

Welcome to this newsletter from Southwark's Autism Support Team. During this time of school closures, we are all still available to offer our support to parents/carers and educational staff.

Helpline

We have a telephone support service from Monday – Friday, 9am-5pm.

More information can be found: [here](#).

Training

We are in the process of looking at online options for training. If you wish to register your interest or find out more please email:

AutismSupportTeam@southwark.gov.uk

- **Cygnets**
- **Next Steps**
- **Toileting workshop**

Games Corner

Each week we provide simplified instructions to a game you might have at home.



This week it's **Battleships**

How to play if you have the game [here](#)

Instructions on how to play if you don't have the game [here](#) and a blank game board [here](#)

Visual supports

Visual instructions to help teach learning to wait [here](#), to support learning to take turns [here](#).

Social Stories to support with losing a game

There are three different stories below about learning to lose, they are at different levels, choose the one that is right for your child.

It's OK to Lose 1 [here](#)

It's Ok to Lose 2 [here](#)

It's Ok to Lose 3 [here](#)



Question Corner...

Q: I would like to work on social skills with my child with autism, can I include their brother and sister when playing games?

A: Yes!! Absolutely involve siblings when practicing social skills. Having sibling support provides positive peer role models. Older or more sophisticated siblings may take an active role in instruction in which they model activities, coach their sibling to follow suit, and respond to their sibling to encourage positive behavior.

When including siblings it is essential that their involvement is voluntary and that they are not forced into having to play with their brother or sister.

Parents should support and praise the siblings playing together as they must see value in their sibling learning skills and feel confident that they can make a difference. Therefore, the activities selected should be "mutually-reinforcing"; that is, both of the children should find them to be equally enjoyable.

To be added to our newsletter mailing list or to contact the team with a question/request for a forthcoming newsletter please contact us on:

AutismSupportTeam@southwark.gov.uk

Clicking on links in this document take you to google drive where the resources can be downloaded. If you would like us to email you any of the resources, use the email above.

Social Skills at Home

Social skills are skills that people use to know how to act in different social situations. Children on the autistic spectrum, sometimes need to be taught social skills directly as they may not learn them indirectly. Social skills help with making and keeping friends and building family relationships. Basic social skills that can be practiced at home are sharing, waiting, turn taking, and, sportsmanship (being okay with losing, being a good winner).

Sharing– can be challenging for any child, it may be particular challenging for children with autism. This may be because they think that if they give an item that they really like to someone else they may never get it back. Click [here](#) for some ideas on how to practice sharing.

Waiting- is not only a social skill but an essential life skill. Waiting to get what you want is a skill that every child needs to learn. *A link to how to use wait cards is in the Games Corner section.*

Turn taking- this can be challenging if waiting and sharing skills have not yet been established. Turn taking helps with interacting socially with peers. Understanding how to take turns allows you participate in sports, board games, and it's the building blocks to understand how conversations work. *Link to turn taking board in Games Section.*

Sportsmanship - if you are able to accept losing or winner at a game, this can help build relationships. Peers will be more likely to want to play again someone who accepts when they lose at a game and if the winner does not make them feel bad. *A link to social stories around losing are in the Games Corner section.*

Super Seven(ish)



Here are some ideas of playdate ideas over video chatting:

- Play Simon Says– how to [here](#)
- House scavenger hunt- a list of items [here](#) - Colouring or origami activities
- Pictionary- one child draws something and the other guesses what they drew. This could also be done with playdough.
- Charades [here](#) for word lists, visual versions [here](#) and [here](#)
- Make up a dance routine together through video– pick out a song and costumes.
- Build Lego together, [here](#) are printable Lego challenge cards, [here](#) are printable Lego Charades cards.
- Play show and tell—take it in turns to show an item and talk about it for 1 minute
- Play 20 questions/yes - no game
- Play Hangman
- Play Battleships (Star wars paper version [here](#))
- Directed drawing games [here](#)

Tips for using Video Chat

While our children are currently not attending schools, they could be missing interactions with peers. Arranging video chat playdates with one or more peers that they enjoy playing with could be nice for them during this time.

Tips on e-safety while online [here](#)

- Having a structure to the time can help things to run smoother as your child gets comfortable video chatting
- Make sure there are not too many peers in the playdate that could overwhelm your child
- It is recommended that parents stay near during the video playdate to help with any technical issues and some prompting or guidance if needed during the social interactions.
- Remember Video playdates will take time for children to get used to so if the first one does not work out keep trying.
- If planning on playing a game in a video chat practice it with your child first to ensure they know the rules