

SEND support Jargon Buster

If you have a child or young person with SEND you'll probably hear lots of different terms and words used to describe the support they get in nursery, school or college. It can feel like it's a language all on its own. So here are some of the main words and terms explained.

We also have a general jargon buster which explains the terms and words you might here about services and processes. You can find it on our website or you can contact us for a copy.

A

AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)

Augmentative alternative communication are the systems and devices that help children with limited speech, and those unable to talk at all (nonverbal), to communicate with others. It's any form of communication which helps (augmentative) or replaces (alternative) speech. AAC includes simple systems such as pictures, gestures and pointing, as well as more complex techniques involving powerful computer technology.

Access Arrangements

If your child has SEND, they may be able to have extra support when sitting tests and exams. This includes SATS, GCSEs and A Levels. This extra support is sometimes called access arrangements. Access arrangements are about making 'reasonable adjustments' to exam conditions so that a child or young person with special educational needs is not at a disadvantage compared with others.

Alternative Forms of Recording

These are alternatives to writing things down, which to enable children and young people to take part in the school curriculum. This might include scribing (see below), images, posters, spoken word, video recording, mind mapping (see below), photographs, role play, templates, word processing and use of IT.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) is the use of devices and software to improve the experience of learning or going about daily life. AT can range from Braille displays and books to text-to-speech software or wheelchairs. Assistive technology is anything that improves life and learning - a technology that meets the individual user's needs.

Attachment based mentoring

This is a relationship approach to supporting children with their social and emotional development. It's often used to support children who

- have had trauma or challenging life experiences
- are struggling with their emotional health and well-being
- are finding it difficult to engage with learning and the social aspects of school

It looks at the specific needs of children and how these can be met through our relationships. It's often given as one to one or small group support, from a trained teaching assistant, at set times each week.

Attention Buckets

An 'attention bucket' is a bucket full of motivating and exciting toys and gadgets which are of great interest to a child. The purpose of 'Bucket Time' is to build a child's attention, listening skills and eye contact and help them to sit and listen for short periods of time.

B

Blank Language Levels

Blank's Levels of Questioning is a questioning framework developed by a psychologist. There are four levels of questioning which move from simple, concrete questions to more difficult, abstract questions. The questions help a child develop general language and vocabulary as well as skills in comprehension, reasoning, inferencing, predicting and problem solving. They are widely used in language programmes.

Boxall Profile®

The Boxall Profile is an online tool to assess the social, emotional and mental development of children and young people aged 4-18. It gives an idea of a child's strengths, as well as any difficulties which could affect their learning. Based on the results, the Boxall Profile® identifies what type of support each child needs and suggests practical strategies that may help.

BSL (British Sign Language)

Sign language is a visual means of communicating using gestures, facial expression and body language. It's used mainly by people who are deaf, or to support those who have a hearing loss. In the UK, the most common sign language used is British Sign Language (BSL). It has its own language rules, and it is not dependent upon or related to English.

C

Circle of Friends

A 'Circle of Friends' helps a child who is finding it hard to feel included, for example if they have challenging behaviour or a disability. It works by bringing together the child's peers in a circle of friendly support, to help them with their problem solving.

Circle Time

Circle Time is an opportunity for younger children to practice speaking and listening, watching, socialising, taking turns and team-building skills. It's usually done as a whole class and may be a regular part of the week.

Colourful Semantics

Colourful Semantics aims to help children to develop their understanding of sentence formation and structure. It's rooted in the meaning of words and the

colour scheme relates to the types of words in a sentence.

Co-regulation

This is when an adult helps a child to become calm and feel safe, by being calm themselves and by meeting the child on the emotional level they are at. Repeated lots of times, co-regulation with an adult will help a child to start to regulate and be in control of their own emotional state.

Comic strip conversation

A comic strip is a drawing made with a child or young person about a social situation or conversation they have experienced. It's a visual way to help explore a young person's thoughts and feelings about a situation. You can find out more on the National Autistic Society website.

Cued Speech

Cued Speech helps children who are deaf or hearing impaired to better understand spoken languages. It's a visual communication system. Eight hand shapes in four different positions (cues) around the mouth are used alongside speech to make the different sounds of speech 'visible'.

D

Dysregulation

When a child or young person is dysregulated, they are finding it hard to manage their emotions. It's a strong reaction to a feeling and you might see this as a 'meltdown', running away, shouting and screaming, having a tantrum or being defiant. It often happens when a child is overwhelmed and their fight, flight or freeze response has been triggered.

E

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants)

An ELSA is an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. They are teaching assistants trained to provide emotional and social skills support to children. There is a recognised ELSA training course which covers things like social skills, emotions, bereavement, social and therapeutic stories and anger management.

Emotional logic

Emotional Logic is a tool that some schools use to help children and young people improve their emotional intelligence in difficult situations. It makes sense of unpleasant emotions and helps people have conversations about difficult things. It's a set programme to follow and you can find out more on the Emotional Logic website.

Emotional Thermometers

Emotion Thermometers are a visual tool for helping children identify and put a name to their feelings and say how strong they are. They are often personalised for an individual child, or some classrooms have them on the walls so everyone can use them as a 'check in'.

Executive functioning skills

Executive functions are the mental skills your child uses every day. They are skills like setting goals, planning, prioritising, organising themselves, solving problems and remembering things. They're the skills that help them to get things done. Many children with SEND may have difficulties with executive functioning in one or more areas. Children with executive function difficulties can also find managing their emotions hard.

F

Fidget Toys

Fidget toys are tactile toys that can be moved, stretched or squeezed. They may help to focus or calm a child or young person and are often used by children and young people with ADHD, autism and anxiety.

Fine motor skills

These are skills that involve small muscles working with your brain and nervous system to control movements in areas like your hands, fingers, lips, tongue and eyes. Developing fine motor skills helps children do things like eating, writing, manipulating objects and getting dressed.

Forced choices

This is when you give a child two or three specific options to choose from, which make them more likely to do the thing you want them to do. For example, your child is refusing to sit down. Using a forced choice would be to ask them to choose to sit in either the red

chair or the blue chair. They feel they have some control by making a choice but whatever they choose, they are doing what you've asked - they are sitting down.

FunFit

The Fun Fit programme aims to improve a child's coordination, stability and balance. It's usually done in school for 15 minutes every day. It's aimed at children with poor motor skills. That means children who have

- particular difficulties doing PE
- a tendency to trip or bump into things
- poor handwriting skills
- problems with dressing and using cutlery
- poor concentration and low self-esteem.

G

Gross motor skills

These are the skills that children develop using their whole body. They involve the large muscles in your arms, legs and torso. Gross motor activities are important to everyday physical activities like walking, running, throwing, lifting, kicking, etc.

H

High Five

High Five is designed to be used in the early school years and key stages one and two. It helps children with underdeveloped fine motor skills, such as poor handwriting skills, lack of hand strength and struggling to coordinate cutlery. It's a structured programme of 25 activity sessions, split into five themes.

I

Incredible Five Point Scale or scaling

The Incredible 5 Point Scale is used to help children and young people become aware of their emotions, such as anger or pain, and the stage or level of the emotion. The scale can be used by children with different needs and often works well for children and young people with autism.

Intervention

This is a broad term for any short-term focused teaching programme. An intervention is usually aimed at particular children or small groups of children with specific needs. It's often focused on certain skills such as literacy or maths and children usually do the work in small groups.

L

Language Link and Speech Link

Language Link and Speech Link are online assessment and support programmes for children with speech and language difficulties.

Lego® based Therapy

Lego-based therapy aims to help children develop social communication skills such as sharing, taking turns, following rules, using names and problem-solving. In practice, children work in groups of three with each child having a role to build a Lego model by working together.

M

Makaton

Makaton is a way of communicating that helps children and young people who are unable to speak, as well as supporting speech. Makaton uses speech with signs (gestures) and symbols (pictures) to help people communicate. People who communicate with Makaton also use facial expression, eye contact and body language to give as much information as possible.

Masking

Masking is sometimes also called camouflaging. It's when a child or young person *hides or disguise parts of their personality in order to better fit in with people around them. For example, when some children with autism seem 'fine' at school but very different emotionally when they're at home, it can be because they're masking.*

Mind Maps

A mind map is a way to capture thoughts and ideas and get them out of your brain and onto paper on a computer. It usually involves writing down a central theme or idea and thinking of new and related ideas

which radiate out from the centre. Focusing on key ideas and looking for connections between them, helps children and young people to understand and retain information. Mind mapping often uses colours and images to link ideas.

Multi-Sensory Teaching and learning

This is a way of learning by using more than one sense at a time. It relies not on just reading, writing and listening alone, but instead involves using at least two senses together, such as hearing, sight, touch, smell and taste. It's often used with children who have learning differences such as dyslexia or ADHD or those with learning disabilities.

P

Passive Intervention and Prevention Strategies (PIPS)

These are strategies to help staff give a consistent and safe approach to managing behaviour during a crisis. This is when a child or young person's behaviour has become challenging and there's a chance that someone may get hurt. The strategies help to keep everyone safe, give opportunities to calm and defuse highly stressed situations and repair relationships afterwards.

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a way of communicating that replaces speech. It involves the physical exchange of pictures to communicate. A child can choose a picture of something they want or use to make a comment and hand it to the person they're 'speaking to'.

Precision teaching

Precision teaching is a way of teaching that's designed to improve how accurate and fluent a child's reading, spelling and maths skills and knowledge are. It's often used with children with SEND who might need additional support.

Pre-teaching and Post-teaching

Pre-teaching is when a child or young person is taught the knowledge, vocabulary or skills they will need for a lesson that's coming up. The idea is to give them a 'preview' of the lesson, which allows them to put their knowledge to work during the lesson. Pre-teaching can

give children more knowledge and confidence when they come to a new topic. This can help to increase their engagement and reduce frustration. Post-teaching is when what's been learned in the lesson is re-enforced and reviewed with a child afterwards.

Q

Quality First Teaching

This is the use of teaching strategies that closely match the specific learning goals and needs of individual children and young people in a class. Lessons are designed to be very focussed, and students are expected to be highly engaged.

R

Relational approaches and support

A relational approach is one that put a child's relationships with staff and their peers at the centre of their school life. It's often used to support children who have trauma or who have had difficult or challenging life experiences. It can give a child a sense of belonging in school, helps them feel safe and to manage their feelings. Relational approaches look beneath the behaviour to understand why something went wrong. Many schools use relational support plans to set out key relationships and the support for each child.

Restorative approach

Restorative approaches are a way of thinking about and addressing behaviour. They're based on principles about how people relate to each other and how best to meet people's needs when there has been conflict or harm.

Restorative conversation

A restorative approach may include having a 'restorative conversation'. Staff trained in using these approaches will use restorative language and questions to allow children and young people to understand the impact of their behaviours. Those affected would be invited to share what has happened, what the impact on them has been and what needs to happen to put things right or to make things better in the future.

S

Scaffolding

This is a technique that all teachers use to help children and young people learn new topics and build their understanding. Teachers start with a basic idea, skill or subject knowledge and then systematically add to what their students already know – like building foundations and then adding building blocks on top. This helps children and young people become more confident and competent as they go along. Eventually the support can be stopped as they become independent in the learning or master the particular skill.

Scribing

Scribing is used for children who have difficulty with writing. A teacher or teaching assistant writes down a child's responses to a test or lesson task, using their words. This helps children and young people who may understand and take part in lessons but, for whatever reason, are unable to get the words down on paper or into a computer.

Sensory diet

A sensory diet is any physical activity that works a child's muscles and joints. Giving a sensory 'diet' throughout the day can help with a child's learning by helping them to be in a calm and alert state. This improves their emotional wellbeing and their ability to engage and learn. Activities include things like heavy lifting, pushing and pulling, running, jumping, chewing or blowing bubbles and deep pressure such as a tight hug.

Social groups

These are small groups that help children or young people to practice, rehearse, role play and model social situations and behaviours. They can help children feel less anxious in social situations and encourage and develop their friendships.

Social stories™

These are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why. They're often used to help children and young people with autism to understand difficult or unclear situations. They can help with things like understanding what

comes next in a series of activities, planning and organising and understanding someone else's behaviour or point of view. You can find out more on the National Autistic Society website.

SSE (Signed Supported English)

Signed Supported English a term used to describe signing and speaking English at the same time. It uses the same signs as British Sign Language, but also uses the same grammatical rules as spoken and written English and follows its structure. Find out more on the Sense website.

T

Task planners

A task planner breaks a task or activity down into small steps. The planner helps children or young people to start work independently and to complete tasks. It supports children who have attention and memory difficulties and helps them feel less anxious about the unknown.

Thrive

Thrive is a school-based programme which supports children with their social and emotional development. It's a school wide approach to support, but each child that's part of the programme has an individual plan and targeted support. It's often given as one to one or small group support from a trained teaching assistant at set times each week.

Total Communication Approach

This is a mix of communication methods that uses verbal and nonverbal ways to improve communication skills. This might include using pictures, symbols and photos, as well as words, gestures and signs.

Trauma informed approach

A trauma informed school is one that supports children and young people who have trauma or mental health problems and whose behaviour acts as a barrier to learning. Trauma-informed schools aim to reduce the potential that the school environment will cause more trauma, for example by using alternatives to isolation and suspension. Trauma informed schools also use relationship-based approaches to support, as well as creating a safe and caring environment. You can find

out more in the Centre for Mental Health's briefing report.

V

Visual Timetables

A visual timetable, timeline or visual activity schedule is a way of supporting a child to predict what will happen next. It helps a child to know what must happen first, before they can do the activity that they are often focused on. It also helps them to understand where they are in the day, by knowing what has gone before and what will come next.

Z

Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is a framework that helps children and young people develop an awareness of their feelings, energy and alertness levels. It's a way to think and talk about how a child feels on the inside and sort these feelings into four coloured zones. Once they understand their feelings and the zones, children can learn to use tools and strategies to manage. You can find out more on the Zones of Regulation website.

Published: June 2023
Review date: June 2025