

Supporting Children with Autism/ADHD with Speech, Language and Communication

Children with autism or ADHD are more likely to experience effects on their language and communication skills. Early intervention is crucial for addressing speech and language challenges in children, and subsequently improving social, wellbeing, and academic outcomes. This document, created in collaboration with **Mable Therapy**, **Autism360** and **ADHD360**, explores likely speech and language difficulties a child with autism or ADHD may experience; the benefits of speech therapy; and how integrated speech therapy can support your child.

Neurodiversity Matters

Defining Terminology:

Autism

Autism is a **natural difference in how the brain processes information**.

Autistic people experience the world in unique ways. This is through distinct patterns of communication, sensory processing, and thinking. These differences can bring strengths such as focus, creativity, and innovative problem-solving.

ADHD

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a **variation in attention and energy regulation**. People with ADHD often think dynamically, act quickly, and bring creativity and enthusiasm to tasks. These traits can be powerful assets in the right environment.

Key Statistics

- **1 in 100** children in the UK are estimated to have autism.
- **5%** of children in the UK are estimated to have ADHD.



Neurodiversity celebrates differences, not deficits. Each brain works differently, and that is a strength.

Which Speech and Language Difficulties Are Frequently Observed in Autistic Children or Children with ADHD?

Language Development: Autistic children may present with delayed language development, while those with ADHD might show difficulties in understanding and using spoken language.

Social Communication: Both autism and ADHD can lead to social communication challenges, where children may struggle to initiate, maintain, and understand conversations.

Attention and Focus: ADHD can cause sustained attention difficulties, affecting task completion and conversational engagement. Joint attention can be affected in both autism and ADHD.

Communication Deficits: Typically, autistic children do experience challenges with communicating with others. While ADHD does not inherently involve a core communication deficit, children with ADHD may exhibit communication difficulties related to impulsivity and distractibility. You may also notice interrupting or tangential communication styles.

The Benefits of Early Speech and Language Support:

For Children with Autism:

- Speech and language therapy **expands verbal, non-verbal and interactive language**.
- Intervention helps children **express themselves, interpret body language, navigate social rules, take turns and develop strategies to communicate effectively**.
- Speech and language therapy **supports language growth, social understanding, confidence, and independence**.
- **Early, tailored, multicomponent approaches** using evidence-backed techniques and caregiver collaboration **show the strongest outcomes** for both conditions.
- **Speech and language interventions** are an essential for **communication, social connection, emotional control, and school readiness** for children with autism and/or ADHD.

For Children with ADHD:

- Speech and language therapy can **provide social communication and friendship coaching**.
- Children **learn to read tone, manage impulsivity in conversation, and stay on topic**, thereby improving relationships.
- Speech and language therapy targets thought organisation, self-regulation, and pragmatic skills. This **strengthens attention, coherence, and peer relationships**.



Benefits of Integrated Therapy:

Research highlights that multidisciplinary therapy improves social participation, independence, and overall well-being. Early intervention with combined therapies leads to better cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes.



Faster Progress: Multidisciplinary care addresses multiple developmental domains simultaneously, leading to quicker skill acquisition.



Improved Communication: Speech therapy enhances language and social communication skills.



Better Emotional Regulation: Coordinated approaches help manage sensory sensitivities and impulsivity.



Family Support: Integrated plans reduce stress and provide consistent strategies across settings.

Learn More

Mable Therapy provide 1:1 online Speech and Language Therapy to children and young people, including many autistic children and children with ADHD. We work alongside our brilliant sister brands [ADHD360](#) and [Autism360](#), who are doing transformational work in providing diagnoses and support to children and adults.

Scan the QR code to learn more about how Mable Therapy can support you:

