

## **General advice to support children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)**

The following suggestions are good practice not only for children with SLCN but for all children.

### **If they have difficulty understanding language**

- Making classroom language easier to understand can improve children's compliance and general behaviour
- Consider the teaching environment, e.g. reduce background noise and distractions

### **Check their understanding**

- Support children to recognise when they do not understand

### **Help them focus on what is important**

- Make sure you are facing the child when giving information
- Use their name at the start of instructions if they are not focussed
- Use phrases like 'everyone needs to listen to this', however this instruction may be difficult for someone who has autism, for example
- Emphasise key words

### **Give extra thinking time**

- Allow extra time for them to listen and process language

### **Simplify your language**

- Use simple language
- Use short chunks of language and only include the important points
- Repeat and rephrase where necessary
- Slow your speech and insert more pauses
- Use shorter sentences
- Avoid or explain difficult words

### **Provide cues**

- Support what you are saying with visual cues, gestures, signing, diagrams pictures etc.
- Use visual timetables to help their understanding of the sequence of events
- Narrative frames including cues such as 'who?', 'where?' 'when?', 'what happened?'
- Demonstrate where possible

**Help them make links**

- Link new information to what the children people already know

**If they have difficulty expressing themselves**

- Listen and show your interest by maintaining eye contact and using their name but be aware that excessive use of eye contact may be difficult for some children, particularly those with autism
- Be patient and let them know you will wait
- Give positive feedback for effort
- Build on what they have already said, follow their lead
- Increase opportunities for real dialogue and conversation, take short turns
- Sometimes you may have to say (kindly) that you cannot understand and perhaps there is another way to explain it
- Offer help and support when they ask for it
- Make sure they are not rushed or feeling rushed
- Do not correct, instead provide the right model of spoken language
- Respond to **what** they are trying to say rather than how
- Prompt with cues such as 'first', 'then', 'last'

**If they stammer**

- Be calm and patient
- Give them time to think before responding
- Allow them time to finish what they are saying rather than finishing their sentence for them
- Do not put pressure on them to speak or read aloud

**If communication is a problem**

- Praise good listening skills
- Encourage children to look at the non-verbal cues which help us understand what the other person thinks and feels, for example when a person pauses, that means you can have a turn



Written with reference to 'Don't Get Me Wrong'