



Social Skills Interventions Summary (e.g., Lego Therapy).

Introduction

Social Skills interventions are structured approaches designed to support children and young people with difficulties in social communication, interaction, and emotional regulation. These interventions promote peer engagement, emotional literacy, and cooperative behaviours, including fostering communication and teamwork. Examples include Lego-Based Therapy, Talkabout Series, Social Use of Language Programme (SULP), Time to Talk, and Socially Speaking.

Purpose of Intervention

The purpose of these interventions is to enhance a child or young person's ability to engage in meaningful social interactions by developing turn-taking, listening, cooperation, frustration tolerance, receptive language, perspective-taking, flexible thinking, emotional literacy, and peer relationships.

Target Audience

These interventions are suitable for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, delayed or atypical social development, and those transitioning between educational settings. They can be adapted for Early Years, Primary, and Secondary settings.

Who Can Deliver the Intervention

Interventions can be delivered by Teaching Assistants, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), Class Teachers with CPD in social communication approaches, and Educational Psychologists or Speech and Language Therapists who may advise or oversee implementation.

Session Structure

Sessions are typically delivered in small groups (4–6 pupils), once per week for 20–30 minutes, over a term or longer. Activities include role-play, structured games, visual supports, social stories, peer modelling, and guided practice.

Frequency and Duration

Interventions are usually time-limited (e.g., 6–12 weeks) but may be extended based on pupil needs. Consistency and repetition are key, with opportunities for generalisation across settings.

Key Principles

- Structured and predictable routines. In Lego-Based Therapy, this includes clear routines and defined roles to help reduce anxiety and promote engagement.
- Peer-based learning encourages naturalistic social interaction and mutual support based on real life situations
- Visual and verbal supports, e.g., the use of prompts, scripts, and visual cues to scaffold communication.
- Individualised Goals: Tailored to the pupil's developmental level and EHCP outcomes.
- Generalisation: Skills practised in sessions should be reinforced in the classroom and at home.



Training and Implementation

Staff delivering the intervention should receive training and ongoing support. Reflective practice and supervision are recommended to ensure fidelity and effectiveness.

Evidence and Outcomes

Research supports the use of these interventions in improving social communication, peer relationships, emotional regulation, self-esteem, classroom engagement, and behaviour. They are widely used in both mainstream and specialist settings.

Pupil Feedback

Pupils often report increased confidence, enjoyment, and a sense of belonging. Feedback from families and staff should be included in monitoring and evaluation.

Detailed Descriptions of Specific Interventions

Lego-Based Therapy

Lego-Based Therapy is a structured, play-based intervention designed to support children with social communication difficulties, particularly those with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC). It uses collaborative Lego building tasks to promote communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. It can be adapted for different age groups and developmental levels. Children work in small groups with defined roles: Engineer (describes the model), Supplier (finds the pieces), and Builder (assembles the model).

Talkabout Series (Alex Kelly)

A structured programme designed to develop social communication skills through sequenced modules. It covers self-awareness, self-esteem, body language, facial expressions, conversational skills, assertiveness, and friendship skills. Typically used in small groups or 1:1 sessions, once per week for 20–30 minutes. Suitable for children with ASC, SEMH, or pragmatic language difficulties.

Social Use of Language Programme (SULP – Wendy Rinaldi)

A developmental programme focusing on pragmatic language and social understanding. It supports understanding of non-verbal and non-literal communication, perspective-taking, emotional literacy, group dynamics, and social problem-solving. Delivered weekly in small groups or 1:1, often used alongside other interventions such as Talkabout or Social Stories.

Time to Talk (Alison Schroeder)

Aimed at younger children (typically KS1), focusing on foundational social skills including listening, attention, turn-taking, sharing, and asking and answering questions. Structured sessions are delivered weekly for 20–30 minutes, often as part of ELSA or small group work.

Socially Speaking (Alison Schroeder)

A practical programme supporting children in developing everyday social interaction skills. It covers initiating and maintaining conversations, understanding social rules and expectations, and building confidence in group settings. Delivered weekly over a term in small groups of 4–6 pupils, often integrated into Emotional Literacy Support or Communication & Interaction provision.

Further Information and Resources

- Daniel B. LeGoff et al (2014), LEGO®-Based Therapy: how to build social competence through LEGO®-based Clubs for children with autism and related conditions, Jessica Kingsley Publishers
- [Using Lego therapy with autistic pupils](#)
- [Social Use of Language Programme Catalogue](#)
- [Talkabout Free Toolkit](#)