

SOCIAL SKILLS, PLAY AND FRIENDSHIP FOR CHILDREN WITH VCFS

PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR SCHOOLS AND PARENTS

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WHY CAN PLAY/SOCIALISING/ FRIENDSHIP BE CHALLENGING FOR CHILDREN WITH VCFS?

- **PLAY REQUIRES:**
 - GOOD LANGUAGE
 - GOOD CONCENTRATION
 - FAST PROCESSING
 - GOOD SOCIAL AWARENESS
 - CONFIDENCE, RESILIENCE AND ASSERTION
 - FLEXIBILITY AND IMAGINATION
 - PEOPLE TO PLAY WITH

SOME CHILDREN WITH VCFS HAVE:

- SHORT/VARIABLE ATTENTION
- SPEECH DIFFICULTIES
- SLOW INFORMATION PROCESSING
- ANXIETY
- IMPAIRED 'SOCIAL RADAR' SKILLS
- AUTISTIC TRAITS SUCH AS OBSESSIONS
- CONFIDENCE 'ISSUES'
- SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES
- MOBILITY LIMITATIONS

WHAT CAN TEACHERS AND PARENTS DO?

1. THE CHILD WITH VCFS

- TEACH SPECIFIC SOCIAL SKILLS
- TEACH SPECIFIC PLAY SKILLS
- PREPARE AND PRACTISE AHEAD OF TIME
- TEACH BETTER CHOICE MAKING SKILLS

WHAT CAN TEACHERS AND PARENTS DO?

2. OTHER CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

- TEACH CLASSMATES SPECIFIC 'PLAY SUPPORT' SKILLS, I.E.;
 - PEER SUPPORT, BUDDY SYSTEMS
 - 'BRAND LOYALTY' AND TOLERANCE
 - MENTORING SKILLS
 - 'CITIZENSHIP' AND RESPONSIBILITY

WHAT CAN TEACHERS AND PARENTS DO?

3. THE PLAY/SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- 'PLAN FOR PLAY':
 - SPECIFIC ACTIVITY CHOICES
 - STRUCTURED ROUTINES AND GAMES
 - 'PLAY DATES' AND 'REVERSE INTEGRATION'
 - REHEARSAL AND PREPARATION
 - QUIET PLAY SPACES, EG LIBRARY
 - 'THEME' PLAY
 - CLEAR PLAY 'RULES'

ISSUES TO PONDER

- DOES PLAY/INTERACTION=FRIENDSHIP?
OR 'SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS'?
- DO SOME CHILDREN BECOME MORE
ANXIOUS WHEN 'PREPARED'?
- HOW LONG IS A 'GOOD GAME?' (OR "QUIT
WHEN YOU'RE AHEAD")
- DO BOYS AND GIRLS DIFFER IN RELATION
TO PLAY, SOCIALISING, FRIENDSHIP?