

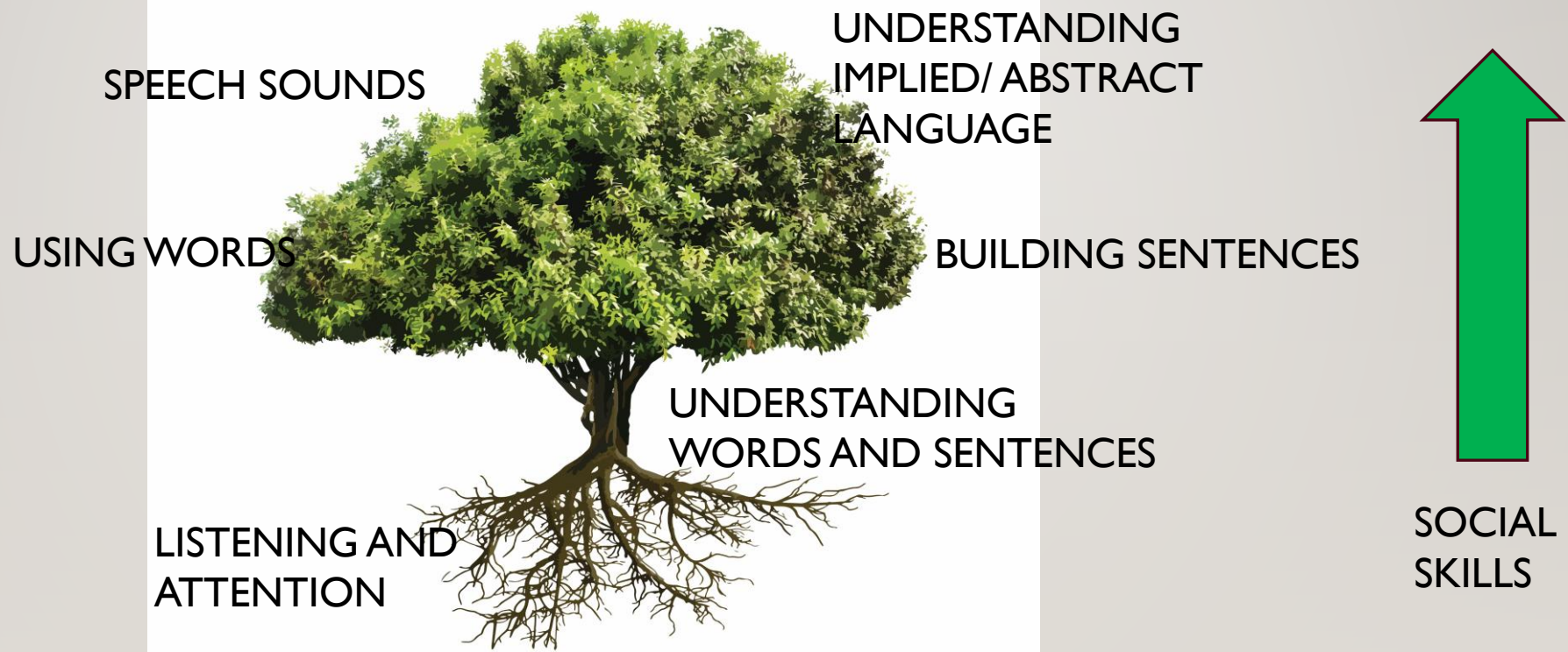
# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION --- SKILLS

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# COMMUNICATION SKILLS – WHAT IS INVOLVED?

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# WHAT IS NEEDED TO HELP CHILDREN BUILD COMMUNICATION?

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- REASONS TO COMMUNICATE
- OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT
- MODELS OF LANGUAGE THAT MATCH THEIR DEVELOPMENT

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT

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- BEING PRESENT, CALM AND INTERESTED
- ENJOYABLE, SHARED TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES
- ASKING QUESTIONS



# ASKING QUESTIONS

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- Balance comments and questions.
- The type of question will depend upon your child – some questions are harder than others!
- Research has shown that adults tend to ask a question then wait approximately 3 seconds before asking again/ making another comment.
- CHILDREN OFTEN NEED UP TO 10 SECONDS TO PROCESS WHAT HAS BEEN SAID...

**WAIT FOR 10, THEN TRY AGAIN!**



# REASONS TO COMMUNICATE

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- We communicate for lots of different reasons, e.g. for social reasons, to ask for things or information, to protest.
- Sometimes we need to ensure that children have reasons to communicate, e.g. by creating an opportunity for them to ask for something or by offering a choice.
- Some children find some “reasons” more difficult than others - requesting things is easier than communicating for social reasons. In these circumstances, it can be useful to model what you would like your child to say.

# MODELLING LANGUAGE AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL

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- This will depend upon your child's development and language stage: a good rule of thumb is to add one piece of information to your child's comment, e.g.

“biscuit”

“*yummy biscuit*”.

“she is sad”

“*yes, she is sad because she lost her cat*”.

“I’m going to ask for a PlayStation”

“*you’re going to ask for a PlayStation because you like playing games*”.



# MODELLING LANGUAGE AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL...

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- If your child makes a grammatical error, uses the wrong word or makes a speech sound error the best response is to REPEAT THEIR UTTERANCE CORRECTLY, e.g.

“they was going shop”

“yes, they were going to the shop”

You can also replace a simple word with a more complex word, e.g.

“I was really happy”

“yes, you were ecstatic”.





# SUPPORTING UNDERSTANDING

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- Sometimes children struggle to understand what is being said to them – this may be because their understanding of language is developing, or it may be that the child is dysregulated and their language processing brain is offline.
- A good way to support a young person's understanding of language is to use

## THE FOUR S's STRATEGY

(The Hanen Centre, Canada)



# THE FOUR S'S

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- **SAY LESS** – use short, direct sentences where possible. Use everyday, familiar language. Make sure the order of mention reflects the order of action.
- **STRESS** – highlight important words using intonation and facial expressions.
- **GO SLOW** – slow down your rate of speech, ensure you pause between sentences and give time for the young person to process information (count to 10).
- **SHOW** – use objects, pictures, written words and gestures to help your child “see” what you mean.

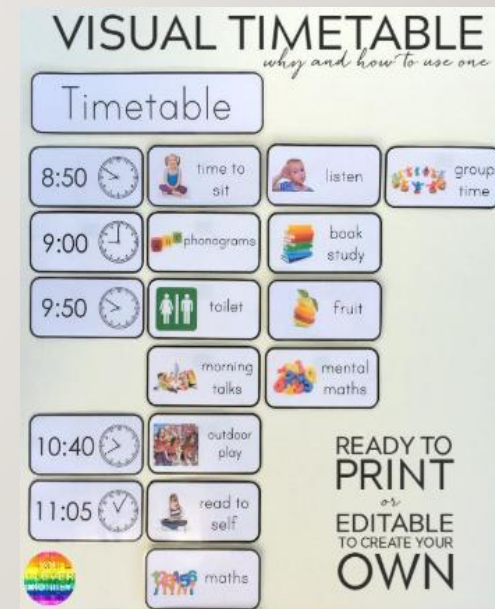
# SHOW – USING VISUAL SUPPORTS

- There are lots of different types of visual supports: here are a few examples...

## Self-help board



## Choice board





# MORE EXAMPLES...

## WHEN I FEEL DOWN

When I feel down I lose interest in things, feel tired and may feel slightly sad.

If I feel down sometimes this is OK. Most people have days when they feel a bit down. There are lots of reasons why I might feel down. These include:

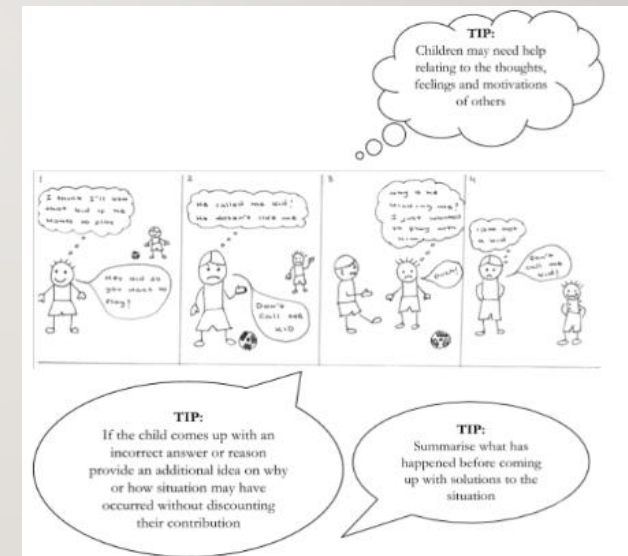
- being slightly unwell
- being physically and/or mentally tired
- after doing something really exciting or interesting
- being disappointed or unhappy about something

When I feel down I know that I will feel better soon. In the meantime I can do some things to help me. These include:

- talking to someone
- thinking about things I am looking forward to
- walking about outside in the fresh air
- watching something funny on TV
- getting a good night's sleep

It is OK if I sometimes feel down. Most people do. I will usually feel better without doing anything. But I can do things that might make me feel better.

## Social stories



## Comic Strip Conversations



# BENEFITS OF USING VISUAL SUPPORTS

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- They are permanent and unchanging, and so children can take their time to process the information presented.
- Many children are visual learners, and so visual supports match their natural way of learning.
- Using visual supports often reduces frustration and confusion.
- Using visual supports has not been shown to prevent children from developing speech. Rather, it often helps children to form the foundations of verbal communication.

# TOP TIPS FOR USING VISUAL SUPPORTS

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- Consult your child's Speech and Language Therapist if you think visual supports would help your child.
- Use “everyday” supports e.g. calendars, clocks, lists objects.



# SUMMARY

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- Count to 10, then try again.
- Give reasons to communicate – offer choices.
- Balance comments and questions.
- Model language at an appropriate level.
- Four S's.
- Use visual supports.

# USEFUL WEBSITES

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- [Visual Supports for Autism:What are the Benefits?](#)
- [Social Stories](#)
- [The Hanen Centre - The Hanen Centre](#)
- [Resources for early years, primary and secondary schools | National Literacy Trust](#)
- [Words for Life | National Literacy Trust | Words for Life](#)
- [Witherslackgroup.co.uk/resources](#)



THANK YOU FOR  
LISTENING – ANY  
QUESTIONS?

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