Serenity School

Parents/Carers' Corner

Welcome to the Parents/Carers' Corner of Serenity School! This space is dedicated to providing you with resources and strategies to support your children at home. Whether your child has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Anxiety, Mild or Complex Learning difficulties, Speech, Communication and Language difficulties, or Global delays, we are here to help.

Helping You Support Your Child at Home

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1. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD is a developmental disorder that affects communication, behaviour, and social interactions. Children with ASD may exhibit repetitive behaviours, have difficulty with changes in routine, and may have specific interests.

Support Strategies

- **Consistency and Routine**: Maintain a structured daily schedule.
- **Visual Aids**: Use pictures and charts to communicate expectations and routines.
- **Sensory-Friendly Environment**: Be mindful of sensory sensitivities and create a calm environment.
- **Social Stories**: Use short stories to explain social situations and expectations. -
- **Professional Support**: Engage with therapists and specialists who understand ASD.

Useful Websites

- National Autistic Society
- Autism Speaks
- Autism Education Trust
- (Social Stories)

2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is characterised by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Children with ADHD may have trouble focusing, following instructions, and completing tasks.

Support Strategies

- **Structured Routine**: Establish clear daily routines and schedules.
- **Use Timers**: Help your child manage time with visual timers.
- **Break Tasks into Steps:** Simplify tasks into manageable steps to help maintain focus.
- **Physical Activity:** Incorporate regular physical activity to help expend energy and improve concentration.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Use praise and rewards to encourage good behaviour and task completion.
- **Professional Guidance**: Speak to your GP for medical support if needed.

Useful Websites

- ADHD Foundation
- ADDitude
- CHADD

3. Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH)

SEMH encompasses a range of issues affecting emotional well-being and mental health, including depression, anxiety, and behavioural problems.

Support Strategies

- **Open Communication**: Encourage your child to express their feelings and thoughts.
- **Safe Space:** Ensure there is a safe, quiet area where your child can go when feeling overwhelmed.
- **Mindfulness and Relaxation**: Teach relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and mindfulness to manage stress and anxiety.

- **Emotional Check-ins:** Regularly check in with your child about their feelings and emotions.
- **Professional Help**: Seek counselling and mental health services when needed.

Useful Websites

- YoungMinds
- Mind
- Place2Be
- CAHMS

4. Anxiety

Anxiety can manifest as excessive worry, fear, and avoidance of certain situations. It can affect a child's ability to engage in daily activities.

Support Strategies

- **Calming Techniques**: Use techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and yoga.
- **Consistent Routine**: Provide a predictable routine to reduce uncertainty.
- **Gradual Exposure**: Help your child face fears gradually in a supportive manner.
- **Open Communication:** Encourage your child to talk about their worries and listen without judgment.
- **Professional Support**: If needed, speak to you GP for referral to CAHMS

  Useful Websites

  - Anxiety UK
  - Child Mind Institute
  - Anxiety and Depression Association of America
  - CAHMS

5. Learning Difficulties

Learning difficulties can include dyslexia, dyscalculia, and other challenges that affect a child's ability to learn effectively.

Support Strategies

- **Tailored Learning Methods**: Use multisensory approaches and specialised teaching techniques.
- **Additional Resources**: Provide extra time, tools, and resources for learning.
- **Patience and Encouragement**: Be patient and celebrate small achievements.
- **Professional Assessment**: Seek evaluations and recommendations from educational psychologists.

  Useful Websites

  - Mencap
  - Learning difficulties | Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

6. Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that primarily affects reading and spelling skills. It can also impact memory and organisational skills.

Support Strategies

- **Reading Aids:** Use coloured overlays and large print books to make reading easier.

- **Multi-sensory Learning:** Incorporate visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learning activities.
- **Assistive Technology:** Use text-to-speech software and other educational apps.
- **Structured Literacy Programs**: Engage with programs designed for dyslexia intervention.

Useful Websites

- British Dyslexia Association
- Dyslexia Action
- Literacy support for dyslexia that follows the Science of Reading | Nessy

7. Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder) affects motor coordination and can impact daily living activities, fine motor skills, and spatial awareness.

Support Strategies

- **Physical Activities**: Encourage exercises that improve coordination and balance.
- **Occupational Therapy**: Use therapeutic techniques to develop motor skills.
- **Adapted Tools**: Employ specially designed tools for writing and other tasks.
- **Patience and Encouragement**: Provide consistent support and celebrate progress.
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Engage in activities that develop fine motor skills, such as drawing or using building blocks.
- **Gross Motor Skills:** Encourage physical activities like swimming or dancing to improve coordination.
- **Organisational Tools:** Use checklists and planners to help your child stay organised.

Useful Websites

- Dyspraxia Foundation
- NHS - Dyspraxia
- Understood

8. School Refusing

School refusal involves a child's refusal to attend school due to emotional distress, anxiety, or other underlying issues.

Support Strategies

- **Open Communication**: Talk with your child to understand their fears and concerns.
- **Gradual Exposure**: Slowly reintroduce the school environment in a supportive manner.
- **Consistent Routine**: Maintain a regular schedule to provide stability.
- **Professional Support**: Seek help from school counsellors and psychotherapists.

Useful Websites

- YoungMinds - School Refusal
- Anxiety UK - School Refusal
- Parenting NI

9. Developing Independent Skills

Independent skills are essential for a child's growth and self-reliance. These skills include personal care, time management, and decision-making.

Support Strategies

- **Daily Living Skills:** Encourage your child to participate in daily chores like setting the table, dressing themselves, and personal hygiene.
- **Visual Schedules:** Use visual schedules to help your child understand and complete daily tasks.
- **Decision-Making**: Encourage your child to make choices and understand consequences.
- **Time Management**: Use visual schedules and timers to help with task management.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Use rewards and praise to motivate and build confidence in independent activities.

  Useful Websites

  - Skills for Life Trust
  - Understood - Independence
  - Life Skills and Autism | Autism Speaks

10. Global Developmental Delay

Global Developmental Delay (GDD) involves delays in multiple areas of development, such as motor skills, speech, and social interaction.

Support Strategies

- **Developmental Milestones:** Focus on achievable developmental milestones rather than age-specific goals.
- **Therapeutic Activities:** Include activities recommended by occupational and physical therapists. Speak to your child's teaching team who will be trained to use these with your child in school
- **Consistency:** Maintain consistent routines and provide plenty of repetition to reinforce learning.

  Useful Websites

  - NHS - Developmental Delay
  - Contact - GDD
  - Scope - Early Years Support

11. Speech, Language and/or Communication Difficulties

These difficulties can range from speech delays to more complex disorders affecting language comprehension and expression which affect a child's ability to communicate effectively, including articulation pr1oblems, language comprehension issues, and speech delays.

Support Strategies

- **Social Interaction**: Encourage interaction with peers in supportive settings.
- **Home Practice**: Reinforce therapy techniques through daily practice at home. Speak to the school about which tools we are using in school to communicate with your child so that there is consistency between school and home.
- **Visual Aids**: Use pictures, gestures, and signs to support communication.

- **Practise at Home**: Engage in regular speech exercises and activities. (See section on Makaton and PECS below)

  Useful Websites
  - Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
  - I CAN
  - Afasic

Makaton and PECS

Makaton

Makaton is a unique language programme that uses symbols, signs, and speech to enable communication. It is designed to support the development of spoken language and literacy skills.

- **Learn Together:** Learn Makaton signs and symbols together as a family.
- **Daily Integration:** Integrate Makaton into daily routines, such as meal times and play.
- **Consistency:** Use Makaton consistently to support your child's communication.

  Useful Websites:
  - Makaton Charity
  - Singing Hands
  - you can also find lots of free resources on youtube.

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

PECS is a communication system that uses pictures to help individuals develop communication skills. It is particularly useful for non-verbal children.

- **Start Simple:** Begin with simple requests using pictures, gradually increasing complexity.
- **Consistent Practice:** Regularly practice PECS at home in different contexts.
- **Encourage Use:** Prompt your child to use PECS to express their needs and feelings.
- **Useful Websites**:
  - Pyramid Educational Consultants
  - PECS USA
  - The school can provide you with PECS resources and you can also find lots of free resources on youtube.

12. Occupational Therapy Support

Understanding Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy helps children develop the skills needed for daily living and learning activities. It can address physical, sensory, and cognitive challenges.

Support Strategies

- **Therapeutic Exercises**: Incorporate exercises and activities recommended by occupational therapists.
- **Adapt the Environment**: Modify the home and school environment to support your child's needs.
- **Assistive Devices**: Use tools and devices that aid in daily tasks.

- **Regular Therapy Sessions**: Attend scheduled sessions with an occupational therapist.

  Useful Websites
  - The OT Practice
  - Royal College of Occupational Therapists
  - Sensory Integration Network

Additional Resources

- **NHS Services**: Access a range of health services and support through the NHS. NHS Choices
- **Educational Support**: Find guidance on educational policies, special educational needs, and more. Department for Education
- **Local Support Groups**: Join local parent support groups to share experiences and strategies.

Serenity School is dedicated to supporting parents and carers in fostering a nurturing and supportive environment for their children. We believe in the potential of every child and are here to help you every step of the way

Contact Us:
For further information or personalised support, please contact Serenity School Crawley at crawleyoffice@serenityschool.org.uk or 01293 698298.