

COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

Entry quiz.....

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COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

“Communication happens when one person sends a message to another person either verbally or non-verbally.

Interaction happens when two people, for example, an adult and a child, respond to one another - a two-way communication.”

(The National Autistic Society, 2014)

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

- ◉ At Tweendykes School we are committed to developing each pupil's ability to communicate to the highest standard possible. We recognise that by reaching their full potential in terms of being an affective communicator will ensure that they can also achieve academically.
- ◉ Children and young people with learning difficulties often have communication and interaction difficulties. This may be as a result of their learning difficulty, physical difficulties and/or autism. A large cohort of children at Tweendykes School have comorbidity in conditions. Primarily autism with additional need/s.
- ◉ Levels of acute impairment vary person to person; by teaching developmentally appropriate interventions we will be able to assist them in learning these skills so that they can benefit from social situations to the best of their ability.
- ◉ When we are born we instinctively become effective communicators in order to satisfy our basic biological, physiological and psychological needs. These stages of communication development occur naturally and do not need to be taught to typically developing children.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is:

“ The exchange of thoughts, messages and information”

The important word in this statement is ‘exchange’. This is because for successful communication to occur there needs to be two people present.

Interventions require a child to be able to attend to another person and have the ability to recognise that other people are required for successful two way communication to occur.

For the children that we are supporting in terms of communication development there are lots of small steps that are required to be completed before we often are at a point of our children communicating successfully.

The next few slides will give further information on communication development for typically developing children and how this differs for some of our children.

COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT

Take a look at the handout 'Stages of Communication Development' You can see that there are 5 stages for typically developing children, listed below.

- ◉ **Pre-intentional Behaviour (0-3 months)** - Not under the individual controls but reflects a state (hungry, tired and we interpret and react to this)
- ◉ **Intentional Behaviour (3-8 months)** - is under the caregivers control but not yet used to intentionally communicate (we interpret and react to this)
- ◉ **Unconventional communication (6-12 months)**- Intentional Communication Begins here- it is pre-symbolic, and seen as not socially acceptable e.g. through body movements, vocalisations and actions such as tugging on people
- ◉ **Conventional Communication (12-18 months)**- pre symbolic behaviours are used but are deemed as socially acceptable e.g. pointing, nodding, waving, using proximity and tapping
- ◉ **Concrete Symbols/Language** - Symbolic communication starts here - this includes using objects, photos, abstract symbols (pictures) that are similar to what they represent and the use of language

To summarise, early communication skills and the further development of this naturally occur throughout the first eighteen months of a human's life. The more complex part of using abstract or concrete symbols such as speech, braille or printed words would not begin to be used until around 24 months of age .

Below are some examples of communication milestones for typically developing children. Take a look at the associated handout 'Stages of Communication Development'.

Think about children who are in your class who have communication difficulties. Are you surprised by where they fit in this grid?

Birth - 3 months	3 - 6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months
<p>Respond to speech by looking at the speaker</p> <p>Attempt to imitate sounds</p> <p>Communicate with bodily movements, by crying, babbling, and laughing</p>	<p>Repeat some vowel and consonant sounds</p> <p>Exchange sounds, facial expressions, or gestures with a parent or caregiver</p> <p>Listen to conversations</p>	<p>Begin repetitive babbling (deaf children also start to babble with their hands)</p> <p>Associate gestures with simple words and two-word phrases, like "hi" and "bye-bye"</p> <p>Use vocal and non-vocal communication to express interest and influence others</p>	<p>Understand the names of familiar people and objects</p> <p>Respond to a firm "no" by stopping what they are doing</p> <p>Say a few words</p>
1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years
<p>Respond correctly when asked "where?"</p> <p>Use "my" or "mine" to indicate possession; begin to use "me," "I," and "you"</p> <p>Follow a series of two simple but related directions</p>	<p>Join familiar words into phrases</p> <p>Point to common objects when they are named</p> <p>Respond to "what?" and "where?" questions</p>	<p>Follow a series of two to four related directions</p> <p>Sing a song and repeat at least one nursery rhyme</p> <p>Use and understand sentences</p>	<p>Combine thoughts into one sentence</p> <p>Ask "when?" "how?" and "why?" questions</p> <p>Understand sequencing of events when clearly explained (for example, "First we plug the drain, then we run the water, and finally we take a bath")</p>

***Remember, this grid is a guideline and that all children develop at their own pace.**

For the children that we are supporting in school to reach their full potential in terms of communication development, it is important that we understand prior to implementing interventions to support this, that we know where they are in terms of communication development. As the 'adult teachers' of children who have autism spectrum condition (ASC) and often an additional learning difficulty, it is our responsibility to ensure that they have access to the most developmentally appropriate interventions to give them the best chance in life of being able to learn.

❖ **Interventions to support communication development must be developmentally appropriate for the child, we will look at these in other training sessions.**

Speech is often seen as the main focus for when entering into what would be considered as two way communication; however it is crucial we know that speech is indeed only a small percentage of communication.

Let's look at other ways that we communicate.....

WAYS TO COMMUNICATE?

- ◉ Body language and proximity
- ◉ Gestures & facial expressions
- ◉ Vocalisations and sounds
- ◉ Spoken words
- ◉ Written words
- ◉ Pictures
- ◉ Sign language

Highly important factors that are used when communicating in 'face to face' situations which need to be considered are the tone and intonation of a person's voice, facial expressions that are used which alongside body language and the tone of voice is often a major indicator in terms of the message that is being conveyed, it is used to enhance the effectiveness or clarity of the message.

If you have little or no understanding of any of these factors it is highly likely that a message would not be understood. Alongside this there is the difficulty in understanding long and complex sentences.

There is also a mismatch between expressive and receptive language (**which we look at in another training session**). For those people with ASC that have developed speech it can be hard for others to comprehend this and often continue to converse in the way the person with ASC is. Literal use of language, understanding jokes and metaphors are also problematic due to either misinterpretation or not comprehending at all, this manner of using language is common practice in many societies.

FUNDAMENTALS OF COMMUNICATION

“Children with autism have few, if any, strategies for sharing attention with others. This is not only important in social development but has important implications for teaching and learning where such sharing of attention is often assumed, even in those with severe learning difficulties ” (Jordan & Powell, 1995)

As mentioned earlier, as ‘adult teachers’ we can try and teach them the necessary skills to learn how to be able to develop their communication skills, be sociable, have successful relationships and have fun with friends

The ‘Fundamentals of Communication’ listed below are what we would classify as the basics of communication.

- ◉ Learning to pay attention to another person.
- ◉ To share attention with another person.
- ◉ Taking turns in exchanges of behaviour.
- ◉ To have fun, to play.
- ◉ Using and understanding eye contacts and facial expressions.
- ◉ Using and understanding of non-verbal communication such as gesture and body language.
- ◉ Learning use and understanding of vocalisations.

We teach these skills through two strands ‘Joint Attention’ and ‘Symbol Use’ which are the two areas of Social Communication in the SCERTS profile.

JOINT ATTENTION

Our aim is that the children we are supporting, over time, would consistently be able to undertake the following:

- ◉ Initiating and responding to interactions
- ◉ Sharing attention
- ◉ Sharing emotion
- ◉ Requesting and protesting actions and objects
- ◉ Greeting, taking turns and showing off
- ◉ Commenting on actions and objects
- ◉ Repeating or changing how they communicate when it doesn't work

SYMBOL USE

- ◉ Learning to copy other people
- ◉ Understanding non verbal communication
- ◉ Using familiar objects to play
- ◉ Using non verbal communication towards others
- ◉ Using vocalisations and sounds to communicate
- ◉ Understanding some words

Our goal is to build a firm foundation for our children, we need to be able to bridge the gaps that will occur for this cohort of children

- ◉ **Remember -**
- ◉ You can't run before you can walk
- ◉ Remember the stage of the child - is what you are asking developmentally appropriate?
- ◉ Are they communicating or just repeating a learnt behaviour?



TRANSACTIONAL SUPPORT

Transactional Support is 'everything' that we do as staff to support the children at Tweendykes School.

This covers everything from the modelling of appropriate behaviours, non verbal communication and the learning that we provide for the children.

These markers are found in the Transactional Support strand of the SCERTS profile.

BEING RESPONSIVE TO THE CHILD

- Follow the child's focus of attention
- Recognise all attempts at communication (including behaviour)
- Imitate the child

RESPECT THE CHILD'S INDEPENDENCE

- Allow the child to move about as needed
- Interpret problem behaviour as communication
- Honour protests, rejections and refusal when appropriate

TRANSACTIONAL SUPPORT

ENCOURAGING INITIATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- Offering choices verbally and non verbally
- Wait for and encourage initiations
- Get down on the child's level and secure their attention before communicating

PROVIDE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

- Encourage imitation
- Use non verbal cues to support understanding
- Adjust complexity of language

MODEL APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS

- Model play
- Model emotional expression
- Model child perspective language

Exit quiz.....

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