

Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

How can I help?

Now that you have a clearer idea of what SLCN, it is important to know how to help.

The environment:

Changing the environment to meet the needs of your pupils is an important and essential step in supporting those with SLCN.

Top tips

1. Minimise auditory and visual distractions.
2. Be aware of excess noise e.g. don't sit them beside heaters, open windows, noisy equipment.
3. Introduce visual support systems such as timetables and sequence strips.
4. Sit children with SLCN at the front - but do not make this a consequence of poor behaviour.
5. Use visual timers for breaks.

Routine and rewards

Children with SLCN often enjoy success, display good behaviour and have low levels of anxiety when:

- They can predict what will happen during the day
- They are motivated to do well.
- They receive praise and positive reinforcement.

Top tips:

1. Develop a familiar classroom routine
2. Prepare children for changes to their routine e.g. a class trip
3. Have a consistent approach when children make mistakes e.g. an oops card.
4. Create class reward systems
5. Have class rules for "good sitting," "good listening."
6. Use peers as role models by explicitly praising and rewarding good behaviour.
7. Create turn taking rules and systems.

Tasks

Differentiating tasks to suit children with SLCN to enable them to access the curriculum is vital.

Top Tips

1. Ensure tasks are given in bite sized pieces
2. Ensure tasks are achievable. Begin with something which guarantees success and then increase the difficulty.
3. Introduce a system to ask for help
4. Have visual resources for specific children
5. Praise or Reward 'good working' - this includes those who made a 'good try.' You could adopt a '3 stars and a wish approach.'

Language:

Adopting your language is important (this include non verbal communication also!)

- Break instructions into small steps
- Reinforce key words particularly if giving a longer instruction
- Avoid using sarcasm and non literal language particularly with children who do not get it
- Try to face children whilst speaking to them

Other modifications

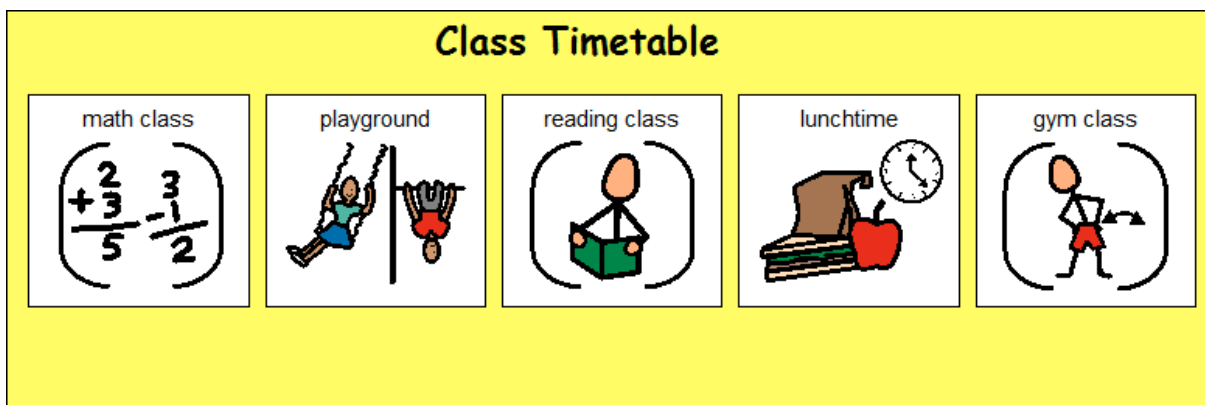
Some children struggle to interact with others and can feel isolated.

1. Create a buddy system and have buddy time once per week.

More information on these approaches

Visual Timetables

This helps children predict what will happen next. This is particularly good for children with poor understanding, attention and listening difficulties, poor time concepts or poor working memory.



Sequencing Strips

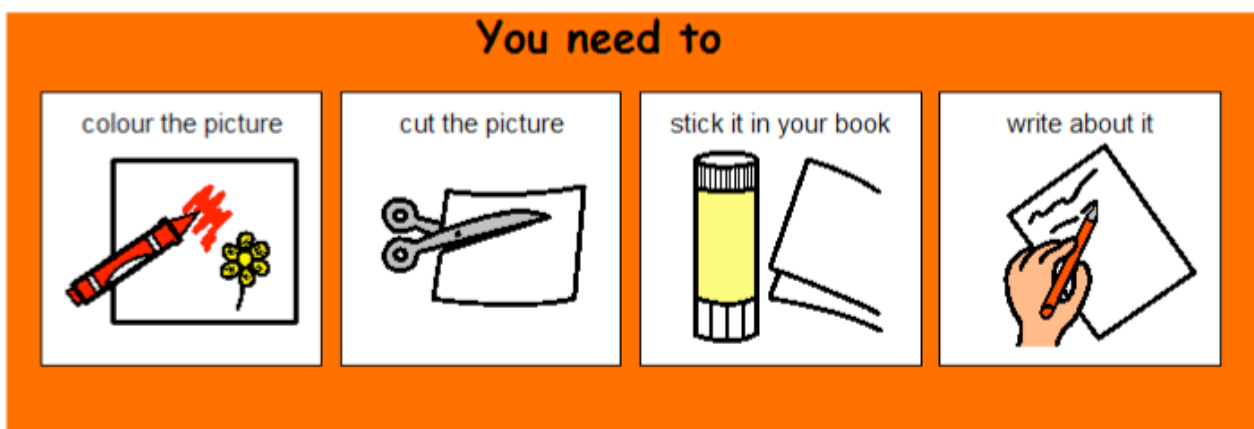
These are useful to promote independent working. It can be particularly useful for children who have poor understanding or working memory.

You can have strips to:

1. Help them prepare for the task e.g. to gather what they need.



2. Help them gather out the task. Splitting it into small chunks with a visual representation.



Class Reward Systems



An example could be a bean jar. Each time a child is praised for good behaviour they get a bean for the class jar. These can work well for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. For example, If a child becomes stressed or angry and they independently use suggested class strategies (e.g. using a stress ball or taking a 5 minute chill out) to calm down then they are praised by the class. The class congratulates the child for controlling their behaviour and reward him/her with a class bean. This class approach works well for many children, as often they feel isolated and disliked by others and this can increase their self esteem.

Visual Timers

Visual timers are great for children with poor time concepts. For example, if there is 5 minutes left for an activity before they need to tidy up you can say 'Okay 5 more minutes, I am starting the timer.' The visual timer allows the child to look at it so they can check when time is almost up and helps them to understand when an activity has finished.



3 stars and a wish

3 stars and a wish is a concept, which reinforces good aspects of a child's work and highlights one area of improvement.

3 stars and a wish
Well done today

-  Really good writing
-  Good walking to assembly
-  Good listening in English
-  Use gentle hands when playing with your friends

Buddy System

Buddy systems are a great way of helping children interact and to make new friends. It is up to you how frequently you use it. Some children need it everyday, others may need it weekly or bi weekly.

10 minutes daily

Children 'buddy' up for 10 minutes. This can be during a play task or communication tasks. An idea would be to give them a list of questions to find out about each other or an activity they need to do together.

Playtime buddies

Some children struggle to play and interact with children in a busy playground. They will play alone as they struggle to initiate a conversation or game. 'Buddies' ensure they have someone to play with, and help them to initiate play with others.

