

SISS Autism Team – Family Newsletter June 2020

WELCOME TO THE THIRD EDITION OF OUR AUTISM TEAM NEWSLETTER ☺

We hope you are all continuing to keep safe and well during this time.

The focus of our SISS Autism Team May newsletter is **friendships** and **relationships**.

Your Questions

Questions have been raised from parents and carers relating to friendships and relationships. Some children may be anxious and feel that they may have 'forgotten' how to make friends, or have a conversation.

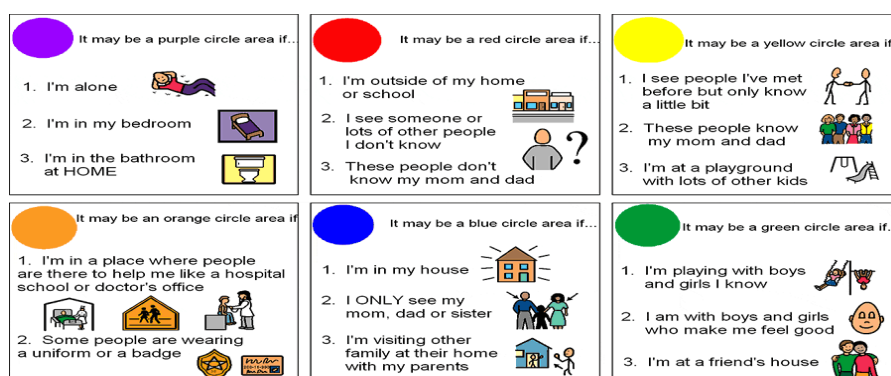
We have collated some strategies and links that may be of use to you and your child, to practice before going back to school.

Ideas to practice and build confidence with social skills-

- **Talk** about how they are feeling about friendships and relationships- You could use a mind map to record this.



- Colour coding emotions in situations that your child is in, then linking these to express their emotions may really help, see example below:



- **Practise social skills** with your child in a number of different ways. They could practise with their friends through the internet, or talk to different family members.
- **Helping identify different emotions:** Use pictures of people showing different emotions. Draw blank speech bubbles to use observation skills and work out what they might be saying or feeling.
- **Pick the time** carefully when introducing new social skills. Avoid stressful times, or times when your child is distracted by a favourite activity.

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- **Interviewing** a family member- this will help with developing questions, talking and listening to the answers. You could use conversations starters to help.



- **Playing games** to remind children about turn-taking, speaking and listening. A **'talking stick/object'** that someone must be holding to have their turn at speaking. **Timers** to indicate the end of their turn.



- **Teach your child a script** for if they want to play with someone and rehearse it. Make sure you practise alternative endings, e.g. what to do if they say no. Also explain that it's ok to spend time alone. Having a **cue card** with the key phrases on can be helpful. They can have in a pocket if they get nervous.
- **Talk to school** about possible support that could be put in place to supportbuddy programmes, circle of friends, structured social skills lessons.



Lots of resources are available online including Conversation Cubes, Question ball, Social Challenge cards and Social Stories. See some links below that might help:



USEFUL WEBSITES AND LINKS:

- <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/friends-relationships-get-the-facts/>
- <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/the-den/>
- <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/special-educational-needs-sen/special-educational-needs-sen-communication-and-interaction/sen-autism-spectrum-disorders>
- <https://learningforapurpose.com/2018/05/06/free-resources-for-making-friends-for-teens/>

GENERAL SUPPORT WEBSITES:

- Autism West Midlands helpline **0121 4507575** or email info@autismwestmidlands.org.uk
- Solihull Local Offer: <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/>
- SISS Autism Team on the Local Offer: <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/siss-2/the-autism-team/>
- SISS twitter feed: https://twitter.com/SISS_Solihull