g. eye contact or facial expressions
- struggle initiating conversations
- say things which are inappropriate
- talk too much and give details which are not necessary
- provide too little information or respond with one word answers
- find it hard to stay on topic in conversations



# Pragmatics

## Strategies

1. Use social stories to model appropriate social behaviours and help a child understand what is happening/plan what to do
2. Use role play to practice social skills
3. Provide opportunities for children to develop turn taking skills in structured activities e.g. board games
4. Use talk partners and pair children with 'good models'
5. Provide opportunities for structured talk and use speaking frames/ sentence stems to scaffold children's thinking
6. Use a visual timetable to provide a consistent routine
7. A "Now /Next" board can help to give structure to a school day and support a child to handle activities that are not self-directed
8. Discuss any changes to the routine prior to it happening – back this up with visuals/a social story





# Communication Friendly Environments

A communication friendly environment should make communication as easy, effective and enjoyable as possible. It should provide opportunities for everyone to talk, listen, understand and take part.

A communication friendly environment will support the development of all children's communication skills including those with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). Developing a communication friendly environment helps remove barriers to communication.

A communication friendly environment will also support learning, social and emotional development.



This information is taken from

[https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/643570/making\\_your\\_place\\_great\\_for\\_communication\\_final\\_1\\_june\\_2018.pdf](https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/643570/making_your_place_great_for_communication_final_1_june_2018.pdf)

# Communication Friendly Environments

## Why do we need a communication friendly environment?

- To help children to understand things that are said to them
- To help you to understand what your child is telling you
- To help to reduce frustration, anxiety or challenging behaviour caused by not understanding the spoken language they hear.
- To support attention and listening skills
- To help children access lessons and activities
- To support memory skills
- To increase independence and confidence

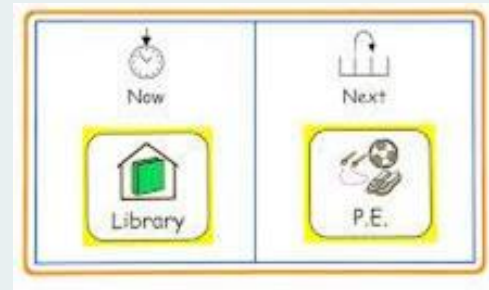


# Communication Friendly Environments



## How to make your environment more communication friendly

- Use more [gestures](#) e.g. beckoning somebody to ask them to come to you, pointing and looking more
- Use [sand timers](#) to let a child know how long they have to complete an activity
- Use [objects of reference](#) e.g. showing the Numicon for Maths
- Show objects, pictures and symbols to support understanding e.g. showing a brick and some straw whilst telling the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'
- Use a [visual timetable](#)
- Put in place a [now / next board](#)
- Change your tone of voice and facial expression to add meaning to what you say e.g. ask a question and have a puzzled expression on your face



# Useful Links

## Useful links

- [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)
- <http://www.ican.org.uk/>
- <http://www.blacksheepress.co.uk/>
- <http://www.elklan.co.uk/>
- <http://www.communication4all.co.uk/>
- Clicker 6
- In Print (widget)
- [Children's Speech & Language Therapy](#) Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust
- [www.afasic.org.uk](http://www.afasic.org.uk)