

SEND Newsletter

Issue 11– December 2024



You can also find a copy of this email on the school website under SEND.

Dear Parents and carers,
Welcome to our December SEND and inclusion newsletter.

It is a busy and exciting time of the year but for many children with additional needs they may struggle or find it difficult with over sensory stimulation.

Please remember if you have any concerns or questions please contact me through SEND@Ankermoor.org or speak to the office and I can arrange a meeting or phone call.

Shirley-Anne Magill
SENDCO

Come and join us at the Next parent Inclusion meeting



Wednesday 15th January 2025
1.15

We will be focusing on looking how to meet the sensory needs of children.
Please join us for coffee, cake and an opportunity to learn from each other.

For any questions please contact the school office or email
send@ankermoor.org



Helping your child cope at Christmas



It is an exciting time of year but for some children including those with additional needs they can find it difficult because of the changes to routine. Here are some suggestions shared by the New Life Children's Charity to help things run smoothly, so everyone can enjoy a calmer Christmas.

As children grow their needs change, and what worked last year might not now, so accepting what is and isn't going to be possible and giving everyone realistic expectations for the Christmas holidays is key - both for yourself, your child and other family members.

- 1) Add Christmas decorations slowly so the change isn't too big, and if possible have them help or be involved in decisions.
- 2) Try to keep to your normal routine as much as possible, especially at bedtime and morning, and any other aspects of your child's day which keep them anchored.
- 3) If you are taking part in activities, ensure you build in quiet time and a way to escape if they are overwhelmed or need a quiet space where they feel safe.
- 4) Think through any activities over the festive period step by step and be conscious of any triggers such as lights, sounds, smells, crowds. Are there new things you need to consider that have developed since last year?
- 5) Be clear with your child on what they can expect from each part of the day, going over any aspects they may find especially tricky, such as visiting relatives or crowds. You can use a visual timetable, social stories, draw pictures or role play to help them understand.



Christmas tips continued..

6) When it comes to visiting family, or having visitors in your home, explain your needs for you and your child participating and what they can expect from your child. The last thing anyone needs is stress about a family member who thinks they know how to parent your child.

8) Food is a big part of Christmas for many people - but if they need to eat something different to everyone else - then let them. Choose your battles.

9) Which leads on to don't sweat the small stuff. We all have ideas of how we want Christmas to be, but if it doesn't happen, it's not the end of the world.

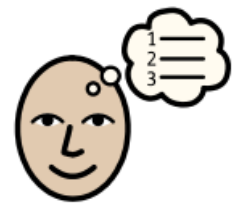
10) Remember it's your Christmas so celebrate it the way that's best for you and your family - if that means no tinsel turkey and tree then so be it.

For more tips visit <https://www.theschoolrun.com/surviving-festive-season-parents-tips-sen-kids> or <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/autism-and-christmas-top-tips-for-surviving-the-festive-season>



The Staffordshire Autism Inclusion team have lots of ideas of supporting children over Christmas on their Facebook page which can be found here:

[Staffordshire Autism Inclusion Team | Facebook](#)



Understanding Sensory Processing

What is sensory processing?

The term 'sensory processing' describes how we understand information from the world around us - through our senses - sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell.

There are also two other senses, 'proprioception' (body awareness) and 'vestibular' (balance and movement).

Some children may show a heightened response to some sensations and this can very occasionally be a sign of a sensory processing difficulty. However, it is important to remember that having a sensitivity in one area, during certain times of the day, does not usually mean that your child has a sensory processing difficulty or needs to see an occupational therapist.

A great many children under the age of five, with no sensory processing issues, will find certain parts of their daily routine difficult. These often include bath time, hair brushing, visiting the supermarket and loud or unpredictable noises.

Daily routines

Many children resist parts of the daily routine as a way of trying to exert greater control over their environment - and their parents! Try to work out if your child really dislikes certain sensations or activities, or whether they are experimenting with control. Sometimes you may avoid certain situations, places or activities to avoid the reaction they bring out in your child. However, bear in mind that this means your child will not have the opportunity to experience the things they find challenging and it will be harder for them to learn to become tolerant of them. Your child may become anxious about certain situations or environments.

If this happens, you need to prepare them for the activity to help them cope better with it. Reassurance is very important and needs to be given in a way that your child can understand. Looking at pictures or photo stories about the activity, holding a familiar comforting toy, or using a picture timetable for the event that is happening can all be helpful.

Here are some other suggestions to support children



My child dislikes noise...

- Offer noise reducing headphones, earphones or earplugs: For school, use for assemblies, gym, cafeteria and in the community use at shopping malls, movie theaters, restaurants, birthday parties, etc.
- Make sure that you are talking to your child at their level, whilst they are looking at you. Use simple, age-appropriate language.
- Use play or songs to catch your child's attention, so they want to listen.
- Avoid calling to your child across a busy room if possible and approach them from the front, rather than behind..
- Play a relaxation CD or a CD of nature sounds, "white" noise or soothing music.
- Prepare child for noisy situations ahead of time.
- Often times, knowing when something is going to happen (e.g., fire drill) helps the child to mentally get ready for it.



My child won't eat that...

- Bear in mind that many children go through phases where they will and won't eat certain types of foods.
- It will help if your child is sat properly at a table, where possible, with their feet supported. If your child is very 'wiggly' try having an active play session before mealtimes.
- Try to keep mealtimes calm and fun, even if your child is refusing the food that you have made. Do not force your child to eat something, but try encouraging gently with games, reward charts, etc.
- You could try involving your child in the cooking as they are more likely to try something they have helped to make.
- Allow your child to experiment with different finger foods and textures. If your child does not like to touch food, try using a dip with a finger of toast, bread stick or raw vegetable stick.

My child seeks or avoids movement ...

Most children develop a strong vestibular (movement) sense simply through engaging in everyday play activities that allow for exploration and movement. There are many activities that can help promote the development of a healthy vestibular system. Here are some of our favourites:

Any and all things playground related!

- Slides are also beneficial for providing fast movement.
- Hanging upside-down from playground equipment (with supervision only!) Or if your Dad holds you by your feet and carefully plonks you on the bed or sofa (remember safety first!)
- Rocking! Fast, slow, or to the rhythm of your favourite song!
- Cardboard Box Race Cars- let Mum or Dad push you down the passage or around the house in your cardboard racing car whilst you navigate.



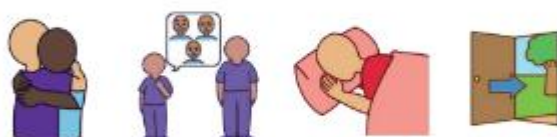

Too low.... too high..... just right!


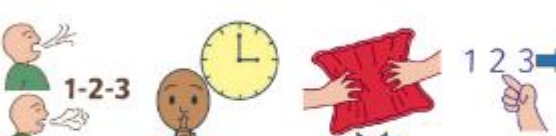
At school we support children to help regulate their emotion and senses. The zones of regulation can help children identify how they are feeling and help to think of strategies to get back in the green zone ready to learn.

BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
			
sad, sick, tired, bored, moving slowly	happy, calm, focused feeling okay, ready to learn	frustrated, worried silly/wiggly, excited, loss of some control	mad/angry, terrified yelling/hitting elated, out of control
I can try...  scretch	I can try...  drink water	I can try...  deep breaths	I can try...  take a break

Sensory activities

In school we help teach children strategies to help them to try and regulate themselves and get back in the green zone. These could be:

<p>I am in the blue area, I could...</p>  <p>ask for a hug. talk to an adult about my feelings. have a rest. go outside.</p> <p><small>twinkl.com.au</small></p>	<p>I am in the green area, I am...</p>  <p>ready to learn. feeling focused. doing good listening. able to help a friend.</p>
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<p>I am in the yellow area, I could...</p>  <p>take a break. go for a walk. talk to an adult about my feelings. do some exercise.</p> <p><small>twinkl.com.au</small></p>	<p>I am in the red area, I could...</p>  <p>take deep breaths. have some quiet time. squeeze a cushion or something soft. count to ten.</p>
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For more information please come along to our next Parent Inclusion coffee morning or go to these websites:

[Sensory differences - a guide for all audiences](#)

[A Parents Guide to Sensory Processing](#)

If you have not received been able to meet with your teacher to take part in a review please contact send@ankermoor.org

	Interim reviews	Review and new plans
Autumn Term	<p>Week beginning 14th October 2024</p> <p>Teachers to meet with parents to discuss plans during parents evening.</p>	<p>Teacher complete reviews and create new plans <u>w.b.</u> 2nd December 2024</p> <p>Teachers to share new plans and invite parent comments and feedback.</p>
Spring Term	<p>Week beginning 10th February 2025</p> <p>Parents to meet teachers to discuss plans during parent meetings.</p>	<p>Teacher complete reviews by 4th April</p> <p>Teachers to share plans and invite parent comments and feedback.</p>
Summer Term	<p>By Friday 16th May</p> <p>Teacher <u>carry</u> out interim reviews</p>	<p>By 11th July Final review and new plans</p> <p>Teachers to meet and parents and review and create new plans.</p>



Parent/Carer Cause for Concern

This form is for parents who want to raise a new concern regarding their child in relation to Special Educational needs.

Please email to SEND@Ankermoor.org to return to Mrs Magill, SENDCO

Child's Name: **D.O.B:** **Class:**

Child's strengths and achievements:

Concerns at home:

Concerns at school:

Parent/Carer information:

A description of all available information about your child.

Areas of concern:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual | <input type="checkbox"/> Auditory | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please state): |

Signed: **Date:**

