

Parenting Booklet (i)

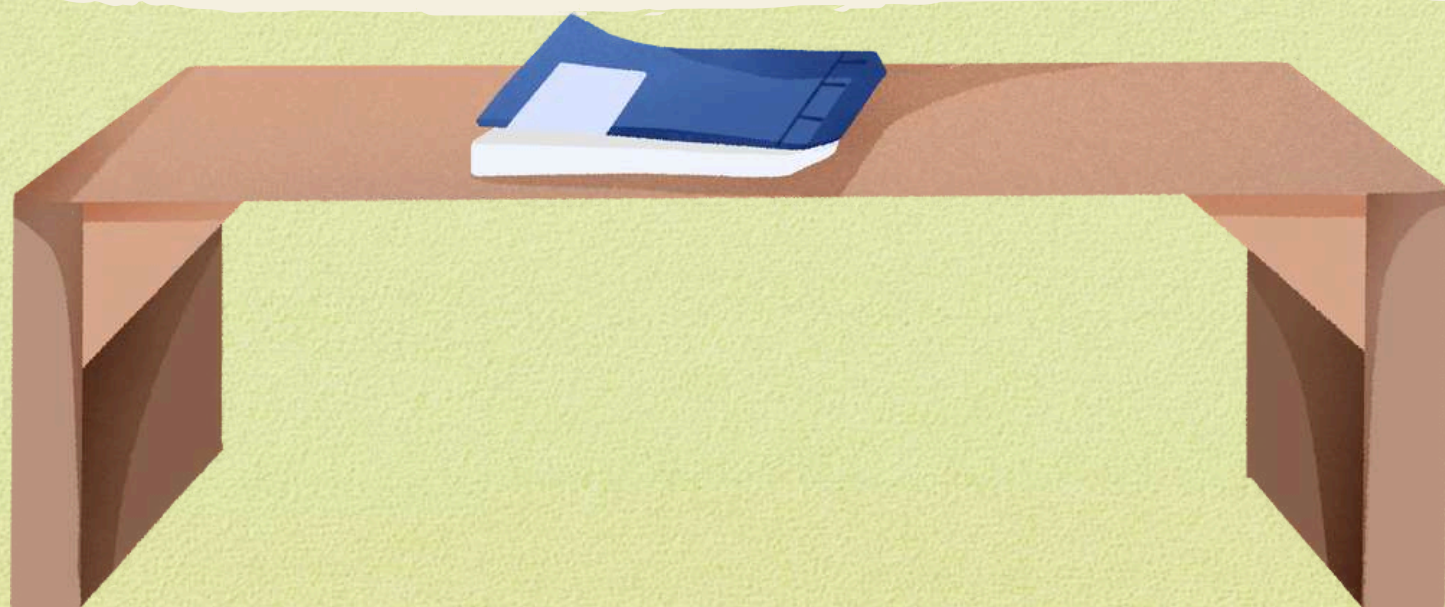
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Introduction to the Nigel Prosser Foundation

We're a charity that supports special educational needs children and their families in the UK (1210968) Our goal is to help SEN families integrate into everyday life and ease the daily challenges they face by providing financial support, education, life-changing equipment, and emotional guidance.



What is SEN?

SEN represents a broad range of educational needs that require personalised attention, resources, and strategies. By embracing diversity and ensuring that all students, regardless of their challenges, have access to appropriate support, we create a more inclusive and equitable society. As we continue to raise awareness and improve services for those with SEN, we contribute to a future where every learner has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their individual challenges.



Types of SEN

★ **Physical and Sensory Disabilities:** These can include visual or hearing impairments, which may require specific accommodations, such as hearing aids, sign language interpreters, or accessible classroom layouts. Physical disabilities may also require physical adaptations to the school environment, such as wheelchair access or specialised equipment.

★ **Learning Difficulties:** This category includes conditions such as dyslexia (a reading disorder), dyspraxia (difficulty with coordination), and dyscalculia (difficulty with math).

★ **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** Autism affects how a person perceives and interacts with the world. Children with ASD may have challenges with communication, social interaction, and restricted or repetitive behaviours. However, every child with autism is different, and their needs can vary widely.

★ **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** ADHD is a common condition that affects attention, focus, and impulse control. Students with ADHD may struggle to stay on task, follow instructions, or complete assignments without additional support or accommodations.

★ **Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs:** These include conditions such as anxiety, depression, and behavioural disorders. Children with these needs may struggle with emotional regulation, social relationships, or participating in group activities, making them more vulnerable in a traditional school setting.



Recognising children's strengths

Creativity and Imagination

Your child might show a natural flair for drawing, storytelling, or imaginative play. Even if they struggle with certain academic tasks, their creative abilities can shine brightly in different areas of life.

Example: "Ella can spend hours drawing intricate pictures and telling detailed stories about the characters she creates."

Determination and Perseverance

Some children with SEN might struggle with certain tasks, but their ability to stick with something and not give up is a significant strength.

Example: "Although Ben finds writing difficult, he never gives up. He always tries his best and is proud of his progress, even if it takes longer than others."

Empathy and Kindness

Your child may have a strong sense of empathy and find it easy to connect with others, even if social interactions can sometimes be challenging.

Example: "Amira is always concerned when someone is upset and is quick to comfort her friends, even if she struggles with group activities."

Strong Visual or Auditory Skills

Sometimes children with SEN excel in specific sensory areas. They might have an exceptional eye for detail or a great ear for music, even if other skills are harder to develop.

Example: "Liam has an amazing ability to remember songs and lyrics after hearing them only once, even though he finds reading more challenging."



Recognising children's challenges

Difficulty with Communication

Some children might find it hard to express their thoughts clearly, whether through speech, writing, or gestures. This can make it harder for them to engage in conversations or share their ideas.

Example: “Ruby finds it difficult to explain what happened during her day. She often uses a few words to express herself and can become frustrated when others don’t understand her.”

Sensory Sensitivities

Many children with SEN can be highly sensitive to certain sensory inputs, such as loud noises, bright lights, or specific textures. This might lead to meltdowns or avoidance behaviours in certain environments.

Example: “Max becomes very upset in crowded, noisy places like shopping centres. He often covers his ears or asks to leave because the noise is too overwhelming for him.”

Challenges with Attention and Focus

Maintaining focus on tasks, especially those that aren’t immediately interesting, can be a challenge for some children with SEN. They may struggle to stay on track, leading to incomplete work or frustration.

Example: “Chloe finds it hard to stay focused during long lessons and often needs breaks to help her re-engage with the task.”

Difficulty with Social Interactions

Children with SEN may find it harder to understand social cues or maintain peer relationships. This can make socialising or working in groups more difficult.

Example: “Owen struggles to understand when it’s his turn to speak in group discussions. He sometimes interrupts others and doesn’t always pick up on non-verbal signals, like when someone wants to stop talking.



Examples of practical parenting strategies

Establish Clear Routines

- **Consistency is Key:** Children with SEN thrive on routine. Keeping consistent times for meals, schoolwork, play, and bedtime helps reduce anxiety and confusion. If they know what to expect, they feel more secure.
- **Visual Schedules:** A visual schedule is a brilliant tool. It can be a series of pictures or a chart showing the day's activities, helping children understand what's coming next. This clarity helps them feel more in control and reduces stress.

Tip: Use pictures for younger children or those who find it hard to understand words. For older children, you can mix pictures with words to make it even clearer.



Examples of practical parenting strategies

Create Sensory-Friendly Spaces

- **A Quiet Retreat:** Sensory-friendly spaces can offer a safe, calming retreat for children when they feel overwhelmed. This could be a corner of a room with soft cushions, a dim light, or sensory toys.
- **Reduce Overstimulation:** Try to avoid bright lights, loud noises, or busy patterns in these spaces. The goal is to create a peaceful environment where children can go when they need to calm down.
- **Sensory Breaks:** Encourage regular breaks for sensory activities, such as listening to soft music, using fidget toys, or engaging in stretching exercises. These breaks help children regulate their emotions and stay focused.

Use Timers and Reminders

- **Timers:** A timer is a helpful tool for children with SEN, especially during transitions. Using a visual or auditory timer can give children a clear idea of how long they have to finish a task or when it's time to move onto something else.

Tip: Give gentle reminders use visual timers with a coloured countdown or an app that shows time passing can make the concept of time easier to understand. A simple timer sound or alarm also signals when it's time to change activity.



Examples of communication strategies

Use Clear and Simple Instructions

- **Be Direct:** Give short, simple instructions that are easy to follow. Children with SEN often struggle with long or complex sentences, so keeping it clear and to the point can make a big difference.
- **One Step at a Time:** Instead of overwhelming them with multiple instructions, break tasks down into smaller steps. This gives the child a clear focus and helps them to process the information more effectively.

Visual Aids

- **Use Pictures or Symbols:** Visual aids are incredibly helpful in clarifying what's being asked. You can use pictures, symbols, or icons to represent tasks, feelings, or objects. This visual representation helps children understand concepts more easily.
- **Create Visual Schedules:** A visual timetable or schedule helps children see what activities are coming next, making transitions smoother and reducing anxiety. It's especially useful for children who have difficulties with verbal processing.
- **Flashcards or Charts:** Flashcards can be used to reinforce vocabulary or instructions. You can also create charts that break down tasks or routines visually.



Examples of communication strategies



Reinforce Positive Behaviour

- **Praise and Encouragement:** Be specific in your praise. Instead of just saying “good job”, say something like “Well done for putting your shoes away!”. This helps children understand exactly what behaviour is being praised and encourages them to repeat it.
- **Use Reward Systems:** A reward chart can motivate children to communicate more effectively and follow instructions. Rewards don’t always have to be material; extra playtime or a favourite activity can work wonders.
- **Model Positive Communication:** Children learn by observing. By using clear and respectful communication yourself, you set an example for the child to follow.

Use Calm and Positive Tone

- **Stay Calm and Patient:** Communication is not just about the words you use but also how you say them. A calm, patient tone can make the child feel safe and more willing to engage. Avoid raising your voice, as it can cause anxiety or confusion.
- **Modulate Your Tone:** Keep your tone friendly and encouraging. A gentle, positive tone helps keep the child focused and engaged without overwhelming them.



Thank You

