Communication

Imperative communications are primarily based on meeting specific or general needs and wants. Imperative communications are centred around motivation.		
Learning Intentions	**Teaching ideas and activities**	**Notes**
To build up a bank of clear and unambiguous likes and dislikes.	You are looking for the learner to make a clear choice which may be positive (I want) or negative (I don't want) but that could easily be by vocalising, eye-gazing, pointing to, taking, holding, turning away from, pushing away etc.	Establishing a motivation to communicate.
	Use Individual Sensory Environments (ISE) to set up activities. Present them to the child and then withdraw to look for a response. Opportunities for free play to look for what motivates a child and what they are drawn to. Reinforcer assessments to ensure that pupils are still motivated by objects of choice. Ensure that all avenues are explored as often there may be unusual favoured items. Communication with home to see what is favoured in that environment.	[Individualised Sensory Environments](#)
To work on early communication to express that I want something	Imperative communications are built around wants and needs, 'I want' is different to 'I need' and comes first. 'I want' is centred around motivation and is naturally more powerful than 'I need' which is learned over time.	
	Total communication environment across the day. Total communication across the school using signs, symbols, objects of reference. Opportunities to make choices throughout the day. Structured communication sessions to teach the skills. Support from the SALT to develop functional communication using whatever tools are appropriate – PECS, symbols, switches, AAC, touch, eye gaze.	
To ask for more.	Once a favoured item has been found opportunities devised throughout the day to ask for 'more' or 'again'. Looking for anticipation of wanting more. Use of Makaton signing for more – be aware that pupils may also have their own 'specific' signs that they have devised to get their needs met. Use of single press switch, AAC device or symbol.	
To make a supported positive choice from two given options – high verses low motivator	Working from the learner's known likes and dislikes offer two clear and obvious opposing choices to the learner. Formal and less formal opportunities to communicate throughout the day.	

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To make a supported *negative* choice from *one* given option	Learning to communicate a negative choice is one of the most important communication skills we can give. Effective communication is about making meaning clear. You are looking for a clear and socially acceptable indication that the learner does not want something.	See also Non-verbal Behavioural Communications
	Working from the previous known likes and dislikes offer two items offer one item which is an obvious dislike. Teaching specific 'negative' responses – pushing away the object, putting it in a box – whichever works best for the pupil. It is not necessary at this stage for the learner to be using a formal communication system such as sign, symbol or speech, rejecting is enough. You are looking for a specific (and acceptable) means of rejection such as pushing away, turning away. Staff could model the Makaton for No at this point to begin teaching that more formal response.	
To establish a bank of the learner's favourite imperative words	Such words, usually nouns, must be established favourites. That is, they must be motivating to the learner. It is not necessary at this stage to consider sentence structure or sentence strips (if using symbols). There is also no necessity to start with '*I want…*' or to put in '*Please'* or '*Thank you*'	
	Regular motivator checks carried out to ensure they are still favoured items. Establishing a strategy for communication – signs, symbols, switches. Agree common phrasing for items – what do you call them? Ensure that all staff know how to sign favoured items and that there are resources and spares to allow communication. Total communication environment. Formal structured sessions to teach symbols and signs to match objects etc. Opportunities to communicate throughout the day. Structured snack time sessions.	
To gain the attention of another person	Having the ability to gain the attention of another person and knowing they will be listened to. Using play as a central opportunity for social engagement.	Links with My Play and Leisure
	Distance and persistence for PECS users. Using switches with children for calling and alerting attention. Sabotage – ensuring that pupils have to get your attention first, rather than pre-empting things they might need. Put some favoured items out of reach. Teaching children to touch gently on the arm or call a name.	

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To establish a symbol, verbal and/or signed bank of each learner's favourite imperative words in school	This is the development of a more formalised communication, going beyond pointing, taking, reaching etc.	
	If possible work within the learners preferred method of communication (signs, symbols, verbal, switches etc). Work alongside SALT team to establish methods that work to support communication. Ensure that there is opportunity to teach signs and symbols in context – don't just assume they will know and understand them. Provide them with opportunities to practice their communication in real life context and regularly throughout the day. Structured opportunities throughout lessons. Regular reinforcer checks to ensure that items are still motivating for the pupil.	
To establish a symbol, verbal and/or signed bank of each learner's favourite imperative words at school, home and for regular out of school placements.	Pupils favourites may be different in different settings. Effective communication between SALT, school, home and other settings is vital to ensure consistency and development for the pupils,	Links with My Play and Leisure
	Ensure that pupils have a voice throughout their day that is carried with them wherever possible and across all settings. Low tech should also be available in Effective communication between home, school and all other settings that the pupil attends. Regular leisure time built into the day to offer the opportunity of choice.	
To establish that favourite imperatives might not be possible all the time.	There is a fine line between wanting to promote motivational activities to encourage communication and restricting breath and balance by just promoting motivational activities.	
	This is a judgement call based on many factors. Pupils need to be taught these skills in a safe space and at the right time for them. Pupils taught this in whatever manner is appropriate for their method of communication and alongside a positive behaviour support plan where necessary.	
To extend imperative communications into shared declarative, dynamic and/or narrative communications	All imperatives carry opportunities to become a shared communication as long as we ensure there is motivation, means and a partner to communicate with.	Links to Play and Leisure
	Playing alongside pupils – sharing the same objects. Encouraging parallel play and turn taking if appropriate.	
To establish that choices may carry significant consequences	The act of choosing doesn't have to be significant if the choice carries no consequences e.g. choosing from two flavours of squash if both are liked. However consequences are important to learn about choices and its beneficial to bring this in early.	Links to Thinking and Problem Solving
	Provide opportunities for pupils to experience the consequence of their choices within a safe learning environment. Sabotage may be useful in this situation to set up structured safe activities.	

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To ask for help.	Ensure that opportunities are provided to teach the pupils to ask for help in an appropriate means of communication – signs, switches, symbols, communication devices etc. Sabotage opportunities and allow time for pupils to process and request help.	
To extent imperative communications into sentences.	Once at the point of developing sentence structure pupils will use whatever their preferred method of communication is. This could be PECS at Phase IV, using verbal requests in a more formal way or more technical AAC. Introducing sentence starters and more core vocabulary – Let's go… I'd like to… Help me… Use structured and unstructured sessions throughout the total communication environment, using those high motivating activities. Modelling of sentences using communication device. Ensuring means of communication is constantly accessible and available.	
To attach basic attributes to imperatives e.g. red apple, big car etc.	Introduction of adjectives to pupil. Begin to point out and model. Provide pupil with objects that are the same but with different attributes so you can identify them… 'Oh you want the red car. Have a selection of different coloured boxes to put snack items or motivators in so that pupil can request the coloured box to get the item. Obviously you would need to show them what was in the box at the start. Clear boxes with different coloured lids could be an initial introduction as a middle ground if needed. Sabotage – give pupil choice of 2 objects with marked difference in attributes e.g. a green and a red apple. Pupil to request adding in attribute.	

Following instructions is a necessary developmental stage. Pupils will not always naturally acquire theory of mind so this element helps to consciously teach a key part of this learning.		
Learning Intentions	**Teaching ideas and activities**	**Notes**
Respond to visuals/signs eg. Stop, sit, wait etc Respond to name and command e.g. 'bob, sit', using visuals and signs to support.	Provide opportunities using visuals to support instructions. Ensure that appropriate processing time is given. Ensure that tone of voice and repeating instructions in the same way is used to avoid re-processing.	
To follow a simple one step instruction.	The complexity of the instructions are dependent on the learner's ability. Sufficient sequential and working memory is essential which can be difficult for some. Use of motivating situations throughout the day – snack time, leisure time. Simple instructions as part of the regular routine of the day. Use of message devices to allow the instructions to be relayed as many times as needed. Spoken and signed instructions. Visual prompts to support instructions. Use of structured language 'stand up', ''stop', 'toilet' without any extra words. Offer activities to develop working memory. Making meaningful requests in context. Ensure that processing time is given. If needed instructions are repeated using exactly the same phrasing and tone of voice.	[Memory Games](#)
To follow a two-step instruction. To follow a three-step instruction.	Use of a first and then phrasing to support 'First get your coat and then get your shoes.' Use of visual cues as a prompt if needed. Again using more structured language to begin with - 'shoes on and then lunch'. Give instructions in the correct order to ensure understanding. Simons says game to develop instructions – 'Simon says pat you nose and close your eyes'. Barrier games. Use of choices 'Do you want to drive the red car or the blue car?. Visual steps of instructions to support. Use of step by step message devices to build up skills.	[Barrier games](#)

Declarative communications is language that offers opportunity to share experiences. Learners with ASD may struggle with this social commenting and may require differentiated teaching to support it. These make up 80% of daily communications.		

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To gain the attention of another person.	Pupils need to know that they have the ability to gain the attention of another person and that they will be listened to Total communication environment across the day. Total communication across the school using signs, symbols, objects of reference. Staff honour all approaches and communication. Intensive interaction. Play based learning providing opportunities for social engagement.	Links to Play and Leisure Intensive Interaction
To make a comment.	Use topics/contexts of interest to the individual. Use of sentence starters – - I like... - I see… - I don't like… - I hear… - Let's go to… - Lets play This can be developed with AAC, PECS, visuals and communication books. Can be supported through stories and listening skills and play based contexts through the day. Personalised 'I see…' books. Adult modelling – model thinking out loud during activities. Verbalising thoughts and providing a narrative based on declarative language. Provide opportunities for problem solving language. Rather than giving an instruction 'put the toy in the basket', turn the question into a comment 'I see a toy on the floor'. Use of self narratives 'My pencil is broken. I need to sharpen it'. Then when the pupil has a broken pencil use the phrase 'I see your pencil is broken…' and then pause to allow them to generate their own response.	Books like Brown Bear Brown Bear have a great structure for teaching commenting.

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To engage in a declarative conversation with another.	Engage learners in sharing memories. Looking through photos at the end of the day. Use scripts to structure communication. Set up a step by step switch with comments on that pupils can use as a structure at the end of the day. Use of AAC – PECS commenting, Exposing learners to Wow moments to encourage them to comment. Use of 'Stretching' to plan for activities. News time is great for this and also candle time/reflection at the end of the day.	Stretching (Lyons et al 2011) 'Stretch' by thinking about an activity before it happens, making plans for it happening, talking about plans (positive expectation). After the event taking pleasure from the memories, looking at photos, sharing narratives and anticipating it happening again (positive reflection).
To engage in a declarative conversation in response to someone else.	Communication is a process, not a series of separately taught skills chained together. They must be contextualised and regarded as a whole. It should be pupil led and this will vary from one to another. They are not developmental or linear. Retrospective target setting should be used as it isn't possible to predict the outcome from an activity. **Ideas for Engagement in Communicative Learning** • Attention Autism, built around the principle that (social) engagement will develop once the attention of the child has been secured, but we might need to work much harder at securing attention than merely calling someone's name. The key is to make the engagement irresistible! • Any form of play • All sorts of games • Jokes, especially slapstick (rather than linguistic) humour, though it is probably best not to make the learner the butt of the humour! • Magic. Simple sleight of hand tricks can be learned with a little time and trouble. • Using personal motivators (the things learners are **REALLY i**nterested in) even if that means **LOTS** of discussions about air conditioning units. • Lego Therapy. An example of structured play and problem solving opportunities leading to increased social interactions between peers. • Doing something out of the ordinary to gain the attention and awareness of the learner - dress up, change your appearance, put on a pair of Elton John glasses or a false beard or a bright red wig. • Parachute Games – attach bells, flashing lights, balloons on top of parachute, blowing bubbles over the parachute, sing a song at the same time, play music. • Pete Wells – interactive songs and poetry. Drama Games – using sensory props e.g. name game, pass the sound, look and scream, dance your name. • Creative art activities which are personalised to include preferences (textures, objects, etc)	Attention Autism Parachute games

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To engage in a declarative conversation in response to someone else.	**Ideas for Engagement in Communicative Learning continued** • Intensive Interaction. • Physical interactive people games such as peek-a-boo, round and round the garden. • Tactile activities with drama e.g. whoosh splat with shaving foam. • Aprons/belts covered in a learner's motivators – encourage learners to approach and interact with the adult. • Parallel play/copy boxes – the adult plays with the same toys as the learner, but is directly engaging or playing 'with'. • Hidden objects. Put a noisy toy in your bag. Put a phone in a cupboard and get a colleague to keep ringing it. Make a big thing of being really annoyed about the interruption to the lesson. Get everyone to search for it, looking in all the wrong places first. Keep playing the same trick so that it becomes a running joke. • Play your running jokes at the most inappropriate of times. • Make purposeful mistakes – use lots of humour and over-the-top reactions. • Introduce, model and encourage appropriate interactions and sentence starters within preferred activities or interactions. • Introduce, model and encourage appropriate interactions and sentence starters within adult directed activities/games/interactions. • Introduce triadic intensive interaction initially with another staff member, but leading onto communicative engagements with two peers and one adult. • Respond to all communication efforts – including unintentional communications. This might especially be the case when meeting in passing; so staff members might practice catching an inadvertent look from the learner as a reason to say hello, or practice brushing past the learner as an excuse to say *'excuse me'* or *'sorry'*. This can in turn, be made into a dynamic communication with dramatic exaggeration (*'OH! EXCUSE ME!!'*) Especially if you can make it into a standing joke. • Modelling verbally, by for example, verbalising a learner's unspoken request or object of attention. Make sure to use single words, particularly emphasising the particular motivator. • Continue to value and acknowledge any attempts to initiate communications – even those that might be considered inappropriate. These can be turned around with a more appropriate method modelled by the staff member. The key is to encourage and build confidence that appropriate requests for communication are **always** listened to! • Model methods of indicating (and therefore communicating) a desire to finish (walking away, signing or saying "stop"). • Staff members to acknowledge and respond to a request. Staff members to carefully observe reactions (behaviours, etc) which are indicating a desire to end an interaction.	[Intensive Interaction](#) [Copybox](#)

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To make a great level of engagements in communicative learning.	The following is some signs of engagement and can be used to show progress. They are not developmental or linear and there is no requirement for pupils to achieve them all.	

What to look for and plan for to ensure greater communication

- Being aware of another person as a communication partner, as little as a fleeting glance.
- Extending the duration and/or frequency of looking at another person.
- Tolerating a communication partner - from brief periods to extended periods.
- Developing curiosity in a communication partner. Look for:
  - eye contact - even fleeting. It is not necessary for eye contact to be sustained for effective communication.
  - approaching/ sharing space with them
  - mimicking – copying facial expressions
  - asking questions
  - joining in with play.
- Developing appropriate responses to a communication partner.
- Showing an interest in other people and a desire to communicate.
- Demonstrating enjoyment in interacting with a communication partner through
  - tolerating
  - engaging with
  - responding to
  - enjoying
  - initiating
  - requesting a wider variety of social interactions.
- Extending and expanding upon interests, building a wider vocabulary of sentence starters or starters for interactions, reducing dependence on a particular and repetitive topic.
- Requesting extension of interaction.
- Sharing attention with an adult – social interaction games, sharing equipment, joint attention, floor time.
- Engaging in social interactions.
- Demonstrating enjoyment.
- Understanding that others can be communication partners.
- Initiating unintentional interactions through looking, touch, gesture, vocalising, facial expressions, behaviours, verbalising, AAC, crying, laughing etc.
- Initiating intentional interactions through looking, touch or gesture, vocalising, facial expressions and behaviours.

Formal social interactions with familiar and unfamiliar people require a particular way of behaving that take in society's understanding of what makes up appropriate language, familiarity, attention, time, proximity and touch. They are generally rule and society bound. It is also important to consider cultural difference.		
Learning Intentions	**Teaching ideas and activities**	**Notes**
To respond to a greeting from a familiar adult.	The use of rote learning for this element is encouraged. We need to be mindful that there are accepted societal conventions that probably need to be formally learned so this unit reflects that and is more developmentally structured.	Ensure that the outcome is differentiated for the individual.
	It is best to set up a standardised method which can then be modelled and practised many, many times. There will be an agreed protocol for this depending on what form of communication the learner is using. Staff to model accordingly using sign, visuals or modelling on a communication device. This will be entirely learner specific. Typically, this model will involve; 1. A set agreed greeting such as '*Good day, Kelly*' as the first greeting of the day spoken, signed, modelled by members of staff as they greet Kelly off the school bus or on entry into the classroom. 2. Supporting adults may help the learner to pause for sufficient time to acknowledge the greeting. The learner may respond in an appropriate and agreed way. This could be a sign (a thumb up for good), eye contact and a look, a wave or any other agreed acknowledgement. 3. Supporting adults may also point out to the learner that they have just been greeted and encourage the learner to give positive feedback with a glance or other acknowledgement to support the signed '*Good*'. • Communication devices need to be ready and waiting and constantly available to allow them to respond.	
To respond appropriately to a greeting from a familiar adult.	Learning about proximity is helped by the use of formal touch early on. We tend to use touch very differently so that adults' physical interactions with children become very different over time. It is best to teach formal touch as early as possible with a low five or a gentle fist with young learners. If we are consistent in this, it is very easy to turn either into a formal handshakes later on, but the adoption of formal handshakes are not really necessary until late teenage years.	
	As above this will be dependent on the communication methods that the learner is using. Regular protocol will support the development of the learner and help with consistency. 1. A set greeting such as '*Good day, Kelly*' as the first greeting of the day spoken by staff members as they greet Kelley off the school bus or on entry into the classroom. 2. The learner acknowledges the greeting by responding with whatever means of communication is used. 3. Staff give a low five or touches hands with the learner and expects the touch to be reciprocated.	

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To initiate a formal greeting with a familiar adult.	Eye contact is not absolutely necessary but should definitely be encouraged, even for those on the autistic spectrum. This is because it is part of the expected formal greeting procedure and should be treated as something to be learned if it does not come naturally. Learners may well need to be primed and heavily supported in the first instance with one key person (such as the head teacher) being the target for the initiation. There can be much practise in the classroom beforehand in role play and drama situations. Staff Members may model the procedure immediately before the learner formally greets the target. 1. Learner approaches the staff member using their preferred method of communication and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five. 2. Learner either initiates or reciprocates the touch.	Ensure that the learner always has access to their voice
To initiate a formal greeting with an unfamiliar person.	Visitors to school are excellent 'targets' for formally greeting an unfamiliar person because this person can be primed and (if they don't know them) taught the basic signs quite easily. Given this, it is essential that visitors are brought into classrooms and introduced to every member of the class including staff, who can then model the correct procedure. 1. L approaches the target saying and using their preferred method of communication 'Good day …………. My name is………' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five. 2. L either initiates or reciprocates the touch.	Ensure that the learner always has access to their voice. Ensure that people showing around guests make time if possible to provide opportunities to put this into practice.
To extend a greeting into a short conversation with a familiar adult.	The trick is for the learner to steer the conversation into areas of personal interest as soon as possible, and to finish before it gets too tricky. This can be learned in the classroom or around the school in role play. Staff must make it clear to learners that they are practising their skills. It is important that we don't push too far too fast; we need to give learners confidence that they can hold a short conversation before going onto longer ones. 1. Learner approaches the target saying and using their preferred communication 'Good day …………. My name is………' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five. 2. L either initiates or reciprocates the touch. 3. L steps away from the touch 4. 'I have a sister. Her name is …………… Do you have a sister?' 5. 'Good. I have to go now. Goodbye'	The conversation extensions will clearly be highly personalised and probably rote learned. This leaves them very open to be recorded on a Step-by-Step or other similar VOCA.

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To extend a greeting into a longer conversation with a familiar adult using a social script.	The use of a 'social script' (Musselwhite & Burkhart) help learners *'to claim, start and maintain turns in conversation.'* The scripts are essentially a limited series of short, closed statements that the learner can practise and rote learn. They are also open to use with a VOCA. Such statements may be responded to in any way yet still make sense as one part of a conversation. The topic for the scripts must be motivational to the learner.	[Social scripts](#) [Examples of social scripts](#) Not to be confused with social stories. A VOCA can be used here even if the learner has language, because it can act as an aide memoire, which immediately takes the pressure off the learner to remember the whole script. If they do have language, there is no reason why learners cannot record it themselves. After 45 conversations with 45 different people using the same VOCA script, the learner may be in a position to talk with or even instead of the VOCA.
	There are a number of key elements, namely: • The use of formulaic starter lines to set the topic of the script. • Use of maintainers, holders and interjections; which all allow the learner to add interest to the basic storyline, yet maintaining control of the conversation. • Use of turn transfers, especially for more able users. After the main story (or in the middle of a longer story) turn transfers invite the listener to give their opinion. • Closings; to allow the learner to initiate the ending of the conversation. The statements are made by the learner and taking no account of the responder. We are teaching the learner to feel confident in longer conversations 1. Learner approaches the target using their preferred method of communication 'Good day ... My name is...' and extends right hand for shake or low five. 2. Learner either initiates or reciprocates the touch. 3. Learner starts the conversation with 'I went shopping yesterday' and waits for a response. After the response (whatever it is) Learner replies 4. 'I bought a new shirt and tie'. Learner waits for a response and then replies 5. 'They're for the school prom'. Response and reply follow. 6. 'Do you like proms?' 7. 'We're having a disco' 8. 'Well I have to go now' 9. 'Bye!' There is a real skill in responding which members of staff have to learn. Neutral affirming questions like 'Really?' or 'Did you?' or statements like 'My oh my!' or 'Wow!' are very useful, as are repeating the line back to the learner as an exclamation. The only variable is in response to the question asked 'Do you like proms?' and it doesn't really matter what you reply. 1. Start with a starter; in this case the dramatic 'Hey you!' or a simple 'Hello'. 2. Keep the sentences short. 3. Keep the whole thing short an absolute maximum of 10 'conversational turn takes'. 4. Make categorical statements. 5. Bring in at least one high point which is the point of the conversation in the first place. 6. End with an with a clear indication that the conversation has finished, as in 'Bye!'	

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To extend a formal greeting into a short conversation with an unfamiliar adult.	This may be very useful for those with ASD who need a short script to develop conversations in order to give conversational practise. This is on the principle that the more practise they get, the more able they will be. We all use these sorts of formulaic conversations and some (like the Queen for example) use them all the time. It is best to think of these like a 'meet and greet' session.	

They will start with a series of one liners after the introduction.

So for example:

1. Learner approaches the target using their preferred method of communication 'Good day …………. My name is………' and extends his/her right hand to be either shaken or at least touched in a low five.
2. L either initiates or reciprocates the touch.
3. L starts the conversation with 'How are you?' and waits for a response which will end with 'And how are you?'
4. L responds with 'I am very well thank you'.

There are many other examples, especially if talking about the weather that can be used as an introduction.

Non–verbal behavioural communications can form a considerable part of a learner's communicative repertoire. Behaviour is seen as communication then we shouldn't ignore these. There is sometimes a tendency to stop these communications because of the link with challenging behaviour, rather than turning them into contextualised and appropriate communications.

There are common themes running through very many challenging behaviours which directly relate to communication. If we can get the communication right, we can go a long way towards finding a better solution. Using the Proact Scip philosophy the behaviours can be categorised at SEAT.

1. Sensory – for the purposes of this curriculum document we are not focussing on this one as this features in sensory diets and OT programmes.
2. Escape
3. Attention
4. Tangible

- **Escape behaviours**, either task, situation or person avoidance usually derive from the learner not wanting to do something but not being listened to when they say 'no'. This then comes back to our *Motivation, Means and Mate* where the learner has the motivation to say 'no' but neither the means nor the mate because we are not listening or are not allowing the learner the control. For most children this is a learning curve and the vast majority of children do learn that there are some things that they have to do even if they really don't want to. It is often painful, there will be lots of tears, but they do eventually learn. For some children losing control in certain things is SO frightening and SO intolerable and SO incomprehensible they are prepared to do anything to avoid it. If the learner has been displaying challenging behaviours in order to avoid a task or situation or person for some considerable time, the only guaranteed way to resolve the issue is to take the task or situation or person away. That is, we need to listen to the communication!! In this sense, the learner is not just saying 'no' they are screaming 'NO' at us very loudly.
- **Attention seeking behaviours** usually derive from the learner's inability to gain enough attention by conventional means. Relating this to *Motivation, Means and Mate*, they have the motivation and possibly the means, but they don't have the mate, because we don't have the time or the resources to give the level of attention demanded. Once again, we often use conventional wisdom here. Firstly, the argument that a learner is getting attention but still continues with extreme attention seeking behaviours, merely indicates that the learner is not getting enough attention. This may seem unreasonable to you, but then your refusal to give enough attention, obviously seems unreasonable to the learner. Secondly, conventional wisdom often dictates ignoring as being the answer: after all, if we give attention to someone who is displaying challenging behaviours in order to gain attention, we will be rewarding a negative behaviour, and the challenging behaviour will continue because it has been successful. This is of course correct, but unfortunately, especially for those with severe learning difficulties because learning is so much more difficult, the learner is likely to ratchet up the behaviour until we have to pay attention, even if that attention is negative. For someone who exhibits habitual attention seeking challenging behaviours, negative attention (which is better than no attention at all) becomes the norm. The solution lies in giving attention before the negative behaviours occur, so that we are rewarding positive attention seeking behaviours rather than negative attention seeking behaviours.
- **Tangible** relates to those behaviours where something is wanted/needed, access to a preferred activity object or person. Providing pupils with a voice is an essential part of developing these communicative behaviours and this communication curriculum is built around working to create as many opportunities to be heard throughout the day.

For further information relating to this, please use the Positive Behaviour Support handbook as a reference point.

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To communicate no appropriately	It may well be that learning to say no appropriately is much more important than learning to say yes and should come at the very beginning of the communication journey.	[Individualised Sensory Environments](#) Although this is saying 'no' appropriately, we must not be too particular about the level of appropriateness in the establishment of the rejection response. This can be refined later. The important part is that the learner does not feel the need to exhibit challenging behaviour in order to be listened to when they say 'no'.
	1. Using a learning opportunity like Individualised Sensory Environments (ISE) compile a list of things which the learner does not like. Please note: it is not sufficient to be neutral about the thing; there has to be positive dislike. 2. At fairly regular intervals, perhaps once or twice a day, offer the positively disliked thing to the learner and look for a sign of rejection. Please note: we do not want to offer the learner a choice between something they like and something they don't like. This is not about making choices but about learning how to say 'no'. 3. Agree with colleagues what the learner's rejection looks like. It is often best to film it so that school can agree on the rejection response with home, respite etc. 4. As soon as the rejection response has been delivered by the learner, take the disliked thing away. This must be instant so that the learner can easily associate the behaviour (rejection response) with the action (the disliked thing gets taken away). 5. When the rejection response is established, repeat the offer of the known disliked item at irregular intervals perhaps once a week for a term. With the learner, and after discussions with all interested parties, refine the rejection response over time so that it becomes as socially appropriately acceptable as it can be.	
To follow a simple single instruction.	See following instructions section. Although this may seem contradictory, the logic lies in recognising that learners may be much more willing to co-operate with the education process if they know that they will be listened to on issues that are really important to them. There is no reason why learners who object to certain tasks, situations or persons should object to all tasks, situations or persons and there is therefore no reason not to teach about following instructions, as long as we are intelligent about the instructions we are asking them to follow.	

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities		Notes
To recognise the difference between 'I don't want' and 'I don't need.'	Needs and wants are subtly but importantly different. 'I don't want' is clear and unambiguous but 'I don't need' has two perceptions, that of the learner and that of the teacher, and it we have to strike a balance that relates directly to the importance of the negative to the learner. 'I don't want to put shoes on' can be agreed by all parties but there will clearly be disagreement about 'I don't need to put shoes on'.		
	The general principles for proceeding will be 1. Don't fight battles that are not worth fighting. For example, don't expect shoes to be worn all the time, but do expect shoes to be worn when outside. 2. Proceed slowly and at the learner's pace. 3. A small success is much better than a big failure. 4. Offer motivators for a very small task. The agreement from the learner really does have to be a 'no-brainer'. This might mean offering (say) 20 minutes of whatever it is that the leaner really loves to do for a mere few seconds of putting shoes on. Over time, with success, and very slowly we can gradually increase the amount of time. The key here is to recognise that the learner has to believe that they are in control. 5. Don't push an increase in expectation beyond that which the learner can cope. Continue to slowly increase demands, but always be aware that the learner may be having a bad and cannot cope. Be prepared to go backwards in the short term.		
To recognise the difference between 'I want' and 'I need'.	In a very similar way, but again, subtly different, 'agreements' will have to be arrived at regarding the relationship between what 'I want' and what 'I need'. 'I want to hold this Thomas the Tank toy in my right hand while I'm eating my lunch' is not the same as 'I need to hold this Thomas the Tank toy in my right hand while I'm eating my lunch'. The principles for proceeding will be the same as for 'I don't want'. Please bear in mind, and with reference to the behaviour support handbook the difference between what is a want and what is a need at that time.		
To positively share attention with a staff member	This learning intention can be seen to be more relevant for the staff member than the learner. Staff have to convince the learner that they are paying attention to the learner all of the time, sole and undivided attention. Once the learner is secure in this, they will have no need to display extremes of behaviour in order to gain the attention. The more secure the learner is in this, the less they will think rely on extremes of behaviour to meet their need. Generally speaking, it is probably best that the person allocated to this task is a TA rather than the teacher, otherwise who is going to teach the rest of the class? The duration for this arrangement will naturally vary according the severity of the learner's need, but can take a number of years to resolve in the most severe of cases. This clearly demands a commitment from the school and its resources.		

	Peer to peer communications can be challenging for pupils with SLD however there are many opportunities for this across all strands of Communication. Staff members can set up communicative triads with a staff member and two or three learners.	
Learning Intentions	**Teaching ideas and activities**	**Notes**
To communicate needs and wants with peers.	Learners may well start with full adult support and then fade out the prompts.	
	• Any communication opportunities arising from structured play,that is, playing games. • Play alongside others – parallel play. • Any communication opportunities arising from free play. • Tea parties and pretend play. • Extend into real situations, such as a class or school coffee morning, snack time, school café, local cafes and work experience. • Requesting a peer pass items that are motivating at lunch time (especially if a peer can act as the lunch monitor) or for example, art materials in a lesson. • Using a preferred object, passing it back and forth such as rolling a ball or car. • Taking turns at the whiteboard/computer etc. where staff are prompting the interactions of the pupils. • Turn taking games such as 'Pop Up Pirate' or 'Guess Who?' facilitated by an adult • Use of a visual prompt so you can only have a turn when the 'turn taking card' is in your possession, which is when an adult can often fade out for periods of time. • Cooperative activities such as surveys where one pupil has the recording 'board' and another asks the questions.	
To listen to another person.	Listening to another is a key skill, but it is not something easily taught.	Phase One letters and sounds Listening Games
	• Phase one letters and sounds which has listening skills and sound discrimination activities. • Barrier games to support listening to a peer. • Listening games like Simon says, Chinese whispers, copying games etc.	
To take turns with another person.	• Take part in reciprocal interactions with another person, such as Intensive Interaction or Musical Interaction. • Turn take with a wider range of adults and then peers in any game. Just about every game from *Musical Chairs* onwards, involves interaction and turn taking. • Take turns in exchanges of communicative behaviour, such as call and response etc.	Anything by Keith Parks Keith Parks

Learning Intentions	Teaching ideas and activities	Notes
To use appropriate physical contact with a peer.	- Encourage peer to peer 'high fives' in appropriate context as praise or reward when someone in the class has done well. - Encourage short bursts of controlled fun in play with another person such as rough and tumble in the soft play room. - Learn appropriate physical contact through the encouragement of a greeting hug, high five or hand shake with people we know well and know by name. The proximity allowed will depend on the learner and we ought to get into the habit of finding out the level of proximity each person is willing to tolerate. - Set up peer to peer massage sessions and other curriculum sessions such as PE, sports, games and Dance are excellent for consolidation of these skills.	
To tolerate others in their space or to request time way from the group.	- Encourage learners to elect a favoured person to join them for individual learning for a short time. Timers, particularly visual timers are excellent here. Agree the time and allow the learner to set the timer if possible. Thus joint agreement as to the duration of time removes the adult 'control' of the activity. - Encourage learners through reward to move closer to group activity over time. The learner may have the activity brought to them until they can gradually move closer to the group. - Create a way for the learner to 'ask' to be alone using their preferred communication method to ask people for 'quiet time' or to tell others to 'go away'. While this may seem contradictory to encouraging peer to peer social interactions, we may need to recognise that some learners will only be able to tolerate their peers for periods of time if they are certain that they can also have the degree of quiet time to themselves.	