North Yorkshire Inclusion Service

Quality First Teaching approaches to support Communication and Interaction and Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Teachers are responsible for the progress and development of the children and young people (CYP) in their class/setting, including where CYP are supported by teaching assistants or specialist staff. Quality First Teaching (QFT) is the best approach for all CYP, including those with **Communication & Interaction (C&I)** and **Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN)** needs.

Identification

A child or young person with C&I and SLCN _may_:

- Have difficulty saying what they want to say or understand what is being said to them.
- Struggle to understand and use social rules of communication.
- Find it challenging to attend and listen.
- Misunderstand and misinterpret information especially from peers.
- Lack awareness of their own and others' emotions.
- Display challenging behaviours because they are unable to express their wants, needs and emotions appropriately.

Guiding Principles

- Create a **'communication friendly'** environment.
- Structure **opportunities** to promote communication skills across the day.
- Develop **effective, positive** adult-CYP relationships.
- Use **consistent** language, approaches and routines.
- Provide **high quality** feedback to support communication and interaction skills.

Strategies and specific approaches – Communication & Interaction

QFT to support CYP who have difficulties in Communication and Interaction:

- ✓ Use literal language. Be explicit. Avoid idioms, sarcasm and figures of speech. Teach understanding of these concepts.
- ✓ Gather the CYP's views. Follow interests and motivations.
- ✓ Use visual aids across contexts: objects/pictures/symbols to aid understanding and clarify. Use visual timetables/now/next.
- ✓ Consider individual learning styles/characteristics of learning, use multi-sensory activities to meet a range of learning styles.
- ✓ Most CYP work best with consistent expectations / rules / routines / structures. Pre-empt problems, prepare and forward plan with the CYP.
- ✓ Communicate regularly with parents/carers and work together for a positive and helpful way of supporting the CYP across all settings. Remember, how a CYP presents in setting is not always indicative of how they are coping. Signs of anxiety or challenging behaviours may only be evident at home.
- ✓ Use positive re-direction rather than negative: 'Put the pens on the table' rather than 'Don't throw the pens'.
- ✓ Praise the CYP when they show a desired behaviour, e.g. "good listening, well done." Make sure you let them know what it is you are pleased with, label the behaviour.
- ✓ Have flexible grouping arrangements, such as grouping with familiar peers or paired work rather than larger group work, to reduce social demands.
- ✓ Plan for differentiated activities / differentiated materials.
- ✓ Use differentiated questioning styles, e.g. precise and direct questions.
- ✓ Staff should foster independence, adapt materials, support as required and develop opportunities for social interaction.
- ✓ Mediate social situations. Provide alternative spaces, additional to existing areas, for socialising and down time. Use spaces flexibly; provide quiet areas for developing play or social understanding.

QFT to support CYP who have difficulties in sensory processing:

- ✓ Provide sensory /movement breaks e.g. time using a sensory circuit and / or regular movement breaks PRIOR to lessons and/or as required during lessons.
- ✓ Provide fidget toys/chew toys.
- ✓ Provide a clear visual timetable with plenty of preparation for transitions.
- ✓ Develop sensory / movement pathways e.g. in hallways / outdoor areas during transitions or break times.
- ✓ Consider reasonable adjustments to equipment such as providing a range of pencil grips, ergonomic pens, writing slopes, tinted screens or overlays and move and sit/wobble cushions / alternative seating.
- ✓ Carry out environment audits and make adaptations to support the CYP's sensory needs.
- ✓ Consider, are the lights in classroom meeting the needs of the CYP?
- ✓ Is the CYP seated in a distraction free area?
- ✓ Is unnecessary noise and movement reduced?
- ✓ Are classroom layouts, displays and signage meeting the needs of the CYP?
- ✓ Check the CYP's sensory profile for specific needs.
- ✓ All staff need to be aware of individual sensory needs.
- ✓ Consider classroom management – think access - appropriate seating, clear and clutter free resources, contrast, easy to locate, spacing of curriculum materials, size and style of curriculum materials, pre and post teaching practices.
- ✓ Give the CYP alternative strategies to record work if required.
- ✓ Provide a 'quiet zone' within the classroom or nearby, where reduced noise is encouraged and established.

Positive Approaches = Positive Outcomes

Strategies and specific approaches – Speech, Language and Communication Needs

QFT to support CYP who have difficulties in word finding and vocabulary:

- ✓ If a CYP is having difficulty with a word and you know which word they need, provide alternatives to the word.
- ✓ Support pupils by giving them the first sound of the word.
- ✓ If the CYP can make the sound, provide a choice for correction (e.g. 'is it a tat or a cat?') and praise all attempts at trying to self-correct.
- ✓ Model the correct production of sounds.
- ✓ Use visuals, such as photographs, word maps and communication mats
- ✓ Pre-teach important and new vocabulary
- ✓ When teaching new words, use a word web to discuss phonological (e.g. first sound) and meaning (e.g. location and function) features.
- ✓ When learning new words, try to make as many associations with the new word as possible.
- ✓ Teach related words and group new words into categories
- ✓ Teach and use the word in a range of different contexts.
- ✓ Ask the CYP questions about the word, e.g. 'Where do you find it? What do you use it for?'
- ✓ Encourage the CYP to regularly rehearse the word once they have retrieved it.
- ✓ Encourage the CYP to use the word in a sentence.
- ✓ Provide multiple exposures to new words.
- ✓ Support the CYP to reflect on their own word learning.

QFT to support CYP who have difficulties in using language:

- ✓ Provide a good language model, keeping your language clear and concise.
- ✓ Repeat what the CYP says, emphasising the correct word order and grammar.
- ✓ Give the CYP sufficient time to process what has been said and to organise their response (at LEAST 10 seconds).
- ✓ Give the CYP plenty of time to say what they mean.
- ✓ To assist with organisation, provide CYP with a simple structure, e.g. first, then, next.
- ✓ Provide visual prompts alongside key vocabulary to support the re-telling of events.
- ✓ Create opportunities for language use and communication (e.g. re-telling a story or describing a recent activity).
- ✓ Encourage participation in a group by asking questions that give alternatives (e.g. 'Was James pleased or unhappy?') This allows the CYP to become more involved in the discussion.
- ✓ Allow the CYP to organise ideas verbally before writing them down. Voice recording apps could be provided to support with this.
- ✓ Differentiate work to reflect the CYP's language and communication profile.
- ✓ Scaffolding – start at a level where the CYP is confident and then gradually stretch this.

QFT to support CYP who are reluctant speakers / selective mutism:

- ✓ Acknowledge the CYP's difficulty and how they feel – reassure them in private that you won't push them to speak and they can do so when they are ready; do not draw whole class attention to the fact that the CYP does not speak.
- ✓ Ensure communication is positive; provide opportunities to speak without making demands to talk and use the CYP's strengths and interests to encourage their involvement.
- ✓ Include the CYP by allowing alternative forms of communication which enable them to express themselves, make requests and engage with others, e.g. use of visuals, gestures, smile, wave or thumbs up to answer the register, pointing, dry-wipe boards.
- ✓ Make comments which they may respond to rather than asking direct questions.
- ✓ Encourage the CYP to interact with their peers both inside and outside of the classroom, foster friendships through interests and activities to encourage involvement and to prevent isolation.
- ✓ Allow them to sit or work with friends they feel comfortable with, at the back or side of the classroom so that they can see what is going on.
- ✓ Make comments that praise the CYP's effort with the task rather than commenting on their speech.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for the CYP to experience success and build self esteem.
- ✓ Encourage independence by doing things with them, not for them.
- ✓ Provide opportunities to develop a strong, positive relationship with a key adult in the setting as well as with peers.

QFT to support CYP who have difficulties understanding language:

- ✓ Ensure that you have the CYP's auditory and/or visual attention before talking to them. Say their name before giving an instruction.
- ✓ Break requests and instructions down into simpler, smaller steps. Limit non-essential information.
- ✓ Provide exact repetitions, if necessary.
- ✓ When giving information and instructions, use visuals to support (e.g. objects, gestures, signs, task boards, photographs and pictures).
- ✓ Use visual timetables to support daily routines.
- ✓ Give instructions in order of completion, e.g. 'Finish your writing and go to the carpet' rather than 'go to the carpet after you have finished your writing'.
- ✓ Use short, grammatically simple sentences, emphasising key words.
- ✓ Allow the CYP extra time to process what they have heard.
- ✓ Use concrete, familiar vocabulary.
- ✓ Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace with pauses between sentences.
- ✓ Revise and summarise stories and information.
- ✓ Consider purpose and types of questions and how this can extend the CYP's learning
- ✓ Encourage the CYP to repeat back the instruction to check their understanding.
- ✓ Support the CYP to recognise when they have not understood. Agree a strategy for them to ask for help or clarification. Praise when they do this independently. .
- ✓ Help the CYP focus on the feature they need to look at to be able to understand your question (e.g. if you are asking how two items are alike, you can draw their attention to the relevant similarity – shape/size etc.)

Positive Approaches = Positive Outcomes