Supporting Children with Social and Communication Differences

Top Tips for Supporting Your Child at Home

Developing Play Skills and Planning Activities

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Developing Play Skills and Planning Activities

Planning Activities

Learning and Play Routines

Getting Started with Play
Planning Activities

Think about activities that will help calm sensory processing differences, and build social and communication skills through fun and visual play.

Plan activities and offer meal times as close to the same time at nursery.

Remember your child will want breaks like we all do and you deserve your time as well.

Between activities if your child has very strong needs to carry out their own preferred play choices, these are good rest breaks and also processing time for your child to accept the new information, process the sensory feedback and enjoy some self-chosen play. You can allocate this as choosing time and create a choice board.

Start with your Child’s Preferred Play Interests
Learning and Play Routines

Start with up to 3 key activities in the day, for example

- Sensory play
- Music/DVD
- Box of Favourite toys

Be kind to yourself. Your child may enjoy down-time, like all of us and want to play in their own way such as repetitive play or sensory breaks. This will help them process what is happening and help relax. Try breaking up adult chosen activities with self-chosen activities by your child so that there is no pressure on either side. When starting a routine think of play activities that your child really likes such as messy or sensory play, stacking and lining up toys, running and jumping, bubbles and water play, sand play or musical play.
Social and Communication Differences

- Messy and sensory exploratory play such as water, sand, foam, rice, pasta (dry and wet), shredded paper, cornflour and water mix, bubbles, treasure basket of different textures that include sensory differences of touch, lights, and smells.

- Trains, animals, cars, balls, small world figures

- What actions interest your child?
  Building, posting, dropping, flapping, jumping, throwing, hoarding, tipping, pouring, grouping. How can you turn their interest into a learning opportunity and have fun?

- Throwing: Scarves of different colours or tissue paper into the air, exploring movement and cause and effect and naming the colours
- Posting: Bottle tops in a tissue box, sorting the colours, or shapes, numbers.
- Mixing foam and sand and exploring with a drop of food colouring or paint
- Music – dancing to one of the many online free children resources, using household items to make music
- Climbing and movement activities – making a den, rolling up and back in a blanket
- Water play and sand play in the garden or in a tray on a shower curtain.

Getting Started with Play

Once you have established a routine with some favoured activities, then you can start to add in some more activities that will help develop social skills such as joint attention, listening, following others and joint engagement. Speak to your Nursery or EYSEND team to find out how to do this or email Early Years SEND Team at EarlyYearsSENDTeam@Croydon.gov.uk for specific information to support your child at home.

When setting up activities for your child do try and set up in the same place if possible to make sense of the environment.
If you are playing with a sensory activity or a puzzle or building, lay a towel, shower curtain or blanket down so that this marks the area for that purpose. This acts as a reference to starting an activity. This also useful for protecting your floors and scooping up and folding over to visually show an activity is finished.

If you can try this for Monday to Friday and then have weekends different this will replicate nursery and school days.

Most importantly be kind to yourself and take it slowly. Croydon Educational Psychology service have produced a booklet to support families and mental health at this time and we are happy to share their guidance with you.