

# ATS Top Tips

Focus on simple support solutions

Be consistent

Be flexible - develop a toolkit

Embed support strategies over time

Stay calm

Simplify and reduce your language

Focus on the safety of the child and those around them

Reduce/eliminate demand where possible

Work together - tag team

Celebrate success

### **Tips to support social understanding**

- Acknowledge and respond to the child's attempts at communication including leading, pointing, eye gaze, smiles, single words etc
- Join the child in their play
- Use commentary to reinforce key words
- Practice social communication and skills in one-to-one situations, bringing in other children once skills and confidence are secure
- Develop joint attention skills - make your interactions irresistible!
- Enable the child to ask for help and express their feelings safely (i.e. without physical behaviours)

### **Tips to support communication**

- Cue the child in first (name, gentle touch)
- Use key words and KISS (Keep It Short and Simple)
- First....Then or Now...Next approach
- Reinforce key spoken words with gestures, visuals and objects
- Chunk instructions into single steps
- Give the child time to process language
- Offer limited choices
- Say the action you want - e.g. "walk" (not "don't run!")
- Repeat, don't re-phrase
- Offer an accessible, language rich environment e.g. using Wigit labels
- Ensure consistency across the team with language and communication aids

### **Tips to develop information processing and understanding**

- Create structure
- Offer predictability
- Establish routines
- Prepare for new experiences, transition, change
- Graded exposure ... build success and confidence gradually
- Teach 'finished' to support transitions
- Use visual agendas and timetables
- Use timers to support transitions (sand, bubbles, digital, stopwatch ...)
- Establish the First....Then or Now...Next approach
- Use interests to gain attention, motivate and reward
- Be consistent

### **Tips to support sensory processing and integration**

- Assess the sensory environments around school (inside and outside)
- Create an easily accessible calm space in/near the classroom
- Create easily accessible sensory boxes
- Offer easy access to ear defenders
- Offer a range of sensory/messy play experiences (wet and dry)
- Offer a graded, slow immersion in sensory experiences and new environments
- Consider how to meet sensory seeking needs, e.g. increase physical activity
- Offer brain/sensory breaks at key intervals away from the Reception spaces
- Easy, independent access to drinks/snacks throughout the day
- Consider lunchtimes carefully - restricted eating; sensory aspects in the hall
- Consider toileting and dressing/undressing support needs