

# Talking Matters

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*Helping your child to reach their potential*



## Communication and ASD

*Students with autism spectrum disorder often have uneven language skills.*

*They often have strengths in the area of vocabulary, particularly around their special interests, and some use quite complex sentence structures. Often however they have weaknesses in comprehension, particularly of more abstract concepts and tasks.*

*They also often have difficulty understanding how social context impacts on the meaning of language and so often are very literal in their interpretation.*

Facilitate listening with the following:

- ☑ Gain the student's attention before giving instructions
- ☑ Use short simple instructions
- ☑ Be very concise and specific
- ☑ Use simple sentence structures
- ☑ Avoid using abstract concepts
- ☑ Break down longer instructions into a series of steps.
- ☑ Support verbal instructions with visuals and or gestures
- ☑ Repeat information as required
- ☑ Use visual demonstrations where possible
- ☑ Explicitly teach listening behaviours:

1. Legs still
2. Hands in Lap
3. Look at person talking
4. Lips quiet
5. Listen to teacher



Facilitate understanding and expression by:

- ☑ Remember to check the student's comprehension of information or tasks
- ☑ Ask the student to tell you their understanding of information. Information may be interpreted in a concrete or personal way. If context or social cues are misunderstood then information may be interpreted incorrectly.
- ☑ When introducing new topics of work remember to check understanding of vocabulary and concepts and teach as required.
- ☑ Encourage students to develop strategies such as highlighting key points, checking understanding and using a dictionary.
- ☑ Providing visuals such as Boardmaker symbols alongside texts can help with understanding.



Students with autism spectrum disorder often have difficulty expressing their feelings such as happy, sad, or angry, using words. They may also have difficulty indicating basic sensations such as hungry, sick, hot, cold, tired and thirsty.

When these things cannot be expressed in words they may be expressed through behaviours such as hitting out or withdrawing.

- ☑ Providing the student with visuals such as symbol cards to represent these concepts can help reduce negative behaviours and develop expressive communication skills.
- ☑ Symbol cards can also be used to facilitate expression of social skills such as asking for turns, requesting help in refusing unwanted items or actions.

