



Swindon SEND
Families Voice

Reshaping conversations



Inspiring change through
positive language



Inspiring change through positive language



Watch the video online at
www.resapingconversations.com

**We as Parent Carers would like to
work with professionals from across
Health, Education and Social Care
to inspire and promote the use of
positive, helpful language.**

Glossary

Team Around The Child:
A network of practitioners
who work together to
agree a plan and delivery
of support to meet a child's
assessed needs, and the
needs of the family.

SENCo: Special Educational
Needs Coordinator
(specialist teachers)

SEND: Special Educational
Needs and Disability

EHCP: An Education Health
and Care Plan. EHCPs
identify educational, health
and social needs and set
out the additional support
to meet those needs.

Parent Carer: Is someone
over 18 who provides
care to a disabled child for
whom they have parental
responsibility.



**Reshaping Conversations aims
to inspire positive change in
the language used by
professionals when speaking to
parents and carers of children
with additional needs.**

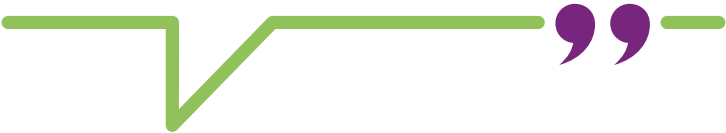
Reshaping Conversations is a project lead by Swindon
SEND Families Voice, the parent carer forum for
Swindon, and was collaboratively produced with local
parent support groups, Mums on a Mission, Swindon
Down's Syndrome Group, SCWAD and A support group
for Parents (Swindon Autism, ADHD).

Over 200 parents and carers told us that they have felt
the impact of words said to them by professionals that
they believe to be unhelpful. We have used some of
these real life conversations to make this booklet. The
language we use everyday has the power to influence
our perception and attitude. By reshaping these
conversations we can start to inspire positive changes.
Never underestimate, the impact that words can have on
the lives of our extraordinary children and their families.





You appear to have more than one child with additional needs, are you sure you don't need some parenting lessons?

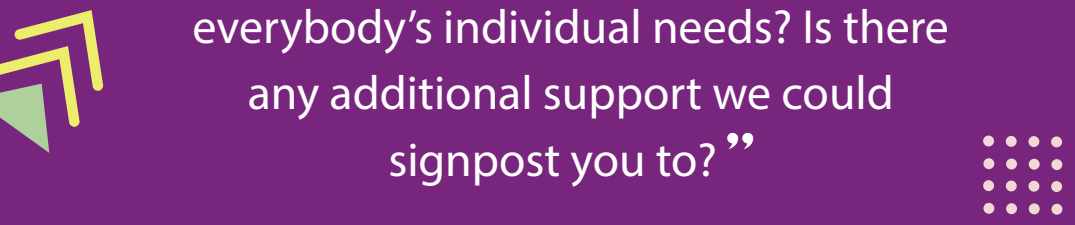


This statement has been shared from a conversation between a **Social Worker** and a SEND Parent Carer.

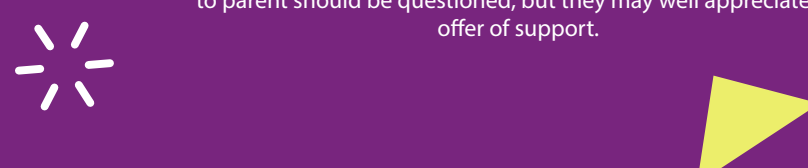


Let's reshape this conversation...

“You appear to have multiple SEND needs within the family, do you feel as a parent carer that you're getting **enough support** to manage everybody's individual needs? Is there any additional support we could signpost you to?”



Top Tip: Parents can have more than one child with additional needs. Many conditions are hereditary. It shouldn't automatically mean a parent's ability to parent should be questioned, but they may well appreciate an offer of support.

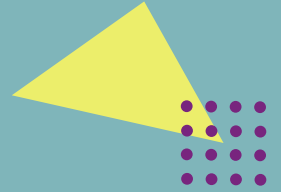


“

Have you considered
your choices considering
there is a 1 in 5 risk
your baby will have
Down's syndrome?

”

This statement has been shared from a conversation
between a **Midwife** and a SEND Parent Carer.



Let's reshape this conversation...



“There is a 1 in 5 **chance**
your baby could have
Down's syndrome.”

Top Tip: Chance is a much less emotive word than risk. The word risk can influence a parent's decision. Understanding more about Down's syndrome allows parents to make an informed choice.



“

Your child doesn't
seem to be following the
normal milestones.

”

This statement has been shared from a conversation
between a **Health Visitor** and a SEND Parent Carer.

Let's reshape this conversation...

+

“I've noticed some developmental
delays that aren't **typical** for your
child's age group.
We might need to explore these
gaps further. It's nothing to
worry about.”

+

Top Tip: It can be very worrying to hear that your child isn't meeting
their milestones. This is made much harder if a child is described as abnormal.
Sometimes SEND children follow different paths with their development
and may just need a little more time.

“

We could apply for an Education Health and Care Plan, but I doubt you'll get one. We don't see any problems at school, they're fine here all day.

”

This statement has been shared from a conversation between a **SENCo** and a SEND Parent Carer.

Let's reshape this conversation...

“Shall we sit **together** and go through some of the identified needs at home and school?”

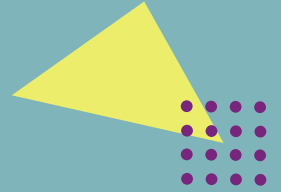
Top Tip: Working with parents collaboratively can achieve the best outcomes. If there isn't enough evidence for an EHCP then it's appropriate to discuss why. Parents appreciate that home can be their child's safe space and that they may be masking in a school environment. Acknowledging this and supporting parents by recording possible reasons and patterns helps everyone to see the whole child and their lived experiences, not just what is shown in school.

“

They will probably never
communicate with you.

”

This statement has been shared from a conversation between a
Consultant Paediatrician and a SEND Parent Carer.



Let's reshape this conversation...



“There maybe some delays or possibly even significant gaps in ‘child’s name’ speech, however, communication comes in lots of different forms we just need to find out what **works best** for them.”

Top Tip: Communication isn't just about speech and language. It also includes sign, body language, assistive technology and eye movements. Every child has the right to communicate their needs and wants. We should never give up on supporting SEND children to find new and different ways of achieving this.



“

They're not on the spectrum,
I know because all the Autistic
children I've worked with can't
speak and look much more
Autistic than your child...

”

This statement has been shared from a conversation
between a **Teaching Assistant** and a SEND Parent Carer.

Let's reshape this conversation...

“Every child is **unique**”

Top Tip: Whether they are a child with Autism or a neuro-
typical child, no two children are the same so it's never helpful
to compare any two children.



Well you wouldn't know,
I'm the professional.



This statement has been shared from a conversation
between a **Children's Mental Health Practitioner** and a
SEND Parent Carer.



Let's reshape this conversation...

“I **value** your opinion and
your thoughts. It's given
me a really good picture
of *[child's name]* lived
experiences, thank you.”



Top Tip: Parent carers are experts in their child's needs.
Their information is important and valid. By listening to parent carers
and taking on board their knowledge and thoughts it can help strengthen a
professional's understanding of the child they are working with.

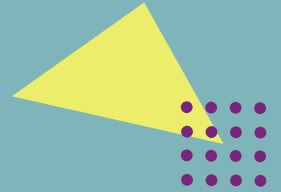


“

It's clear they are just
a naughty child and that
they are choosing to be
disruptive and lazy.

”

This statement has been shared from a conversation
between a **Head Teacher** and a SEND Parent Carer.



Let's reshape this conversation...

“Some of these behaviours can be quite
difficult to manage in this environment.
I can see they are struggling, perhaps
we could look at strategy ideas that can
help focus our energy into making them
feel more motivated and **engaged** in
their learning.”



Top Tip: SEND children find certain environments challenging. By using
terms like naughty, lazy or disruptive we are making the child with the
additional need a “problem”. Negative reinforcement will not help a child
engage or feel included. By exploring triggers such as low self esteem, sensory
overload, low mood or anxiety we can start to look at the reasons behind the
behaviour and help implement useful strategies.



Reshaping conversations

As you can see from this booklet and our video the words you use today can have a lasting impact on the lives of parent carers and their families for years to come.

By reshaping some of these conversations we can start to make positive changes. To make every word, phrase, statement, conversation, discussion, remark and communication count! Because it really does matter.

By 'Reshaping the Conversation' now, we can all help to build better, more inclusive services for SEND families.

Because our voices are always better together.



**Swindon SEND
Families Voice**

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SwindonSEnDFamiliesVoice

We are proud to have worked in partnership with

