



Highfield Nursery School

Parents Guide to



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL  
NEEDS AND DISABILITY  
PROVISION



[www.highfield.suffolk.sch.uk](http://www.highfield.suffolk.sch.uk)

# Highfield Nursery School

## Contents

1. Definition of SEND
2. The 4 Broad Areas of Need
3. The Graduated Approach (APDR Cycle)
4. EHCP Process
5. EHCP Process Flowchart
6. What is the Local Offer?
7. SEND Law - Your Rights and Entitlements
8. The Role of Highfield Children's Centre
9. SENDIASS
10. Raising Autistic Children
11. The different stages of a child's communication
12. Intensive Interaction
13. Objects of Reference
14. People Games
15. Creating Opportunities to Communicate
16. Useful Activities to help Develop Early Communication Skills
17. Stammering
18. Reluctant Talkers/Selective Mutism
19. Hearing impairment
20. Specialist Units and Schools
21. Helpful Websites





## Definition of SEND



A child has SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

Special Educational provision is “additional to” or “different from” provision for children of the same age.



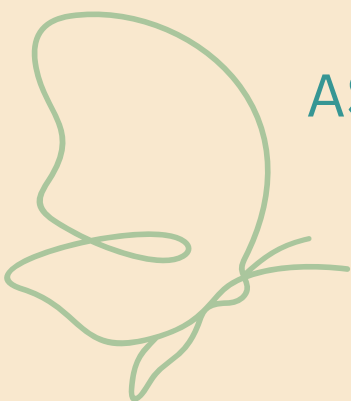
# The 4 Broad Areas of SEND



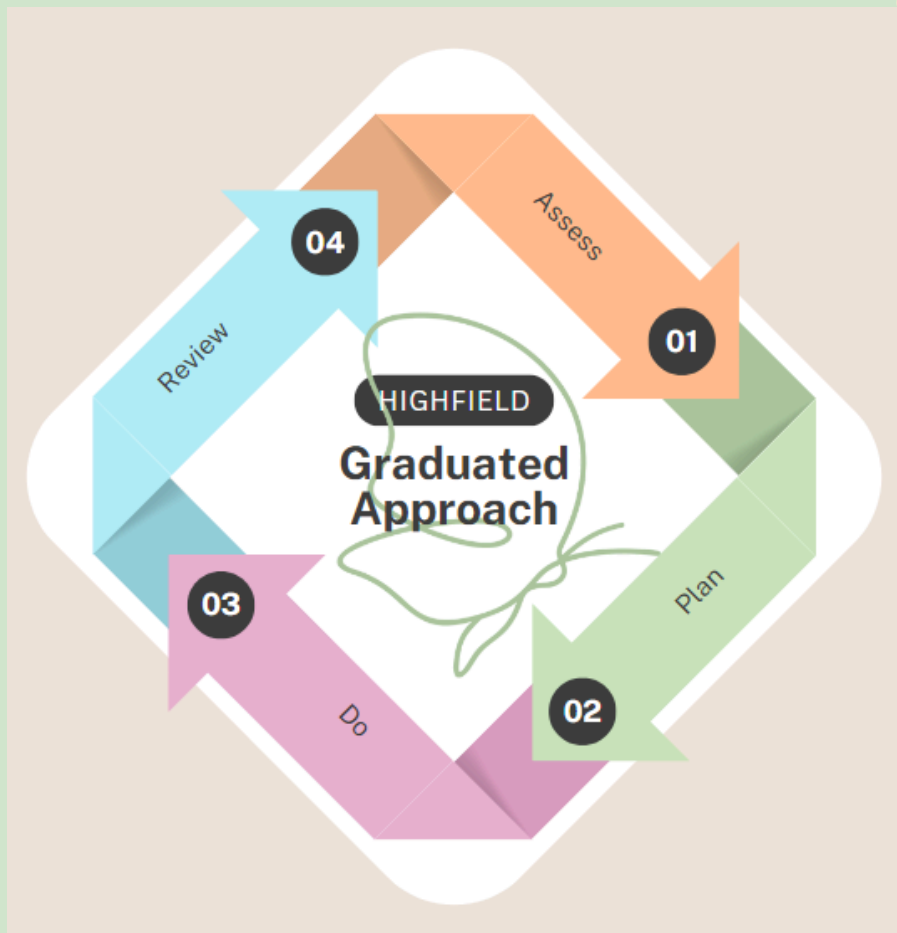
Under the 2015 SEND Code of Practice there are 4 broad areas of need. These will be referred to in your child's SEND Nurture Plan and EHC Plan.

- 1) Communication and Interaction, e.g. speech and language/early communication difficulties and Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- 2) Cognition and Learning, e.g. dyslexia or dyscalculia
- 3) Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties, e.g. autism
- 4) Sensory and/or Physical Needs, e.g. visual impairments, hearing impairments, processing difficulties

NB/ Children often have needs that cut across all these areas and their needs may change over time, e.g. a child with ASD/ASC may have needs across all 4 areas.



# The Graduated Approach



- **Assess** - Evidence Gathering
- **Plan** - Decision to give SEND support
- **Do** - Intent, implementation, Impact
- **Review** - every 1/2 term



# The Graduated Approach



- Informal assessments carried out within the setting
- Analysis of child's needs undertaken
- Teacher and Key Person's observations carried out e.g. Tapestry
- Parental concerns expressed
- External agencies involved e.g. Specialist Health Visitor



# The Graduated Approach



## Plan

02

- Formal assessments undertaken
- Setting's 'Nurture/SEND Support Plan' written, in consultation with parents and child's Key Person
- All parties agree:
  - The outcomes they are seeking
  - The interventions and support to be put in place
  - The expected impact on progress, development or behaviour
- A clear date for review

# The Graduated Approach



Do

03

- Support Plans shared with all teaching/support staff involved in child's care
- Class teachers/Room Leaders all aware of child's developmental needs and classroom provision needed/adaptations needed
- Staff deployed effectively during child's sessions to ensure any personal safety/self-care needs/individual learning needs etc are met
- Resources used by Key Persons and other professionals in the classroom carefully planned and utilised to ensure child's safety, access to the nursery curriculum (making HQT inclusive for all children with SEND)
- Implementing interventions or programmes, e.g. DMP, Theraplay, Speech & Language support, Intensive Interaction, Attention Bucket, PECs, Pre-Pecs etc either daily or on a weekly basis, agreed as part of SEND support.
- Daily dialogue with parents – feedback to, and concerns shared.

# The Graduated Approach



## Review

04

- All SEND support plans should be reviewed regularly (at Highfield every 6 weeks/half termly) with child's Key Person/Class teacher, parents and SENDCo)
- Any changes to the SEND support should be agreed by all parties in view of the child's progress and development. Next steps should be agreed.
- When a child has an EHCP, an Annual Review is held annually with parents, setting staff and all professionals involved in the child's care.

# The EHCP process

Education, Health and Care Plans are often referred to as EHCPs.

For some children with SEND, the support that a mainstream nursery or school can provide is not enough to help them. These children may need support through an EHCP.

An EHCP is a legal document. It is a plan that outlines the needs of the child, what they and their parents want them to achieve, the support they require and who will provide this support.

The purpose of an EHCP is to ensure that the correct support is provided to help meet the child's education, health and social care needs.

An EHCP application can be made by a parent or your child's educational setting. The online portal to make a request is on the Suffolk Local Offer website.

EHCP application can be made at any time during a child's education. An application can be made by parents, settings, schools.

It is a very lengthy, complex process and can take months.

# The EHCP process

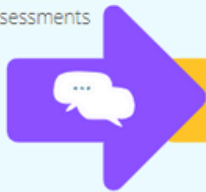


## Highfield Nursery School The EHCP process



### Stage One

Conversation with parents and other professionals. Informal & formal observations and assessments



### Stage Three

Multidisciplinary assessment carried out. Feedback given



### Stage Two

Meeting with parents  
Written nurture plan in place

### Stage Four

EHC assessment paperwork completed by SENDCo or parents



### Stage Five

EHC Panel decide to proceed or refuse at this stage



### Stage Six

EHC Needs assessment carried out. All those involved will be asked for a written report

### Stage Seven

Panel meet to discuss the ECHNA. EHCP is either issued or refused at this stage



### Stage Eight

Each year, the EHCP will be reviewed (annual review)



# The EHCP process - flowchart

## 1 to 6 weeks

- A parent or school makes a request to an EHC Needs Assessment to the Local Authority
- Within 6 weeks of making the request, you will receive a letter from your Local Authority with a decision about whether they will carry out an EHC Needs Assessment or not (next step of EHCP referral process)
- **Your application may be refused at this point**

## 6 to 12 weeks

- If a EHC Needs Assessment is to be carried out, the Local Authority will contact all your child's health professionals to request formal reports. This is a legal requirement regardless of waiting lists or a shortage of professionals to carry out the work.
- By week 12, the Local Authority will decide whether or not to issue an EHC Plan.

## 13 to 16 weeks

- If the Local Authority has decided to issue an EHC Plan, it must issue the draft version by week 14. A copy will be sent to yourselves and all those who contributed to the EHC Needs Assessment.
- Once the draft EHCP has been issued, parents have 15 days in which to respond to the draft with their comments and changes, to name the type of school (mainstream or special) they want named in the EHCP and to request a meeting with the Local Authority if they would like to discuss the EHCP.
- Once the Local Authority receives the parents' decision about school placement, they must consult with the school specified by the parents. The school must respond with its decision within 15 days. All responses from schools will be shared with parents.

## 17 to 20 weeks

- Between week 17 and week 20, the Local Authority should issue the final EHCP. A copy should be sent to the parents and to the school named in the EHCP where a child will be attending.
- The final EHCP will explain parental rights and the right to appeal to a tribunal.

## What's next?

- Your EHCP will be reviewed yearly.
- For children under 5, the reviews are every 6 months.
- The Annual Review gives parents, the Local Authority and the educational facility an opportunity to reflect on the last year and suggest changes.

# The Local Offer

<http://www.Suffolklocaloffer.org.uk>

All Local Authorities must publish a detailed summary of the services available to support children and young people with SEN and disabilities, named the 'Local Offer'. This should cover services for education, health and social care.

It also includes information about:

- How a parent can request an assessment for an EHCP.
- Support to help children move between phases of education, e.g. early years to primary.
- Sources of information, advice and support in the local area relating to SEND, including forums for parents and carers and support groups.
- Arrangements for mediation and resolving disagreements in respect of SEND and provision.

## SEND Law Your rights and entitlements

As a parent of a child with special educational needs, you have legal rights and entitlements.

- 1) Section 19 of the 2014 Children and Families Act states that Local Authorities must have "regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parents and the importance of the child and his or her parent participating as fully as possible in decision-making".
- 2) Section 6.20 of the 2015 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that parents/carers should be included in all decision-making processes, understand their right to choose and control the level of support they receive and be enabled to express their views and opinions.

"Parents know their child best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development."

(Section 6.20)



# Highfield Children's Centre



There are several places that offer support, advice and guidance. Highfield's very own Children's Centre is a fantastic resource for parents of children with SEND.

They offer such services as:

- Family support/parenting strategies
- Speech, communication and language
- The Emotional Health of your child
- Toileting
- Counselling
- Signposting
- Financial advice;

o DLA, government funding available to all families with children with a diagnosis. This provides funding for equipment and activities.

o Carer's allowance

• SEND support groups;

o Little Stars – once a month an opportunity to meet other parents of children with additional needs

o Stay and Play sessions – for children with additional needs

o Information about specialised SEND groups in the area, e.g. dance groups, soft play groups, holiday clubs, Activities Unlimited

Email: [Highfield.cc@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Highfield.cc@suffolk.gov.uk)

Tel: 01473 742534

Web: [www.suffolksendiass.co.uk](http://www.suffolksendiass.co.uk)

Tel: 01473 265210

Email: [enquiries@suffolksendiass.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@suffolksendiass.co.uk)

Their role:

- Provide information and advice about SEND law, policies and procedures, schools and educational settings
- Listen to your concerns and views and work with you to explore your options
- Help you prepare for meetings, help with form-filling, report-writing
- Help with choosing the right school
- Help with EHCP plans – how to request, support you throughout the process and help with mediation and with Annual Reviews

Suffolk SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service) is a confidential and impartial information, advice and support service on issues related to SEND.

The service is free, easy to access and confidential.

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## Raising Autistic Children

### Signs and Symptoms of Autism

Autism is a spectrum condition and affects children in different ways. Below are some indicators that autistic children may present with:

#### **Social communication and social interaction difficulties**

- Autistic children have difficulties with interpreting both verbal and non-verbal language, e.g. gestures or tone of voice.
- Some autistic children are unable to speak or have limited speech.
- They may have difficulty with starting and turn-taking in conversations, sharing interests or emotions or understanding what others are thinking/feeling (empathy).
- Autistic children struggle to make eye contact. They may appear to be insensitive.
- They feel overwhelmed in social situations
- They repeat what others say to them (echolalia)
- They find it difficult to regulate their tone of voice and may speak too loudly or quietly.



## **Repetitive and restrictive behaviour**

- Autistic children often engage in repetitive body movements, e.g. hand-flapping, rocking or spinning to help calm themselves when they are stressed or anxious.
- They often require a strict and rigid routine, e.g. same meal menu, same clothes, same route to school.
- Changes to routine can be very distressing for autistic children and make them very anxious.
- They may engage in repetitive play behaviours, e.g. lining up toys in a row.

## **Over or under sensitivity to light, sound, taste or touch**

- Autistic children may be sensory seekers (hyposensitive) or sensory avoiders (hypersensitive). Sensory overload may cause anxiety or even physical pain.

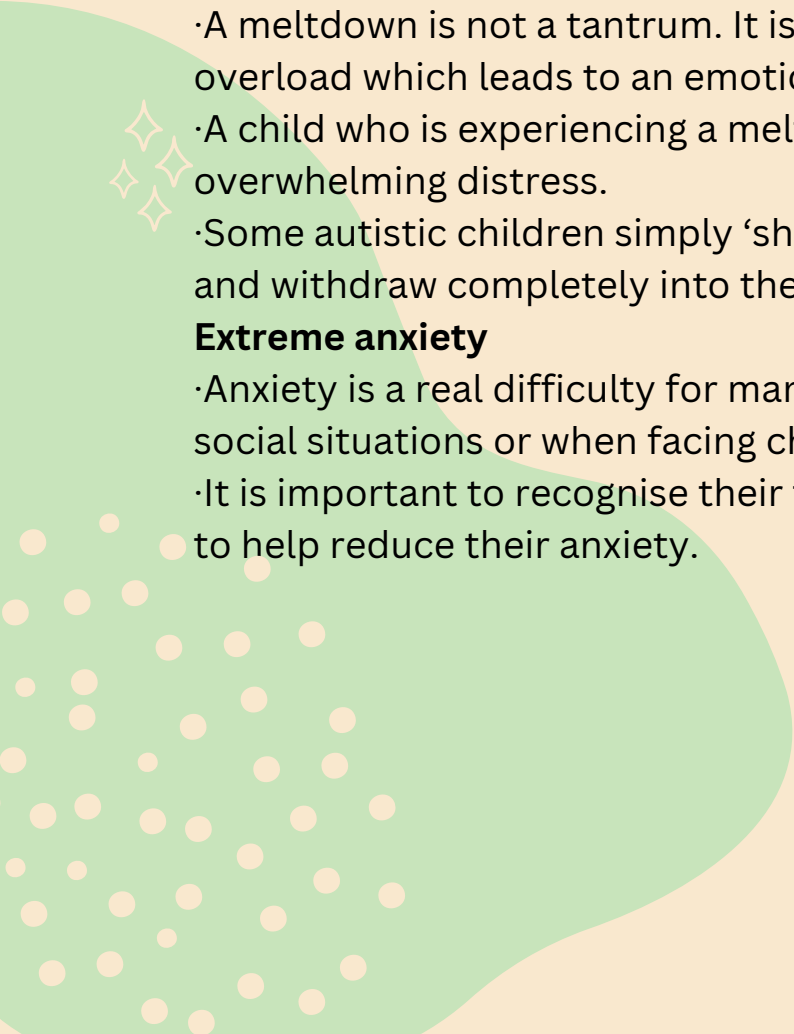
## **Highly focussed interests or hobbies**

- They often have a strong attachment to a certain object.
- Autistic children often have an extreme interest or knowledge of a specific narrow topic.

## **Meltdowns and shutdowns**

- A meltdown is not a tantrum. It is a response to an external stimulus overload which leads to an emotional explosion.
- A child who is experiencing a meltdown is feeling huge anxiety and overwhelming distress.
- Some autistic children simply 'shut down'. They are unable to speak and withdraw completely into their own world.

## **Extreme anxiety**

- Anxiety is a real difficulty for many autistic children, particularly in social situations or when facing change.
  - It is important to recognise their triggers and find coping mechanisms to help reduce their anxiety.
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# Different stages of a child's communication



## 1) Own Agenda Stage

Plays alone

Appears uninterested in people around him/her

## 2) Requester Stage

At this stage, a child is just beginning to realise that his/her actions can have an affect on you.

By pulling or leading you, he/she is able to ask you for things he/she needs or enjoys

May enjoy physical games, e.g. Peek-a-boo or tickles; when you pause, he/she may look at you

## 3) Early Communication Stage

Starts to use specific gestures, sounds, pictures or words to ask for things

When the child starts to share his/her interests with you by looking at something and then looking back at you, or pointing to something he/she wants to show you he/she has developed joint attention (a big step forward in learning to communicate)

## 4) Partner Stage

Can now use words or another method of communication to request, protest, greet, draw your attention to something or ask and answer simple questions.

Able to carry on short conversations



# Intensive Interaction

Intensive Interaction is an approach used to teach early communication and interaction skills. It is used by speech and language therapists, educational settings and can also be used by you at home!

It is recommended for children who:

- Have hearing or vision problems
- Have communication difficulties
- Reject interaction
- Are content being alone
- Have complex or severe learning difficulties

The approach aims to teach the basic fundamentals of communication as well as helping develop sociability, cognitive abilities and emotional well-being.


## **What skills will it develop in your child?**

- A sense of pleasure
- General engagement with social environment
- Joint/shared focus
- Turn-taking
- Watching
- Anticipation
- Attention/concentration
- Imitation
- Initiation of an interaction
- Eye contact
- Use and understanding of facial expression
- Using vocalisations with meaning
- Sharing of space
- Use of understanding and touch

## **How do we do it?**

- Follow the child's lead
- Respond to selected aspects of the behaviour
- Join in or imitate their behaviour, e.g:
  - Noises – babbling, grunting, lip-smacking
  - Actions – tapping, flapping, rocking
  - Facial expressions – blinking, smiling
  - Physical contact – patting, tapping
- Wait for the child to do something/restart something and copy
- Stop when the child has had enough
- Daily – several times a day
- Remove background noises
- In a quiet area

# Objects of reference

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- An object of reference is an object that has a particular meaning associated to it.
  - They are used for children who have difficulties with communication.
  - They act as a visual reinforcement – they begin to associate objects with events and understand what is about to happen.

## **How do I choose an object of reference?**

- Choose an object that will be meaningful and motivating to your child and is used as part of their daily routine.
- Start with 1 or 2 objects, e.g. a bowl to show they are going to eat.
- Gradually add in more as your child grasps their meaning.

## **How do I use an object of reference?**

- Show your child the object each time you are about to follow the routine you are referencing and name it.
- Keep your language simple.
- Use the object consistently

## **Objects of reference ideas**

- A shoe – to mean going outside
- A plate/bowl/spoon - to mean time to eat
- A nappy – to mean changing time
- A bottle of bubble bath – to mean bathtime
- A cuddly toy – to mean bedtime



# People Games

People games are activities that involve 2 people and **can be done at home.**

Can be done over and over again

- The child enjoys
- Simple, interactive, fun
- Short (2-5 minutes)
- Are made up of a predictable sequence of shapes

## Why play People Games?

The aim is to develop your child's ability to anticipate and use eye contact for social communication.

There are 5 main skills that we can teach children through people games:

- Initiation
- Turn-taking
- Anticipation
- Imitation
- Shared attention
- 

## Ideas for People Games

- Bubbles
- Balloons (blowing up and letting go)
- Nursery rhymes
- Tickle games
- Wind-up toys
- Ball-rolling
- Car run

## How to play People Games

Choose any short activity your child enjoys and which can be done repetitively, e.g. 'Row, row, row your boat'.

- Gain your child's attention – be down at their physical level – face-to-face – call his/her name.
- Once your child has experienced the routine a number of times, choose a suitable point to build in a pause, e.g. "if you see a crocodile, don't forget to (pause) scream".
- Wait and see if your child reacts in any way that you could interpret as him/her wanting you to continue, e.g. pulls your arm, looks up at you.
- Then continue saying 'more?'
- If the child doesn't react in any way then, after a pause, continue anyway and as long as your child enjoys the activity keep doing it.

# Creating opportunities to communicate

As adults, we need to create opportunities to communicate. Communication does not have to be verbal/speaking; it can be:

- Pointing
- Vocalising
- Talking
- Gesturing
- Signing

## **People toys**

- Toys that are difficult to operate, e.g. wind-up toys, spinners
- Your child needs to find a way to ask for your help to make them work

## **Bubbles**

- Open the bubbles and blow a few
- As soon as your child starts to watch or pop bubbles, close the pot or pause

## **Balloons**

- Hold the balloon to your mouth and wait for your child to ask you, in some way, to blow it up again

## **Mechanical/switch-operated toys**

- When it stops, wait for your child to request to make it go again

## **Place favourite items out of reach**

## **Drinking/eating**

- Put a small amount of drink in your child's cup and they need to find a way to ask for more

## **Puzzles**

- You can hold back the pieces and offer one piece at a time



# Activities to develop early communication skills

## **Developing eye contact**

- Ball games
- Peek-a-boo games
- Squeaky toys
- Making funny faces

## **Developing attention skills**

- Building towers
- Counting
- Matching objects
- Inset puzzles
- Lotto games
- Singing nursery rhymes
- Sorting things by colour – shape – size

## **To help copying and turn-taking**

- Playing 'Simon Says'
- Singing action songs
- Making funny faces and noises
- Throwing bean bags or balls to each other
- Using a doll, copy 'pretend' actions, e.g. jumping, feeding, washing
- Pop-up toys


## **Developing listening skills**

- Playing musical instruments (and introduce STOP/GO)
- Playing 'ready, steady, go' games
- Play 'STOP/GO' games
- Singing songs and nursery rhymes and pausing

## **Developing understanding of language**

- Keep language simple
- Gain your child's attention before you speak
- Break instructions down into shorter, more manageable chunks
- Give your child up to 10 seconds to respond
- Repeat instructions/questions several times as necessary (rephrase if necessary)
- Support spoken language with visuals and/or gestures

# Stammering



Stammering/stuttering/dysfluency usually starts in childhood, often between the ages of 2 and 5 and coincides with the rapid development of new physical and mental skills.

Stammering is different from early speech and language difficulties because it can start at different stages in a child's life.

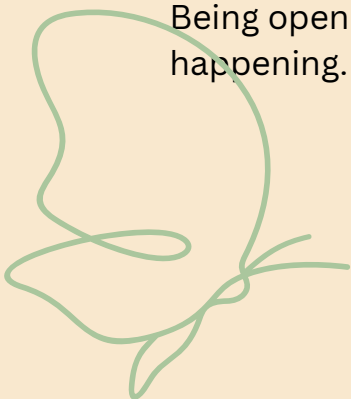
For some, it starts gradually – it comes and goes and seems to be part of a child's natural attempts to use more and more words.

For others, it can begin quite suddenly, sometimes almost overnight and sometimes quite severely. For some children, it can disappear just as quickly, within days or months.

The frequency of stammers will often vary depending on the situation, e.g. when relaxed or excited, whether talking to friends or strangers. Stammering may come and go; you may notice the child's speech is fluent for several days, weeks or months at a time, then speaking becomes more difficult again.

## **Strategies to support stammering**

- Listen carefully, concentrating on what your child is saying, not how he/she is saying it. Try not to look away when he/she is having difficulty talking.
- Slow down your own rate of talking as his/hers helps to create a calm and relaxed atmosphere for speaking.
- Reduce the number of questions you ask and make sure you give time to answer one before asking another.
- Allow time for the child to finish when he/she has to say rather than finishing it for them.
- Give specific praise for the things he/she does well (not necessarily related to talking) as this can help build confidence.
- Stammering and a fast pace of life don't always go well together. Structure and routine in daily life can be beneficial.
- If the child is aware of their stammering – and it feels right – ask them what they think would be helpful when they are having difficulty with their talking. Being open about it is much more natural than trying to pretend it isn't happening.



# Reluctant talkers/Selective Mutism

A reluctant talker is a child who is able to talk freely in some situations but is silent in others. In these situations, the child may use non-verbal communication but doesn't use verbal communication.

## Supporting reluctant talkers

- Respond and reward all attempts at communication such as smiling, nodding and eye contact.
- Praise any attempt to initiate an interaction with you or another adult, even if they don't use words.
- Let your child know you understand they have difficulty speaking at times. Tell them they can take small steps when they feel ready and reassure them that talking will get easier.
- Ask relatives and friends to give your child time to warm up at their own pace and focus on fun activities rather than getting them to talk.
- Try not to pressure them to talk.
- Try not to label your child as non-speaking with other family members or friends.
- Do not praise your child publicly for speaking because this can cause embarrassment.
- Don't avoid family visits or parties, but consider what environmental changes are necessary to make the situation more comfortable for your child.

SMIRA (Selective Mutism Information and Research Association)

<http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/>

- Some selective mute children seem particularly attached to pets. This interest could provide a motivation for speaking.
- Imaginative play, dressing up and puppet play should be encouraged as selective mute children may speak when 'in role'.
- Don't try and get them to speak – this will only make things worse for them.
- They find it easier when they are in small groups.
- If they have a close friend, they will feel more relaxed when their friend is in the group too.
- Don't ask them direct questions; talk about what you are doing or comment on things.
- Ensure that your child feels valued and secure.
- Try to reduce embarrassment or anger about your child's behaviour.
- Educate family and friends about the nature of your child's difficulties.
- Keep busy and have a routine.

# Hearing impairment

## What is Glue Ear?

Glue ear happens when part of your child's ear gets blocked up with sticky fluid. Your child may find it hard to hear you or their friends, especially when it is noisy. It can take lots of energy to focus on listening so they might get tired or distracted easily. They may not hear words clearly which could affect their talking and understanding of words.

## What can you do to help?

- Make sure your child can see your facial expressions and body language by getting down to their level and being face-to-face when you are talking and playing together.
- Try to get your child's attention when you want to talk to them by calling their name.
- Talking slowly will give your child more time to notice.
- Break instructions down into small chunks.
- Repeat things if your child does not seem to hear you.
- Give them extra time to think about their answers.



# Specialist units and schools

Specialist units are part of a mainstream school. SEND pupils receive a high proportion of classes in smaller groups with additional support yet have access to the activities and facilities of school. They are encouraged to participate in mainstream classes where able.

Pupils must have an EHCP.

## Key Stage 1 and Specialist Reception Units

- Sidegate
- Rushmere
- Castle Hill
- Pipers Vale
- Gorseland

## Hearing Impaired Units

- Rushmere

## Special Schools for children with significant SEND

All pupils are required to have an EHCP.

Each school has a specialist area of need.

## Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD)

- The Bridge (Ipswich)

## For specific communication and language difficulties

- Hillside Special School (Sudbury)
- Warren School (Lowestoft)
- Riverwalk School (Bury St Edmunds)

## Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

- SENDAT Priory School (Bury St Edmunds)
- SENDAT Stone Lodge Academy (Ipswich)
- Ashley School (Lowestoft)

## Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

- Sir Bobby Robson School (Ipswich)
- Sir Peter Hall School (Bury St Edmunds)
- Sunrise Academy (Lowestoft)

## Communication and Interaction (CI)

- Woodbridge Road Academy (Ipswich)
- Castle East School (Bungay)
- Churchill Free School (Haverhill)

## Physical/Sensory Needs

- Thomas Wolsey School (Ipswich)

# Useful websites

## Family Support

Activities Unlimited

Website: [www.activities-unlimited.co.uk](http://www.activities-unlimited.co.uk) Tel: 01473 260026

Homestart (advice and support for families)

Website: [www.homestartinsuffolk.org](http://www.homestartinsuffolk.org) Tel: 01473 621104

Families Together Suffolk (SEND support for families in Suffolk)

Website: [www.familiestogethersuffolk.org.uk](http://www.familiestogethersuffolk.org.uk) Tel: 01379 678552

Suffolk Parent Carer Network

Website: [www.spcn.org.uk](http://www.spcn.org.uk)

SENDIASS (advice and support service on all issues related to SEND)

Website: [www.Suffolksendiass.co.uk](http://www.Suffolksendiass.co.uk) Tel: 01473 265210

Special Needs Jungle (support and useful links for families of children with SEND)

Website: [www.specialneedsjungle.com](http://www.specialneedsjungle.com)

## Down's Syndrome

Down's Syndrome Association

Website: [www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk)

## Hearing Impaired

National Deaf Children's Society

Website: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

## Stammering

British Association for Stammering

Website: [www.stamma.org](http://www.stamma.org)

## Reluctant Talkers/Selective Mutism

SMIRA (Selective Mutism Information and Research Association)

Website: [www.selectivemutism.org.uk](http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk)

## Epilepsy

The Epilepsy Society

Website: [www.epilepsysociety.org.uk](http://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk)

Epilepsy Action

Website: [www.epilepsy.org.uk](http://www.epilepsy.org.uk)

## Children with physical difficulties

The Bumblebee Children's Charity (a specialist centre for children who have difficulty with movement and coordination)

Website: [www.bumblebeechildren.org.uk](http://www.bumblebeechildren.org.uk)



# Useful websites

## **Autism**

National Autistic Society

Website: [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

Autism Anglia

Website: [www.autism-anglia.org.uk/suffolk](http://www.autism-anglia.org.uk/suffolk)

Tel: 01206 577678

## **Early Communication**

The Communication Trust (top tips for supporting children with language disorders)

Website: [www.slcframework.org.uk](http://www.slcframework.org.uk)

Empowering Little Minds

Website: [www.empoweringlittleminds.co.uk](http://www.empoweringlittleminds.co.uk)

Singing Hands (a YouTube channel which uses Makaton songs and rhymes)

BBC Tiny Happy People (activities to help develop language skills)

Website: [www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people)

Something Special (CBeebies programme for children with SEND)

The Makaton Charity (activities, songs and stories)

Website: [www.makaton.org](http://www.makaton.org)

