

INCLUSION 2024

LIVE

29th January - 2nd February



Are You Listening?

Strategies for Communicating Effectively with SEND Students

Faith Newton

- **Communication Challenges**
- **Communication Styles**
- **Strategies**

Faith Newton

Occupational Therapist

Parent Carer

Author & Speaker



Communication Challenges

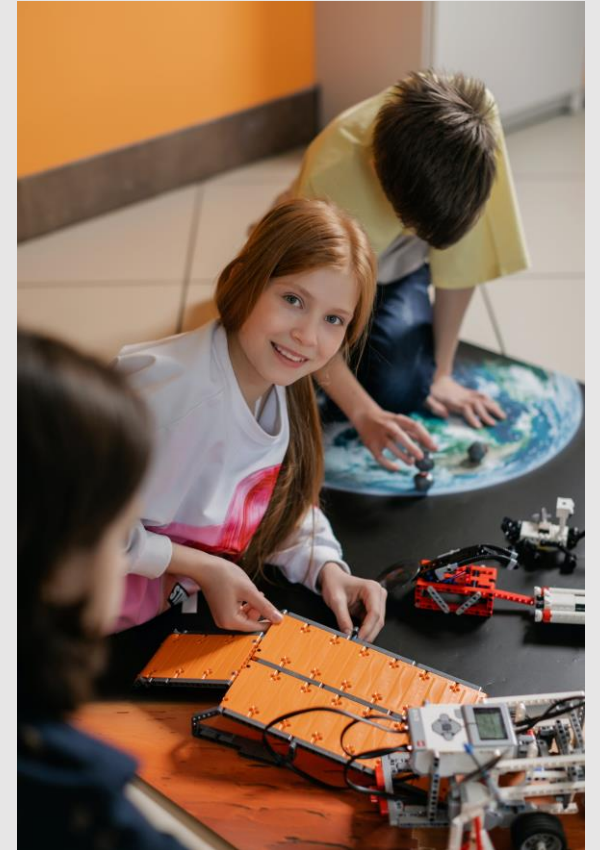
Group Work

- Hunting for a partner
- Complex social interactions
- ‘Unpredictable nature of team work’ is stressful, *Sobel & Alston, 2021*

‘She struggles to process more than one interaction at a time. She finds group work hard because you’ve got to be aware of more than one focal point in a group’, Newton, 2023

Group Work - Strategies

- Teacher or random selection & preferred friend
- Small groups
- Clear role to decrease anxiety
- Consistency



When we did random teams I was not sure about my group, but getting to know them and talking to them was actually really interesting. Then playing together was really fun and I felt that everyone was included!

Milne, 2023



Listening & Following Instructions

- Ability to tune out distractions
- Good working memory
- Self-regulation and inhibition to not call out / move
- Rule followers & rule breakers
- Verbal processing

Kyle was always getting into trouble for not following the rules. He was frequently punished which led to more disruption. Knight, 2017

‘Tom struggles to take in lots of verbal information. One time he was playing a game like rounders, and he didn’t know what to do. He just stood there when the ball came near him.’



Kyle said if a teacher had tried to explain the reasoning for the rules it would have helped him to follow them. Knight, 2017.

Instructions - Strategies

- Use routine so less instructions are needed
- Reduce sensory stimulation
- Provide information in different formats
- Use less language – few key words
- Explain the reasoning for the rules

‘Tom’s teacher shows his class a video of the game they are to play. She plays it twice. During the first viewing she pauses the video to point out the different teams and what the children have to do. Tom watches the 3 minute clip with interest and listens carefully whilst his teacher pre-teaches the key points. When they get to the field to play he knows what to do and joins in confidently.’



Expressing Self

‘Children with ADHD often have so many ideas and so much to say, but struggle to organise their thoughts’ Newton, 2023

They may:

- Speak loudly
- Divert from the topic
- Dominate the conversation
- Shout out
- Make grammatical errors
- Have difficulty finding the right words in the right order
- Pause & repeat themselves

Expressing Self - Strategies

- Give extra time to respond
- Pause and break up language
- Give opportunities to talk in pairs / small groups
- Don't discipline a child for interrupting or shouting out

Neurotypical & Neurodivergent Styles

Non-Verbal Communication

- Facial expression & eye contact
- Head & hand movements
- Posture
- Touch
- Distance

- Complex
- Ambiguous
- May not be noticed or understood



'Listen please' 'Listening ears on'

**We expect students to listen to us.
Are we listening to them?**

'Stop talking' 'Are you listening?'

Neurodivergent Communication

Stimming

- E.g. Blinking, flapping, fidgeting, making noises, licking

Reduced eye contact:

- Uncomfortable, painful, distracting

Facial expression & body language not mirroring

- E.g. blank, turned away

Direct communication

- May speak bluntly

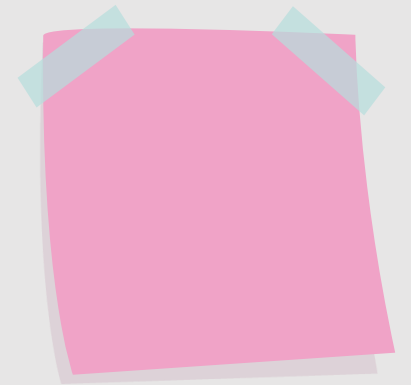




Non-Verbal Communication - Strategies

- Be explicit about rules, exceptions and non-verbal signs
- Be aware of your non-verbal communication
- Don't assume things about students' non-verbal communication

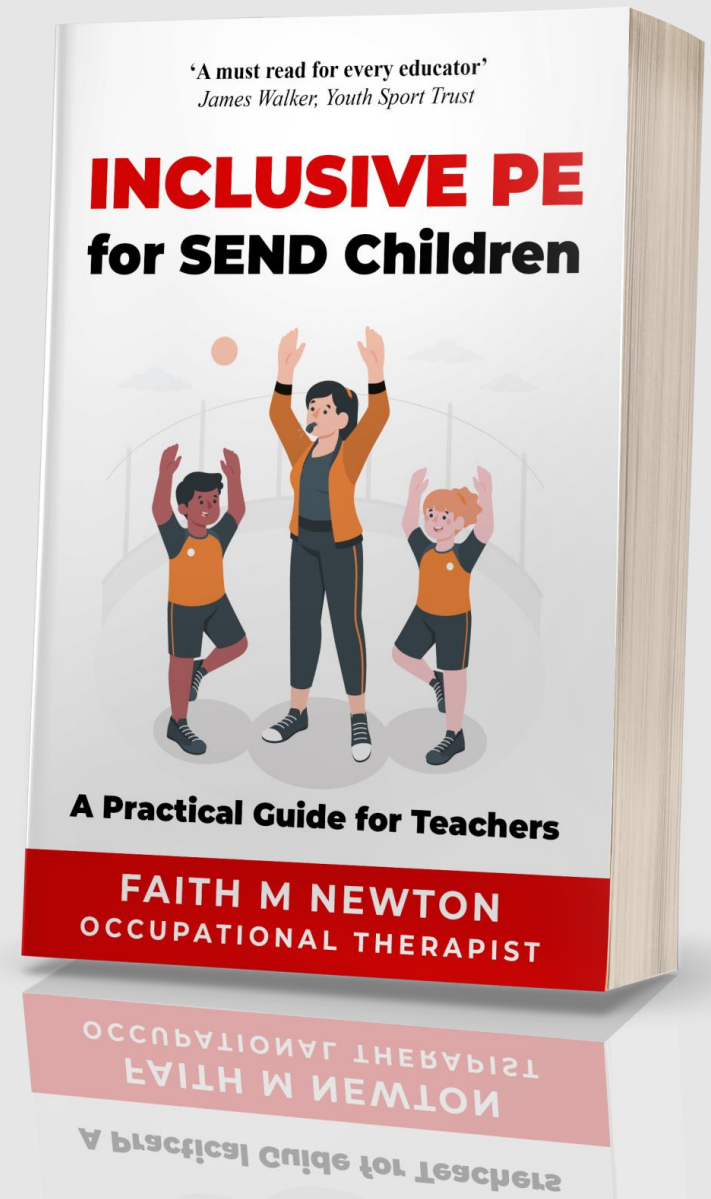
What 1 thing can you do to make your communication more inclusive?



'An easy read that is full of ideas and is essential for all teachers.'

This book shows you what life is like through the eyes of a pupil with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and perfectly illustrates the power of inclusive practice'.

Penny Whelan, SENCO and Assistant Headteacher



References & Credits

Knight, Rachel. *Little Known Secrets of ADHD: The Surprising Upside You Haven't Been Told*, Busy Bee Media, 2017

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Sobel, Daniel and Alston, Sara. *The Inclusive Classroom*. Bloomsbury Education, 2021

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Contact

faith@schoolot.co.uk

@FaithSchoolOT (Twitter / X)