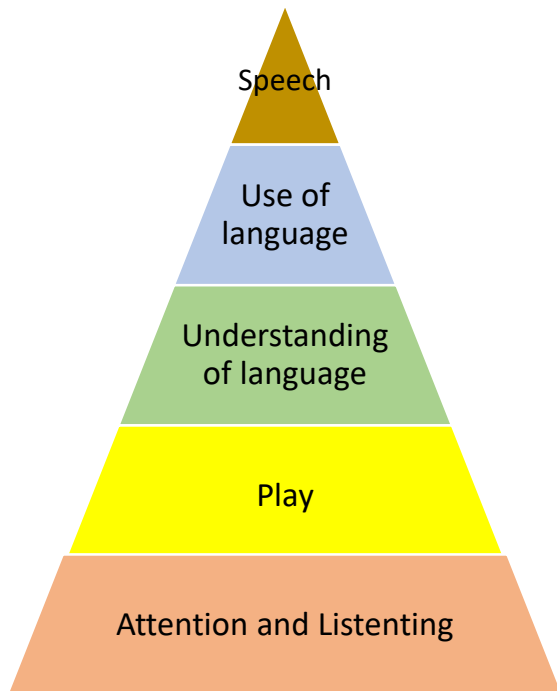




## Social Communication



The Communication Pyramid shows the different elements that make up speech, language and communication.

Social communication includes:

- The way we use language to communicate with others
- Making and maintaining friends
- Understanding emotions
- Understanding and using facial expressions and body language
- Taking turns in games and conversations
- Knowing how to respond to different social situations

### Provide structure

Your child may find it difficult to manage moving between activities and changes in their routine. Visual supports can help to prepare your child for changes and to build structure into their day. Here are some examples you could try:

- ➔ Visual timetable
- ➔ Use sand timers to show your child how long they have before the activity finishes.
- ➔ Checklists, e.g. getting ready for bed, dressing for school.
- ➔ First/Then

### Use rewards

If your child needs extra encouragement to complete activities which have been chosen by an adult, use rewards as a way to motivate them to complete these activities/tasks. E.g. 5 ticks on their chart and then a reward of your child's choice (Lego, dinosaur stickers).

## **Use positive language**

To reinforce good behaviour and provide specific praise. E.g. "You put your shoes away without me asking, that was really helpful."

## **Make it visual**

Spoken language is easier to understand when there is visual support. Gesture, objects, pictures and/or symbols can be used alongside talking.

## **Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations**

These are useful strategies to help children to understand different social situations. You can find out more about these by asking your therapist or visiting [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk).

## **Say what you mean**

Your child may understand language literally. Explain common metaphors and idioms. E.g. "It's raining cats and dogs means it's raining a lot."

## **Help your child to understand their emotions**

Talk about how your child and others feel in different situations, and discuss reasons why. Use a range of emotion words e.g. worried, anxious, joyful, happy, excited. E.g. "Sarah is feeling excited today because it's her birthday; she is smiling."

## **Help your child to manage their emotions**

Think of some solutions together for what your child can do when finding their emotions hard. E.g. Listen to some music, do some exercise, talk to someone.

## **Help your child to develop their play skills**

Encourage your child to play and take turns with others. Show your child how to play different kinds of game and teach them how to be a good winner and loser. E.g. role play, board games, chase games.

## **Practise conversation skills**

Your child may have difficulties starting, maintaining, and finishing conversations. Support your child to have conversations about different topics. Practise taking turns, asking questions and listening. E.g. Write topics on a piece of paper and take turns to choose one to talk about. Help your child to stay on topic by reminding them what you are talking about.