



Social Eyes – A Vision for Inclusion

Supporting emotional and Social Communication needs

Tips for supporting your child's emotional development:

- Encourage your child to talk about their emotions
- For children who have difficulty talking about their emotions, help them to label the feeling and encourage them to talk about it: eg "It looks like you might be feeling worried, can you tell me why?"
- The simple act of naming the emotion can help children understand it more clearly
- There is no such thing as a bad emotion
- Using a scale eg/ an **Emotional Thermometer** or **Zones of Regulation** can help perspective
- All emotions are normal and natural, though they can be experienced as either comfortable or uncomfortable. Explain to your child that it is normal to feel sad, worried, or angry, and that talking about our emotions can help
- A key message to relay is that it is perfectly okay to talk about our feelings, but it is not always okay to act on our feelings (i.e. control your behaviour not your feelings)
- Share your own feelings. Don't be afraid to share your own feelings with your child during the day, using a wide range of emotion words. Sharing your feelings can help your children learn to identify their own emotions more accurately

Tips for supporting your child's Social Communication:

- Teach your child social skills just as you would any other learning skill: show/demonstrate, practice in context and praise!!
- Have clear rules, routines, and boundaries to ensure fairness and as predictable a life as possible – de-personalise situations/routines but show these as about a happy, secure family life
- Consider that although you wish to do activities together as a family your child may give and gain better interaction, resilience and access to key skills on a 1:1 basis at times
- If invited to play dates and parties, talk to the other family about how to make the situation as positive as possible, adaptations such as arrival time or a quiet room or taking a comfort toy/object

- Explain and rehearse situations and events with your child beforehand – pre-empt what may happen, normalise but go through what will give a positive time for all of the family
- Talk to siblings about what may happen for their sibling and how they can help both their brother or sister but also ensure they all have a positive time
- Be literal with what will happen and how they may feel including what will help them and your family eg/ finding a quiet place for lunch, taking a favourite toy or a haven place
- Support good communication skills. Set aside time during the day for talking and listening to each other.
- Model good communication skills. Maintain eye contact with your children. Give them a chance to finish speaking before responding
- Tune in to your child’s body language and what that might be telling you: eg “Michael, you’re very quiet today, is everything ok?”
- Work together to solve the problem as the way we deal with situations
- When discussing incidents, issues /social problem situations, try to avoid solving the problem for the child. Instead discuss with your child what they could do differently
- Provide lots of praise. It is important to remember any time you observe your child demonstrating good communication skills, relationship skills and problem-solving skills
- Engage with staff at school as to what approaches you are using and what they are doing to give consistency to your child. Social Stories may help this consistency

Above all, help your child grow into themselves and learn about what strategies give them positive social experiences. Avoid avoiding or your child seeing that they have to be like anyone else other than the most positive they can be!!!