Social Communication
Paediatric Community Speech and Language Therapy

What is it?	What is Social Communication?
	
	• Social skills are the skills we use every day to interact and communicate with others. They include verbal and non-verbal communication, such as speech, gesture, facial expression and body language (kidsense).
	• Social communication difficulties may occur for many different reasons. Sometimes it is a distinct diagnosis, other times it is associated with the following conditions:
	  - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
	  - Learning Disability
	  - Developmental Delay
	  - Acquired head injury
	
	How does this skill help communication?
	
	• There are many aspects of social communication that help us understand each other
	  - Sharing attention and orienting to others during conversation;
	  - Taking turns in conversation;
	  - Using non-verbal skills like facial expressions and body language to help interpret what other people really mean or feel;
	  - Staying on a shared topic, rather than only talking about preferred topics.

How to help	Everyday Strategies: • Provide opportunities for early pretend play. • Make the rules and expectations of social behaviour clear and consistent. • Keep language clear by avoiding inferences, sarcasm, irony or indirect requests. • Keep calm and support the child to understand what is being said. • Use visuals such as task boards and visual timetables to show the routine of the day. • Encourage your child to seek clarification if they have not understood. Activities: • Encourage turn-taking at home with the family (e.g. in games and in conversation). • Specifically teach meanings of words, especially when there is more than one. • Support with transition between tasks by using strategies like a traffic light system or now/next boards. • If your child attends school, they may have social skills groups they can attend. • You can create Social Stories to teach children specific social skills that they may find difficult to understand or are confusing.
Helpful links	**Communication skills in the classroom** **Social Skills – more information**