

Find out what helps children and young people with SLCN

In the *Bercow: Ten Years On* review, children and young people had a lot to tell us about what support worked best for them.

As part of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) guidance (Code of Practice), children and young people should give their opinion and help to shape what support looks like.

Do you ask children and young people what helps them to learn, and to communicate?

Some people worry that because pupils with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) find communication difficult, they won't be able to give an opinion. This is wrong! There are lots of ideas for how to do this in our consultation report www.bercow10yearson.com/evidence but here are some more:

Before you start.....

It's important that children and young people know why you are asking them.

Some ways of doing this

Do you get help with your talking, listening or understanding? We want to try and make this the best we can – so we want to know what works best for you. You are the expert!

Remember, when we say 'talking' we mean every different way that you tell someone something. This could be speaking, using signing, using pictures or symbols or with a communication aid.

- Decide what you want to focus on – do you want to know about the support they get, or about what happens in lessons?
- Start by asking fairly open questions, leaving time for them to talk and tell you more. Then encourage them to tell you more.



Use the resources on www.bercow10yearson.com/resources. These are:

What support helps (written)	What support helps (pictures)
What helps in lessons	Like/don't like template
Help/don't help template	Graffiti wall

You can change these to personalise them for children and young people. Replacing the word with symbols or pictures can help and there are examples of this in our children's consultation report.

Use **cards with words/pictures** to have a conversation. Start by saying '*people try to help us in different ways but we might like some of these more than others*'. Then read out each card or example. Again, starting with open questions and then encouraging some sorting into things they find helpful or unhelpful.

- This could be by placing the cards on to a continuum (Help/don't help or like/don't like). But you may have a different way of finding out this information.
- You might want to ask some follow on questions to get a better understanding for their reasons for liking/not liking particular support e.g. 'how does that make you feel?'

More ideas:

- Graffiti wall. Use the picture of a wall with 'helps' and 'doesn't help' on it. Get children to write on the wall, or stick pictures on.
- Children and young people are given the chance to 'tell' the person who helps them what they like and don't like about the help they get. Using a photograph to represent someone who helps with talking (speech and language therapist/TA etc.), the children and young people are asked to think about:
 - One thing they think helps/they like about the help they get
 - One thing that doesn't help/they don't like

Using speech bubble shaped 'post its' (different coloured for like/don't like) the child or young person can write these themselves, or you can write them. Stick them onto the picture of the adult who helps.

You can then follow up and ask for more information using prompts such as 'tell me about that one', 'can you give me an example.?' Record what the young person says.

- Give me five! Ask children or young people to draw around their hand. On each finger ask them to write a top tip that adults should remember to make lessons easier. Explain that this will help people remember the tips. You will find some examples of these in our consultation report. www.bercow10.com/evidence

The Communication Trust has produced a [downloadable booklet](#) with lots of really practical suggestions and printable resources to help children communicate their views.