

Supporting Confidence & Emotions in Children with Speech Delay and SEND

Understanding Emotions & Communication

Children with speech delay and SEND may experience frustration, anxiety, or low confidence when they struggle to express themselves. Behaviour is often a form of communication, and with the right support, children can feel understood and empowered.

Practical Tools to Build Confidence

- Celebrate small successes and communication attempts.
- Offer choices to give children a sense of control.
- Focus on strengths, interests, and positive language.
- Encourage independence at your child's pace.
- Use predictable routines to increase emotional safety.

Managing Big Emotions

- Name and validate feelings (e.g. 'I can see you're feeling frustrated').
- Use visual emotion charts or feelings cards.
- Teach calming strategies such as deep breathing or squeezing a stress ball.
- Create a calm-down space at home.
- Reduce language demands during emotional moments.

Communication Supports That Help

- Visual supports such as picture cards and now/next boards.
- Gesture and sign support (e.g. Makaton).
- AAC tools to support communication alongside speech.
- Giving extra processing time.
- Reducing pressure to speak.

Useful UK Support & Resources

- Speech and Language UK – www.speechandlanguage.org.uk
- NHS Speech & Language Therapy Services – via GP or Health Visitor
- SENDIASS – local SEND information, advice and support services
- Afasic – www.afasic.org.uk
- BBC Tiny Happy People – www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people

- YoungMinds – emotional wellbeing support

Remember: You are your child's biggest advocate. Supporting confidence and emotional wellbeing alongside communication makes a powerful difference.