



# The School Age Support Pack

Strategies for supporting children with social communication difficulties or who have a diagnosis of Autism.

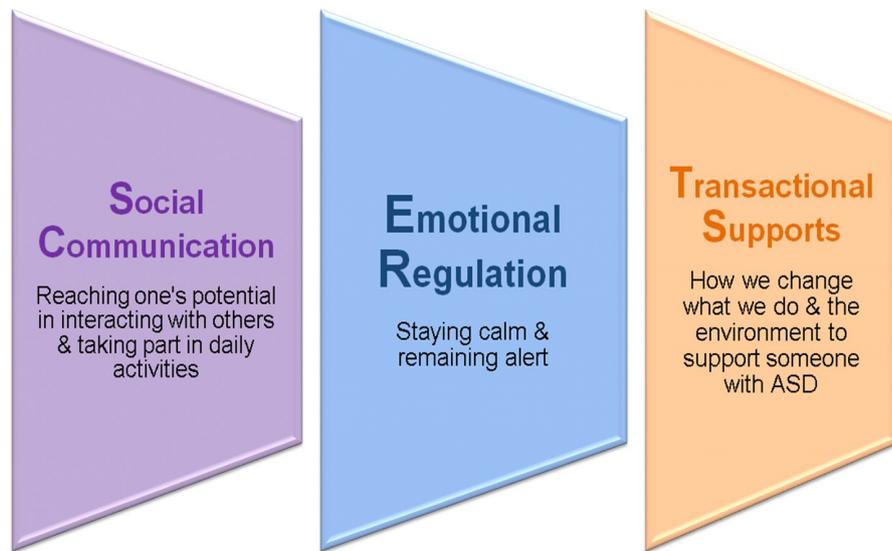
by

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LCIS follow the SCERTS framework. SCERTS is not a single intervention but a model that takes into account the whole team working with the pupil to alter the school culture and adult style to support the pupil's needs.



Pupils are given a 'Communication Stage'.



*Please notes that these 'age norms' relate to the child's communication stage. They may be at a different developmental level in other areas.*



# Intensive Interaction

A therapy approach that focuses on social communication and helps to develop the “Fundamentals of Communication” (the building blocks to communication and interaction). Intensive Interaction focuses on:

- *How to be social and understand people.*
- *How to take part in interaction with another person.*
- *How to enjoy other people and be motivated to be with them.*

## Intensive Interaction Techniques

The aim of Intensive Interaction is for the adult to create turn-taking sequences of extended, enjoyable shared attention with the other person.

Intensive Interaction involves the following principles:

- **Quality one-to-one time** – find time and a place for the quality interaction to take place.
- **Positioning** - position yourself at the pupil’s eye level.
- **Tune in** –to the child’s body language, movements, gesture, facial expression and voice
- **Hold back** – go slowly and hold back your behaviour to allow the person to take the lead in the interaction.
- **Respond** – respond to what the child did in a variety of ways such as joining in and imitating. *\*Only join in with/imitate behaviours that you feel comfortable with and that are safe.*
- **Be available** – be relaxed and show available body language, facial expression and a sense of presence.
- **Pause** – wait and be unhurried to allow the activity to happen at a comfortable speed. This will allow the child to think and process the activity.
- **Shared enjoyment** – expect to enjoy yourself!

*The only rule is that the interaction stops when the child has had enough.*



## Joint or Shared Attention Activity Ideas

**Peek-a-Boo:** Covering your eyes with a scarf or your hands, enjoy this simple interaction. Encourage excitement, anticipation and surprise in the tone of your voice.

**Click clack track:** cars on a ramp...use language such as 'ready steady go' to encourage anticipation. Wait for the child to communicate 'go'. This may be in the form of language or it may be a gesture such as the tap of their hand on their leg - look out for any sign.

**Puzzle pieces in a bag:** taking it in turns to take a puzzle piece out of a bag to complete a puzzle. Keep it simple and keep language to a minimum.

**Threading beads:** again taking it in turns using minimised language to thread beads on a shoe lace/string .

**Blowing bubbles:** Using language like 'ready steady go' encouraging anticipation for 'go'.

**Blowing up a balloon and letting it go:** Blow up a balloon as small or large as you wish. Let it go and encourage your child's excitement and communication by prompting them to return it and ask\gesture for more.

**Posting toys:** Use a simple posting box.. with this you can post anything... animals, shapes, numbers, ping pong balls etc. Take it in turns until all objects are posted

**Matching activities:** Similar to puzzles. Activities to find out which objects are the same? Or which objects go together.? For example, matching a car with another car, or a plate with another plate of a different colour helps your child generalise. You could then extend this into a matching activity where you match the toothbrush to the toothpaste, the knife with the fork.

**Song bag/cards:** Using approximately 5 song cards in a bag or items that represent songs (e.g. a toy spider for Incy, Wincy spider), ask your child to choose one. Sing the songs until all items/photos/cards have been used. If using song cards they can be on a board for all to see. This way as each song is finished there is a clear visual aid to show the child.

# Using Communication Containers

Can be used to encourage a pupil to make bids for interaction and foster both social communication and language development.

## To look at the container

- Put a motivating item inside a clear closed container on the table or floor.
- Put a labelled picture of the item on top of the container from the start, although you won't be drawing the pupils's attention to it until the final stage.
- Respond to the pupil's glance/gaze – each time he/she looks at the container, open it, say a single word and give item to him/her.
- Use your judgement to decide which word to use - either the name of the item inside, 'more' or a useful verb such as 'help/open'.

## To look towards the adult

- If it feels appropriate, pause briefly after he/she looks at the container to encourage him/her to look at you (not necessarily at your eyes) before you give the open container.

## To touch the container

- Wait for him/her to touch the container and then respond as if he had given it to you.
- To push the container towards the adult
- Use open hand prompt to encourage him/her to give you the container.
- Accept the slightest of pushes initially. Fade out open hand prompts.

## To give the container to the adult

- Increase distance between you and the pupil slightly.
- Pause slightly before responding to encourage the pupil to reach towards you with the container.



# Emotional Regulation

Adults need to support pupils to stay regulated. It is vital that adults are responsive to students with ASD, recognise their emotional states throughout the school day and validate how a student is feeling (e.g. if student is sad, adult says 'sad' and shows it on his/her own face and body language).

As pupils at this stage can't directly tell you about their likes and dislikes it is important to liaise with the student's family to come up with a list of activities/objects that will support their emotional regulation (e.g. playdough, jumping, chew toy, singing).

Below are some emotional regulation ideas to support a pupil at the Social and Language Partner stage. Many of the activities and objects will help to redirect the student and make them feel calm and/or alert.



Jumping on a trampoline



Opportunities to run or climb



Deep pressure massage



Access to a chew tool



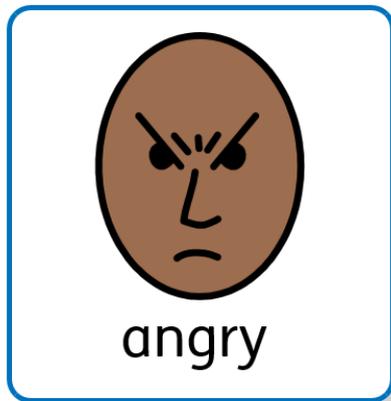
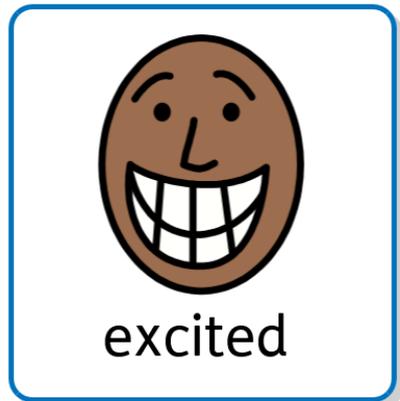
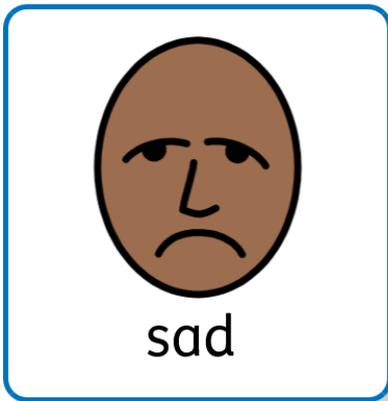
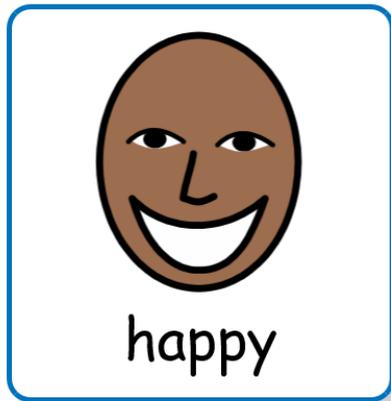
Tactile input such as a squeeze ball



Visual distraction

*These are a few suggestions—please speak to your LCIS SEN Practitioner for further advice. If you feel that your child's emotional regulation is linked to their sensory needs then please consider further advice from Occupational Therapy.*

# Emotional Regulation



Emotions cards can also be used to support a child's regulation.

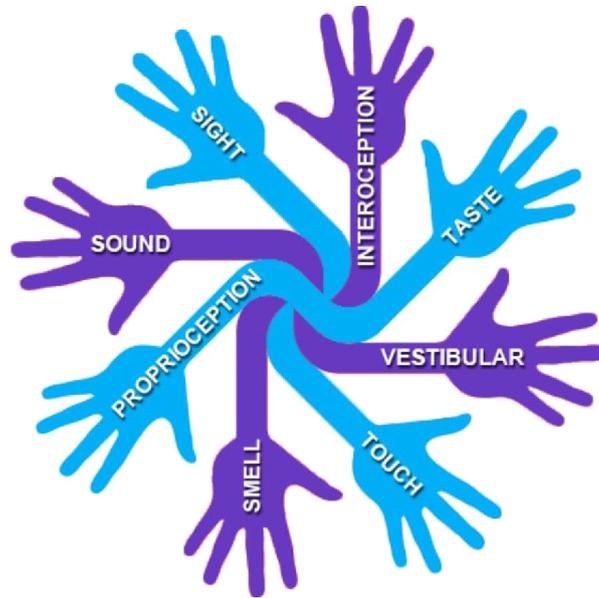
Show the child the photo that matches their current emotion.

Label the emotion "Raheem, you are happy!"

Redirect or model a more appropriate behavior if necessary.

Ensure you use emotion cards for a *range* of emotions.

## Sensory Needs



Children in your setting may experience sensory sensitivities in any of the eight senses shown above. We all have our own sensory preferences. Individuals with ASD can have either heightened or reduced awareness of all, many or just one of their senses. Their level of sensitivity may have a direct impact on their behaviour and emotional regulation.

### **Please remember:**

- All behavior is purposeful and serves a function:
  - ◆ To communicate
  - ◆ To achieve a goal
  - ◆ To regulate sensory information
  - ◆ To regulate arousal or emotions

### **Consider:**

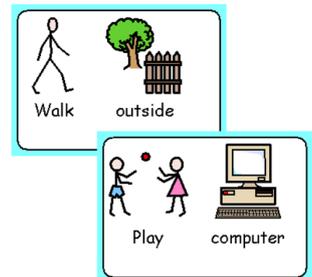
- Adapting the environment to meet the needs of your child.
- Creating a sensory profile to share with your staff.
- Seek advice and support from Occupational Therapy.



# Visuals

## Why use visuals?

- Helps to reduce anxiety for the pupil.
- They give adults a tool to prepare pupils for changes.
- Helps to increase the level of a pupil's independence.
- Helps to support a pupil's understanding.
- Helps to support progression and learning.
- Helps predict the future so they are aware of what's happening next .
- Reinforces our verbal language.
- Reminds us to use minimal verbal language.
- Slows us down and gives the pupil time to process the information.
- Emphasises key words.
- Visual learners' – works with their strengths.
- Visuals are permanent – verbal words are fleeting.



## Principles for using visuals

Visual Supports should:

- Be used consistently and not only as a response to a difficult situation. Visuals are proactive not reactive.
- Be in line with a pupil's cognitive level.
- Should not be phased out: it should be progressed rather than reduced.
- Build up to give the pupil an over view of their day and not just tell them what they are doing now.
- Help the pupil see steps within tasks as well as big changes like locations.
- Managed by the pupil as far as possible to promote independence.
- Be used consistently by all people working with the pupil.

# Types of Visuals



**Objects of Reference**  
Use an object to represent a different activity.

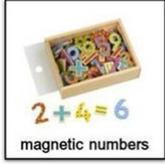


**Talking Tile**  
Record a word or music to represent a transition.

These are only a few examples of the types of visuals you can use. Please speak to your LCIS SEN Practitioner for further advice .



**Photo Keyring**  
Use photos of key activities, people or locations.

First	Then
 <p>magnetic numbers</p>	 <p>ball bounce</p>

**First /Then or Now / Next Board**  
Use pictures to tell your child what is happening now and next.



**Visual Timetable**  
A series of images to indicate what will happen over a session.

### Routine

- Routines are important for consistency and all staff should be consistent in their practice with the child.
- All staff should have the opportunity to work with the child

### Peer Support for

#### Social Communication

- Small group activities, (depending on communication level of child as to how many children in group) e.g. ball rolling/peek-a-boo!
- To do these groups in a variety of settings within the classroom so the child becomes used to many areas
- Good role models!

### Child's Enthusiasms

- If a child has a strong liking for one particular toy or activity try to work with this and turn it into a positive e.g. If child likes dinosaurs then count with them, sort them and make books etc.

## Key Strategies

### Behaviour and Emotional Regulation

- Use the word "STOP" instead of "NO"
- To stop a certain behaviour, offer them an alternative activity.
- Give child space/time to calm down acknowledge their emotions and label the emotion.
- Your child will need to regulate their emotions before they are able to learn.
- Try to discover the specific triggers for your child's behaviour.
- Warn child that activity is coming to an end before you end it. Use a sand timer, count backwards from 10 or prompt in order to give them time to finish.
- Use positive reinforcement

### Carpet Time

- Is it appropriate for your child's stage of development?
- Is it too long?
- Position your child in an appropriate place on the carpet
- Use carpet marker as a visual aid for your child to sit on. e.g. carpet tile, cushion etc.
- Peer support
- Small groups (to get used to this area)
- Visual prompts/ story props/smaller book etc.
- Allow your child to hold something whilst sitting on carpet. (car or block)

## How to help: top tips

- ◆ Gain your child's attention before giving an instruction, by calling their name or approaching them and getting down to their level.
- ◆ Break down instructions and minimise language i.e.: "Ahmed, coat" or "Emma, toilet" "Sam, outside time"
- ◆ Allow time for your child to process this instruction or information. Check your child has understood, repeat the instruction after 10 seconds.
- ◆ Always use the same words when repeating an instruction. Changing the way you say something can confuse your child.
- ◆ Use visual cues to assist with transactional support e.g.: body language, gestures, facial expressions, pictures and objects of reference.
- ◆ Demonstrate what you want your child to do, model it to them first to initially support them.
- ◆ If your child has difficulty answering a question, give a choice of answers, i.e. "would you like an apple or an orange?" show them both pieces of fruit and let them choose.
- ◆ Extend what your child says or does and repeat back "you would like an apple?"
- ◆ Use specific (to the child) praise, rewards, and motivators.



**We hope you find this information pack useful  
Please contact your LCIS School Age SEN  
Practitioner if you require additional support or  
advice.**