Semantic Pragmatic Disorder is a communication disorder. (Semantic = the relationship between words or sentences and their meanings; pragmatic = making language work in context). It is believed that people with SPD are unable to process all the given information from certain situations.

The disorder relates in some way to autism because children with SPD have difficulties in the same three areas called ‘The Triad’: socialising, language, and imagination. It is often described as the ‘outer spectrum of autism’, but all children with features of autism will have semantic and pragmatic difficulties with language. It is always best to have a specialist medical consultation to exclude autism or find out where a child might be along the ASD spectrum and if there are any additional problems such as ADHD or dyslexia.

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• a quiet, orderly working environment with visual clues
• predictability to reduce anxieties – turn-taking, changes in routine clearly signalled
• clear rules on how to behave using concrete language they can understand
• simple, specific instructions spoken slowly – ‘put the toys in the box’ not ‘tidy up’
• as much as possible written down – clear timetable, instructions, messages
• small work groups, good role models, special small communication group activities
• time to reply when asked a question (but tactfully replying for them, on occasions, can help understanding)
• help with socialising – specific games, role-play
• constant positive reminders supported by visual/written information
• a home/school diary – on a daily basis if possible
• increase self-esteem by giving regular little jobs to do
• allow a child to observe other children carrying out a task first
• teach the meanings of useful idiomatic expressions and appropriate playground language.

Other possible features may include
• dislike of crowds
• food fads
• problems with social events (school breaks, parties)
• over-sensitive to some noises or tastes.

In learning, they may
• have problems with abstract concepts (next week, guess)
• be late or very early readers, but show little understanding
• have some motor skills problems (writing, drawing, bike riding, dressing, football)
• be easily distracted in a busy environment
• struggle with team events and games.

Behaviourally, they can
• appear rude, arrogant, gauche
• embarrass others
• be over-active or too passive
• insist on following rules and expect others to
• be isolated – won’t ask for help or for children to play with them
• or be over-friendly.

Other tips
• Try to respond to what is intended, not what is actually said
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In OAASIS publications can be downloaded from our Web

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**USEFUL CONTACTS**

**AFASIC**
Email: info@afasic.org.uk
Helpline: M-F: 10.30-2.30 0845 355 5577
Offer advice, support, information, publications, courses and conferences, actively days for young people and have local support groups.
Website: www.afasic.org.uk

**The Association of Speech & Language Therapists in Independent Practice**
Tel: 01494 488306
Find your nearest independent speech and language therapist (SALT) via their website.
Website: www.helpwithtalking.com

**ICAN**
Tel: 0845 225 4071
Offer advice, support, information and training courses for parents and professionals. They run Early Years Centres and two Special Schools for children aged 4-19 (both with assessment centres).
Website: www.ican.org.uk
Email: info@ican.org.uk

**National Autistic Society**
Website: www.autism.org.uk
Helpline: M-F: 10am-4pm 0845 070 4004
Nationwide organisation for people with autistic spectrum disorders. They have information on SPD which can be found at this link: http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=2493&a=20464.

**Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists**
Tel: 020 7378 1200
They have information on how to get a referral to a local NHS speech and language therapist or how to find an independent therapists.
Website: www.rcslt.org

**Sage Publications**
Formerly Paul Chapman Publishing, for all professionals working in schools and educational settings (includes Lucky Duck classroom resources).
Web: www.sagepub.co.uk
Email: market@sagepub.co.uk

**SEN Marketing**
Books and software for special educational needs.
Website: www.senbooks.co.uk
Tel: 01924 871697

**Speechmark**
Website: www.speechmark.net
Email: info@speechmark.net
Tel: 0845 034 4610

**The National Autistic Society**
The NAS books are supplied by Central Books. You can order online at Website: www.autism.org.uk or by telephone.
Tel: 0845 458 9911

**The internet book shop**
www.amazon.co.uk

**USEFUL INTERNET SITES**
See Useful Contacts above, plus

**The Surrey NAS** website is excellent for autistic spectrum disorders: use their search facility and you will find many good links – www.mugsy.org

**www.talkingpoint.org.uk** is a one stop shop for information on communication disorders and communication development. A clear, informative website with separate sections for parents and professionals covers many areas including information, support, and education. Also has Talking Links section with post code search of speech and language provision. Developed by ICAN, RCSLT and Afasic.

Another American site, **American Hyperlexia Organisation** www.hyperlexia.org/sp1.html has an in-depth and clear article, if a few years old now, on all aspects of SPD.

**The Cambian Group** run seven residential special schools and colleges for young people with autistic spectrum disorders, Asperger syndrome/HFA, severe learning difficulties. OAASIS can give you advice on the schools and send you their prospectuses or visit the website www.cambianeducation.com.

OAASIS produces a wide range of free Information Sheets, 8 publications entitled ‘First Guide to…’ and wallet sized cards explaining 9 learning disabilities. Please contact OAASIS (see front of sheet for contact details) for the full list, or view and download them on the website at www.oaasis.co.uk.

All sheets are checked and amended annually. Please ensure you have the current version.