



Early Years Autism Support

The SCERTS Model

Key Points

- SCERTS is an evidence based approach to support the social communication and emotional regulation of preschool children who are on the autism spectrum.
- Oxfordshire, with support from one of the original developers of SCERTS, have developed their own model called SCERTS in Action.



The SCERTS Model

The SCERTS Model is a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach for children on the autism spectrum. It is designed to help families, Early Years practitioners, teachers, support staff, and other services coordinate their efforts in supporting a child with autism to become a competent and confident social communicator and an active learner.

The approach targets three main areas:

“SC” - Social Communication

The development of spontaneous, functional communication, emotional expression and secure and trusting relationships with children and adults.

“ER” - Emotional Regulation

The development of the ability to maintain a well-regulated emotional state to cope with everyday stress, and to be most available for learning and interacting.

“TS” - Transactional Support

The development and implementation of supports to help partners respond to the child’s needs and interests, modify the environment, and provide tools to enhance learning. Specific plans are developed to provide educational and emotional support to families, and to foster teamwork among professionals.

See www.scerts.com for more information.

Oxfordshire SCERTS in Action

Oxfordshire have used SCERTS to develop their own SCERTS in Action framework. SCERTS in Action allows practitioners and families to draw from a wide range of evidence-based practice with a focus on promoting initiated communication and emotional regulation in everyday activities. It includes a coordinated and flexible assessment process that ensures:

- functional, meaningful and developmentally appropriate goals and objectives are identified
- individual differences in a child's style of learning, interests and motivations are respected
- parents are included as partners
- the child is engaged in meaningful and functional activities throughout the day
- supports are developed and used consistently across partners, activities and environments
- a child's progress is tracked over time



The SCERTS model identifies three partner stages at which a child may be interacting in a social world, and observational assessment and target setting is directly linked to the identified partner stage. These partner stages are:

- **Social Partner:** where a child is using fewer than 3 words or phrases (which may be spoken, signed, involves pictures, written words or other symbolic system) referentially, regularly and with communicative intent.
- **Language Partner:** where a child uses more than 3 words or phrases (which may be spoken, signed, pictures, written words etc.) meaningfully, regularly and with communicative intent.

- **Conversation Partner:** where a child uses at least 100 words or phrases (which may be spoken, signed, involves pictures, written words etc.) meaningfully, regularly and with communicative intent and can use at least 20 different word combinations that are creative.

Once your child's partner stage has been identified, a more detailed observational assessment will take place in the setting, (if your child attends one) and at home. This will inform the planning of next steps for your child and offer strategies and activities which can support you and the setting in providing the best for your child.