An introduction to The SCERTS Model

Please click the link and complete the questionnaire before going through this training.

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Session Aims:

▶ For learners to understand what the SCERTS Model is and why we use it

▶ For learners to understand the importance of social communication, emotional regulation and transactional support for our pupils, especially those with autism.

▶ For learners to understand the impact of Social and Emotional Development on academic learning and engagement

A little reminder…

To best understand why SCERTS is such a valuable tool to us in supporting our pupils, it's worth briefly reminding our selves of the difficulties our pupils with autism experience.

This is the what's known as the **Triad of Impairments –** people with an autism diagnosis will have difficulties in all of these areas.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

FLEXIBLE THINKING
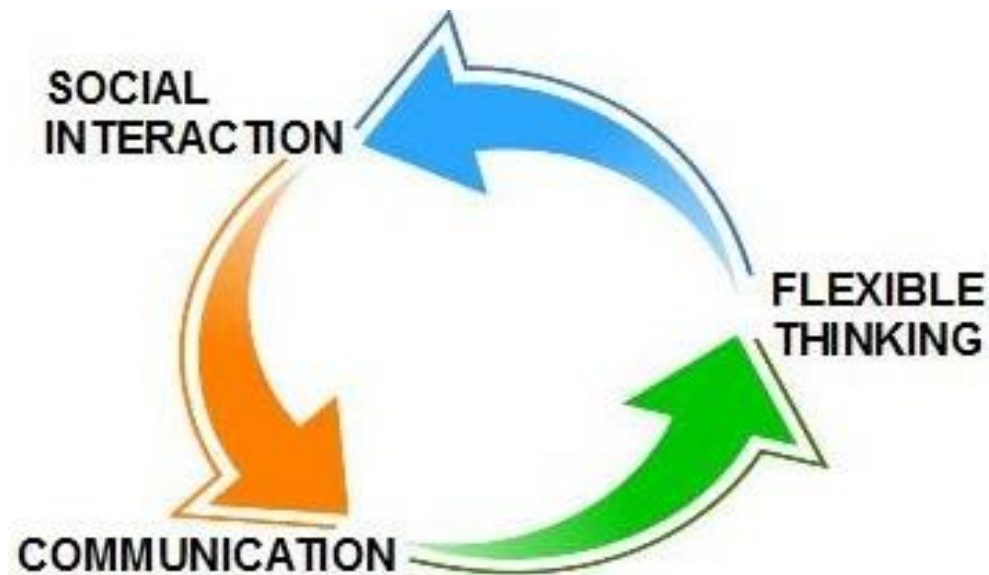
COMMUNICATION

A little reminder…autism and the triad of impairments

Social Communication

This affects their:

- intention to communicate with others
- understanding and processing of spoken language
- understanding and use of non-verbal communication
- Literal understanding of language

Social Interaction

This affects their:

- Recognition and understanding of feelings and emotions in both themselves, and other people
- Reading and understanding of the unwritten social rules

Flexible Thinking

- This affects their:
- Ability to understand other peoples' behaviour
- Acceptance of change and unfamiliar situations
- Ability to engage in imaginative play
- Ability to plan and to work out what might happen next

Research also tells us that people on the autism spectrum may also have differences and difficulties in the way they process sensory information.

What is it?

The SCERTS Model is comprehensive approach to **enhancing the social communication and emotional regulation abilities** of people with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) and related disabilities.

SCERTS is, essentially, a curriculum and assessment tool which breaks down social communication and emotional regulation skills into very small, logical steps – this is fundamental in helping us picking out targets and focussing our support to maximise a child's progress in these areas.

There is a really strong emphasis throughout the SCERTS Model on improving the **QUALITY OF LIFE,** for both the child and their family, and on ensuring goals are **developmentally appropriate and functional** for each child.

The model's highest priority is the

development of spontaneous, functional communication abilities and emotional regulatory capacities

Why do we use it?

Communication, interaction and emotional regulation are the 'basic skills' for an ever-increasing number of the pupils attending our school. SCERTS provides us a with a thorough assessment tool to ensure we are able to identify pupils strengths and weakness in relation to their social and emotional development, and support them accordingly.

SCERTS allows us to:

▶ Create highly personalised goals that are meaningful, functional and relevant to each individual child

▶ Consider their wellbeing and quality of life

▶ Use as many different interventions to support as needed – such as Intensive Interaction, TEACCH, AAC, Social Stories, etc

▶ Show and celebrate even the smallest steps of progress

Click the link to listen to Emily Rubin, one of the SCERTS creators, explain a little more…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7-x3bTGNTg

Let's break it down…

SC   ER   TS

During a SCERTS assessment, we look for skills in these 3 areas

| Social Communication | Emotional Regulation | Transactional Support |

SCERTS focuses on these 3 areas based on extensive research into to the core challenges faced by people with ASC. Focussing on **Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support** enhances **quality of life** and human development.

Social Communication (SC)

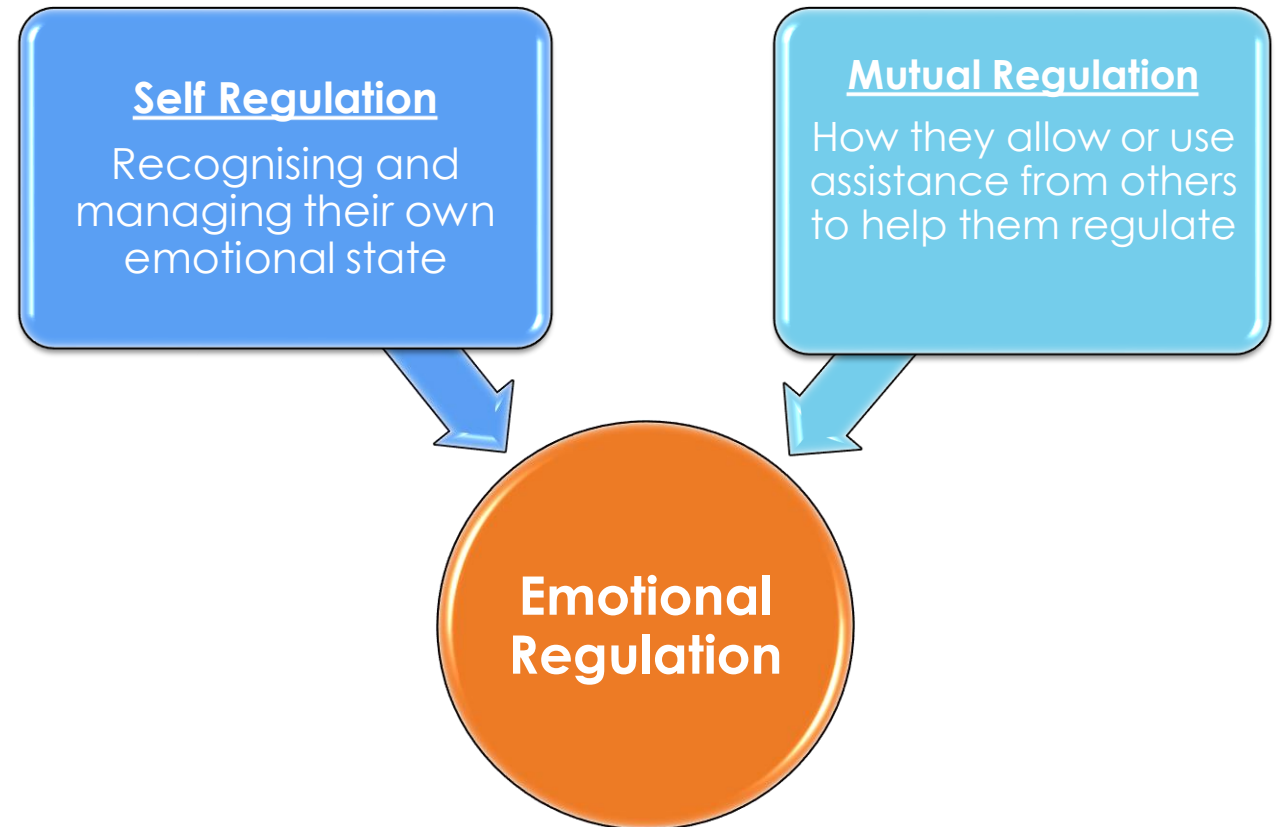- This area focusses on helping a child to be increasingly competent, confident, and active participant in social activities.

- This includes communicating and playing with others in everyday activities and sharing joy and pleasure in social relationships.

- **This area is broken down into two parts:**

Joint Attention
The reasons why they communicate

Symbol Use
The way they communicate

Social Communication
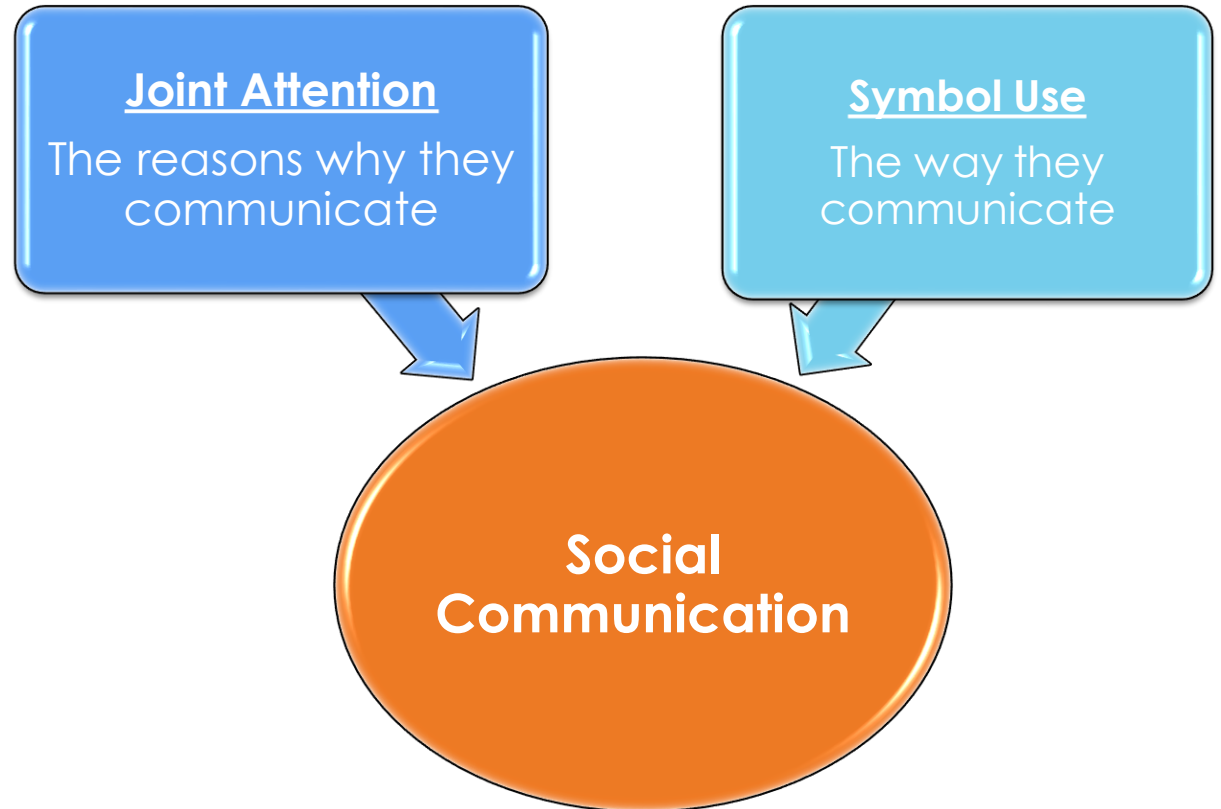
Emotional Regulation (ER)

- This area of the SCERTS Model focuses on supporting a child's ability to regulate their own emotional arousal and to be available for learning.

- **This area is broken down in to these two parts:**

Self Regulation

Recognising and managing their own emotional state

Mutual Regulation

How they allow or use assistance from others to help them regulate

Emotional Regulation

Transactional Support (TS)

- This area of SCERTS refers to the support put in place by partners to help facilitate a child's learning and development

- 'Partners' are those people such as parents, school staff, Speech and Language Therapy, personal assistants, social workers etc

- **This area is broken down into the following two parts:**

Interpersonal Support

How we adapt ourselves to meet their SC and ER needs

Learning Support

How we arrange and adapt resources and the environment to support SC and ER needs

Transactional Support

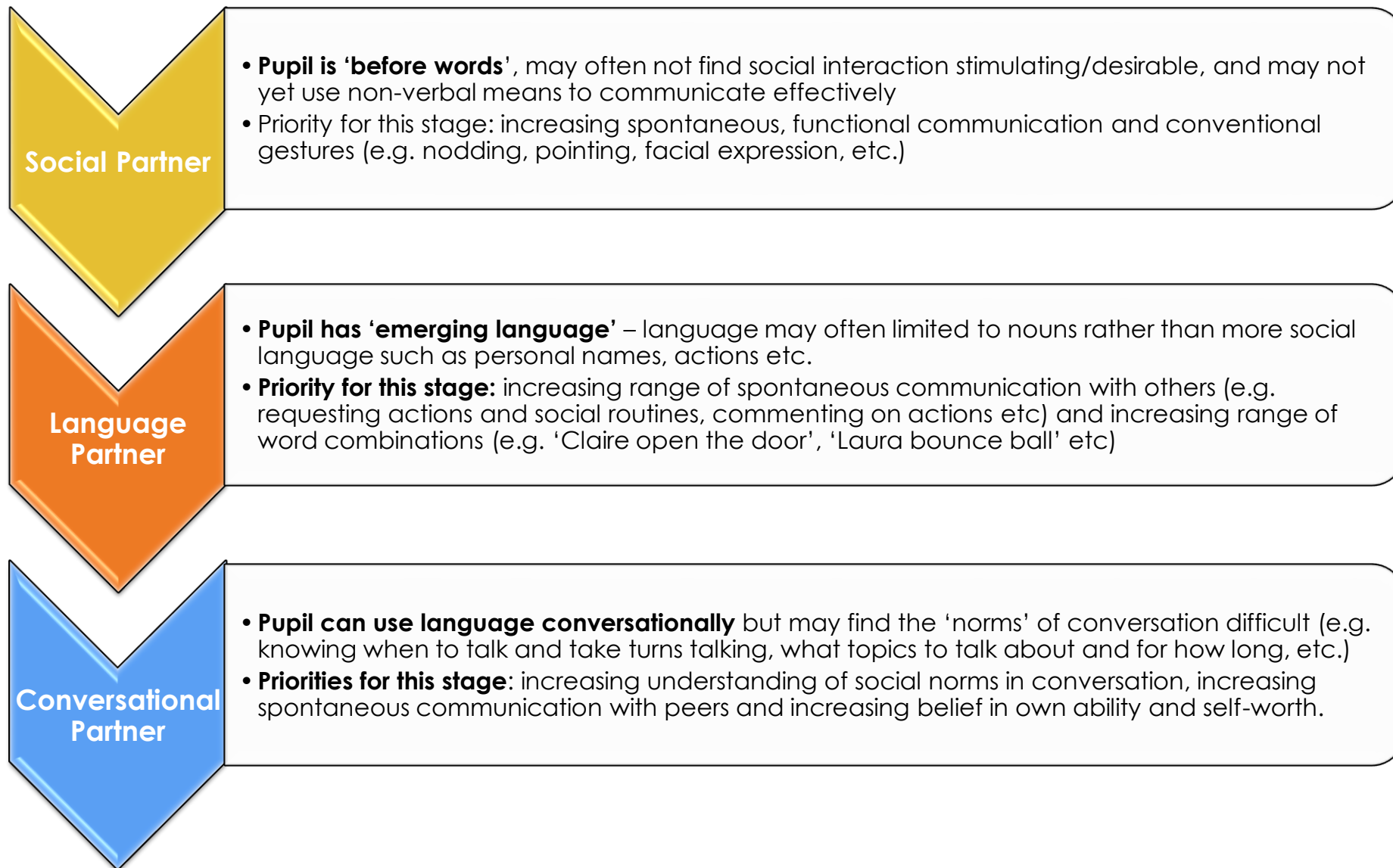## So, now we know what SCERTS is…how do we use it?!

Firstly, what's really important to understand is that using the SCERTS Model within our school is not just for the purpose of assessing the pupils.

The SCERTS ethos is fundamental in ensuring that good autism practice is at the heart of everything we do. It underpins all of our practice and everything we do in school to support our pupils, encourage their progress and help them manage themselves more effectively.

Secondly, SCERTS can be considered very much like a curriculum: a curriculum gives us a specific course of study which sets out what a person must learn, goals they must achieve and resources that are needed in order for them to progress to the next 'level', or to 'pass'. SCERTS does exactly this, but differs from the norm in the personalisation it allows us to provide.

Like with any curriculum, we need to know where to begin using it for them as an individual...*What level or stage is the pupil currently at?*

SCERTS sets out 3 really clear developmental stages of Social Communication:

Social Partner

- **Pupil is 'before words'**, may often not find social interaction stimulating/desirable, and may not yet use non-verbal means to communicate effectively
- Priority for this stage: increasing spontaneous, functional communication and conventional gestures (e.g. nodding, pointing, facial expression, etc.)

Language Partner

- **Pupil has 'emerging language'** – language may often limited to nouns rather than more social language such as personal names, actions etc.
- **Priority for this stage:** increasing range of spontaneous communication with others (e.g. requesting actions and social routines, commenting on actions etc) and increasing range of word combinations (e.g. 'Claire open the door', 'Laura bounce ball' etc)

Conversational Partner

- **Pupil can use language conversationally** but may find the 'norms' of conversation difficult (e.g. knowing when to talk and take turns talking, what topics to talk about and for how long, etc.)
- **Priorities for this stage**: increasing understanding of social norms in conversation, increasing spontaneous communication with peers and increasing belief in own ability and self-worth.

Important Note: Terms such as 'before words' and 'emerging language' are **not only referring to the use of speech.** They encompass **all methods of language** such as symbols, signing, voice output aids, LAMP etc. A child does not have to be able talk to have a voice.

Click the link to listen to Emily Rubin explain this a little better for us…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLr6wreEiqg

SCERTS

- **S**ocial **C**ommunication
- **E**motional **R**egulation
- **T**ransactional **S**upport

How do we use it?

▶ Once we know at what stage of communication a pupil is currently at, we can carry out an in-depth assessment of

the pupils **S**ocial **C**ommunication and **E**motional **R**egulation skills, as well as our **T**ransactional **S**upport.

▶ The assessment itself is extensive, and requires us to observe the pupil across different environments and activities, with different adults, peers and group sizes. It also requires input from parents/carers and supporting staff.

▶ Results are used to identify strengths and progress made, as well as areas of developmental need for the pupil and possible areas of mentoring or training for supporting staff.

▶ Objectives for the pupil are then created, ensuring that they are meaningful and functional to their life, and factoring in the impact on their social and emotional wellbeing.

▶ SCERTS assessments can be carried out at any point during a pupil's time with us in school, and on into adulthood. Each set of objectives is reviewed at timely intervals, when suitable for that pupil and objectives are then adapted to meet their changing needs.

**This is an example of a pupil's SCERTS objectives**

Name: xxxxxx	Start Date: xxxx		Review Date: xxxx

Summary of assessment

XXXX has made positive progress particularly in his development of both mutual and self-regulation, showing in his ability to reduce the amount of time taken to regulate his emotional state with support from adult partners. He has also shown that he has improved his ability to make choices when these are offered to him. XXXXX has made significant progress in the area of 'flexibility and resilience' which is recognisable in his ability to tolerate unpredictable change and aspects of change which occur in situations that are familiar to him – this is important in helping him to cope with and adapt to the challenges of everyday life.

Although XXXX has made progress, two of the previous objectives set for him have not been met and will be reinstated this term. The previous objective of JA4 'shares intentions to regulate the behaviour of others' has progressed to JA7 'persists and repairs communication breakdowns'.

SCERTS objective	Child objective	Why?	How do we help?
Symbol Use 2 (SU2) Understands non-verbal cues in familiar activities.	XXXXX will begin to show signs that he has noticed a change in adults' emotional state through facial expressions, body language, or intonation of voice	XXXX will begin to gain a better understanding of other peoples thought and feelings and respond appropriately.	Adults need to model exaggerated emotional responses and states and then label these for each other, verbally or using a symbol. For example pretending to get cross because you can't open the door, stamping feet, angry face, growling and another member of staff saying "Sam I think you are cross. Can I help you?" whilst showing you a picture of cross.
Symbol Use 1 (SU1) Learns by imitation of familiar actions and sounds.	XXXXX will continue to learn by copying other people's actions and sounds.	XXXX will continue to look for information to help him be an active problem solver and engage appropriately with others.	XXXX needs opportunities through activities such as simple sensory stories and intensive interaction to copy familiar sounds and actions following a model. Adults need to leave lots of time for XXXX to respond and show anticipation that he will do so.
Joint Attention 7 (JA7) Persists and repairs communication breakdowns	XXXX will persist in his attempts at communicating if they don't work by either repeating or modifying, perhaps by going to another person.	This is working on skills to help XXXXX persist when learning new skills and to assist his recovery when he finds things challenging.	Adults need to model solutions to breakdowns in communication e.g., tapping, repeating, going to another person. Also only responding to effective attempts at communication not responding because "we know what XXXX wants". Create opportunities to sabotage communication in familiar routines with support and modelling of changing attempt or person.

This section simply tells us what SCERTS objective the child's objective relates to.

This section sets out the child's objective – exactly what the skill to be learned is.

This part is the impact that learning these skills will have on the child's learning and wellbeing

This section tells us how adult partners should support, what resources are needed and any training required
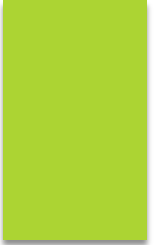
Finally…

What we ultimately should be aiming for, and the main concern of the SCERTS Model, is that of

AUTHENTIC PROGRESS

'defined as the ability to learn and spontaneously apply functional and relevant skills in a variety of settings and with a variety of partners'

Through the transactional support we provide, we can significantly make a difference to the authentic progress our pupils achieve, the independence they gain and relationships they build. In turn, our support is helping pupils achieve their best possible quality of life.

Please click the link to complete the questionnaire and end the training session.

Thank you!

- https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=R0P3UPKOvUWeOvy1TzCeBxNXjdaPUNdHobbJrUfjInNUQlNWMEZJUU5KV1pEQ0NVNEVPUjNGM0lFVi4u