

Communication, Attachment and Looked after Children

Alison Wyatt
Speech and Language Therapist
July 2021

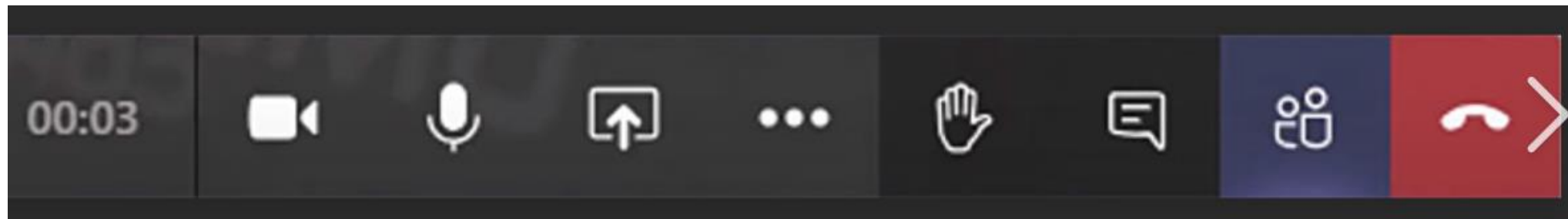


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Video-link Session

Ground rules

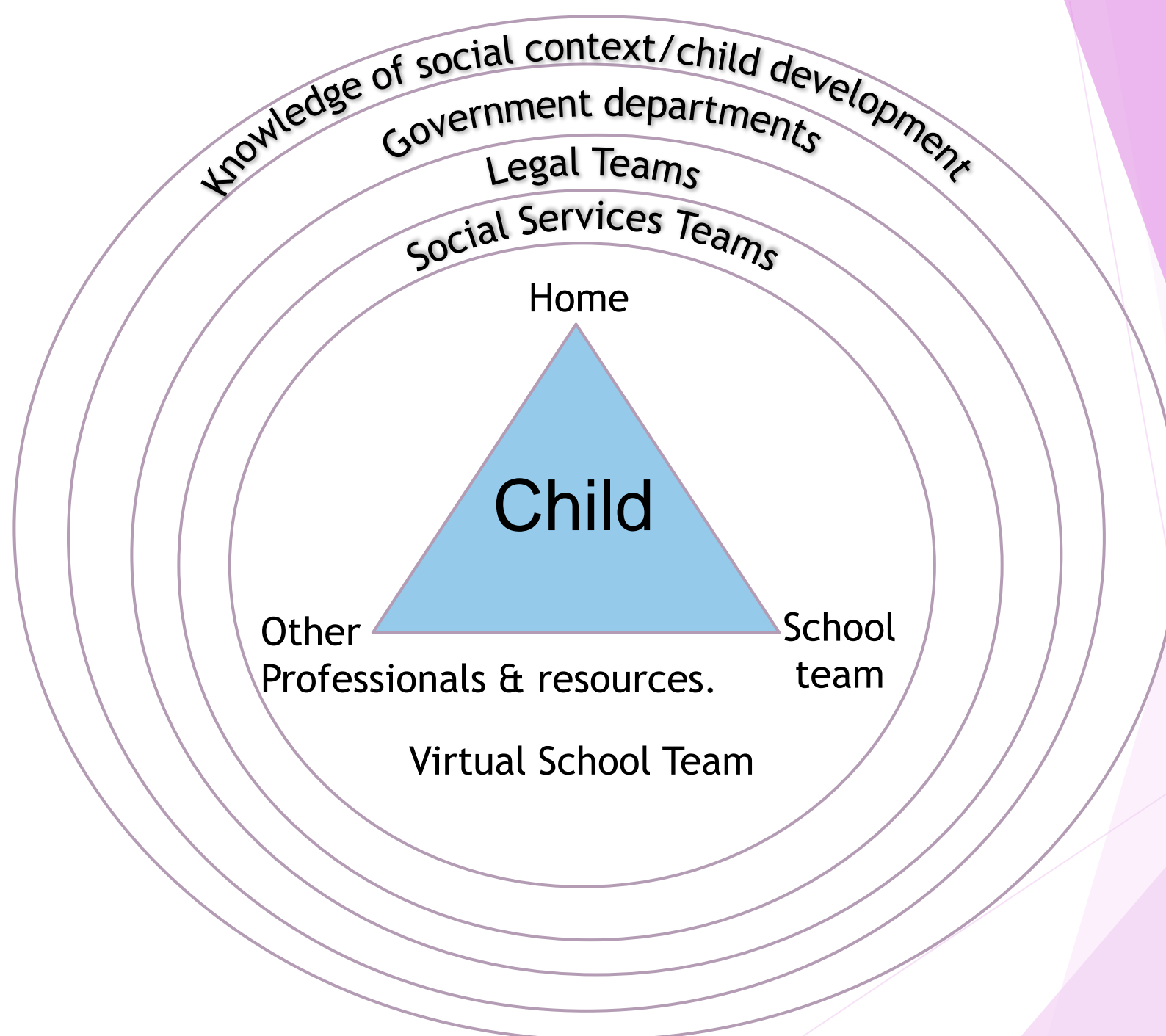
- Keep confidentiality
- No recording of this session
- Mobile phones on silent
- Engaging respectfully
- There are tools to support you to make comments or to ask questions during this remote session



“I work really hard but
people always leave.”



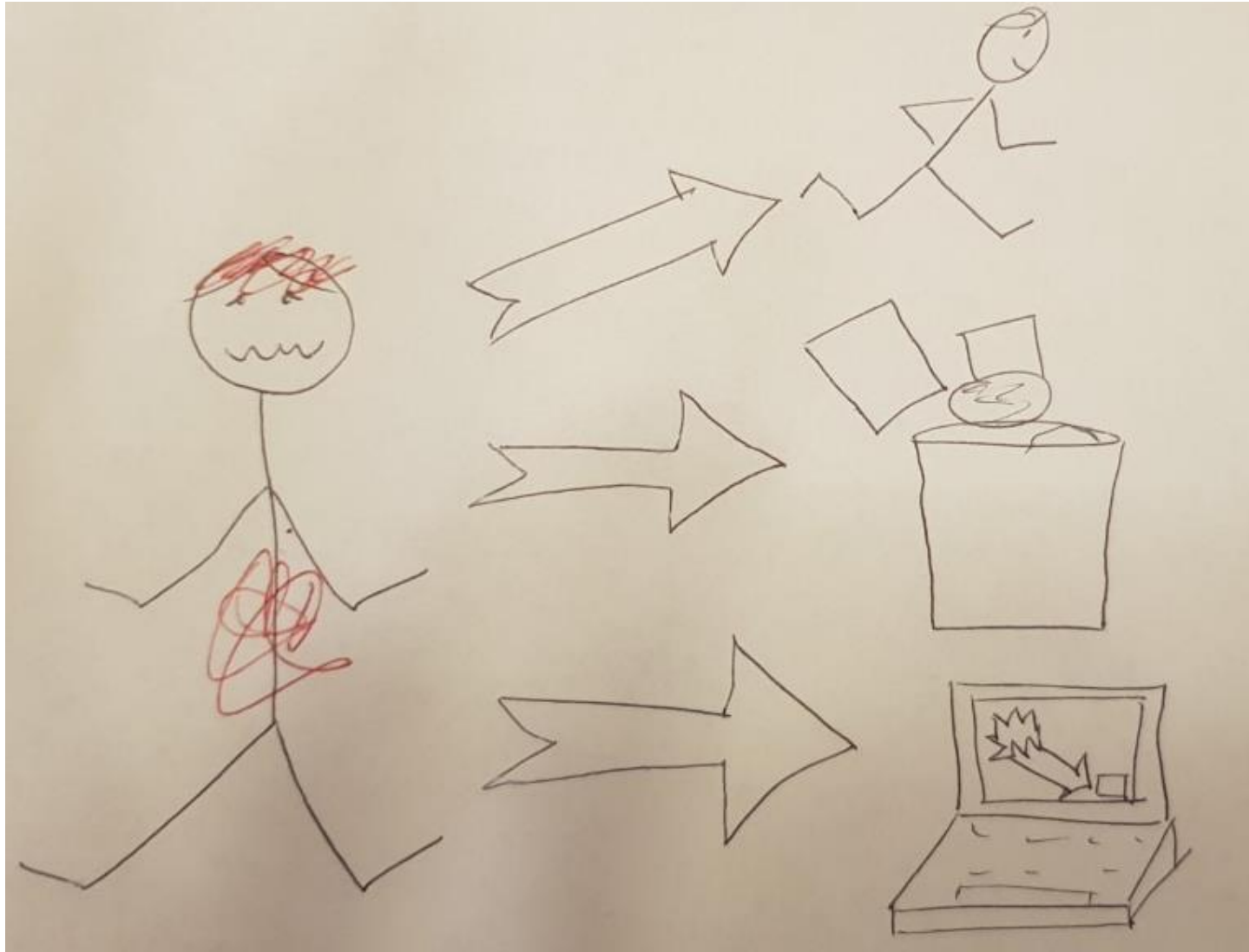
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**It sometimes feels so
complex it is hard to
know where to start!**



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Resilience!

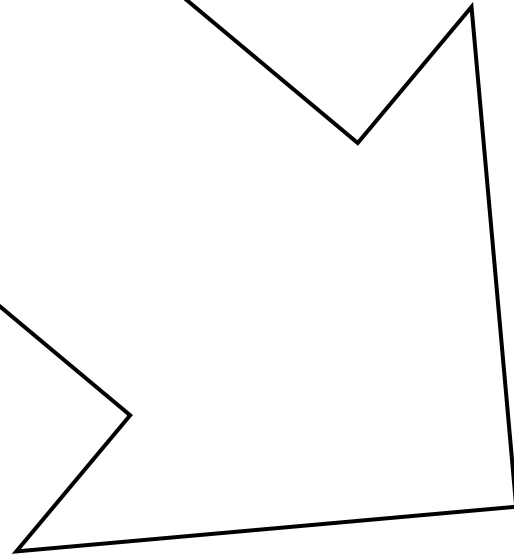
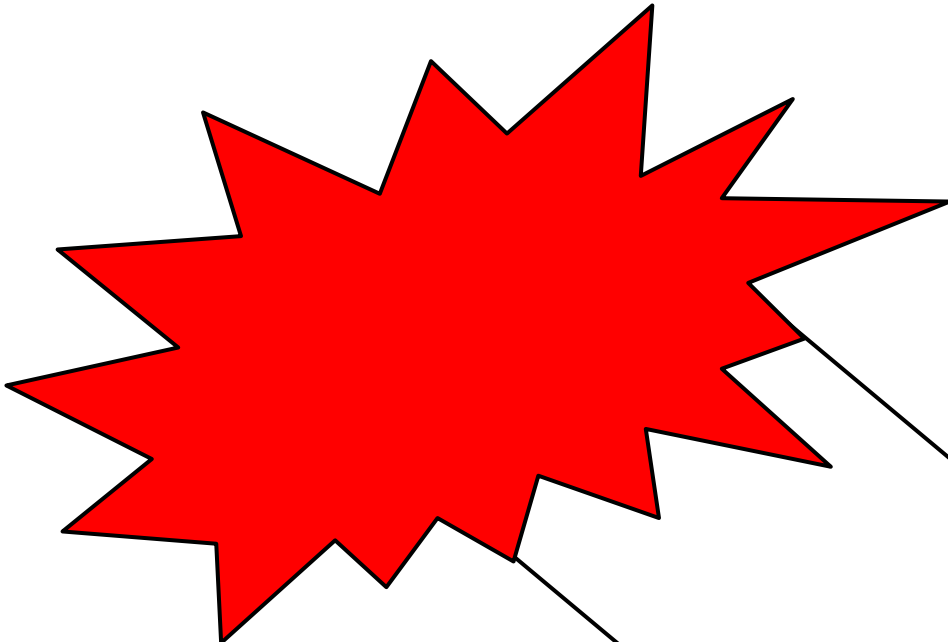
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Language development and
disordered attachment.

Impact of SLCN on
accessing curriculum.

Communication strategies
to support child to feel
safe enough to learn and to
support language and
communication
development.

I think I can use some
of this to add to what we
already do to support
kids with disordered
attachment.



Safe enough
to learn



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The role of communication in enabling children to feel safe enough to learn.



How can I use communication skills and strategies to:

1. not add to the stress of the situation
2. reduce the difficulties in this situation
3. support through challenging times so this child feels **SAFE ENOUGH TO LEARN.**



Language development and looked after children:

- Level of Language development will depend on the combination of protective factors and risk factors.
- Development in womb
- Hearing
- Early communication environment
- Caregivers language development
- Social environment
- Age when became a looked after child
- Resilience
- Childhood trauma
- Attachment



Early communication and language development:

The human potential for language is based in human biology- but makes requirements of the social environments to be realised.
(How social contexts support and shape language development
Erika Hoff 2006)



https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/363847/tct_univspeak_0-5.pdf

Early communication and language development:



Although language acquisition is a very robust process there is evidence that the rate at which children develop language is sensitive to the amount of input they receive from the adults around them. The quality of input that children receive is likely to be more important than the quantity.

Early Language Development: Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds A Report for the Education Endowment Foundation October 2017 Law, J. Charlton, J. Dockrell, J. Gascoigne, M. McKean, C. Theakston, A.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Law_et_al_Early_Language_Development_final.pdf



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Early communication and language development:



Studies have demonstrated that there is a great deal of individual variability in language as it develops, some children starting well and dropping behind, others starting very slowly and catching up. This finding has been replicated in a number of studies, each finding similar rates in the preschool years of approximately 70% of children with low language abilities having resolving difficulties and 30% persisting difficulties. A small, late-emerging group also exists who appear to start well but then fall behind their peers later in development.

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Early communication and language development:



Vocabulary size in itself isn't a great predictor of language outcomes but combined with other risk factors like the presence of receptive or expressive language difficulties or family history of language difficulties; it improves the predictive relationship (Bishop et al 2014).

Combine these with the potential biological/brain development differences and the social differences in Looked After Children's lives - the risk factors increase.



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Early communication and language development:



...expectations for the communication, language, and literacy skills (CLL) on the Early Years Foundation Stage measure. Across the whole of England in 2015, approximately 15-20% of four- and five-year-old children were not meeting expected levels. These figures are also sensitive to social disadvantage.

Early Language Development: Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds A Report for the Education Endowment Foundation October 2017 Law, J. Charlton, J. Dockrell, J. Gascoigne, M. McKean, C. Theakston, A.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Law_et_al_Early_Language_Development_final.pdf



Brain development

Experience alters the trajectory of development in the young brain.
(Patricia Kuhl 2013)



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Brain function for language

Language development



The internal working model

The internal working model of an individual will contain particular expectations and beliefs about:

- My own and other people's behaviour
- Whether or not I am loveable and worthy of love
- Whether or not others are available, interested and able to help/protect/support me.

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase/relevant-attachment-concepts>



Internal working models

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Separation
distress

Safe Haven

Proximity
maintenance

Secure Base



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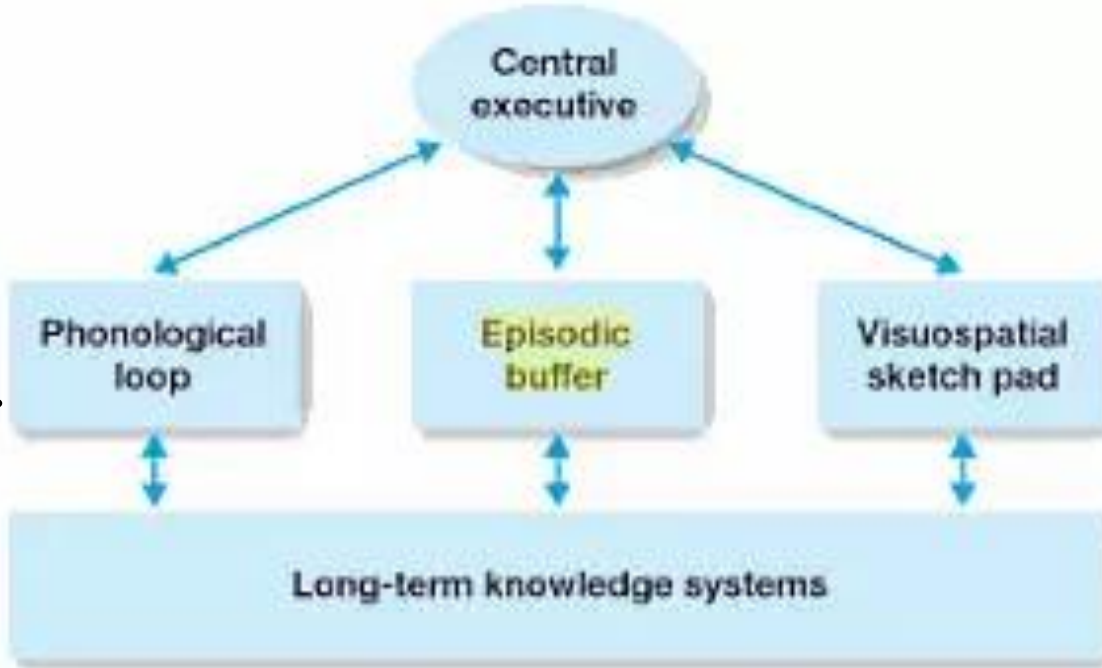
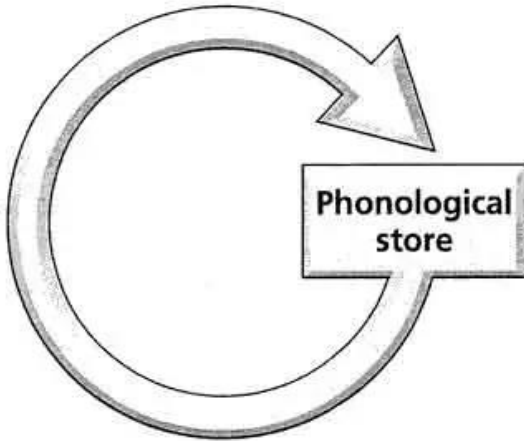
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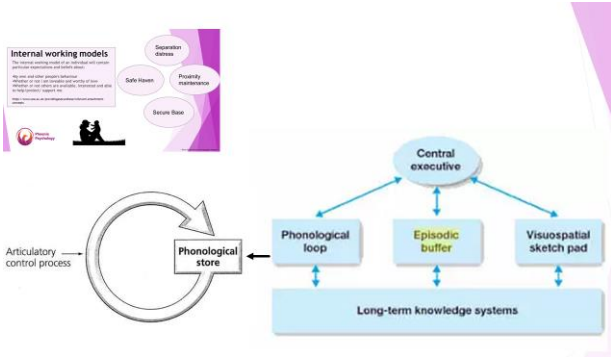
Alison Wyatt Speech and language therapist

Articulatory
control process



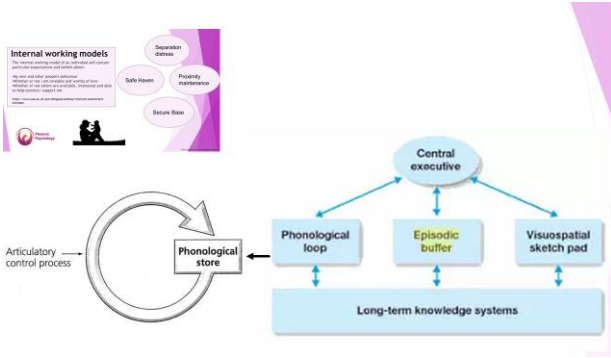
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Baddeley and Hitch (1974)



The working memory model makes the following two predictions:

1. If two tasks make use of the same component (of working memory), they cannot be performed successfully together.
2. If two tasks make use of different components, it should be possible to perform them as well as together as separately.



1. If two tasks make use of the same component (of working memory), they cannot be performed successfully together
 Baddeley and Hitch (1976)

- Can you count backwards in threes whilst listening to a song with interesting lyrics?
- Can you remember those 4 things you went to Aldi for- when someone is asking you if you know where the orange juice aisle is?
- Can you decode a new word in your reading book when your internal working model is telling you that you are no good at this and there's no point in even trying?

Supporting children and young people who have experienced adversity and trauma

Many children and young people who have experienced adversity or trauma, or who don't have secure attachment to their caregivers, have speech, language and communication needs.

What are speech, language and communication needs

Speech, language and communication needs are considered to be a hidden disability, because they are often not immediately obvious. A person with speech, language and communication needs may have difficulties understanding and remembering what is said to them; explaining and expressing themselves; or following the 'rules' of social interaction.

The size of the issue

- ▶ **31%** of young people report trauma exposure and 8% experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by the age of 18 years¹
- ▶ **80%** of the children in need in England (defined as all those children receiving statutory support from local authority social care) had experienced at least one adverse childhood experience, with over half (54.4%) experiencing abuse or neglect.²

What do we mean by adversity and trauma?

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are usually understood as a set of 10 potentially traumatic events that occur before the age of 18.³ Research over the last 20 years has consistently shown a cumulative relationship between the number of ACEs and negative outcomes related to health, wellbeing, behaviours and opportunities; the greater the number of ACEs experienced before the age of 18, the greater the chance of poor adult outcomes.⁴



Systemic adversity can also impact on children and young people's outcomes; for example those who experience economic disadvantage, racism or other forms of discrimination.⁵

The term "trauma" can be used to describe the psychological response to a one-off, prolonged and/or repeated exposure to one or more distressing or life-threatening events.⁶ This can begin when a mother is severely stressed during pregnancy.⁷

Trauma can result from early, repeated abuse, neglect or separation; or experience of substance misuse or mental ill health happening within a child's important relationships. Other children who may have experienced trauma include those with conditions necessitating long or repeated hospitalisations, or who experience life-threatening illness.

* For more information on trauma and relevant terminology see the links below:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/complex/>
<https://www.acamh.org/blog/developmental-trauma-useful-framework/>
<https://www.acamh.org/topic/trauma/>

Trauma exposure is higher than average among certain groups, including children with developmental disabilities⁸ and those from Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities.⁹ It should be noted that those caring for traumatised individuals are also at risk of secondary trauma.¹⁰

More research is needed to understand the role of pre-existing vulnerabilities and contextual factors in the consequences, and causes, of childhood adversities.¹¹

How adversity, trauma and communication skills influence each other

- Children who have experienced abuse and neglect are more likely to have poor language and social communication skills.^{12,13}
- Flashbacks and chronic stress can shut down language areas in the brain,¹⁴ and language skills may be diminished or lost in the longer term.¹⁵
- Children with Reactive Attachment Disorder, which happens in response to severe neglect, can have social communication difficulties similar to autistic children.¹⁶
- The pervasive effects of developmental trauma shape the brain during critical periods of development.¹⁷ Children and young people who have had very negative early experiences often find it difficult to interact positively with others, so they miss out on opportunities to learn positive language and interaction skills.¹⁸
- Limited language skills play a role in the links between deprivation and mental health issues.¹⁹

The impact of adversity and trauma in early life can continue into adulthood. However, it is important to recognise that the number of ACEs a child has experienced is not as important as their degree of social connectedness – the experience of feeling close and connected to others. This is something that speech and language therapists can support.²⁰

Baj's story

Baj is 10 years old. For many years Baj's unconventional behaviour was considered to be due to her early traumatic experiences before she came into foster care. Her teacher referred her to speech and language therapy because she seemed to be having difficulty understanding complex instructions, and although she could read she didn't seem to understand what she read. A speech and language therapy assessment showed that she had a language disorder as well as social communication difficulties indicative of autism. Her foster carer also suspected autism and used the speech and language therapy report as evidence to ask for an autism assessment. Baj got an autism diagnosis which changed how she was understood and taught. Her psychotherapist also altered her approach in response to Baj's autism and associated language disorder. Baj then began to make more progress in all areas of development.



What is attachment?

Babies can't look after themselves. They need a responsive adult to meet their needs. If a responsive adult consistently comforts them, meets their needs and helps calm them when they are stressed or upset, a secure attachment forms. Through this process the parent/carer and child tune in to each other's feelings and intentions. This initially happens non-verbally and then with words – for example "I will come back soon".

Sometimes these responsive interactions are not easy and an insecure attachment develops. An insecure attachment is not necessarily a problem, but can be a risk factor for mental health issues.²¹

How attachment and communication skills influence each other

- Securely attached children:
 - have better language skills²²
 - learn words for thoughts and feelings, and how to manage emotions (insecurely attached children often have gaps in these skills)²³
 - are able to tell longer and more coherent stories²⁴
- Speech, language and communication needs are common in children adopted from abroad and attachment is a possible risk factor.^{25,26}
- Having a child with a cleft palate can impact on developing a secure attachment with them.²⁷

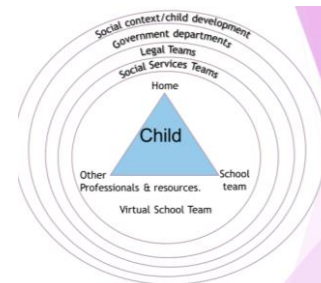
However, it's important not to assume that a child's early experiences explain all the difficulties they experience; one study found that looked-after children had more developmental difficulties such as ADHD and fewer attachment disorders than expected.²⁸



SLCN and Looked after children

- There were more than 93,000 children in care in the United Kingdom in 2015
- Severe and pervasive communication impairment, much of it previously unidentified, has been found in children and young people in residential care.
- No Wrong Door, the service for looked after children in North Yorkshire, found 62% of its looked after children had communication needs. Only two of the children had previously seen a speech and language therapist (SLT).

<https://www.rcslt.org/-/media/Project/RCSLT/rcslt-looked-after-children>



Think of a cat



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Lexical representation

Semantic representation: we know what the word 'cat' means - pet/furry/usually four legs

Phonological representation: identifying the word 'cat' from auditory (hearing) and lip-reading (visual) cues and discriminating between similar words like 'tat' and 'cap'

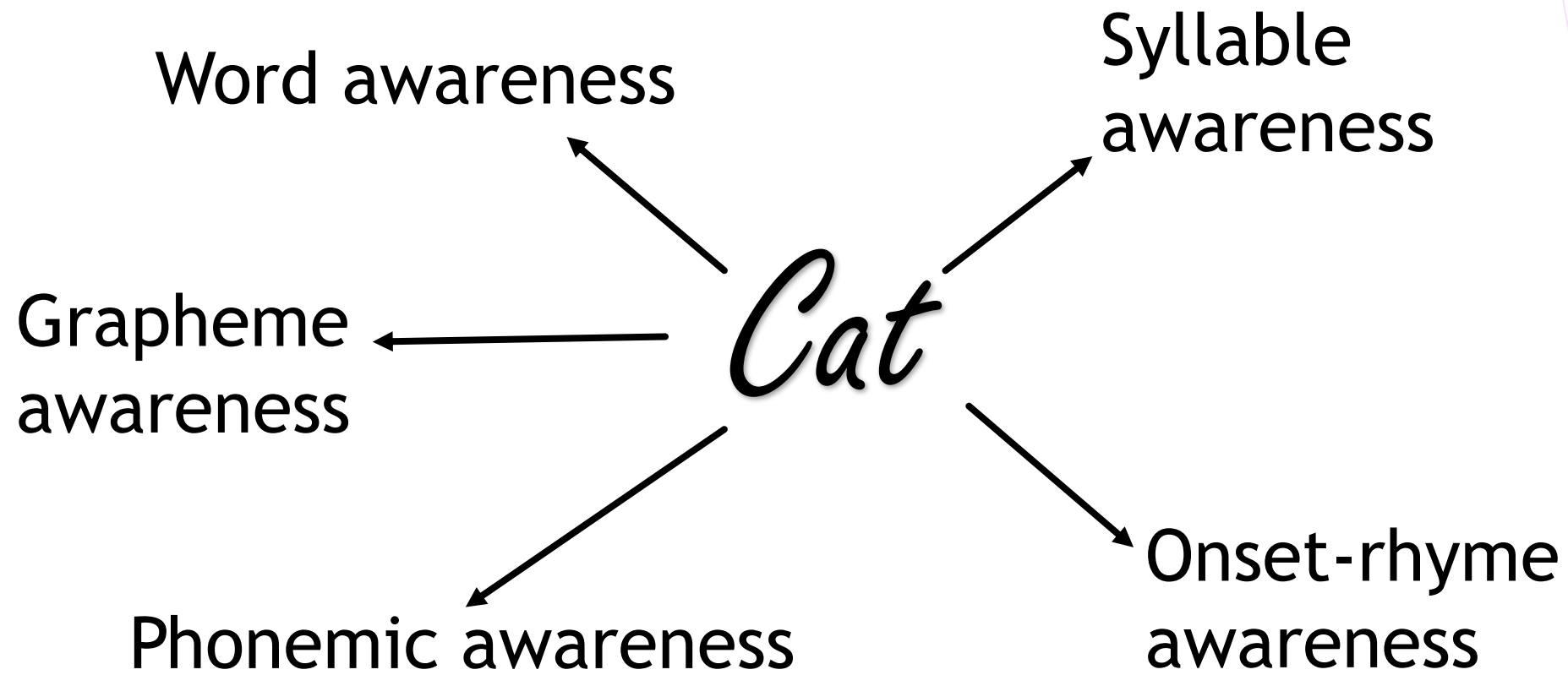


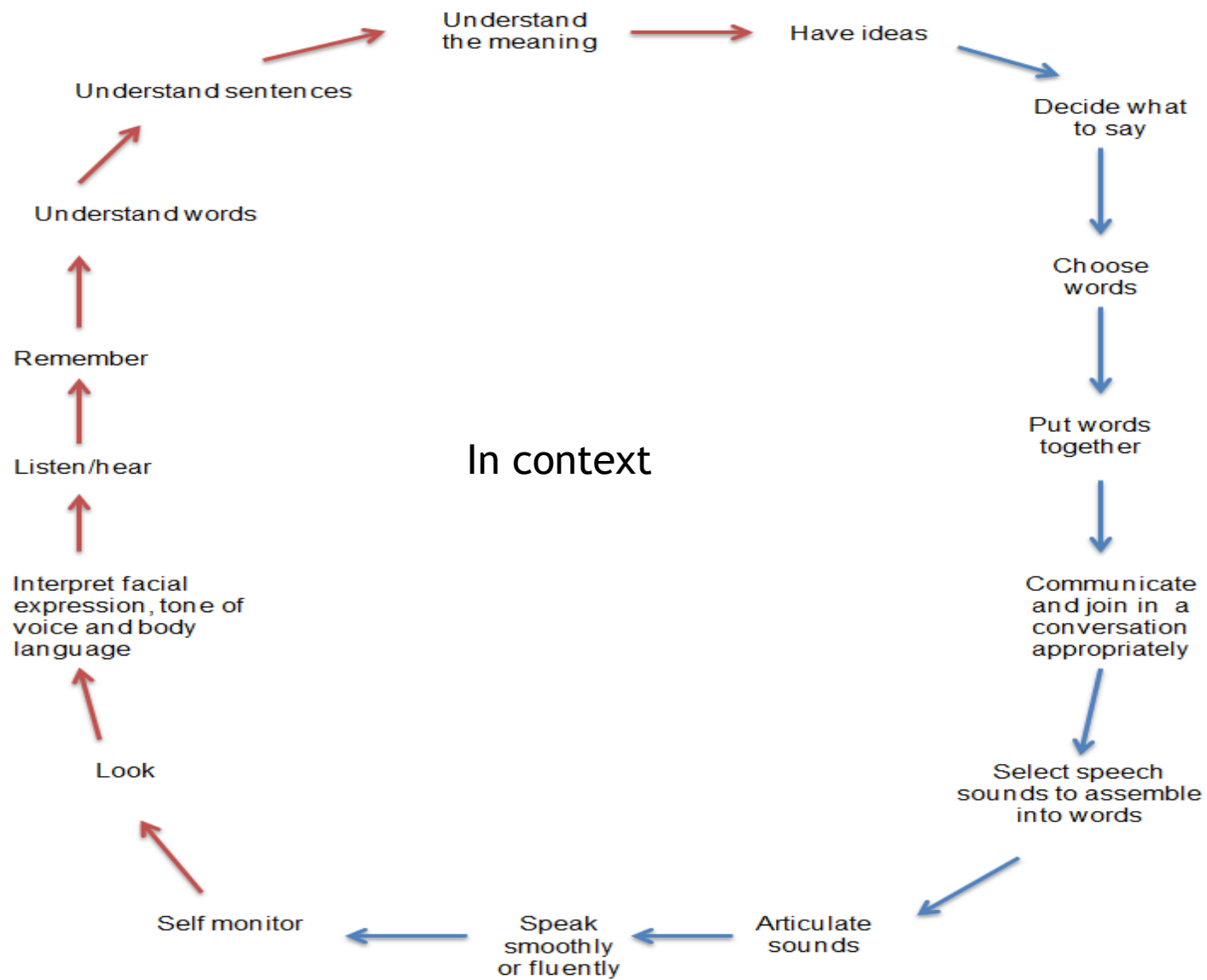
Grammatical representation: knowing how to use the word 'cat' in a sentence: "I'm going to feed the cat."

Orthographic representation: knowing how to spell 'cat' and understanding 'cat' in its written form.

Motor program: knowing how to say the word 'cat' and not having to think about it every time.





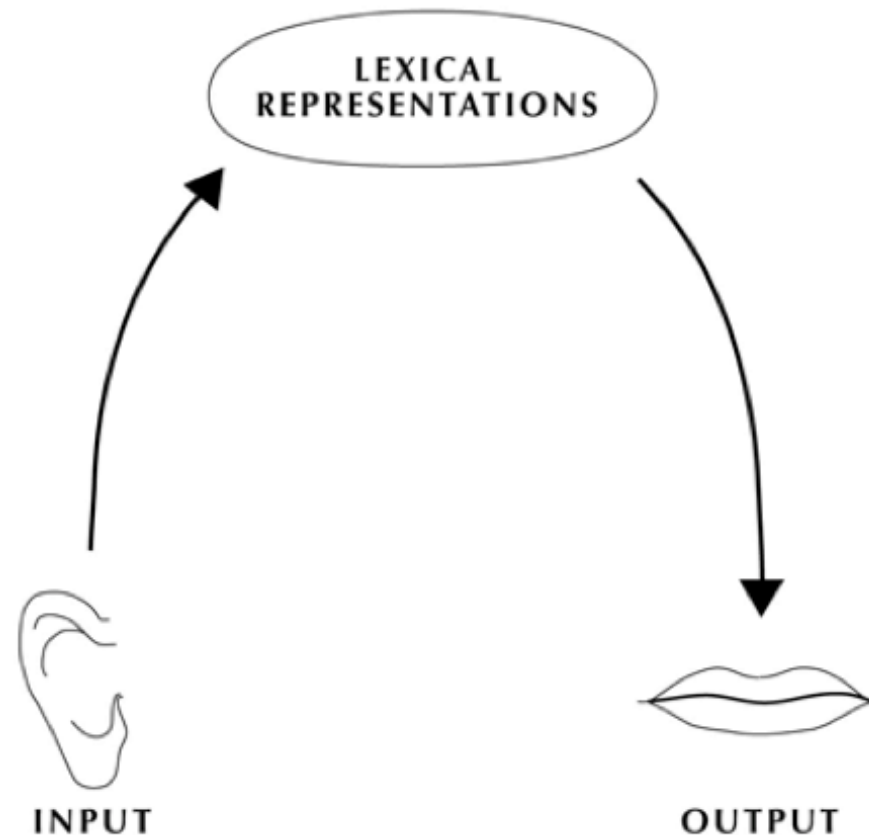


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*The Communication Chain www.afasic.org.uk Adapted
from McLachlan & Elks, 2012 Language Builders.
Published by ELKLAN*

Psycholinguistic approach

Children's speech and literacy development is the product of an intact speech processing system.



It sometimes feels so complex it is hard to know where to start!

Language development and disordered attachment.

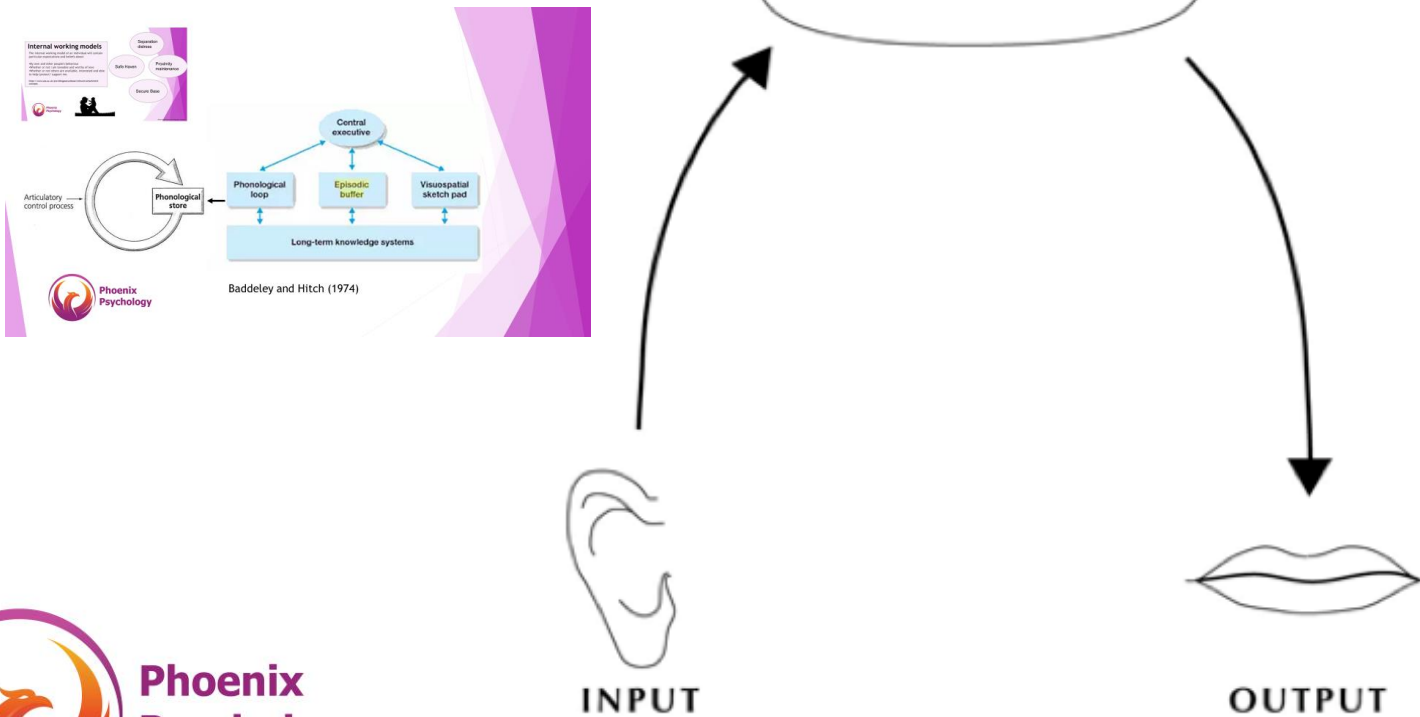
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Communication strategies to support child to feel safe enough to learn and to support language and communication development.

I think I can use some of this to add to what we already do to support kids with disordered attachment.

Psycholinguistic approach

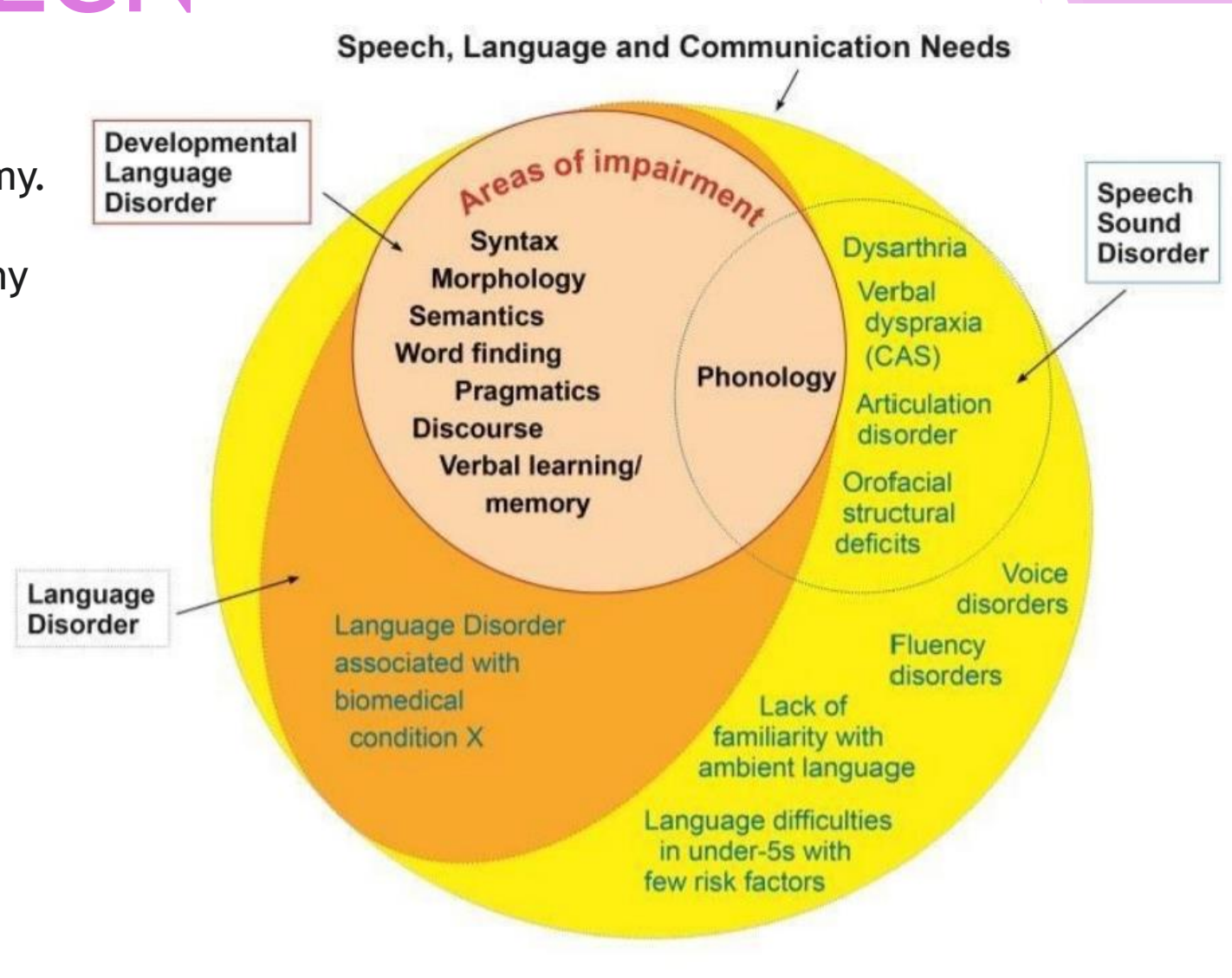
Children's speech and literacy development is the product of an intact speech processing system.



Defining SLCN

Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
What's in a name?
(William Shakespeare and Dorothy Bishop)

Phase 2 of CATALISE: a multinational and multidisciplinary Delphi consensus study of problems with language development: Terminology
Dorothy V.M. Bishop Margaret J. Snowling Paul A. Thompson Trisha Greenhalgh and the CATALISE-2 consortium
First published: 30 March 2017
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12721>





The Communication Trust
Every child understood

Identifying Speech, Language and Communication Needs



How do I know if a child or young person
with SLCN warrants a referral?



<https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk>



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If you are unsure of this or what you should do to support your child's communication needs...



helps children communicate

The Communication Trust and Consortium



[TCT resources \(ican.org.uk\)](http://ican.org.uk)



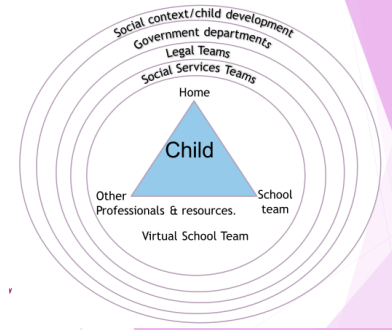
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Movement and co-ordination difficulties:

Difficulties with motor planning, movement and co-ordination may also be more prevalent in this population.

Children may have difficulty with:

- Planning the actions required to complete a task
- Completing a sequence of actions like - hanging up coat; putting lunchbox away; putting homework book in the right place and then changing book.
- Playground activities such as hopping, jumping, running, and catching or kicking a ball.
- Joining in, because of their lack of co-ordination and may find physical education difficult
- Writing, drawing and using scissors - their handwriting and drawings may appear scribbled and less developed compared to other children their age
- Getting dressed, doing up buttons and tying shoelaces
- Keeping still - they may swing or move their arms and legs a lot
- Child may appear clumsy as they may bump into objects, drop things and fall over a lot.
- Sensory integration difficulties.
- There may also be associated emotional dysregulation issues.



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Such concerns would be best discussed with an Occupational Therapist and may warrant a referral for assessment.

Difficulties with hearing

In older children, signs of a possible hearing problem can include:

- inattentiveness or poor concentration
- not responding when their name is called
- talking loudly and listening to the television at a high volume
- difficulty pinpointing where a sound is coming from
- mispronouncing words
- a change in their progress at school

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hearing-tests-children/>



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Increased Vulnerability of Children with SLCN

- Increased risk of abuse when child has poor communication skills.
- Recognise SLCN as a possible indicator when with a collection of other concerns regarding safeguarding.



Language development

In the domain of language infants and young children are superior learners in spite of adults' cognitive superiority.



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

- Phonetic learning prior to end of first year.
- Bilingualism and multilingualism are very positive factors in brain development and language development.
- Early in infancy can detect phonetic and prosodic patterns of speech.
- Emotional attunement in early infancy.
- Vocabulary development explodes from about 18 months.
- When child has 50+ words - start to combine words.
- Syntactic learning 18-36 months



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

- Pre-schoolers learning nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs
- Then prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and auxillary verbs.
- Between ages of 18 months and 6 years - typically developing children will add 5-9 new words a day to their lexicon.
- By 6 years typically developing children will have an expressive vocabulary of around 2,600 words and a receptive vocabulary of 20,000 - 24,000 words.
- Vocabulary development starts with concrete words then from school age, they learn more abstract words such as: love, disappointment, excitement, think, feel.
- Morphemes develop gradually over time eg: John's; jumping; unlock; cats; quietly; jumped.



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

3-5 years the language skills that really aid more detailed and descriptive narratives emerge:

- **Auxiliary verbs** to add information eg: “Chrissie was running, now she is limping.”
- **Modal verbs** to express different moods: “We **might** be able to go to the park...”; “Miss Jones said we **must** bring our PE kit tomorrow”
- **Post modifiers which add to the noun**: “The lady in the office..” “The Christmas tree at Tesco’s”
- **Embedded wh clauses, with a ‘wh’ word acting as a conjunction**: “I want what he had!”
- **By 5 years, using sentences with more than one verb, usually joined by “and” or “then”.**



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

- Unfamiliar words can be worked out through prior knowledge and the context in which the word sits - semantic and syntactic. This happens in conversation, listening to instructions and when reading.
- From key stage 2 new words are most frequently acquired through the use of current vocabulary - using current words to acquire understanding of new ones.



Getting into trouble with inference.

Instructions and conversations rely on inference:

“go to the library to change your book” (you expect the child to infer: “and then come back to class”)

“I'm on holiday next week and its your meeting then” (you expect the child to infer: then =next week and if I'm on holiday, I can't be at you meeting.)



Distress from misunderstandings

(..could WE go on that) playground?

Good plan

Everyone would LOVE that!

good thinking

let's do that

Uh huh

that's a great idea

Brilliant!

good thinking

I don't see why not

excellent idea



Distress from misunderstandings when child has SLCN

Playground?

Yes! Let's go on the playground.

..then once child understands that you are following his idea, you could add some of those other words of encouragement about the idea (previous slide).



Getting into trouble with grammar

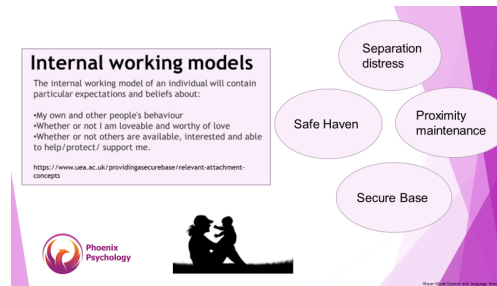
It's fine to go on the gym
equipment today but not the
bars ok?



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Getting into trouble with grammar

It's fine to **go on the gym equipment** today but not **the bars** ok?



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Getting into trouble with grammar

It's fine to get a new book
from the library but not the
ones in the boxes.

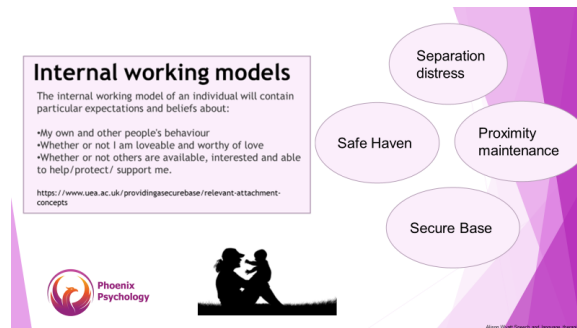


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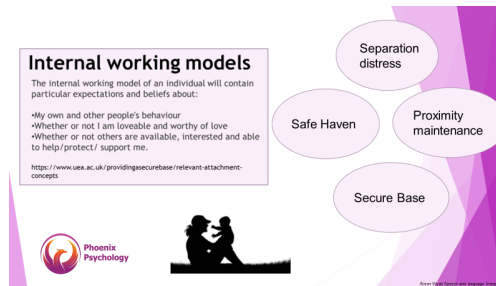
That woman who came to see
James is really annoying.



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Getting into trouble with grammar

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Getting into trouble with grammar

- The inspector who came to see Mrs Finch has got a new job.
- It's a shame; she was really good.
- Hopefully the next one will be as helpful.

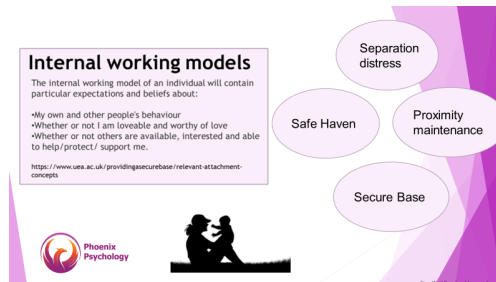


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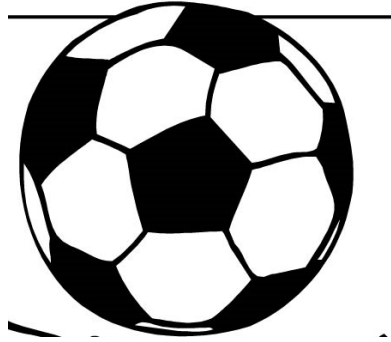
- The inspector who came to see **Mrs Finch has got a new job.**
- It's a shame; she was really good.
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Context



Children in reception will know that this is a ball and are likely to know that this is a ball too but they are not likely to get the Cinderella joke as they haven't yet got that meta awareness that ball and ball are same words with more than one meaning. Children's jokes are quite a good way to tell if they have got that awareness.

Understanding of ambiguous language relies on meta-awareness and understanding of context.

For many children who have experienced traumatic starts, it is harder to read the context, processing takes longer and is more difficult.



Context

To get reading and stories, beyond the basics, you really need to get inference; working out the inference is part of the joy of reading but not getting inference, which is the case for children with SLCN, is likely to be part of the barrier to reading for enjoyment and reading for learning too.



Context

Whether you need to take something literally or not depends on context and knowledge of idioms too.

- I don't want you to cut corners
- I'm being cruel to be kind
- I really want to give you the benefit of the doubt
- I don't want you to burn your bridges
- It's always darkest before the dawn



The apparent unfairness of social rules

To follow social rules you need to be able to notice the change in context.



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How DO you judge when
it's OK to ask for help?



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Perception and ambiguous language



We start to push you a bit in year 1



Inner working view of world
Negative perceptions of others' actions



Abandon all assumptions

- When did you learn that books are supposed to make sense?
- Ensure that teacher/child/home grown-ups work together to develop understanding that: the words in books make sense!
- When sharing a book with a child one of the most important things to do is encourage the understanding of the story. This means understanding more than the individual words that appear on a page. Children need to be able to fill in the larger meaning of a story, that hasn't been specifically stated. In other words, they need to know how to “read between the lines” to really understand what's happening and why.



He was intent on beating him this time.



He was intent on beating him this time.



Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

Blanks levels

Level one: 2-3 yr old Questions that relate to the immediate environment and require concrete thinking:

- “What is that?”
- “What can you see?”
- “Find one like this”
- “What is Jolie doing?”
- “Is it a sheep?” (yes/no response)



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

Blanks levels

Level two: 3-4 yr old. Questions involving some analysis such as classifying or grouping objects, describing and understanding object functions:

- “Find something that can cut”
- “What is happening in this picture?”
- “Where is the dog?” (requiring a location response: “in the garden” not just pointing)
- “Find something that is red”
- “How are these different?”
- “Which one is ... (an animal)?”



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

Blanks levels

Level three: 4-5 yr old. Questions requiring child to use their own knowledge to make basic predictions; re-tell a story; assume the role of another or make generalisations.

- “What will happen next?”
- “How do you think he feels?”
- “How do I make... (a sandwich)?”
- “How are these the same?”
- “What is a.....?” (definitions)



Critical periods for learning specific levels of language:

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

Blanks levels

Level four: 5 yrs+ Questions involving problem solving, predictions, solutions and explanations. Require own knowledge and thinking about the future and the past.

- “What will happen if?” (predicting changes)
- “What should we do now?” (finding solutions)
- “How did THAT happen?” (identifying causes)
- “Why can’t we eat soup with a fork?” (justifying)
- “How can we tell he is sad?” (Explanations)



Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

Can you find something yellow?

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

How did you make your kite?

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

“What can you see?”

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

“What did you do THAT for?!”

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying

“Why did you do that?”

Mismatch

Blanks levels

So when a child is dysregulated and heart thumping and set for fight or flight, which level do we frequently use?

Why did you do that?!

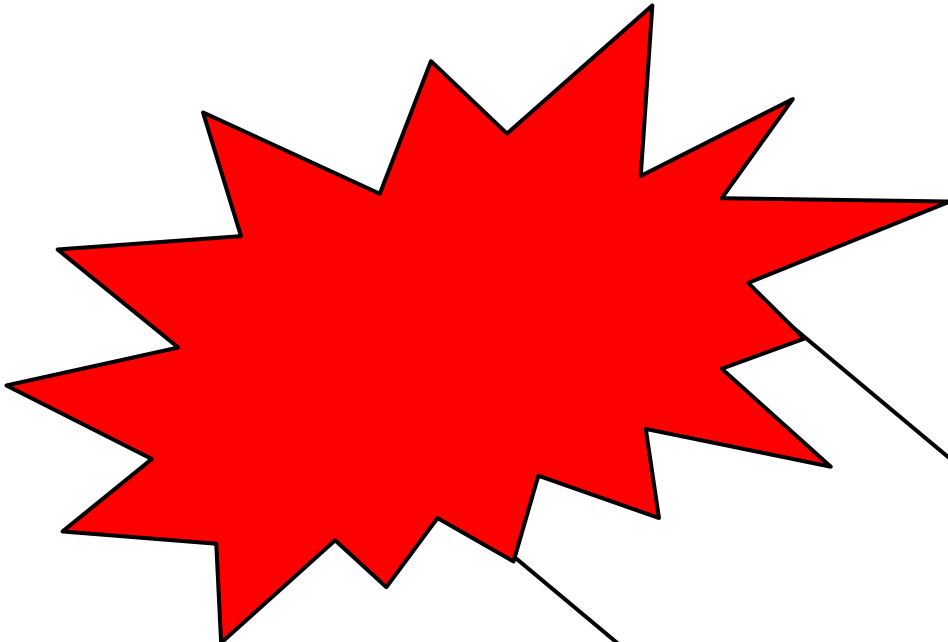
What did you do that for?

We just spent all that time talking about this and you did it againwhy?!

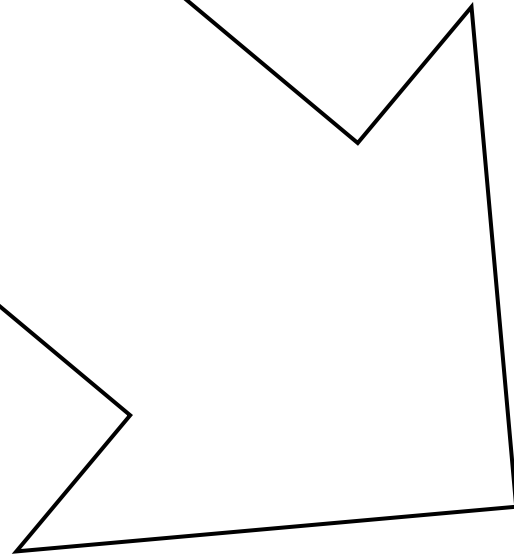
How can we modify our need for level 4 answers when a child is at level one or two?!

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying





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Safe enough
to learn

It sometimes feels so complex it is hard to know where to start!

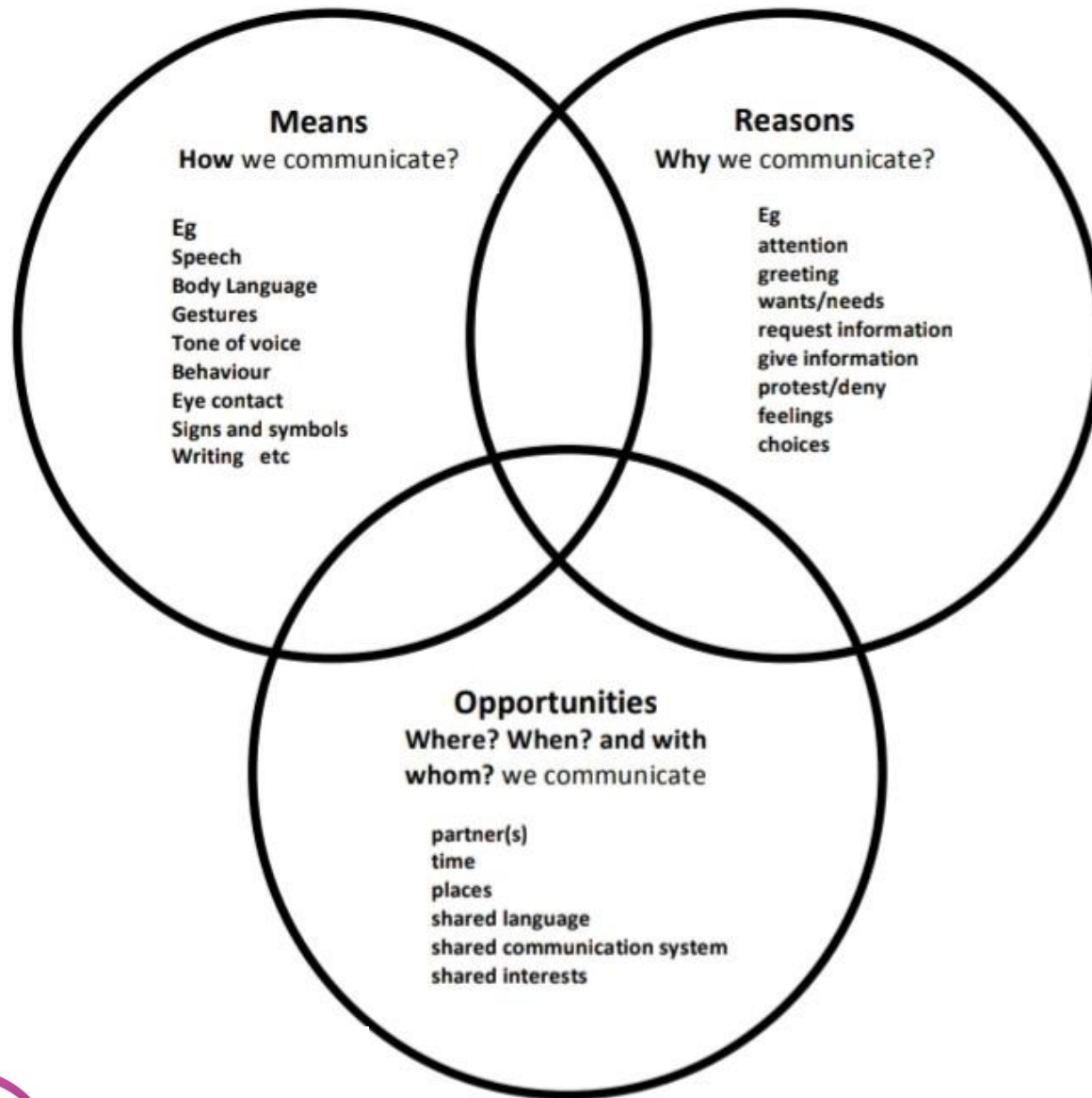
Language development and disordered attachment.

Impact of SLCN on accessing curriculum.

Communication strategies to support child to feel **safe enough to learn** and to support language and communication development.

I think I can use some of this to add to what we already do to support kids with disordered attachment.

Alison Wyatt Speech and language therapist



Without **means**, you cannot express yourself

Without **reasons**, there is no point in communicating

Without **opportunities**, communication fails

Effective communication only happens where **means, reasons and opportunities** are all in place



The role of communication in enabling children to feel safe enough to learn.



How can I use communication skills and strategies to:

1. not add to the stress of the situation
2. reduce the difficulties in this situation
3. support through challenging times so this child feels **SAFE ENOUGH TO LEARN.**

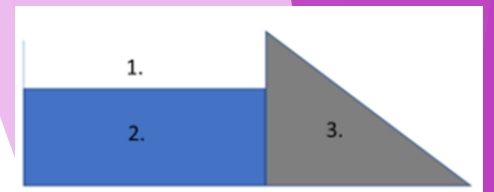




1. not adding to the stress of the situation

- Establishing understanding of attachment needs and likely triggers including responses to praise.
- Understanding factors that unintentionally add to uncertainty or add pressure..like sticker rewards.
- Competing voices.
- Maintaining safety and certainty and dignity.
- Awareness of own presentation/needs.
- Aware of SLCN and adapting language.
- Aware of Blank's Level and using appropriate level explanations and questions. Start with concrete.
- Aware of likely differences: any memory difficulties, sensory issues, planning and coordination issues, movement differences.
- Repetition and demonstration.
- Shorthand with colleagues to help them not to add. Conversations already had to support consistent understanding and use of Attachment-Aware approaches.
- Referral on for further development of understanding support needs.

2. Reducing the difficulties in this situation



- Linked in with all positive strategies and structures already in place eg: bug space on carpet, star chairs, yellow box for homework books, trays, etc.
- Processing time.
- Opportunities for activities that reduce language load and promote positive interaction.
- Abstract to concrete for times of likely challenges.
- Share structure and rules with home team.
- Reducing planning stresses. Practicalities so home can practise eg: homework book in yellow box, reading book on pile, lunchbox, water bottle.
- SLT assessment to inform approach
- Word webs and mind maps to reduce load of verbal understanding and joint strategies for literacy.

2. Reducing the difficulties in this situation



- Information from VS team.
- Shared strategies with home team.
- Visual plan/Way task set up explains expectations.
- Known triggers acknowledged
- Redirection when emotionally dysregulated.
- Visual supports for reassurance
- Reduce unpredictability/ add certainty.
- Make strong links to support development of inference. Inference comes from knowledge of situations/world and vocabulary.
- Use language to describe own feelings and make links.
- End of the day likely to be a tricky time when everyone is tired and hungry and major transition is on the horizon, nearly there syndrome!



3. support through challenging times so this child feels SAFE ENOUGH TO LEARN.

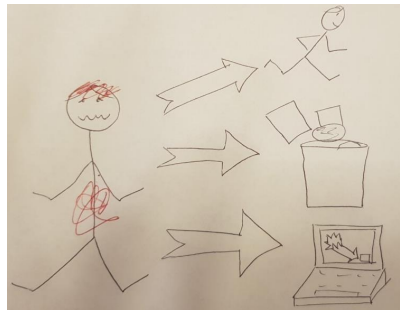
- Timing!
- Plan ahead for challenging times, work out plan for likely challenges.
- Redirection.
- Understanding of physiological responses in child and you, need for team working.
- Visual structures in place to help from explosion to calm. Supporting child to see that explosion always goes to calm in the end.
- Working to increase certainty and feeling of safety.





3. support through challenging times so this child feels SAFE ENOUGH TO LEARN.

- Following school plan to maintain safety and learning for all children and staff whilst working through challenges.
- Maintaining use of concrete language and calm plan.
- Maintaining certainty and predictability
- Using shorthand with colleagues to support them to do the same.
- Building resilience. Use visual images to support through the difficult feelings when work gets difficult.





3. support through challenging times so this child feels SAFE ENOUGH TO LEARN.

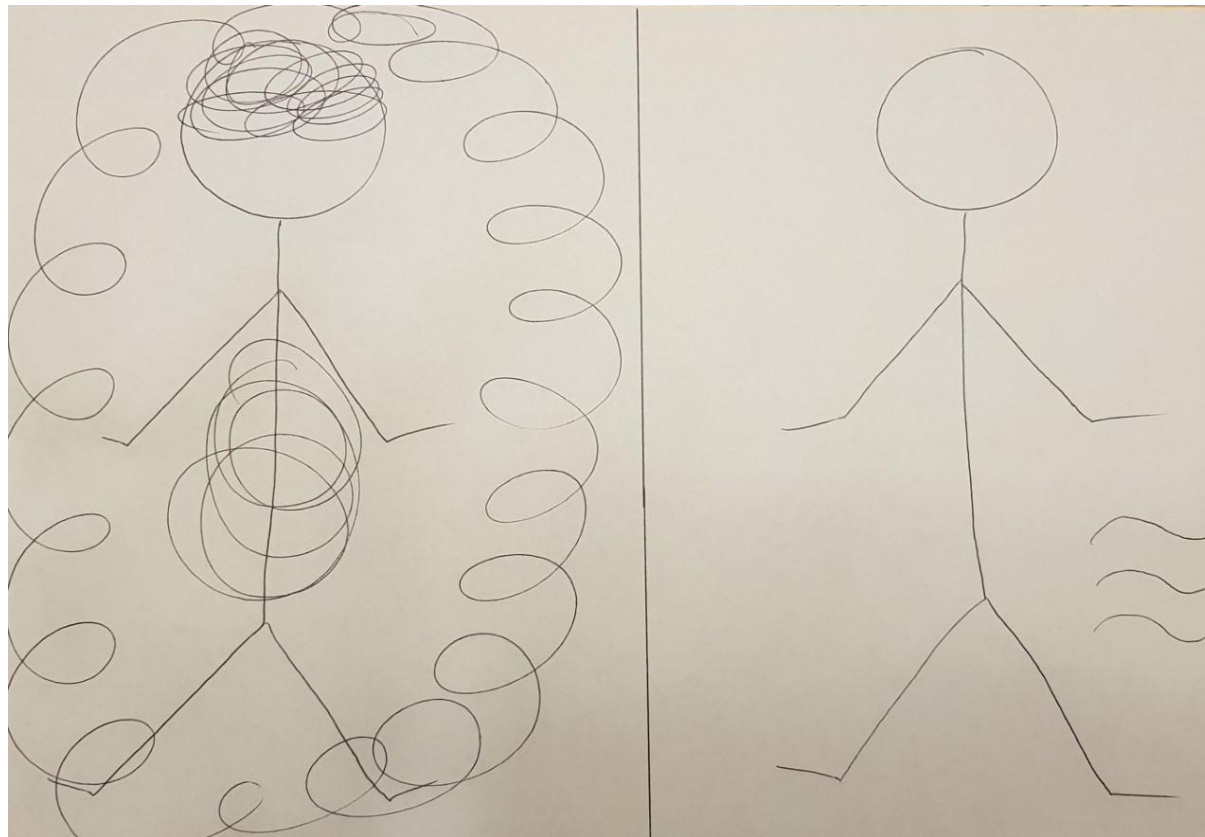
- Building vocabulary and narrative skills. Building inference through reading books.
- Work with SLT re visual systems.
- And remembering that instant good behaviour is no more a thing than instant ability to read. Some people say " s/he needs to learn to live in the real world" the key word here is learn. Without the structure and steps to do that, it is not possible for behaviour change to happen spontaneously.

Working through challenges

- Neutral language
- Cards
- Attention away from behaviour
- Redirection.
- Visual Paths to remind that won't feel like this forever.
- Maintain positive interaction
- Dignity and pride



Emotional dysregulation and communication



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Likely times for challenges:

(challenges may include withdrawal)

- Sudden change, Uncertainty, unpredictability.
- New situation
- Different expectations of events/situations.
- Not understanding what's happening and what is expected.
- Inner working dialogues competing with teacher's explanations.
- Not feeling safe.
- Situations that require turn-taking or sharing of favoured people or items.
- Transitions
- Fear of upcoming activities.
- Fear of judgement



Likely times for challenges:

Sudden change, Uncertainty, unpredictability.

- Talk about what will be the same.
- Draw a 'list of certainty'
- Share what you know eg: Miss Jones will phone Jane today. Draw this information. Say things in the order they will happen.
- Concrete ways to show when things will happen.



Likely times for challenges:

New situation

- Talk about what will be the same.
- Passport
- Image for the feelings.



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Likely times for challenges:

Different expectations of events/situations.

- Show what is happening before you go
- Take the drawing of plan with you.
- Refer to plan



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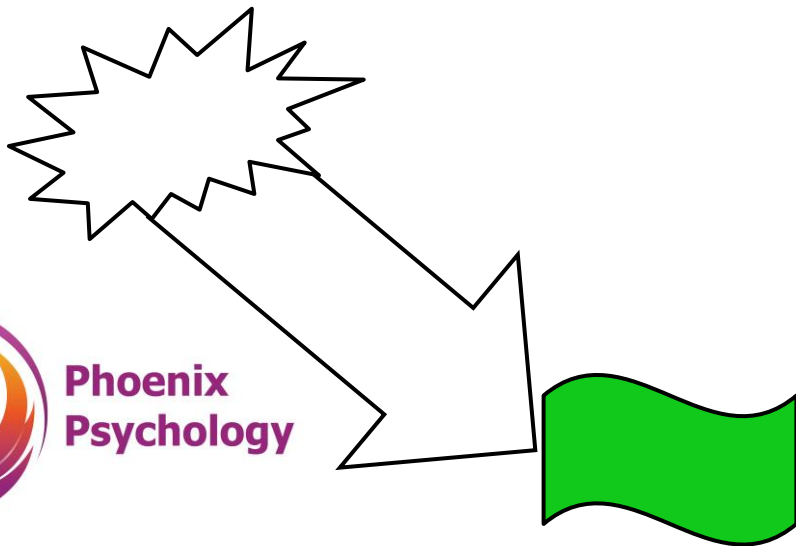
Likely times for challenges:

Not feeling safe.

- Refer to plan
- Visual anchors
- Tactile anchors
- What is staying the same
- Visual representation of the feelings



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Likely times for challenges:

Different expectations of events/situations.

- Show what is happening before you go
- Take the drawing of plan with you.
- Refer to plan



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Likely times for challenges:

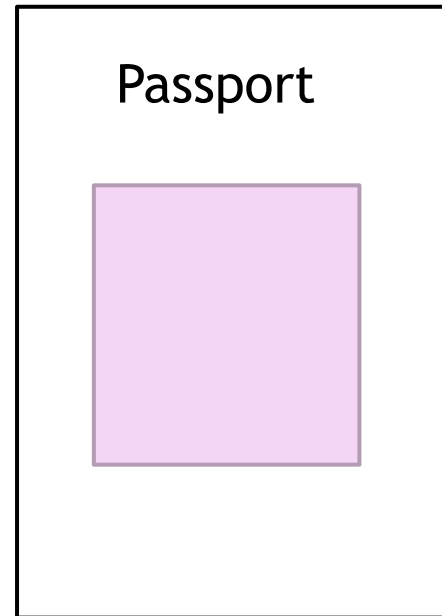
- Fear of upcoming activities (eg: It's PE later.)
- Plan in place with supporters and child to reduce anxiety.
- Plan with parent/carer for those days to reduce anxiety eg: easier clothes/fastenings for PE days.
- Clear rules about how and when to ask for help
- Consider referral to OT regarding movement/coordination or planning differences



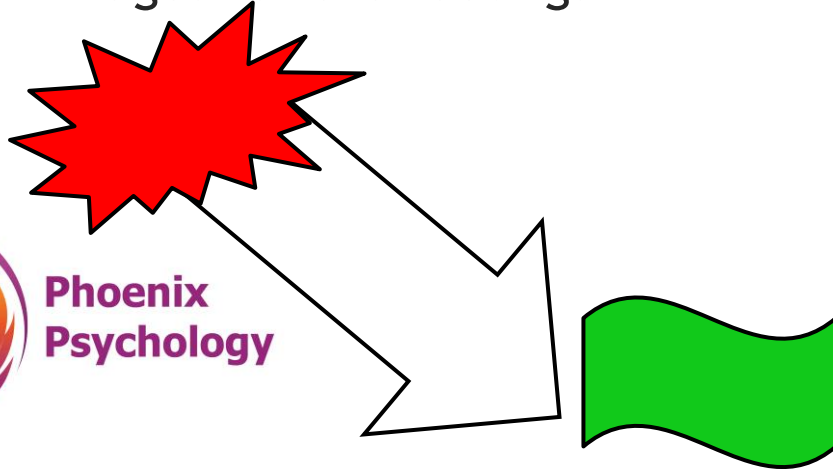
Likely times for challenges:

Transition times

- Routines for end of one activity, then routine for the start of the next activity. Managing the end of favourite activities.
- Songs
- Different route
- Support for planning move
- Images for the feelings



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Uncertainty

- Stickers are sometimes so motivating and sometimes add pressure and uncertainty.
- Praise can be so reinforcing and it can be overwhelming.
- The uncertainty of “one more go”



Likely times for challenges:

- Not understanding what's happening and what is expected. SLCN referral for SLT assessment and specific programme.
- Visual plan of what is happening
- Use visual plan to show order of events instead of time words such as: "before" "after"
- Teachers are already great at setting up tasks so child can see what is expected
- Demonstrate task, then observe child starting task - so they feel safe they know what is expected.
- Small steps and checking in.
- Visual ways to show: task, how much expected to do, how child will know when finished and what's next.
- Support development of narrative skills
- Use appropriate language level.
- Give plenty of processing time - 7 seconds

Likely times for challenges

SLCN

- Appropriate language level, using Blanks levels as a guide.
- Allow processing time and time to plan response.
- Direct others in team to use appropriate level.
- Use visual supports through all lessons throughout school.
- Picture word -webs to illustrate key points and to support children to make connections.
- Act out or make pictures of key points in books and make the links explicit, in this way you are demonstrating what books are for!
- Have a list of the names of people and what child calls them, so you can encourage narrative skills between school and home environment eg: "let's take a photo so you can show Joy later"
Joy would love to see this. What shall we tell Joy?
- Encourage sharing of stories about day to home.
- Talk about how you will tell Joy, when the event is still happening; so you can practise the narrative in the concrete here and now. Print a photo for child to share to help prompt the practised narrative.



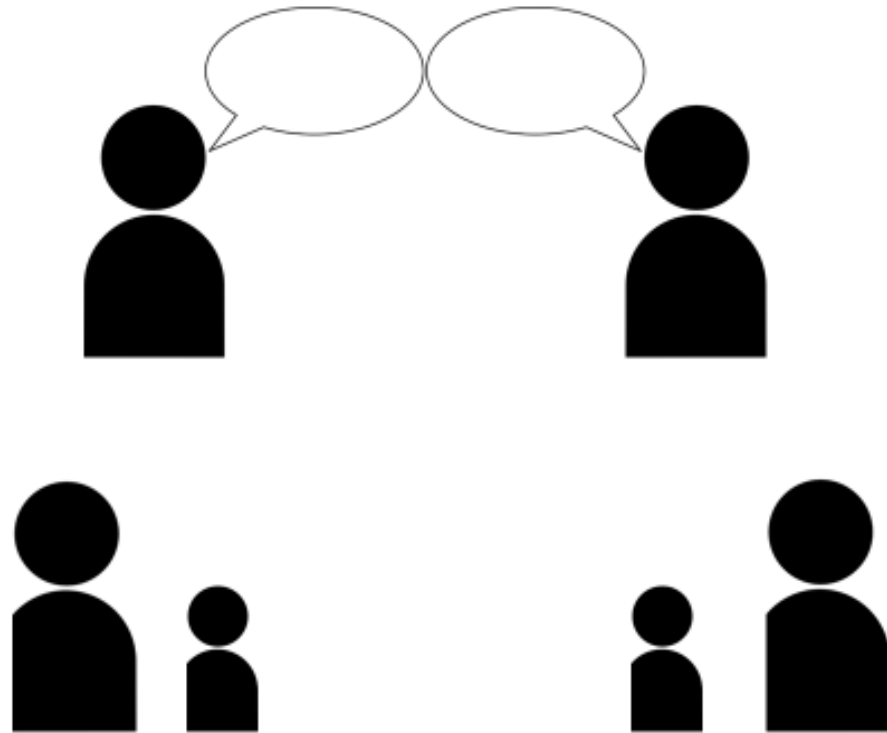
Likely times for challenges

SLCN

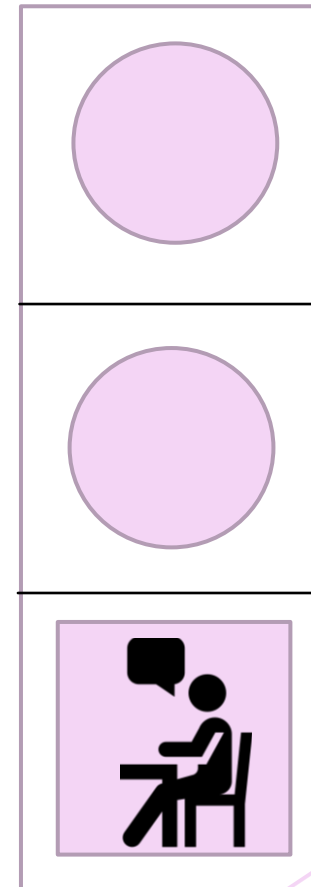
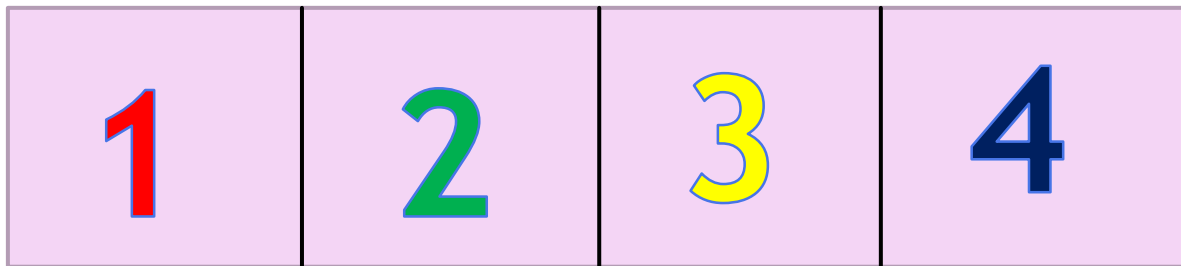
- Support opportunities for child to be heard in all sorts of ways eg: singing in a choir; shared songs in music; playing an instrument; a part in the play; taking a message; being in the team; supporting the school team.
- Options may be explored through visual strategies like Talking Mats but be mindful that child needs to be at least level 3 (Blanks levels) to do so successfully.
- You can also gather child's opinions by observing their responses in different sessions and noting their response and your interpretation of that response separately (so not just "he loves science" but he engages in each experiment, he watches the changes, he smiles and joins in the sessions = I think he loves science).
- If child appears reluctant to speak in class there may be many reasons. Consider referral to SLT as it may be SLCN and not just shyness. Support child to contribute through showing a picture or holding picture with teacher to get 'voice' heard.



Equal discussions and control



Visual schedules and checklists making the unpredictable predictable.



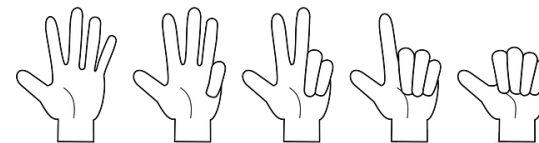
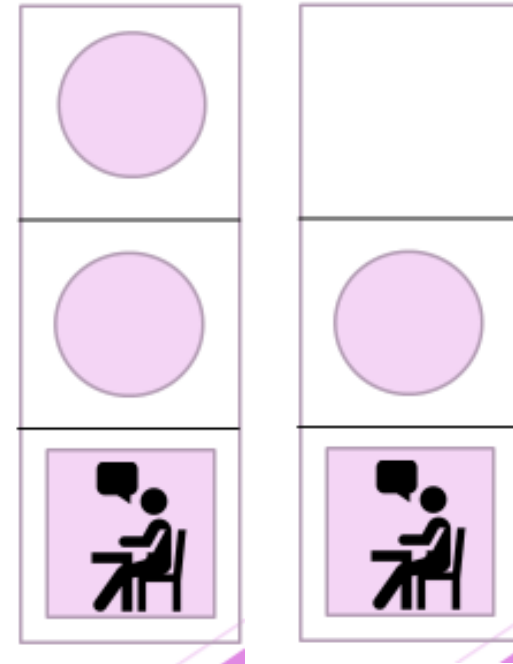
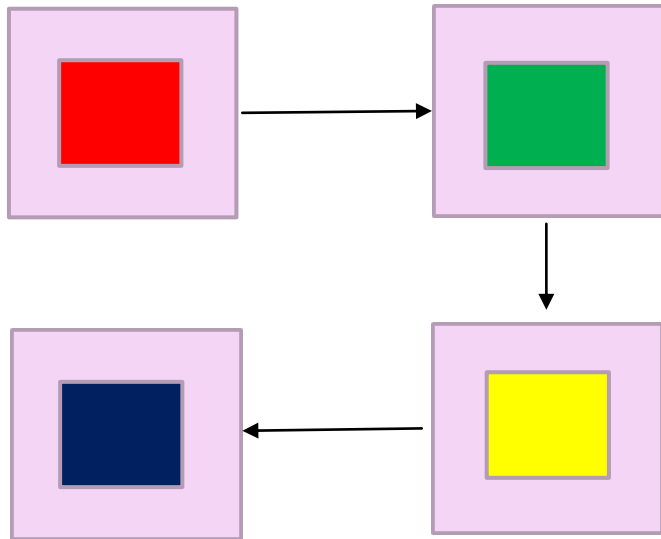
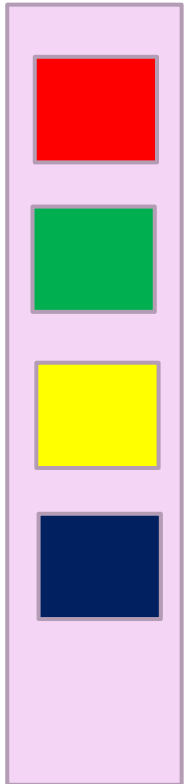
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Don't forget the schedules for special days like World Book Day or party days or trips etc (what stays the same?).

Likely times for challenges:

Situations that require turn-taking or sharing of favoured people or items.

- Non verbal interaction games where turn-taking makes the game fun.



How to check understanding

- Avoid “is that ok?” or “Did you understand?”
- Observe responses.
- Tell and show plan, then ask child to tell you the plan (with visual support in place).



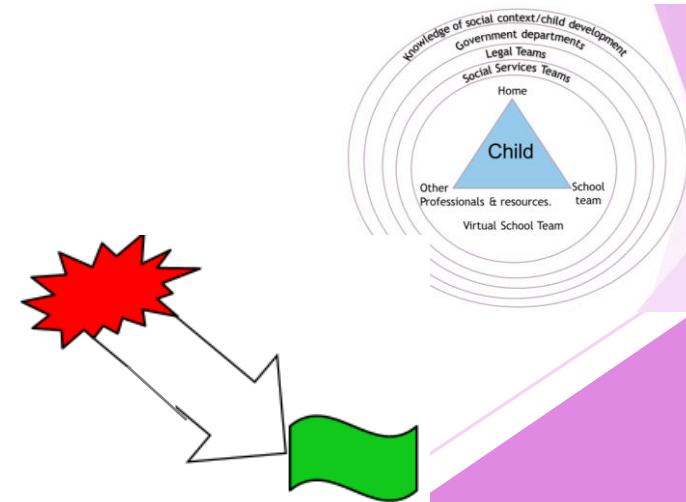
Practical session:



Thinking about a child:

- How will you use some of the information from this session to add to your practice?

Blank Level 1 Naming	Blank Level 2 Describing
Blank Level 3 Re-telling	Blank Level 4 Justifying



“I work really hard but people always leave.”

Preparing for literacy Seven recommendations to support improving early language and literacy
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/preparing-for-literacy/>

Book of the brain and how it works Dr Betina Ip 2020 Usborne

Test of Abstract Language Comprehension Elklan (Based on Blank's levels).

Let's Talk with 5-11s Mc Lachlan and Elks Elklan 2018

Write from the start Developing the fine motor and perceptual skills for effective handwriting. Ion Teodorescu and Lois Addy
LDA

Parent -child book reading and language development in the early years Law and Charlton
2018 <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/a-systematic-review-of-the-impact-of-parent-child-reading>

<http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Promoting-Language-with-Books.aspx>

Cockatoos by Quentin Blake !



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