

# SEND Bulletin NO. 19



## Social Communication (pragmatics)

Pragmatics refers to the ability to communicate in social situations. Some pupils have difficulty in understanding how to use language in a range of different social situations and can make very inappropriate remarks.

Children with difficulties in this area may:

- have problems taking turns in a conversation or when playing games
- be unable to change the style of conversation to suit the listener
- be unable to interpret tone of voice in others
- have difficulty interpreting non-verbal communication (facial expression, gestures)
- have difficulty keeping to the topic of a conversation
- have problems with judging the amount of previous knowledge that the listener has when relating information
- have difficulty understanding other points of view
- have strengths in a specific area of the curriculum (e.g. maths, music)
- have a particular interest or hobby which can sometimes act as a stimulus to learning
- have a good memory for rote learning.

## Activities to develop social communication

**Role play** Adults and other pupils model social situations with the learner; these can relate to home, school and environmental activities.

**Tell me** Talk about personal experiences; subtle adult questioning to ensure the pupil keeps to topic and gives relevant background information.

**Puppets** Adults and other pupils model social situations through puppet plays and stories with the learner.

**Making faces** Miming activities, specifically teaching pupils how to show feelings through facial expressions. Older pupils may develop this as part of a drama lesson.

**Board games** Play games that involve turn-taking; some pupils will need to do this with an adult only, others with another pupil.

**Parachute games** Involve collaboration introduce gradually in small groups.

**Circle time** Provide specific opportunities for pupils to learn how to listen to other points of view; ensure visual explanations are available.

**Reactions** Pupils choose a reaction to a specific social situation (from choice of three); talk about possible consequences of the chosen reaction.

**Speech bubbles** Read an extract from a story; pupils to write in a speech bubble what the character might say at that point in story.

**Just a minute** Pupils talk for one minute on a given subject such as cars, animals, food etc.; this is good practice at keeping to the topic.

**Social stories** A well-researched and published approach to help pupils cope with certain social situations they may find difficult.

**Comic strip conversations** A well-researched and published approach to help pupils cope with making choices in certain social situations.

If you have any particular items you would like information on or any interesting information or resources which you would like to share with your colleagues via this fortnightly bulletin please e-mail them to me:

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Many thanks

Anne