



Worcestershire's Early Years SENDCo Spring Term Cluster 2026

Housekeeping



- This meeting is a live & recorded event – please mute yourself & turn off your camera if you do not want to be seen on the recording.
- If you want to ask a question, please type your message in the chat and we will respond. Please ensure all personal details are removed.
- Please note we may not be able to cover all questions raised today, but please do not hesitate to contact one of the team after the event if you need further information or guidance

Agenda- action packed tonight!



- Guest speaker – Lisa Pinkerton
- EP support – Vicky De Cloedt
- CCN slot – Kimberley Turnbull
- Early Years Inclusion Team updates/reminders
- Funding update

The value of visuals in the Early Years

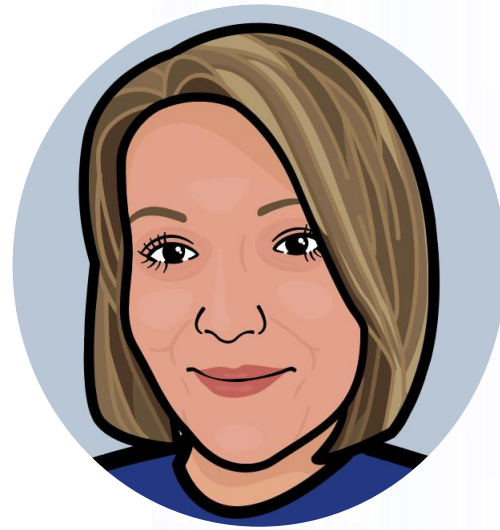


Welcome **Lisa Pinkerton** from 'Widget'



Widgit Online

Worcestershire Early Years Inclusion Team





Lisa Pinkerton
Head of Education
Widgit Software



<https://www.widgit.com/support/index.htm>

Technical Support

 Contact us
Telephone: 01926 333680
Email: support@widgit.com

 Training
Widgit training resources and free webinars to help you make the most of your software


International Support





Products




Learn

 Video Tutorials
Our bite-sized videos will help you to get you started

 Helpsheets
PDF guides to setting up accounts

 Borders
Bring structure, style and clarity to your resources with Borders.

 Help Centre
Online manual covering all the features of Widgit Online



Objectives



Understand the purpose and benefits of using symbols.



Identify high-impact opportunities to use Widgit in EYFS settings.



Understand how to roll out symbol usage consistently.



Leave with practical next steps...



Understanding Inclusion



presence



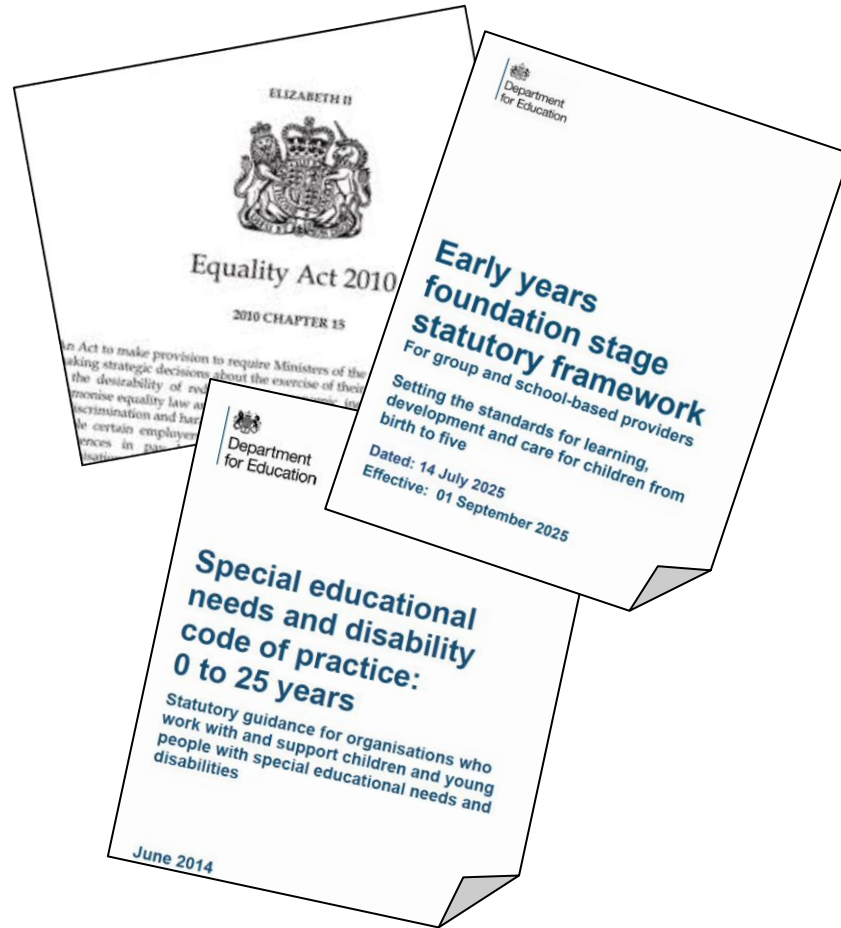
participation



progress



Policy and Practice



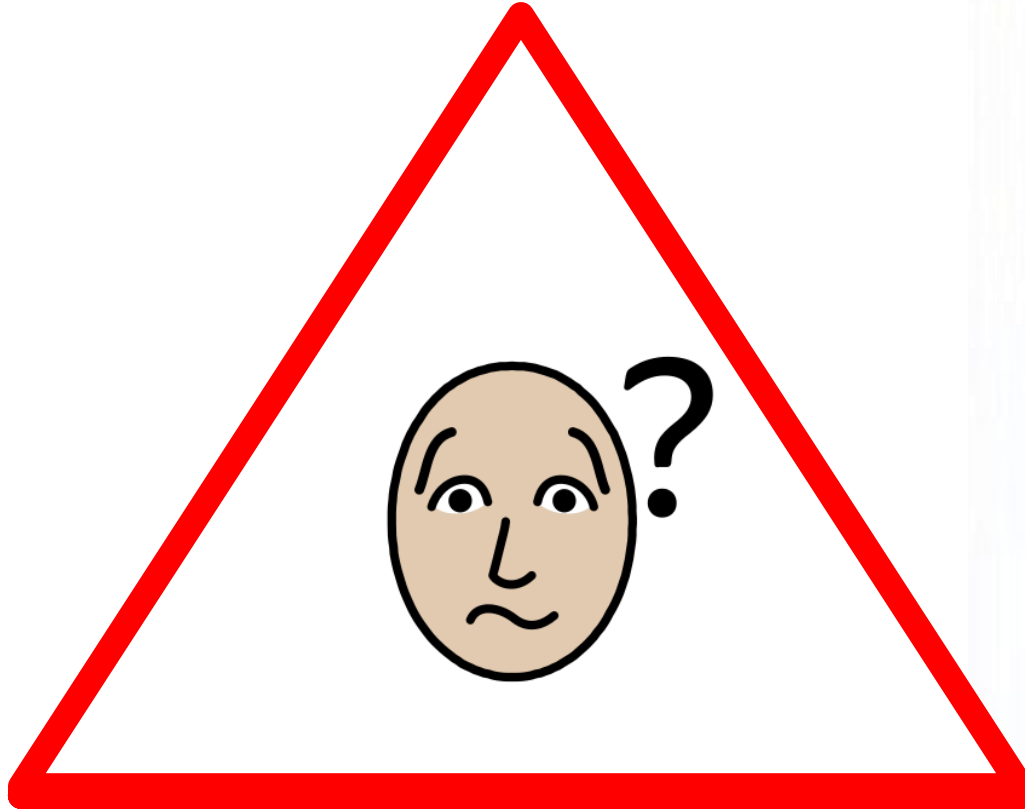
Removing Barriers



Physical environments



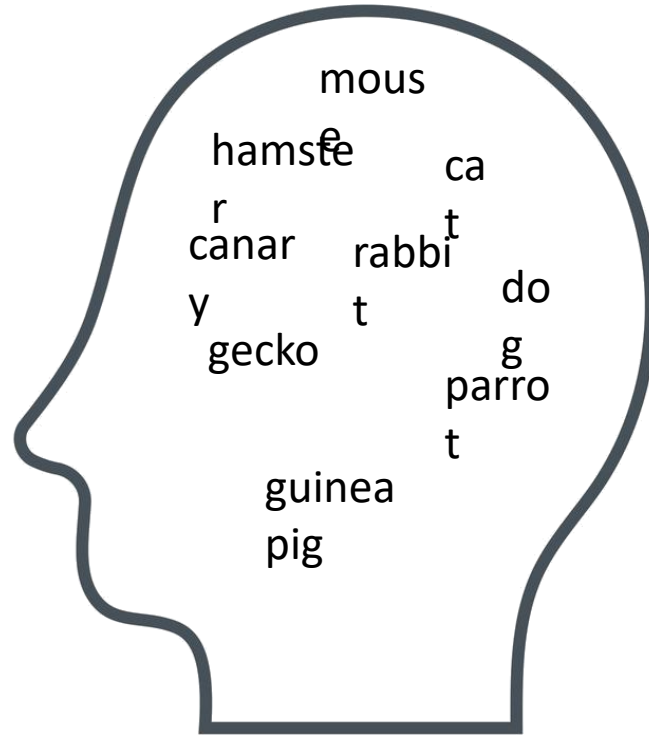
How symbols can help... and why



How symbols can help... and why



Why symbols work...



visual vs sequential processing

emotional and cognitive impact

concretises abstract ideas



Removing Barriers: Simple Changes



Symbols vs Pictures



Symbols vs Pictures

*I like to use
own pictu
instead*



Why symbols?



water play



The Widgit Schema



book



library



book shop



librarian



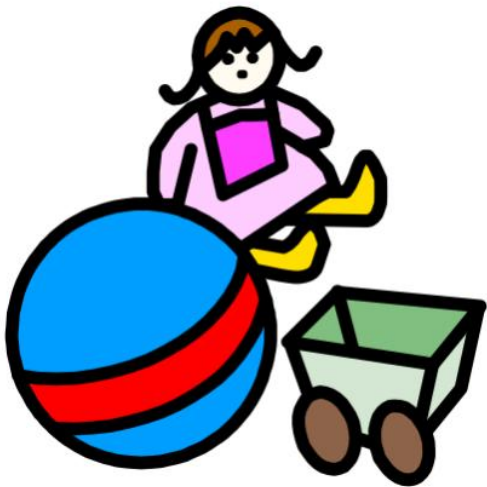
publisher



read



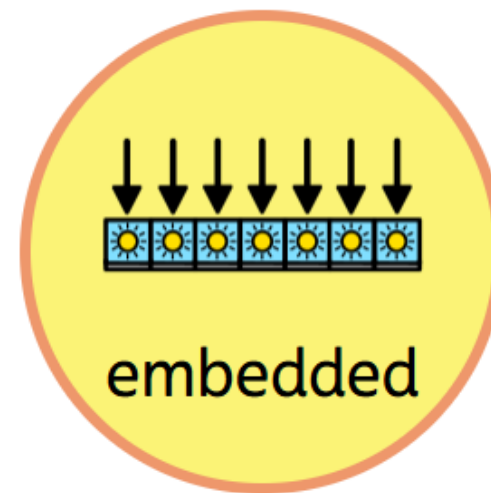
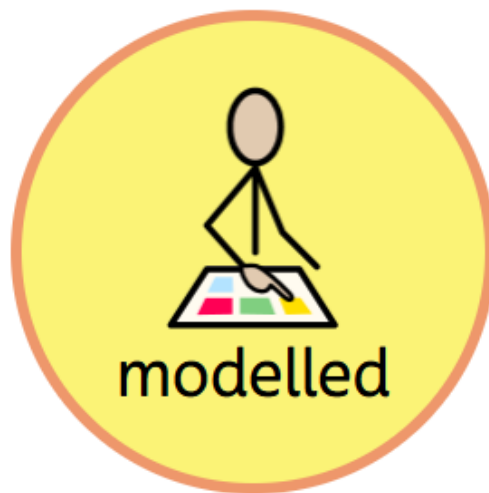
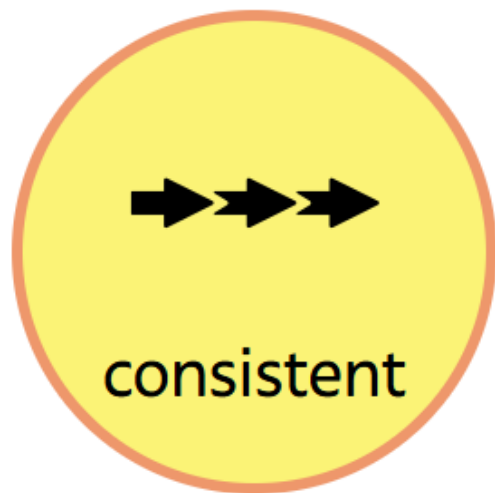
audio book



Who symbolisation supports...



How symbols support...



The Early Years Resource Pack...

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View recent uploads / downloads

Move Copy Delete Download Publish Unpublish

Search Search

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	View	View PDF	Download	Published	Last modified
<input type="checkbox"/>	Homework Examples	1	View	PDF		1 day ago
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotions and Behaviour Scales Pack	1	View	PDF		1 day ago
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Examples	1	View	PDF		2 days ago

sea rainbow fish beautiful scales

happy

cave

The Rainbow Fish

sparking

upset

wise octopus starfish friends lonely

Icons: soccer ball, pyramid, dice, geometric shapes, juice box, ice cream cone, rolling pin, geometric shapes.

First Next Last

fine motor skills

dough disco

water tray

Choices

sensory toys

playdough

painting

sand

construction

books

My Warning Signs ...

My body might

sweaty palms

flushed cheeks

shaky

























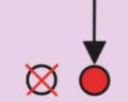
goosebumps

butterflies

cry

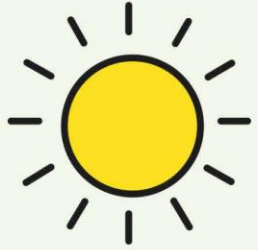


Communication

 Who?	 Doing?	 What?	 water play	 Where?
 I	 want	 reading area	 construction corner	 inside
 friend	 don't want	 role play	 mark making	 outside
 key worker	 play	 messy play	 something else	 excited
 someone else	 feel	 happy	 sad	 something else



Phonics



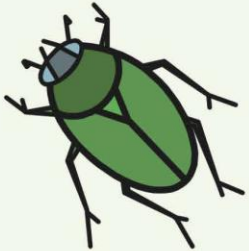
sun run fun



rug hug mug



tug cut but



bun bug yum



hug bus mug



run bug bus



s

a

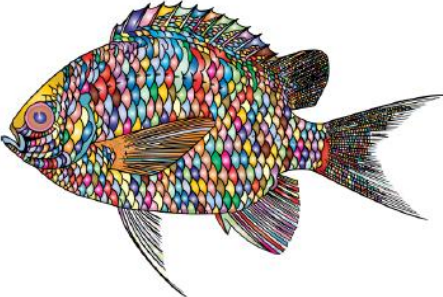
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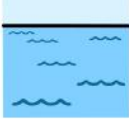












i

n

Literacy




The Rainbow Fish


 sea	 rainbow	 fish	 beautiful	 scales
 happy				 sparkling
 cave				 upset
 wise	 octopus	 starfish	 friends	 lonely




Transitions



First



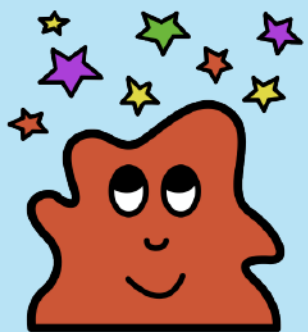
Next



Last



fine motor skills



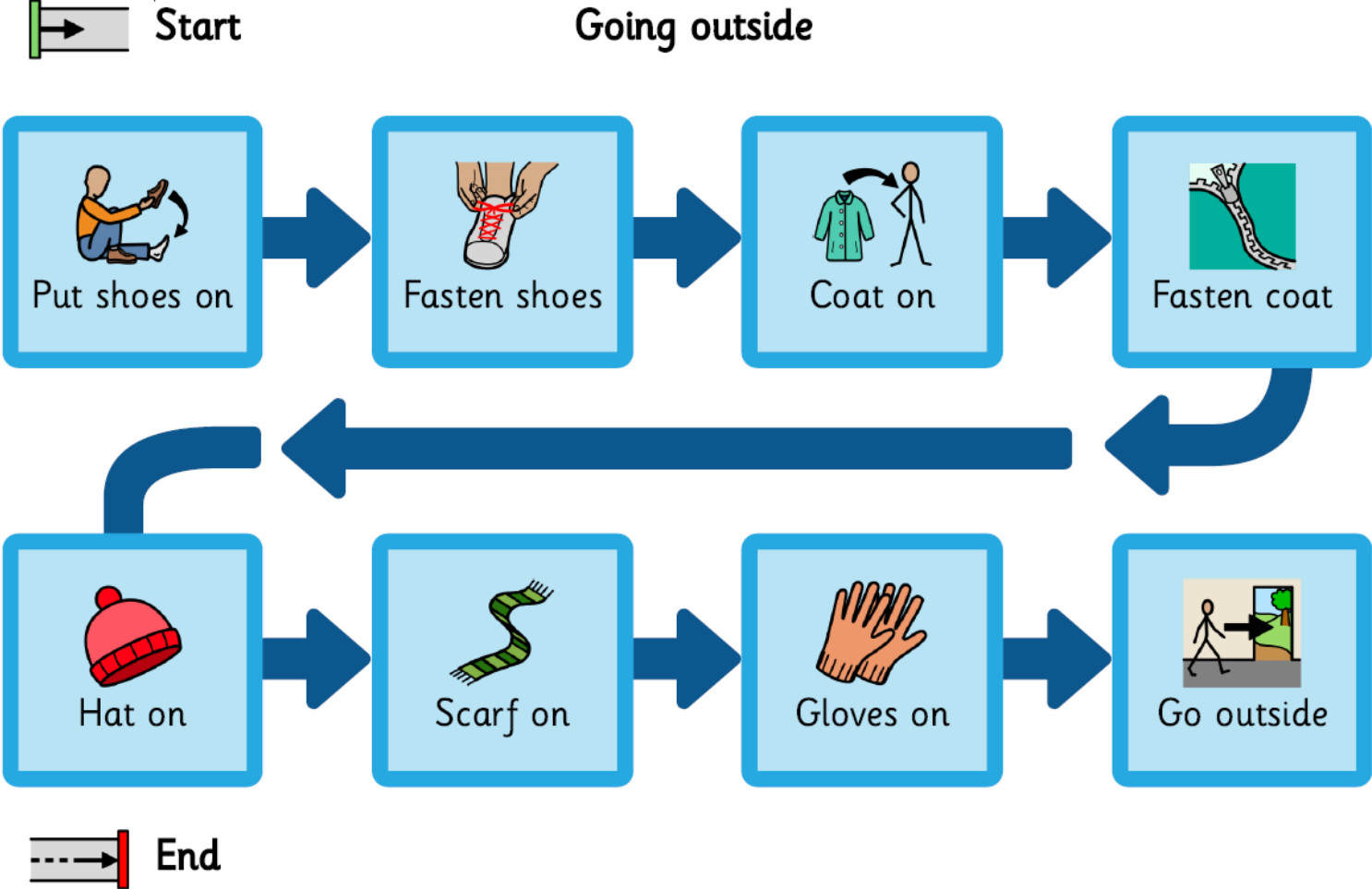
dough disco



water tray



Sequences and Routines



Navigating the Setting



	Feathers
	Sequins
	Pipe cleaners
	Lolly sticks
	Fabric
	Googly eyes
	Stickers



Celebrations



Birthdays



invitations



celebrate



party clothes



party food



dancing



singing



music



birthday cake



games



party bags



Diwali



festival



diya



sweets



rangoli



pray



Rama



Sita



Ravana



Hanuman



fireworks



Eid



festival



Ramadan



suhoor



fasting



iftar



decorations



pray



mosque



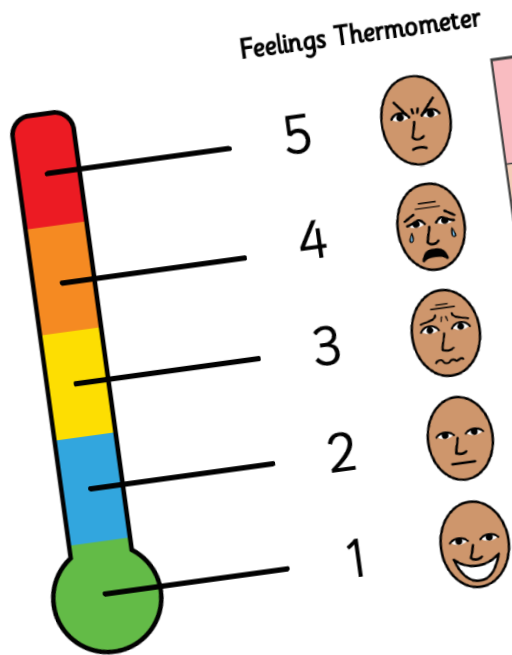
quran



money box



Emotional Literacy and Regulation



	change
	mealtimes
	turn taking
	story time
	playing outside



friends
whisper
close eyes
hum
rock
stories
music
games
calm
sensory toys
squeezes
bubbles
sing
lie down



Making Meaningful Choices

Choice Board

 10 Green Bottles	 Twinkle, Twinkle	 If you're happy...
 Incy Wincy Spider	 Row, Row, Row Your Boat	 She Sells Seashells
 Sing a Rainbow	 The Wheels on the Bus	 Humpty Dumpty
 Goldilocks	 Red Riding Hood	 3 Billy Goats





Do you know



you can



cut and paste

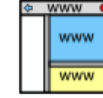


directly into templates



using

our



'populate frames' feature?

Widgit Online

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View recent uploads / downloads

Move Copy Delete Download Publish Unpublish

Search Search

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	View	View PDF	Download	Published
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Examples	I	View	PDF	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Homework Examples	I	View	PDF	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotions and Behaviour Scales Pack	I	View	PDF	
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Autism Support Pack	I	View	PDF	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curriculum Vocabulary	I	View	PDF	

happy

sad

angry

nervous

excited

tired

hungry

thirsty



Quickly create bilingual resources using our dual language templates.

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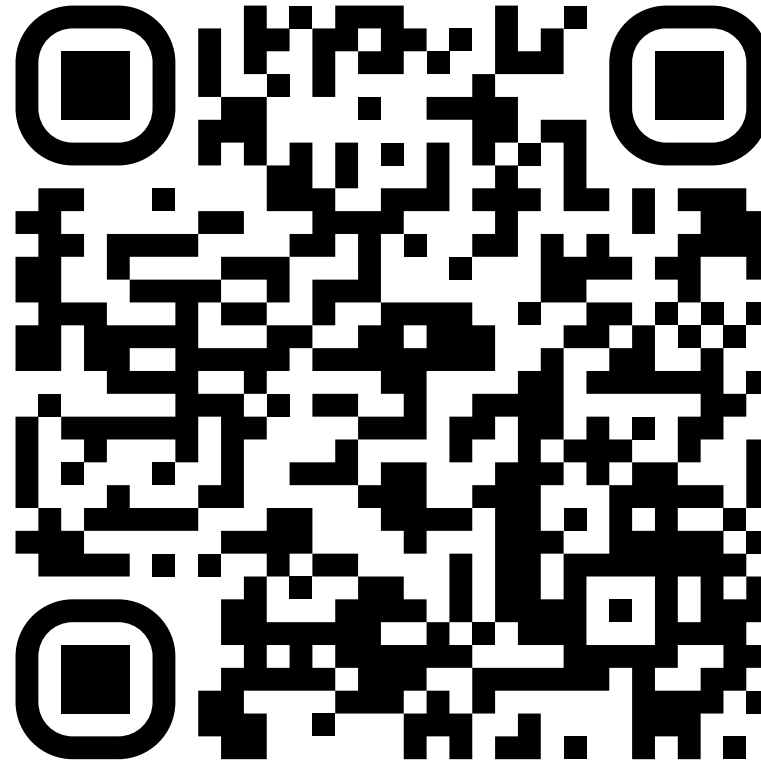
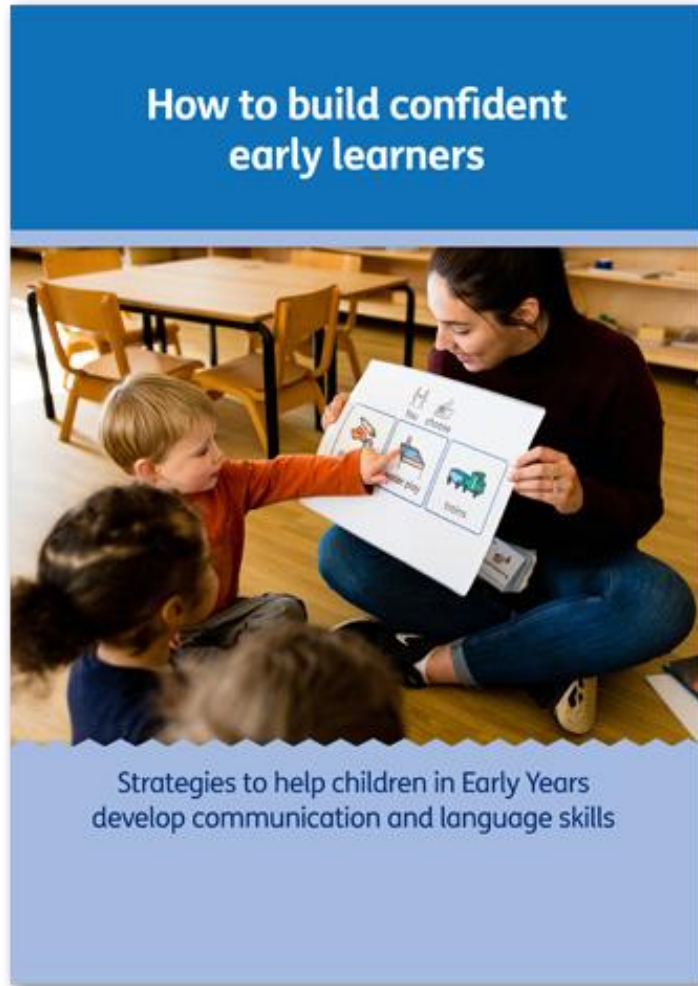
Search Search

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title		View	View PDF	Download	Published
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Examples	I	View	PDF		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Homework Examples	I	View	PDF		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotions and Behaviour Scales Pack	I	View	PDF		
<input type="checkbox"/>	School Autism Support Pack	I	View	PDF		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curriculum Vocabulary	I	View	PDF		

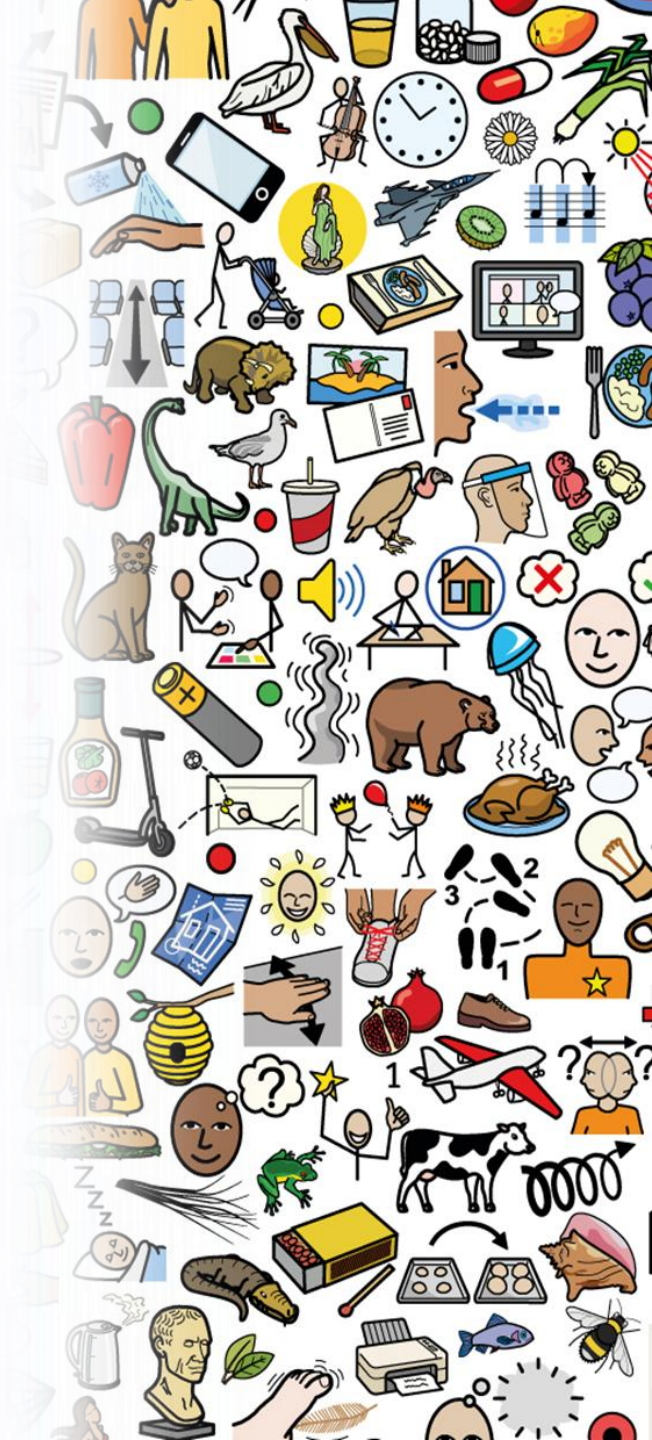
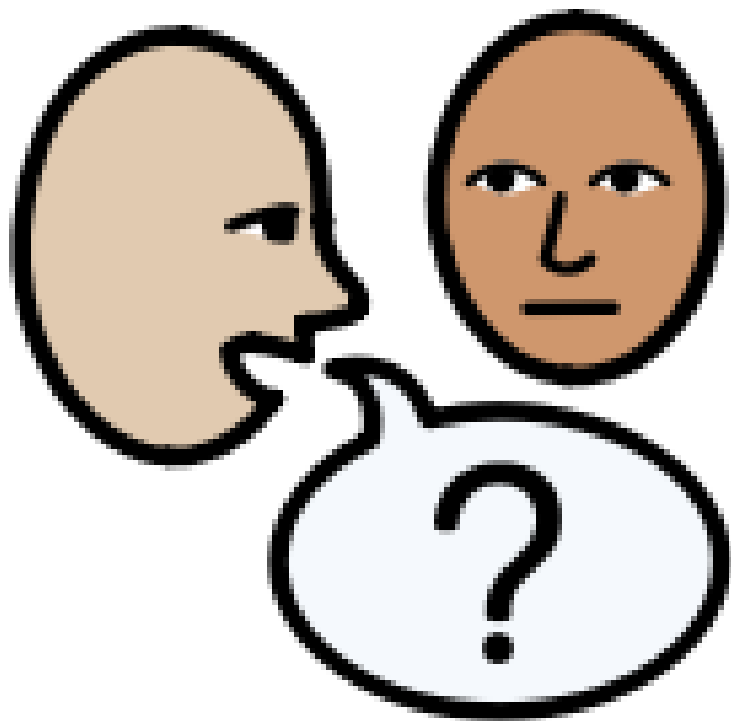
cat
dog
pig
cow
chicken
horse



Making Meaningful Choices



Any Questions?





The Educational Psychology Team joins us to share a support opportunity



Early Years Practitioner Supervision

Dr Vicky De Cloedt – Educational Psychologist



What is Early Years Practitioner Supervision?

- This is a safe, dedicated, non-judgemental space for Early Years Practitioners to collaboratively develop ideas and actions to help in supporting a child with additional needs.

“Supervision is a process of professional learning and development that enables individuals to reflect on and develop their knowledge, skills, and competence.” (The Health Care and Professions Council, 2024)



Who will lead the session?

- Sessions will be facilitated by an Educational Psychologist, and they will be supported by an Assistant Educational Psychologist.



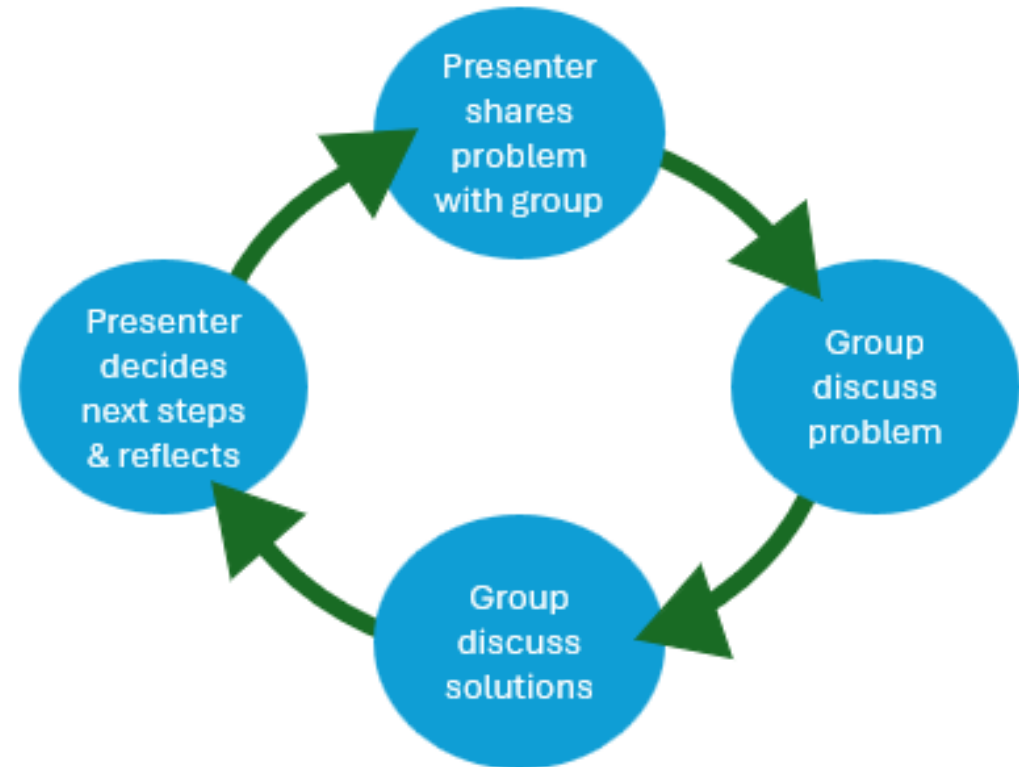
Why are we offering the sessions?

- We are offering this space to provide further support to Early Years settings outside of the Joint Assessment Meeting process.
- We felt offering this supervision would be beneficial to support early intervention across Early Years.



What structure will sessions follow?

- The supervision sessions take a Solution Circles approach.
- Once the case has been presented, the group will have the opportunities to ask questions and collaboratively explore solutions together.
- Attendees leave the session with strategies that they can try to implement into their practice.





What type of case should I bring?

- You can bring any case that you are finding difficult and needing some extra guidance or support with.
- We just ask that you only bring one case and when signing up you include some information about the case you intend to discuss.



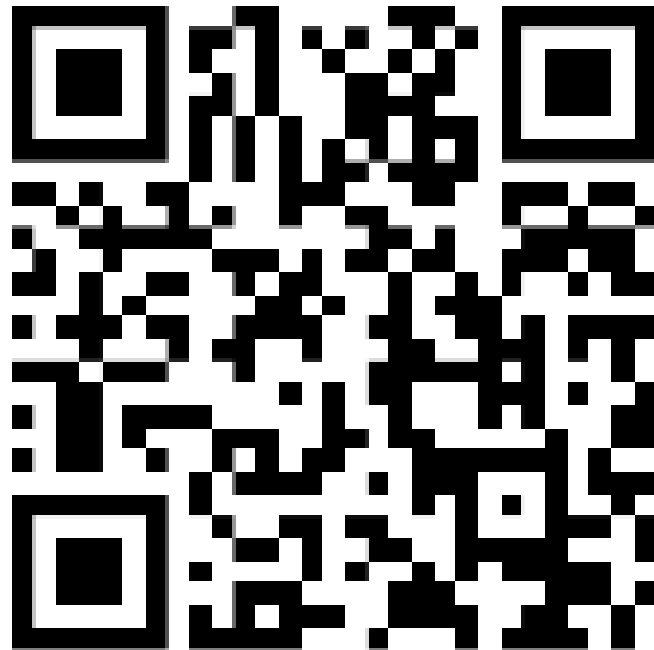
Attendees and duration?

- There will be up to 6 attendees
- Sessions will last for 60 minutes and take place virtually via MS Teams.



How do I sign up?

- Scan the following QR code to sign up for a supervision session:





Any questions?

- You can also contact us with any questions via the following email:

edpsychology@worcestershire.gov.uk



CCN Team slot – Kimberley Turnbull



Supporting Children with Complex Communication Needs in the Early Years

Kimberley Turnbull

A free suite of resources designed to support pre-verbal children, or those with complex communication needs in Early Years.

A Resource Package for Children with Complex Communication Needs in Early Years

A suite of resources to support pre-school children with significant communication and interaction needs in a mainstream setting.

This package contains resources to support all areas of the EYFS, in the form of short webinars, advice sheets and resources, broken down into the 4 specific strands of the EYFS.

It has been designed to be used by SENCOs to develop their own knowledge/resources, or as a way of settings facilitating training with staff on a range of strategies

Cost: Free

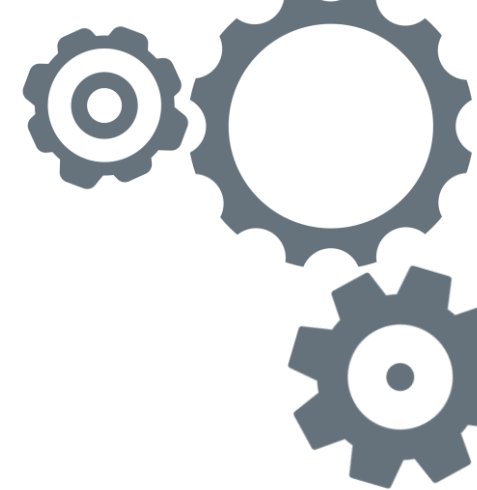
To find out more:
Scan the QR code and search code 10691

Visit CPD and search code 10691
<https://capublic.worcestershire.gov.uk/LearnCPD/CoursesSearch.aspx>



The Unique Child - Webinars

- SCERTS in the Early Years (Part 1 and 2)
- Developing early communication skills
- Objects of Reference



Using SCERTS to Support Children with Complex Communication Needs in Early Years: Part 1 - Assessment

Taken from SCERTS by: Barry Prizant, Amy Wetherby, Emily Rubin and Amy Laurent

Developing early communication skills

OBJECTS OF REFERENCE

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/education

The Unique Child – Advice Sheets and Resources



Advice Sheets

- Developing early communication/choice making

DEVELOPING EARLY COMMUNICATION SKILLS

An introduction to enabling communication with children who do not yet use spoken words within a mainstream setting. This advice sheet complements the webinar of the same title.

Overview

Children with complex communication needs, including autism, may attend a [mainstream, early years](#) setting. Where children have not yet developed the ability to express needs and wants to others, a multiagency approach, including families and speech and language therapy, may be needed. This advice sheet aims to compliment the individual recommendations with some general information and strategies that may be helpful.

Modes of communication

Communication is the exchange of information, thoughts or ideas between two people. Communication can involve spoken words, written language, body language, etc. To be successful, communication needs to involve at least two people. There are lots of ways apart from spoken words that information can be shared, for example, using objects, photographs, symbols, signs and alternative and augmentative communication systems (AAC). It is important that a child's mode of communication is supported throughout the day, both for receptive and expressive communication.

Receptive communication:

Child needs to 'hear' instructions, choices and information from others in their mode, for example, an object of reference alongside a verbal instruction to go outside.

Expressive communication:

Child needs resources available for the words they may want or need to use, for example, a communication board with objects to represent the choices in play, i.e. a train, a spade, etc.

Planning communication activities:

It may be helpful to consider the things the child enjoys, and plan ways for them to make those choices throughout the day.

Considerations:

- Observation. Carefully notice the activities, sensory profile and passions or interests the child has and enjoys.
- Communication based sessions need to be timetabled regularly as well as nonverbal communication being resourced and planned for throughout the day/curriculum.

Resources

- SCERTS assessment forms

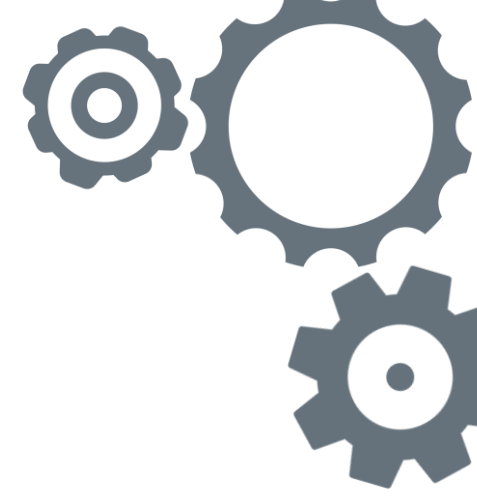
SCERTS in Action

OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT FORM – SOCIAL PARTNER STAGE
(I am using body language, gestures, and facial expressions to communicate)

Child's name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
 Setting: _____ Person/s completing form: _____

Scoring criteria: 2 = consistently across two partners and two contexts 1 = inconsistent 0 = not yet observed

Joint Attention	I can communicate for many reasons (WHY I communicate)	Date	Date	Date	Date
JA1.2	Initiate interaction Criterion: The child initiates interaction through nonverbal or vocal means by using the proximity (moving toward a person), physical contact, or gaze.				
JA4.1	Request desired food or things Criterion: The child directs nonverbal actions or vocal signals to get another person to give a desired food item or object. The signals must be directed to a person by using proximity (moving toward a person), physical contact, or gaze.				
JA5.2	Request social games Criterion: The child directs nonverbal actions or vocal signals to direct a person to begin or to continue carrying out a game-like social interaction.				
Social Understanding	I can communicate in many ways (HOW I communicate)	Date	Date	Date	Date
SU 4.4	Use giving or pointing gestures Criterion: The teacher uses at least 3 different contact gestures (i.e., the child's hand touches another person, a thing, or a picture) that are conventional (i.e., giving, pointing, and pushing away).				
SU 1.2	Imitate familiar actions when elicited by a partner Criterion: The child imitates or closely approximates a familiar action or sound immediately after a partner models an action (e.g., clapping during a song, reaching up to be carried, etc.).				
Mutual Regulation	I can cope with the help of others (MUTUAL Emotional Regulation)	Date	Date	Date	Date
MR2.1	Soothe when comforted by a caregiver Criterion: The child or calms down quickly when the caregiver offers comfort verbally or nonverbally with the exception of periods of time when the child is experiencing extreme dysregulation, fear, or violations of expectations.				
MR2.6	Make choices when offered by a caregiver Criterion: The child directs nonverbal or vocal signals to make a choice when offered by a partner.				
MR3.1	Express negative emotion to seek comfort Criterion: The child displays a clear vocal or facial expression of distress or frustration and shares it with another person by looking at, approaching (e.g., crawling over to), gesturing toward (e.g., raising arms to be picked up), or touching that person (pulling on pant leg) to seek comfort.				
Self Regulation	I can cope on my own (SELF Emotional Regulation)	Date	Date	Date	Date
SR2.3	Use behaviours modeled by others to self-soothe or focus myself. Criterion: The child uses behaviours (i.e., simple motor actions or sensory motor strategies) that are imitated either immediately or at a later time from those modeled by caregivers to regulate arousal level (e.g., using a chew tube, jumping, squeezing).				
SR3.4	Use behaviors to make an independent transition. Criterion: The child uses an object representing an upcoming activity to make a transition, using movement, and using a comfort item.				



Positive Relationships: Webinars

- Developing positive relationships
- Intensive interaction
- Copy Box
- What's in the box

**DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE COMPLEX
COMMUNICATION NEEDS IN EARLY
YEARS**
Autism/CCN Team

THE COPY BOX
Using a double set of toys to help encourage
attention sharing and turn taking skills with
children who have complex communication
needs in Early Years
Autism/CCN Team

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?
An Approach for Establishing Joint
Attention with Children who have Complex
Communication Needs in Early Years
Autism/CCN Team

Positive Relationships: Advice sheets and resources



Advice sheets:

- Developing positive relationships
- Intensive interaction
- Copy Box
- What's in the box

COPY BOX

An introduction to using a duplicate set of toys to encourage shared attention and create moments of connection. This advice sheet complements the webcast of the same title.

Aims:

- To encourage moments of connection/social interaction.
- To validate the child's play.
- To encourage and extend joint attention.
- To facilitate language and communication development

What is it?



Copy Box is a child-led approach using a double set of toys, presented to a child in a large container such as a tray or box. It is important that the type of toys or resources you put in the copy box are relevant to the child's developmental needs and are likely to appeal to the child. The idea of copy box is to play with the child by offering them the box and WAITING to see what they choose to do. You then use your box with the exact same toys and resources to COPY the child's actions and choices. Games that use and encourage copying help children to develop their observation and imitation skills which in turn, are important for developing social communication skills.



Who would benefit?



- A child who is a social partner and benefits from visual/sensory input and reduced language.
- A child who benefits from attuned emotional support from a trusted adult.
- A child whose play is often solitary and experiences difficulty in sharing attention in play.

The Copy Box and SCERTS:



In Worcestershire, our team uses the SCERTS model when working with young children. This model is designed to help children develop skills and understanding within both social communication and emotional regulation through the use of different transactional supports. The Copy Box approach supports all three aspects of SCERTS model:

- **Within Social Communication** (i.e., why and how the child communicates), this approach can establish the building blocks needed for interaction by promoting moments of connection.
- **Within Emotional Regulation** (i.e., how a child copes on their own and with help), this approach can provide positive experiences which help to build trust with an adult.
- **Transactional Support** (i.e., what we can do to support the child), this approach is a short intervention that can be easily implemented with just a few resources.

Where and when to use it?



Aim for 3 minutes once a day, at least 2 or 3 times per week. The more the child practises, the better they will become and the more effective the intervention will be. Sessions should be carried out on a 1:1 basis in a quiet learning space with minimal distractions.

DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

An introduction to developing positive relationships with young autistic children or children with complex communication needs who may be entering mainstream school with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Why are relationships with a key adult so important?

Neurotypical children often actively interact and communicate with others, using verbal language or physical/facial cues. They also quickly learn how to interpret the intentions of others by picking up on their tone of voice and their body language. Autistic children can show little desire or ability to communicate/engage with others, or may respond in ways we do not understand. This, however, does not mean that they do not want to interact or have fun with others. We need to find ways to make it happen, and this starts with a trusted adult.

How do positive relationships help?

We ask autistic children to step into the unknown every day, especially when starting a new school. When we try to play/interact with them, it can be so scary that they are overwhelmed – they may turn away, ignore the other person, or push them away. Whilst it may feel like the child does not want to engage, it is important to think about what would make the situation less scary; this can often be having someone that they trust. There are 3 key questions that need to underpin everything that we do to support autistic children and are particularly pertinent when it comes to starting school:



Developing a trusting relationship with a key adult can often help an autistic child answer these questions and step into the unknown.

Positive relationships and SCERTS

The SCERTS approach is designed to help children develop skills and understanding within both social communication and emotional regulation through the use of different transactional supports. Developing a positive relationship with a trusted adult is key to all three aspects of SCERTS approach:

Social Communication – why and how a child communicates:

For children whose social communication difficulties mean that they struggle to initiate interaction or respond to the initiations of others, a key adult can help set the stage for interaction.

Emotional Regulation – how a child copes on their own and with help:

For children who are fearful of interaction because they struggle to predict that others are a source of engagement/help, a trusting relationship can help them take the risk.

Transactional Support – what we can do to support the child:

Developing a positive relationship with a key adult is an important strategy to lay the foundations for both social communication and emotional regulation.

Who would benefit?

Children at all SCERTS stages benefit from having positive relationships with adults in the classroom. **Social Partners** (SCERTS) in particular will need a key adult who understands their unique profile of strengths and challenges and who is able to adjust their interactive style accordingly.

How often?

Ideally interactions should build on naturally occurring opportunities within the school day but they also need to be planned for. Gather together a collection of resources that are likely to appeal to the child and keep them close by, should they be needed to encourage engagement. Aim for at least 3 minutes of interaction, at least 3 times a day. Be mindful that, within that, you may only get a few seconds of engagement at first but keep trying.

Resources:

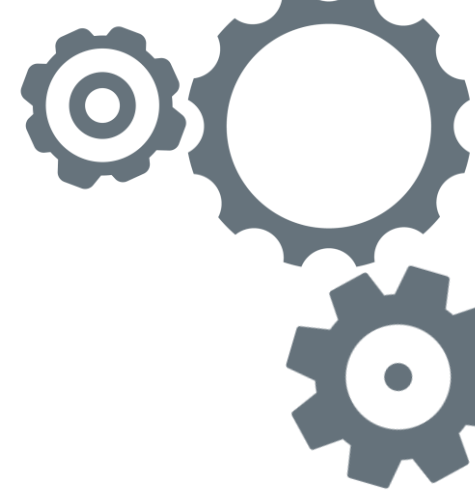
- Solution finding chart (early years)

Solution Finding Chart:

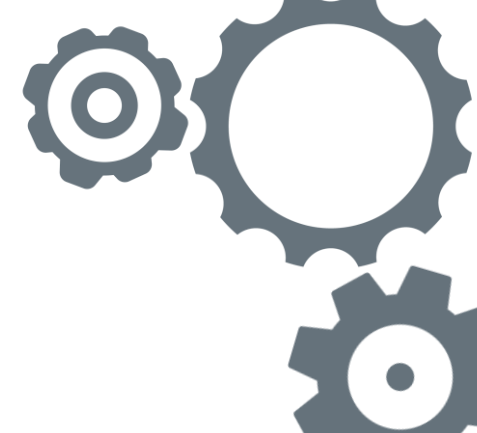
Where did it happen? Date: Time:	Sensory Triggers	Prepared for transition What happened before?	What was happening? What was the child being asked to do?
<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outside <input type="checkbox"/> Moving rooms <input type="checkbox"/> Snack <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch/Tea <input type="checkbox"/> Drop off <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up <input type="checkbox"/> Different adult <input type="checkbox"/> Change to daily routine Communication by child: <input type="checkbox"/> Removing clothing <input type="checkbox"/> Moving away <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving space <input type="checkbox"/> Hiding <input type="checkbox"/> Always on the move <input type="checkbox"/> Seeking adult <input type="checkbox"/> Biting <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting <input type="checkbox"/> Swiping <input type="checkbox"/> Distressed vocalising (screaming, shouting, crying)	Tick all that apply <input type="checkbox"/> Hungry <input type="checkbox"/> Thirsty <input type="checkbox"/> Hot <input type="checkbox"/> Cold <input type="checkbox"/> Wet <input type="checkbox"/> Soiled <input type="checkbox"/> Signs of illness <input type="checkbox"/> Tired <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Too Noisy? <input type="checkbox"/> Too busy? <input type="checkbox"/> Too bright? <input type="checkbox"/> Too dark? <input type="checkbox"/> Too smelly? <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Tick all that apply <input type="checkbox"/> Objects of reference <input type="checkbox"/> Song/signifier <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph <input type="checkbox"/> Warning <input type="checkbox"/> Count down <input type="checkbox"/> Timer <input type="checkbox"/> Part of routine <input type="checkbox"/> Had the child finished what they had been doing <input type="checkbox"/> Has the activity come to a natural finish <input type="checkbox"/> Given time to transition in their own time <input type="checkbox"/> Follow the child's lead	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult led: e.g. messy play, story <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Pair <input type="checkbox"/> Small group <input type="checkbox"/> Whole group <input type="checkbox"/> Child Led: <input type="checkbox"/> Was the object that they want available? <input type="checkbox"/> Could they do the activity where they wanted? <input type="checkbox"/> Did other children affect their play? <input type="checkbox"/> Did things go wrong in their play?

Enabling Environments: Webinars

- Designing Meaningful activities
- Choosing boards
- Now/Next boards



Enabling Environments: Advice Sheets



Advice Sheets:

- Designing meaningful activities
- Choosing boards
- Now/next


Now/Next Board

A visual support to provide information to support the child.

What is it?

A Now/Next board is a support to provide the child with information about what is happening.

- **Safe:** Emotional safety in activities that are known and experienced before. The symbols/pictures ensure adults and child have the same expectation and language around an activity.
- **Predictable:** The symbols/pictures and the simple use of language make activities predictable.
- **Desirable:** Personalised, highly motivating activities for the pupil.



The board is made up of a symbol, photograph or object to show what is happening now (on the left) and a symbol, photograph or object of what is happening next (on the right).

Who would benefit?

A child who benefits from visual support to understand and focus on spoken language.	A child who needs support with transition and small changes.	A child who benefits from visual supports to help them focus.
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When to use it?

Now/Next boards should be used consistently throughout the day to sequence consecutive events.

At first use highly motivating activities for both 'Now' and the 'Next.'	When the child is ready, you can gradually adapt the 'Now' activity but always ensure the task is developmentally relevant .
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DESIGNING MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX COMMUNICATION NEEDS

An introduction to supporting children in Early Years who may be struggling to engage in an environment, with the activities on offer or with the people around them.

Designing meaningful activities?

A meaningful activity for a child with autism or complex communication needs is one that is enjoyable, captures their attention and motivates them to engage with it. It is different for every child but will capitalise on the things that they are interested in.

How do they help?

They can capture and potentially extend the child's interest. They can also motivate the child to engage with an adult, request more and play independently.

Designing meaningful activities and SCERTS

A SCERTS board is designed to help children develop social communication and interaction skills through the use of different transactional supports. Designing meaningful activities is one of the key areas of transactional support within the SCERTS framework. Meaningful activities promote joint attention and encourage communication.

Partner: Meaningful activities include those with sensory properties that are intrinsically motivating (e.g., movement, music, art, and messy play) and have purposeful goals (e.g., hiding games and 'cause-effect' toys).

Communication Partner: Meaningful activities include those with hands-on qualities that lend towards social interests, or a desirable end-point.

Attention Partner: Meaningful activities include embedding the child's special interests within activities that have intrinsically rewarding sensory properties and lead to a productive and meaningful outcome.

How should they be used for?

Children who are at any Partner Stage (SCERTS) benefit from meaningful activities. Children who are at the Language Partner Stage (SCERTS) benefit from meaningful activities if they are provided with activities and resources that are meaningful to them.

When should they be used?

Meaningful activities should be embedded within the continuous provision of the setting.

CHOOSING BOARDS

An introduction to supporting young children with complex communication needs who may be struggling with making choices.

WHAT IS A CHOOSING BOARD?

Choosing Boards essentially present options to a child with a series of pictures/objects illustrating what is available. Learning to make small choices as a young child can lead to making bigger choices as an adult. Ultimately, making choices improves communication, quality of life, and independence. Understanding preferences and making choices known can be difficult for some autistic children. They often benefit from a concrete way to visually understand what their options are and how to communicate their choice to others.

Initially, the pictures need to look similar to the actual object in order for the child to make the connection between the picture and the object. An item relating to the activity may also be used for pupils working with concrete resources. Alternatively, photographs of the exact object can be taken. Some pupils may be able to understand pictures or symbols which can be generalised to different types of the same object (e.g., a symbol of a puzzle for multiple types of puzzles).

HOW DO THEY HELP?

- To enable the child to make decisions and express preferences.
- To promote a communication exchange.
- To narrow the choices down - there could be as little as 2 options at first.
- To implement structure, routine and familiarity, which could help to reduce anxiety.

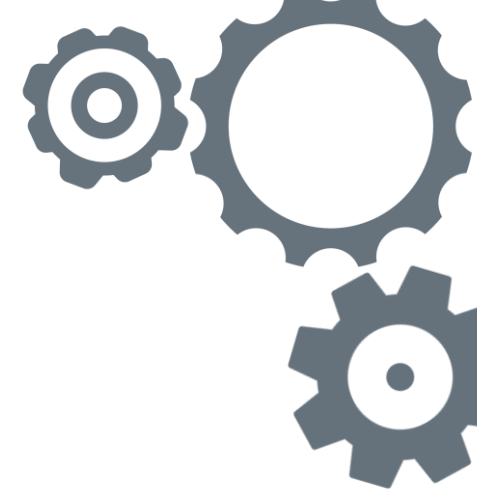
WHO SHOULD THEY BE USED FOR?

Children who are at the Language Partner Stage and the Conversation Partner Stage (SCERTS) are most likely to benefit from a choosing board that uses photographs, pictures or symbols. The type of visual cue depends on the child. Social Partners (SCERTS) can be encouraged to make a choice when presented with objects of reference.

WHEN SHOULD THEY BE USED?

Choosing boards can be used whenever the child can be encouraged to make a choice. Some examples of when one might be useful include:

- Activities during free or play time,
- Food items during snack or meals,
- Books in the Book Corner,
- Sensory activities,
- Which academic tasks to work on first (if possible),
- Which work tasks to complete first (if possible),
- With whom to spend their time at Break.
- Games to play at Break.



Learning and Development: Webcasts

- Emotional regulation
- Power of Music
- Designing sensory curriculum parts 1 and 2
- Song signifiers

EMOTIONAL REGULATION FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX COMMUNICATION NEEDS IN EARLY YEARS
AUTISM/CCN Team

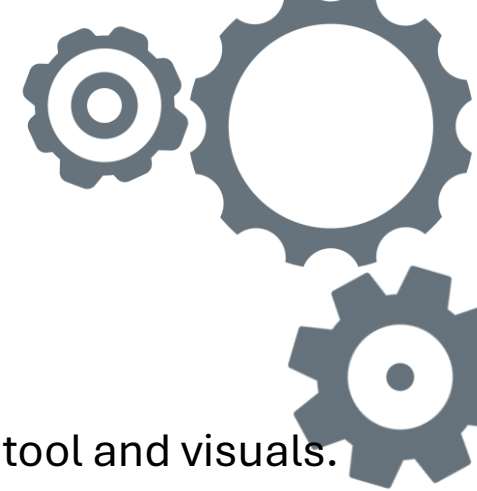
Using a sensory approach in a mainstream setting
Part 1: areas and ideas

county council

The Power of Music

Music to support social communication, mutual regulation and relationships.

Autism/CCN Team
Inclusion Support Services,
Worcestershire County Council



Learning and Development: Advice sheets and resources

Advice Sheets:
Emotional regulation
Using a sensory approach
Song signifiers

Resources:
Power of music additional songs, assessment tool and visuals.
Observation template

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

An introduction to supporting [the emotional](#) regulation with young autistic children or children with complex communication needs who may be entering mainstream school with an Education, Health and Care Plan

Why is this so important?

Autistic children often [have to](#) work extremely hard to navigate the challenges they face. At School, these challenges come from multiple sources, not least the pace of the curriculum, the sensory input of their environment, and the social demands of their peers. Autistic children can struggle to regulate their emotional responses and become overwhelmed. They may experience big emotions that they do not recognise or understand, and this can be scary. They may experience a build-up of stress/anxiety that can lead to complete dysregulation, often referred to as a 'meltdown'.

How can we help?

It can be helpful to think of the 'stress bucket' analogy. Everyday experiences (stressors) fill up the bucket until it reaches the top. Then, a minor event (trigger) causes the bucket to overflow and the child becomes dysregulated. Whilst it may seem that the trigger is small, it is the build-up of stressors in the bucket that has made the last event unmanageable. We can help offset the amount of stress going into the bucket by 'releasing the tap' through making [adaptions](#) to the child's environment and to our interactive style. We can also model strategies that the child can use to help them maintain a more regulated state.



Emotional regulation and SCERTS

The SCERTS approach is designed to help children develop skills and understanding within both social communication and emotional regulation through the use of different transactional supports. Developing a positive relationship with a trusted adult is key to all three aspects of SCERTS approach:

Social Communication – why and how a child communicates:

For children whose social communication difficulties mean that they struggle to express how they feel, support is needed to enable them to communicate their needs effectively.

Emotional Regulation – how a child copes on their own and with help:

For children who struggle to manage their emotional responses, support can be provided to alleviate some of the load and offset the build-up of anxiety.

Transactional Support – what we can do to support the child:

We can be responsive to the child's levels of arousal and use strategies and approaches so that they do not reach an overload state.

Who would benefit?

Children at all SCERTS stages benefit from emotional regulation strategies. Social Partners (SCERTS) in particular will need adults who are attuned to the early signs that their [feelings are](#) beginning to escalate and who can make the right adjustments for them when they cannot communicate their needs effectively.

USING A SENSORY APPROACH IN A MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

An introduction to supporting children with significant social and communication needs within a mainstream environment.

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM – WHY?

Children who have not yet developed functional communication skills may need adaptations and additional provision [in order to](#) reach their potential and thrive. Practitioners need [to understand](#) individual strengths and [passions](#), and use this to support learning. Achieving success requires all adults to be thoughtful, curious and reflective.

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM – HOW?

Some pupils will need a significantly different 'day' to their peers. In designing an individual's timetable, consider:

- Whole group provision that is enjoyable, relevant or meaningful for the child (i.e. forest school sessions, snack or story times etc.)
- Individual provision the child needs. Please see additional webinars/advice sheets for each area. This could include:
 - Intensive interaction
 - Sensory-motor based play
 - Meaningful and developmentally relevant adult led activities
 - Movement based activities, and movement breaks, such as sensory circuits.
 - Music based activities
 - Communication focused activities
- Regulation time where the child has time and space to 'take a break' from social and sensory demands, as they require.
- Alternative spaces/places/activities that are available.

DIFFERENTIATING THE CURRICULUM – PLANNING

Investing time at the beginning of each unit/topic thinking about how to implement it for a child who may not yet be using functional communication is important. For all [activities](#) considering the child's communication needs and opportunities is valuable, and crucial in ensuring that the resources needed to support/facilitate communication [in a given](#) activity are readily available. These need to incorporate resources for both expressive and receptive communication.

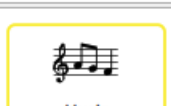
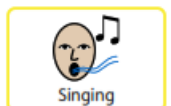
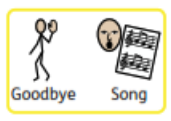
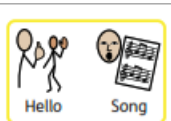
Observation is important in planning. Allowing a child time to explore materials/resources/activities and noticing what interests them can be helpful information. When observing a

Song list

Below is a list of songs that can be used in addition to the three listed on the training PowerPoint. You don't have to stick to this list, as long as the song is simple and with, you can pick other songs the pupil might enjoy.

Remember to use the same songs regularly, to support predictability during the

- Head, Shoulders, knees and toes (with actions)
- Old MacDonald (encourage children to insert their own animals).
- Itsy Bitsy Spider (with actions).
- The Hokey Pokey (with actions).
- Five Little Speckled Frogs.
- The Wheels on the Bus.
- Wind the Bobbin Up.
- Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer
- We're Going to the Zoo.
- Baby Shark.
- One Finger, One Thumb Keep Moving
- I am the Music Man
- Bingo





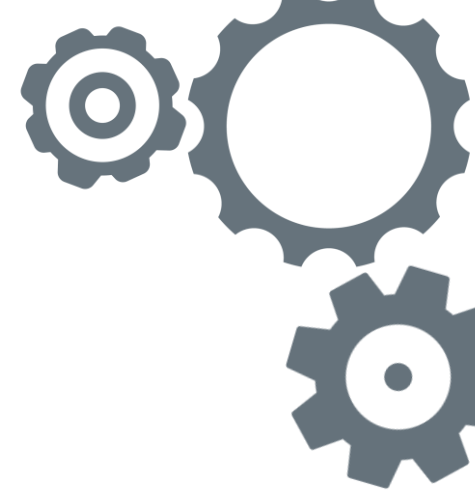
To find out more:

Scan the QR code and search code 10691

Visit CPD and search code 10691

<https://capublic.worcestershire.gov.uk/LearnCPD/CoursesSearch.aspx>





White Paper SEND Reforms

We believe this will be available by March 2026.

If you would like to keep your eye on it check it will be disseminated through the DfE and Parliament.

We will cover this in the next cluster hopefully.

Reminder: Enhanced Early Years Provision Tender



The tender for Enhanced Early Years Provision in Redditch/Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest, Evesham/Pershore and Malvern is now open.

The intention is to deliver:

- enhanced provision for children whose identified complex needs make it difficult to attend mainstream early year provision(s) for their full NEF entitlement.
- enhanced provision that can support dual attendance enabling children to also access appropriate support within their local community.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/schools-education-and-learning/send-local-offer/childcare-or-preschool-children-send/enhanced-early-years-provisions>

The deadline for tender submissions is Friday 20th February.

Self Evaluation Tool for Inclusion



Early Years Inclusion A to Z of resources | Worcestershire County Council
Self-Evaluation Tool for Inclusion in Early Years | Worcestershire County Council now aligned with the Ofsted Framework



If you are unable to find any documents please contact the Inclusion Team:
 Email: eyinclusion@worcestershire.gov.uk
 Telephone: 01905 843099

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Self-Evaluation Tool for Inclusion in Early Years																									
SEN policy for Early Years activities																									
SENCO Communication Sheet																									
Sensory processing																									
Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Support (SCERTS)																									

Book with your Area SENCo to share your audit strengths & areas for development



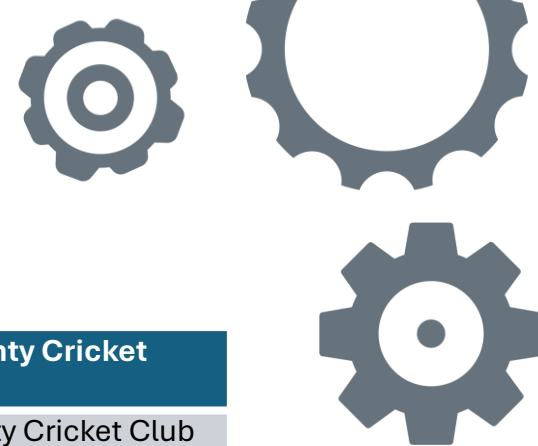
Self-Evaluation Tool for Inclusion in the Early Years

Reviewed and updated to reflect EYFS and Ofsted Inclusion expectations 2025, including enhanced Leadership and Inclusive Practice descriptors. Providers, rooms, and practitioners can evaluate their practice using a rating system. They may choose Red (not yet evident or no longer used), Amber (emerging in practice), or Green (securely embedded). This process will help identify areas for development.

Unique Child

Descriptor	RAG	Actions/notes	Further resources
Child profiles are written with families and kept up to date.			Promoting voice and inclusion – Birth To 5 Matters
Early support in use to support assessment of need.			EYFS Early Support tracking documents Worcestershire County Council
A total communication environment includes various strategies, such as visual supports like objects of reference, visual timetables, Now/Next displays, and environmental signage, tailored to the child's developmental level. Signing and			Speech and language Worcestershire County Council WCF Webinar Visual Support in the Early Years

EYIT Spring & Summer Term Training Courses



Some courses to look out for:

10610	Visual Support in the Early Years	91987	03/03/2026	Worcestershire County Cricket Club
10611	Strategies and resources to support interaction with SEN children	91988	19/05/2026	Worcestershire County Cricket Club

Early Years Community Hub: Spring and Summer Dates can be booked via CPD:

- Spring: Thursday 26 February 6.30pm to 8.30pm, Course code 10529
- Summer: Thursday 11th June 6.30pm to 8.30pm, Course code 10529
- Our Spring term discussion topic will focus on ‘Here and Now! Valuing and supporting the growth of confident and capable children’.

[Next cluster 28th April 6-7.30pm](#)



Focus feature – over to you!



Please pop in the chat topics you might like to discuss in future SEND Cluster meetings:

Have you been given a strategy, and you are not quite sure what it means or how to deliver it? Or any of your own ideas? Let us know! eyinclusion@worcestershire.gov.uk

Some ideas:

- Health services - Specialist Play Service
- Child Development Centre
- Good Practice - Adapting the Curriculum

Early Years Funding overview

Local Inclusion Fund:

Deadline for Application Forms to be completed online

- Summer Term 2026 13th March 2026
- Summer Term 2026 27th April 2026

Monitoring Form Return Deadlines 2025/2026 Term

Deadline for Monitoring Forms to be completed online

- Spring Term 2026 Between the 1st – 15th February 2026
- Summer Term 2026 Between the 1st – 15th June 2026



Early Years Funding update



Following the Early Years Inclusion Funding Consultation that took place in Autumn 2025, information about the process, criteria and funding rates for the Inclusion Supplement from April 2026 will be communicated shortly.

We are keen that the processes around this new criteria is transparent and communicated clearly and would like to invite representation from the sector to share their views at an online meeting on 26th February 7pm-8.30.

If you interested, then please sign up with your details at:

[Early Years Inclusion Funding Conversation Thursday 26th February 7 pm -8.30 pm](#)

And Fill in the form

Area SENCo Inclusion Surgeries

For those complex cases that may warrant an extended call don't forget to sign up to guarantee a conversation with your Area SENCo

Next slots are on:

10th March 2026 slots between 1-3pm and 11th March for Childminders slots between 6-7pm

- Booking is essential as places are limited.
- To book your place, please add your name and contact number to this document:

 [Book a Surgery Slot](#)

Reminder where to find the links for new referrals to the EYIP or to request an EHCNA



Useful Links and Resources

- ◆ Submit an Early Years Notification

[Early Years Inclusion Process](#)

- ◆ Applying for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA)

[EHCNA Information](#)



The Early Years Inclusion Team Inclusion Helpline

- Inclusion helpline and answer machine: 01905 843099
- Inclusion helpline email: eyinclusion@worcestershire.gov.uk

Follow us on Facebook for updates

https://www.facebook.com/WorcsEarlyYears/?_rdr

Website:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/worcestershire-education-and-early-years-services/support-services/improving-schools-and-settings/information-early-years-and-childcare-settings/early-years-inclusion>



**Thank you for your
participation in the Spring
Term Cluster! See you April
28th 😊**

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