

Sensory considerations

Environmental management

Routines and planned change

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Autism friendly communication

Motivation ©

## Module 2

# Assessing your child's Social Foundation Skills (S<sub>o</sub>FS)

This module provides a step-by-step guide to assessing early developing reciprocal nonverbal communication and social skills that form the basis of later language development. It is recommended that you read Module 1: Getting started: Assessing your child's everyday communication skills, before commencing this module.

## *Getting familiar with the Social Foundation Skills definitions, observational pointers and recording forms.*

As a starting point, we recommend that you become familiar with the definitions and observational pointers for the six Social Foundation Skill areas. These may be found on pages 11-17 of this document. The definitions and pointers are also available as separate downloads on the SERVAM website.

The six skill areas identified in SoFS were derived from research literature. There is convincing evidence that children with autism have core social difficulties in these areas which impact on later reciprocal communication and social relating skills. A list of related references appears on page 39.

The literature refers to the Social Foundation Skill areas by a range of definitions and terminology. User-friendly definitions were developed for the SoFS assessment by a group of experienced professionals skilled in transdisciplinary intervention<sup>1</sup>.

The observational pointers are not meant to be used as a checklist of questions. Don't feel you need to answer every question. Use the pointers as a guide, as you observe your child interacting with others.

Share the definitions, observational pointers, forms and guidelines with the professionals who work with your child and ask for their input. Ask the professionals to describe their observations of your child, so that you can compare it with what you see at home and in the community. There are often big variations in the way children interact in different situations.

If you are on a wait list or do not have access to professional support, you can get started yourself. As we have mentioned earlier, the most useful information will come from observations of your child in his everyday life, not from a standard test. You are the ideal person to conduct a functional assessment of your child's social and communication skills.

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<sup>1</sup> An approach in which professionals from different disciplines (e.g. Specialist educators, Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists) work together in a collaborative manner to implement intervention within the classroom environment. Generally there is collaborative input across all areas i.e. assessment, goal formulation, and implementation of intervention strategies. This is a more naturalistic approach and a move away from the traditional "pull out" model where specialist therapists would take students out of class for individual sessions.

## *Guidelines for Documenting Your Child's Social Foundation Skills*

The 10 guidelines summarised below will help you document your child's social orienting, imitation, joint attention, turn taking, emotional attunement, affect sharing and cooperation skills.

### *Guideline 1: Start small*

The SoFS pointers will guide you about what to look for in each skill area. It may be a little overwhelming to look at all areas at the outset so perhaps begin with documenting your child's social orienting abilities. Social orientating is central to the other skill areas so it's an ideal opener. For example, a child can't imitate nor can he take turns, unless he pays attention to others.

Many opportunities to observe your child's social orienting skills occur naturally throughout the day, so you'll probably get a clear picture of your child's social orienting skills within a day or so. It is a good idea to set up social situations to check out your child's awareness of others in different contexts. For example, you or someone else may observe his ability to pay attention to others under different conditions, such as when he is:

- ❖ busily engaged compared to being unoccupied
- ❖ in noisy, congested environments versus quiet environments
- ❖ in unfamiliar as well as familiar environments
- ❖ at varying distances from the person he is attending to ( see guideline 5 for further detail).

### *Guideline 2: Choose a portion of the day when you have energy and time*

A fair amount of energy and time is required to set up and record your child's Social Foundation Skills. When you first begin, choose a time during the day when you are not rushed, or perhaps use a video and analyse the footage at another time.

*Guideline 3: Don't rely on your memory: write what you see as it occurs.*

Carefully observe and diarise your child's skills as they occur. Don't rely on your memory; you will miss out on important information. Either video or write down what you see as it occurs. Remember, you are not just watching your child; you are also noting the surrounding social and physical situation. Record exactly what adults say and how they interact with your child. Your observations should be detailed enough so that you can picture what your child does from reading the description. Try to write the description as if it is happening at that moment (see completed sample SoFS forms on pages 24-29 for an idea of writing in this style). This will help you envisage the event. For example, the episode below shows how a child, Cooper, orients to his mother's voice.

*Cooper is walking back to his bedroom after the bath. Kirsty is in the lounge room reading so it's quiet in the house. I'm walking about two metres behind when I say, "Cooper, bath finished. Now it's....". Cooper turns around and looks directly at me and smiles saying, "play trains and buses".*

Observe and diarise when your child engages successfully with others as well as times when he does not. You'll want an account of his skills at their best and worst and, more importantly, you'll need to consider what factors influence those ups and downs.

*Cooper is putting the train tracks together on the lounge room floor. I enter the room, move across the room with loud footsteps and sit on a chair nearby making obvious "mmmmm" noises. Cooper does not look up, hesitate or stop what he is doing even when I say "yey... trains!*

Date all observations and keep them together in a book. It will be a useful reference to set appropriate learning goals and gauge your child's development in future months.

*Guideline 4: Enlist the help of others as 'recorders'*

Try to get others to watch and record how your child interacts with you. It is difficult when you are part of the interaction to pick up what you are doing, as well as your child's responses and initiations at the same time. You may need to show the other person the type of details you'd like them to record.

*Guideline 5: Document your child's Social Foundation Skills as he interacts with others*

Observe your child interacting with a range of people, across situations, during different times in the day. Often there are significant variations in a child's social skills depending on *who* the child is interacting with, *where and when* the interaction is taking place, and *how* the child feels at the time of the interaction. You may observe your child as he interacts:

- ❖ with people of different ages (children his age, younger children, older children, adults)
- ❖ in different situations (noisy, busy surroundings, quiet surroundings, familiar versus unfamiliar situations, in situations that are highly motivating versus uninteresting )
- ❖ at different times of the day ( a child's skills may vary widely depending on his energy levels)
- ❖ when he is in different emotional/physical states.

It is up to you as to whether you wish to forewarn adults prior to observing their interactions with your child. Some adults become quite uneasy if they know they are being watched. They may feel pressured to get a response from your child and so tend to be a little directive doing things like:

- ❖ asking lots of questions
- ❖ not giving time for the child to respond
- ❖ getting in the child's 'face' and unintentionally intimidating him
- ❖ repeating themselves if the child doesn't respond quickly enough

Perhaps it might be better to let the adult know that you are not trying to see how clever your child is or how many words he knows, you just want to see what he likes to do around other people.

*Guideline 6: Be balanced: try not to rush to commence intervention BUT don't get bogged down in too much detail.*

There is no prescribed number of observations a parent needs to record. You know your child better than anyone else, so you will know when you have a representative picture of his skills. Try not to get bogged down taking repeated observations that tell you the same thing BUT having said this, do not be too eager to start intervention without knowing all the facts.

One of the first questions parents ask is: I know he is not good at ..... but what do I do about it? A thorough assessment will give you some of those answers. Try to describe the conditions in which you see your child's skills at their best as well as their weakest. This summary will help you work out what strategies to employ.

For example, the two previous examples show that Cooper's social orienting skills vary. After several more observations Cooper's mum worked out that his social orienting is poorest when:

1. other people try to get his attention by talking to him whilst he is engaged in something that is very motivating
2. he is tired after school
3. he is in a visually busy environment – he gets distracted when people move about him and by some objects

Cooper's mum also noted that his social orienting is best when:

1. people get his attention by joining him if he is doing something he really enjoys (for example, if people sit down and help him with the train tracks before attempting to direct his attention)
2. people introduce activities that are part of his usual routine or of interest to him
3. people use animated, well intoned voices

Record your observations on the Social Foundations Skills observation form on page 18. The form has a column headed up "So this means...". This is where you summarise your conclusions. Every time you make an observation use this column to note whether you think the observation is typical of your child on a good day, or not-so good day. Describe any contributing factors and your overall impressions. A sample completed form is provided on page 24.

Take care to not get caught up making observations under every condition possible otherwise you'll never finish the assessment. You are getting an idea of your child's Social Foundation Skills so that you can begin addressing his needs. Once you have a representative picture of your child's abilities, you can get started setting up everyday situations to address his strengths and weaknesses.

### *Guideline 7: Summarise your findings*

Read through your observations, highlight each entry in terms of the ups and downs and then summarise your observations and conclusions using the SoFS summary form. The SoFS summary form is found on page 28.

Firstly list all the factors that hinder and promote your child's skills in each area in the columns provided.

There is an area to make a short summary statement about your child's current skill level. Try to describe how your child demonstrates the skills, under what types of social situations and your overall impression. Encapsulate the main points as briefly as possible (as shown in the examples below).

*Silvia's social orienting is pretty limited. She spends most of the time looking at things around her instead of people. Her dad and I seem to be the only ones who can get her attention when we touch her and talk in a sing-song way. We have to be very close. She looks at us for a couple of seconds and then turns her head away. She just doesn't seem interested in any of the children at preschool or when we go to the park.*

*Louis' social orienting is pretty good. He pays sustained attention for more than 10 seconds by looking at a person's face, as well as turning his body and moving towards other people. He smiles at others too. He can do this with lots of different people in different situations.*

The final summary section is where you record the immediate areas to address in intervention. These recommendations and goals may relate directly to your child and at other times they may involve other people, particularly in terms of educating them about your child's needs.

Sometimes people who interact with your child may need to alter their own style of interaction to bring out the best in your child's Social Foundation Skills. Most people are very accommodating when they understand the nature of your child's difficulties. However it is important to specifically outline the problems your child faces and what strategies best support him. Just telling another person that your child has autism does not always help. So many parents are typically faced with a rather frustrating reply to this statement that sounds something like "oh I know about that I used to work with a child with autism". Unfortunately to know or work with one or several children with autism does not mean that you understand autism in its diversity, nor do you know the child himself: his likes, dislikes, sensory style, strengths, weaknesses, personality and temperament.

It can be very helpful to describe the specific difficulties that your child experiences *from his perspective*. Try writing up your SoFS summary information in first person as if

your child is talking. We have found these types of personalized information sheets a powerful way to get the message across to others. Add your child's photo and a few illustrations to heighten the personal nature of the information. The example on the following page summarises a child's social orienting difficulties and what best supports her in this area. The suggestions were derived from the list of factors that hinder and promote the child's orienting skills (as per the SoFS summary form).

*A sample personalized Information Sheet about social orienting.*



Hi,  
I'm Lizzy!



I think things like rubber gloves and balloons are really interesting. I'm also excited by walking in straight lines, lining up rocks and looking at angles between walls and ceilings.

People are a bit of a mystery to me and I don't seem to notice them around me. I am not trying to ignore you when I don't respond. I am just more motivated by other things so that's what takes my attention.

If you want my attention it would be best if you:

- ❖ sit near me so that I can easily see your face (the further you are away, the harder it is for me to notice you).
- ❖ use an interesting voice that captures my interest.
- ❖ join me rather than trying to direct my attention away from what I am attending to. Try doing what I am doing, making sound effects that match what I am doing, or vocalizing what you think I might be feeling, e.g. making excited, inquisitive, thinking, surprised or annoyed vocalizations that match my demeanor.
- ❖ If you really need my attention touch me on the arm and show me what you want me to do.

### *Guideline 8: Set Priorities*

You will not be able to address all your child's Social Foundation needs at once. Pick out one or two priority areas to keep at the forefront of your mind across the day. Record your top 2 -3 priorities on the final section of the SoFS summary form (see page 30). Print this page out and place in highly used location like the fridge so that you remind your self of your priorities. Focus on the area that is having the biggest impact on your child's behaviour or family life.

If you find it difficult to embed the goals across the whole day, set some time aside to analyze and structure a couple of daily activities to address Social Foundation goals. See socially-assisted routines in Routines and Planned Change chapter.



## *Social Foundation Skills Definitions*

### [Social Orienting](#)

Showing awareness and giving attention to other people by either changing one's facial expression; gazing at, turning one's body/head or moving towards another person.

### [Imitation and joint actions with others](#)

Joint actions involve moving in unison with other people and imitation involves copying others. Both may involve actions with and without objects.

### [Adjusting behaviour to co-ordinate with others](#)

Doing something in a certain way so as to coordinate with others while assuming both complementary and parallel roles. This includes starting and stopping *with* others as well as adjusting the speed, loudness, size and shape of one's actions so as to maintain a partnership with another person. See observational pointers for examples of activities and tasks that involve complementary and parallel roles.

### [Emotional attunement and, Expressing states and emotions](#)

Emotional attunement refers to a child's awareness of, and response to other people's emotions. Emotional expression looks at how a child conveys how he feels (both his physical and emotional state) as well as the child's ability to share his/her emotions with others.

### [Turn taking interactions](#)

Connecting with another person in a patterned way that involves attending, waiting, anticipating and responding, based upon what each person does in the interaction.

### [Joint attention](#)

Connecting with others while observing the same event/object so as to share the experience.

CATEGORY	Use these questions to guide your observations.
Social Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does your child show an awareness and interest in other people? Is there any difference if those people are family members, children his age, older and younger children, babies, familiar adults or adult strangers?</li> <li>● How do you know he is aware of others? How does he give attention to others?</li> <li>● Does he look at others, reach out to touch them, move towards or turn his body towards them, smile, giggle, stand nearby or try to start an interaction? Describe exactly what you see your child do.</li> <li>● Does he look tend to look at people’s faces, at what they are wearing, physical features (lips with lipstick, beards, shaved heads etc) or is it difficult to tell what he is focusing on?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does he give attention spontaneously? Does he naturally pay attention to people who enter the room, make an interesting sound, or come nearby? OR Do other people need to purposefully try to engage him to get his attention?</li> <li>● Does he keep paying attention to others, or is his attention fleeting (lasting a couple of seconds or less)?</li> <li>● How long does he maintain attention in a typical interaction?</li> <li>● Does he notice people from a distance (e.g. across a playground) or does he need to be close by others to notice them?</li> <li>● Does your child pay more attention when the other person is doing something that interests him?</li> <li>● Does he show more awareness and interest in particular people? If so, what is it that attracts him to these people? Is it their physical characteristics, personality, communication style etc? E.g. long hair, beards, loud speech, animated style, age, or size? Does he prefer quiet or outgoing people?</li> <li>● How does he show that he wants to be close to others or indicate that he wants to be alone?</li> <li>● Does your child show better social awareness depending on what he is doing? For example if he is highly engaged in what he is playing with is he oblivious to others or is his awareness heightened?</li> </ul> <p>If you get the chance to watch your child in a group situations, consider the following observational pointers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does your child look at the leader or a facilitator at the front of a group?</li> <li>● Does he shift his attention when other people in the group take turns?</li> <li>● Does he pay attention to what most other children in the group attend to?</li> </ul>

Imitation  
&  
Joint Actions

Functional imitation

● Does your child imitate functional actions? Functional imitation occurs when a child copies another person's actions in order to meet his own needs and wants. He may copy what another person does in order to obtain a desired item, undertake an action he likes but doesn't know how to do, or get rid of something he doesn't want. E.g. If you show him how to open a container that contains an item of interest, does he copy you? If you show him how to make a toy work, does he copy you? If you show him how to pack away or throw away an item, does he copy you?

Social imitation

Social imitation occurs when a child copies another person purely for social purposes, i.e. to relate, connect with or be similar to another person. In other words, he will receive nothing more than social attention and a sense of connectedness from the act of imitating.

● Does he imitate, single words, phrases or sounds you make? If so, what are the sounds and words he imitates? Will your child imitate these same sounds and words if other people make them? Does he watch your mouth, or does he tend to imitate just as well if he can't see you? Is your tone of voice imitated? Is he more likely to imitate if you use a dramatic vocal style?

● Does he imitate facial expressions or different mouth positions (e.g. poking out your tongue, rounding or protruding your lips)?

● Does he imitate hand, leg and whole body actions? (E.g. clapping, hi five, tapping, drumming, stamping, jumping, and turning in circles). What actions is he more likely to imitate? Why do you think these actions are more effective?

● Does he imitate actions that involve objects better than actions that don't?

● Does he seem to enjoy imitating others or show an interest in watching others when they imitate a leader??

● Does he imitate better in certain situation, with particular people, or doing particular actions etc?

● How long does he maintain imitation interactions?

● Is there a difference between his imitation skills in-group and one-on-one situations?

● If you change actions during an imitation game, does your child adapt to copy the next action? (If you change actions quickly, does he keep up?)

● Does your child show awareness that other people are copying him (i.e. when he is the leader in an imitation activity?)

● Does he imitate actions better when music or an obvious rhythm is involved?

General imitation

● Does he imitate his favourite personalities and characters on TV and DVDs?

● Does he imitate environmental sounds or melodies?

Adjusting  
behaviour to  
coordinate  
with others

#### Coordinating parallel roles

● Does your child undertake and adjust his behaviour in a variety of activities, games and tasks that work better when two people to do the same action at the same time (i.e. taking parallel roles)? Some examples are:

▶ When you are walking together, does he slow down if you slow down, quicken if you quicken your pace, stop when you stop etc? If your answer is 'yes', do you need to hold his hand, or will he do whatever you do without holding hands? Do you need to give him tell him to do so, or does he adjust his behaviour by himself?

▶ If you are singing together or playing with musical instruments, does he get louder if you get louder, softer if you get softer, stop when you stop, start again when you do so? Do you need to give him tell him to do so, or does he adjust his behaviour by himself?

▶ Can he lift and carry a small table or heavy bag with you? Carry mats /mattresses out or air? Does he lift the item, walk in the same direction and put down the item when you do so?

▶ Can he make or strip the bed together (pull up sheets/ blanket together)?

● Is it you or your child taking the lead in parallel role activities? (i.e. the lead starts, stops, changes pace, direction and loudness while the follower adjusts). Does he tend to lead, follow or is he happy to do both?

#### Coordinating complementary roles

● Does your child undertake and adjust his behaviour in a variety of activities, games and tasks that work better when two people to do a different action at the same time (i.e. taking complementary roles)? Some examples are:

▶ While packing away groceries or other items: if you take items out of the bag and hand them to him, can he put the items on the shelf? (Can he swap roles, i.e. he takes the groceries out and you put away?)

▶ Will he continue holding a bag open while you tip in items? Can he bring the dustpan towards the broom and hold it steady as you sweep in the dirt? Does he recognise when you have finished doing something together and look to you to see what happens next?

▶ During spray and wipe cleaning, will he spray then wait for you to wipe before moving on to do more spraying?

▶ During teeth cleaning if you show you are ready to squeeze the toothpaste will he bring his toothbrush to the toothpaste to co-ordinate?

● Does your child show awareness that he is doing something in a coordinated manner? (Does he look to check the other person, pause, change what he is doing etc?)

● Does your child show emotional engagement while coordinating with others? (Does he smile and show joy, get annoyed at you when you take the lead etc?)

<p>Emotional expression and attunement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How would you describe your child's general temperament?</li> <li>● Is it obvious to most people the way your child is feeling?</li> <li>● How can you tell your child is in pain, is sick, is feeling angry, happy, excited, wary, bored, confused, frustrated etc?</li> <li>● Who is your child affectionate with?</li> <li>● Does your child's behaviour reflect how he is feeling internally? Does he giggle when he is stressed rather than look concerned?</li> <li>● Does he seem to laugh for no apparent reason?</li> <li>● Are his emotional and behavioural responses appropriate to the situation? E.g. Does he laugh when it is a stressful situation or giggle when another person is upset?</li> <li>● Is the scale of his response appropriate to the situation (is it too big, too little or flat)?</li> <li>● Does your child get stuck in an emotion and can't seem to move on?</li> <li>● Does your child react or show awareness of other peoples' emotional reactions?</li> <li>● How does your child handle planned and unplanned separations from key people?</li> <li>● Is your child soothed/calmed by others when upset? Does he prefer to be by himself when upset?</li> <li>● Does your child actively share his emotions with others?</li> <li>● Does your child have ways to cope with his emotions by himself? What does he do to calm himself?</li> <li>● Does your child attempt to make you react with a particular emotion? (E.g. Does he manipulate your mouth to smile when you are frowning? Bring you items to share because you usually become excited and he likes that experience to be repeated?</li> <li>● Does your child have emotional meltdowns? What causes these meltdowns? How long do they last? What do they look like?</li> </ul>
<p>Joint Attention</p>	<p>Expressive Joint Attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does your child show, hold up, bring or give you objects?</li> <li>● If so, why does he usually do this? Is it to get you to do something he can't do (e.g. open it, fix it, blow up a balloon), or to do what you usually do to the object as part of a well rehearsed routine (e.g. brings you a hat to put on your head when getting ready to go out) or does he just want to show or share the object with you?</li> <li>● Does your child point towards objects/items that are out of reach to either request them or to direct your attention to them for the purpose of sharing?</li> <li>● If so, does he point using his index finger or is it more of a general hand point?</li> <li>● Does he coordinate his gaze by looking at the object and/or you when he points to objects?</li> <li>● Does he coordinate any vocalization or words when he points to, holds out, brings or gives you objects?</li> </ul>

<p>Joint Attention</p>	<p>Receptive Joint Attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does your child look to see what others are looking at (follows the path of your gaze to see what you are looking at)? Do you need to tell him to look or does he naturally follow the direction of your gaze?</li> <li>● Does your child look at the main point of interest that most others in the vicinity are looking at?</li> <li>● Does your child look at what you are pointing to? If so, does he then check to see what your reaction is?</li> </ul> <p>If you comment about something of interest in the surrounding area, does your child look at what you are talking about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does he look at the object directly, in the general direction but not at the object, or does he look at your arm or pointed hand?</li> <li>● Does your child shift his gaze between people and objects depending on what is happening?</li> <li>● Does his gaze shift from looking at your face, immediately to the item of interest, then immediately back to you?</li> <li>● If there are 2 people, does your child look from the object to the 1<sup>st</sup> person, then immediately to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person then back to the object?</li> <li>● Does he show enjoyment when sharing the same point of interest?</li> </ul>
<p>Turn Taking Interactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How does your child respond to other people's attempts to interact with him?</li> <li>● Is he more likely to respond when people behave or talk in a particular way? What works best to encourage him to respond?</li> <li>● Some children take a little time to respond. How long does your child take to respond?</li> <li>● What happens when other children his age approach your child?</li> <li>● Does your child take turns in short interactions that follow a predictable sequence (e.g. peek a boo, chasings) Can he swap roles in these interactions?</li> </ul> <p>If you have had the opportunity to watch your child in a group situation, note whether he can take turns when a variety of structured turn taking strategies are used (e.g. moving left to right as everyone takes a turn, handing/passing along an object from one person to another, showing a person's picture or calling a child's name in relation to turn taking etc)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does your child take turns when it is explicitly announced and guided? (e.g. " mummy's turn, Suzi's turn" as object is passed)</li> <li>● Does your child show anticipation as his turn comes closer?</li> <li>● Does your child show interest in other people when it is their turn?</li> </ul>

## SOCIAL FOUNDATION SKILLS OBSERVATION FORM



Child's Name:

Observer:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>So this means...</b>
Social Orientation			
Imitation & Joint Actions			

Category	Date	Observation	So this means...
Regulating behaviour to coordinate with others			
Emotional attunement & expression			

Category	Date	Observation	So this means...
Joint Attention			
Turn Taking			

## SOCIAL FOUNDATION SKILLS OBSERVATION FORM



Child's Name: Louis R

Observer/s: Mum, Dad, Grandma, Occasional Care staff, EL Staff

Category	Date	Observation	So this means...
Social Orientation	1/09/09	<p><i>When Nanna arrives at the front door, she calls out "hello" through the front screen door. Louis is sitting on the lounge room floor, playing with his helicopter and garbage truck. He stands up immediately, looks to the door, takes the dummy out of his mouth, holds it out to show and says "dummy". Louis is about 3 metres away from the front door.</i></p> <p><i>Aaron arrives at dinnertime and Louis is sitting at the table in his high chair. He looks to Aaron as soon as he enters and says, "dinner" smiles and points to his helicopter saying "helicopter, open door".</i></p>	<p><i>This is fairly representative of how Louis responds to people he knows and likes, who arrive at home. He just needs to hear them and quickly looks to check who it is. He usually names a nearby favourite object, points to it or shows it to the person to start an interaction and makes it obvious that he enjoys their attention.</i></p> <p><i>This is not how he responds to people he doesn't know. (It is the opposite, particularly if it is a child).</i></p>
	3/09/09	<p><i>Louis refuses to walk into preschool by himself, he clings and clamours to be held closely. When staff who he knows say hello, he closes his eyes, hides his face and tucks his head under my chin.</i></p>	<p><i>Louis is still pretty aware of adults and children in these group situations but he is not confident enough to neither look at their faces nor start an interaction. There are too many people all at once. Later on he gets over his shyness and starts to interact.</i></p>
	5/9/09	<p><i>When Louis arrives at his Early Learning centre he hides his head but keeps his eyes open. He clings to me and buries his head.</i></p>	<p><i>At home is where we see his social orienting skills at their best.</i></p>
	4/9/09	<p><i>Mum and Louis enter the familiar neighbourhood bakery. Louis looks through the counter display at the 'face' biscuits. He doesn't notice that another child and his parent have entered the shop. I say "hello, what's your name?" to the child to alert Louis to the fact that someone is near him. Louis looks at me, then at the child (who is about his height and age), he scowls and shrinks backward to move away. The other child approaches Louis and Louis is backed into a corner. Louis screams and his body shakes violently. He spits at the child as he tries to back away from him.</i></p>	<p><i>This shows he can be quite oblivious that people have moved in close if he is really engaged in what he is doing. It is worse when he finds others nearby without a route of escape. He'll use challenging behaviours to get away. He just went into meltdown terror mode.</i></p> <p><i>It Louis had been in his pram it might have been different. When the pram straps are securely tightened around his body he copes better with busy social environments and even comments about the people he observes.</i></p>
	2/9/09	<p><i>Louis is walking across the playground at recess time, hand in hand with his mum. Louise calls from about 30 metres way "Hi Meredith". Meredith stops and Louise calls out "Hi Louis". Louis looks straight at Louise then points in the direction that he and his mum are walking. Louise answers "oh going up the stairs" "see you later" and he starts walking again. Louis has not met Louise before this occasion.</i></p>	<p><i>This shows how well Louis notices and pays attention to people from a distance. I think he was particularly good because he was on his way to an OT session which he loves and was holding my hand so he felt safe.</i></p>

Category	Date	Observation	So this means...
Imitation & Joint Actions	3/09/09	<i>Louis is in an OT session, Mum is talking to Aaron while Louis is exploring the equipment. Louis places his hand on his hip, and with his other hand places his finger to the side of his cheek, puts a thoughtful expression on his face and says " mmmmm.. I know" obviously mimicking Aaron's vocal tone, body language and spoken language.</i>	<i>This is pretty good to mimic an adult's subtle behaviours and mannerisms. I see him copying Aaron's language and behaviour at home. Because this is done some time after Aaron has gone it shows he has good delayed imitation skills.</i>
	2/09/09	<i>During circle time EL Louis copies clapping, touching his nose, stomping his feet, touching shoulders and rubbing his tummy during action songs. He is a little bit behind the actions of the group leader but he tries to catch up by omitting some actions and starting next anticipated action.</i>	<i>Louis has trouble keeping up with the pace of most imitation songs. This is because he has trouble with motor planning. It's good that he knows to drop some actions and find ways to catch-up. He looks around at others and obviously likes to be part of the group.</i>
	2/9/09	<i>During the goodbye song another child is banging on a cupboard nearby. An imitation song is being sung and demonstrated by the group leader. Louis pulls away from the group, covers his ears and climbs into his mum's lap.</i>	<i>Louis just goes into shut down mode when his sensory system is overloaded.</i>
	2/9/09	<i>Louis is seated at the outside tables during morning tea at EL. He hears the clock tower bell chime, he looks up at mum and says "train bell". He looks back down to his food then starts singing a rising pitch 3-note melody. This is the sound of the school bell that follows within 10 seconds of Louis singing it.</i>	<i>Imitating the sound of the school bell just before it occurs shows great delayed imitation of environmental sounds.</i>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>So this means...</b>
Regulating behaviour to coordinate with others	17/09/09	<i>Louis is playing a push car game on the lounge room floor. Both Louis and mum have a car each and are pushing their cars over a bridge. Mum takes the lead and pushes her car over the bridge. Louis follows and does the same. Louis starts to scream "Louis' turn, Louis' turn" Louis screams each time mum tries to take the lead. He insists on everything from the train and car movements, placement of roads and bridges and which car mum can touch etc.</i>	<i>Louis is not good at following the lead of mum or dad in games he knows well. He is quite controlling. He tantrums and protests if things are not done his way. He gets more and more insistent that the games must be played out exactly as he determines.</i>
	22/09/09	<i>Mum and Louis are emptying the dishwasher. Louis is taking out the plates while mum puts them in the cupboard. Louis starts to do a common visual stim. of his by moving the plate in and out of his peripheral vision while handing it to her. He does not watch to see if mum has taken hold of the plate and lets it go to crash on the floor.</i>	<i>I need to avoid activities where Louis can create repetitive visual input by moving objects in and out of his view. There is no way I can get his attention to keep the partnership going when that occurs.</i>
	2/9/09	<i>Louis is at EL during music time playing drums. He is drumming along with the leader but not looking at her momentarily. The group leader is singing a song and changes the tempo to the music in an obvious way. Louis glances up to the group leader, looks and then continues back to his drum altering his beat to keep in time while playing.</i>	<i>This shows Louis is very aware when the person he is 'joining in' with is making changes. He looked to see whether he was doing the same thing because he noticed the change. He altered what he did to keep pace. It shows that he knows he is in a partnership and that he has to alter what he does to keep that partnership going i.e. follow the lead of the other person</i>
	19/9/09	<i>Louis is about to brush his teeth. He stands on a stool and looks in the mirror. Mum gives the toothbrush to Louis. Mum gets the toothpaste and Louis looks at mum then holds his toothbrush up. Mum holds the toothpaste a little way from his brush and begins to squeeze it. Louis brings his toothbrush up to collect the toothpaste from where mum is holding it.</i>	<i>Louis is aware when he needs to adjust his movements momentarily to achieve a goal. He is aware and changes his behaviour to adjust to the physical positioning of the other person. When he is required to make adjustments to sustain a complementary role he struggles.</i>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>So this means...</b>
Emotional attunement & expression	17/09/09	<i>Mum and Louis are in the library. Louis is excited by the spinning displays of books. He spins them around and shouts "this one mummy!" at the top of his voice over and over. He flaps his hands and then falls to the floor then jumps like a frog on his hands and knees. He shouts "Noonie froggy!" over and over. Mum has had a hard day already and in a less than admirable parenting moment gets on her knees and hisses angrily to Louis "stop it NOW LOUIS!". Louis laughs hysterically and hisses back in the same tone "STOP IT NOW MUMMY!"</i>	<i>Louis is very often unaware of how I feel. He gets excited and finds funny any exaggerated facial, body expressions, whether they be angry or happy. As he loves to mimic, he will generally do the action again to get the same result, or simply copy me and laugh.  I get better results by ignoring bad behaviour or by redirecting him with a bland expression on my face.</i>
	28/09/09	<i>Louis is outside an unfamiliar building. It is windy and sunny. Mum is getting wedding photos done and can't hold him. Louis screams and cries. Family, familiar and unfamiliar gather around him and tell him that "it is okay". Louis screams "Mummy up!" over and over while closing his eyes and kicking out at the gathered crowd. Mum picks him up and he curls into her and cries. Nanna tries to take the bag out of Mum's hand to reduce her load. Louis screams "NOOOOO Mummy's bag, mummy's bag!" Mummy moves away indoors with Louis, faces a wall and doesn't speak. She gives him his comfort items, blankies and teddies and dummies. Louis calms down.</i>	<i>Louis is greatly affected by his environment. His sensory difficulties mean that he often has meltdowns if the environment is too loud, too bright, unfamiliar and busy. At these times, Louis needs to be removed from the situation quickly and quietly and allowed to self regulate and calm down in a quiet environment with his security items. It helps if I am with him but do not engage him in any way. Sees mum as an avenue for escape. Louis does not seek comfort from others</i>
	2/9/09	<i>Mummy and Louis are outside of the house. Louis asks to be spun around by his hands. Mummy spins him around. Louis lets go and lands flat on his face – hard. Louis lies on the ground. He doesn't cry. Mum picks him up. He stares into space and shakes. After Mum cuddles him he gets down and walks off. He won't talk. Mum checks his mouth and finds it full of blood, bruised gums, swollen lip. Louis does not mention any pain.</i>	<i>Louis does not process pain reactions properly. He will cry and be distressed over light touch but a significant pain will be reacted to by, "disappearing" and shaking. He will often be quiet and withdrawn for the rest of the day.</i>
	19/9/09	<i>Louis returns home with mum after his first swimming lesson. He runs from the car to where his daddy is standing at the top of the stairs. He stops and throws his hands in the air yelling "daddy swim in the water" smiling broadly. He repeats this phrase throughout the night with enthusiasm.</i>	<i>When Louis has achieved something new and enjoyed the experience, he loves to name what he has done with close family members. He will often talk about the experience happily well after the event but does not engage in different commenting about the topic. He says it in the same way repeatedly.</i>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>So this means...</b>
<i>Joint Attention</i>	18/9	<i>Mum and Louis are outside at night time. Mummy points to the moon and says "Look Louis!". Louis doesn't look at Mum or where she is pointing. He looks around himself at ground level. Mummy says "Look moon". Louis looks up to the moon, not at mummy and says "moon".</i>	<i>Louis understands when people are directing him to look at something. He does not look back to the adult to share the experience. He has difficulty following their instructions of where to look, unless he knows where the object is. He does not follow their point of gaze.</i>
	11/9	<i>Nanna walks into the house on a visit. Louis looks at her and points at his helicopter. Louis says "helicopter" and offers it to Nanna. Nanna says "hello Louis". Louis says "helicopter".</i>	<i>Louis finds it easier to gesture or comment about objects/events in order to greet people that he is familiar with.</i>
	11/9	<i>Louis is playing trains in the lounge room. Mum walks in and Louis looks up at her and points to his trains and says "Gordon is fast" (one of his train's name). Mummy says "yes Louis, Gordon is fast" and moves on. Louis gets upset and cries because he wanted Mum to come and play trains.</i>	<i>Louis wants people to be engaged in his object of choice under his terms. He does not always know how to express this verbally and gets upset when misunderstood. He points and comments on objects of interest to get people to play with him. This is more of a request for mum to do something rather than sharing.</i>
	8/9	<i>Louis walks into the lounge room. The garbage truck is coming down the street. Mum says "Look Louis, Garbage truck". Louis races to the window and points at the garbage truck. He then yells "Garbsee truck". He does not look back to mummy.</i>	<i>Louis easily understands where to look for items he is directed to look at, if he knows where they normally are. He does not reference the guiding adult to check where the object is. He expects it to be in the same place. He does not look back to the guiding adult to share the experience.</i>
	16/9	<i>Daddy is taking Louis to the city to see the monorail and other transport - his favourite interest area. When they are on the road under the monorail Damien points and tells Louis "look up" in an excited tone of voice. Louis looks up and see the monorail, smiles and screams with excitement "Daddy up bus inta air monorail" when arrives home he runs to his mum and says "Louis monorail".</i>	<i>Louis happily shares exciting events with familiar people.</i>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Observation</b>	<b>So this means...</b>
Turn Taking	13/09/09	<i>Louis is sitting with mummy on the lounge. The cat jumps up between them. Louis says "gentle with Frances (cat's name)". He then strokes her once. He then looks at mummy and says "mummy's turn". Mum strokes the cat. Then Louis pushes her hand away and says "Louis' turn". Then he strokes the cat and says "mummy's turn".</i>	<i>This is very representative of Louis' notion of taking turns. He understands the nature of turn taking i.e. one person does something and then the other person does something. It is very directing almost demanding in the way he does it. It doesn't feel pleasant because you are being told what to do. It so repetitive he can do this for ages</i>
	22/09/09	<i>Louis is at occasional care. The teacher has set up a memory game and has introduced a quiet younger child for Louis to play it with (while sitting on the teacher's lap). Louis has his turn. The other child is hesitant and is thinking about where to place his card. Louis grabs it off him and glares and says "NO Brian! There!" and places it where it should go.</i>	<i>I think this backs up my idea that Louis thinks of turn taking as this static thing where people have to take a turn in the right way. Changes to how Louis' views a turn taking process will result in stress for Louis.</i>
	9/9/09	<i>Louis is at EL . He finishes riding the push car around the playground and then moves to the slippery slide . From the top of the slide he spots another student getting into the push car and begins to cry shouting " Louis 'turn. Louis' car".</i>	<i>Louis behaves as if all possessions that he touches are now his, whether they are public property or not. He believes that taking turns means that he is in possession of that object or that he is losing the object (if it is another person's turn). He gets upset if when other people take a turn. He repeatedly says "Louis' turn" until it is his turn. He is not interested in the other person playing with the object, rather than is anxious and upset until it is back in his hands.</i>

# SOCIAL FOUNDATION SKILLS (SoFS) SUMMARY AND GOAL SHEET



*Child's Name:*

*Person completing form:*

*Date:*

<b><i>Factors that promote optimum social orienting</i></b>	<b><i>Factors that restrict social orienting</i></b>
<p><b><i>Current skill level:</i></b></p>   <p><b><i>What we need to work towards:</i></b></p>	
<b><i>Factors that promote imitation and joint action skills</i></b>	<b><i>Factors that restrict imitation and joint action skills</i></b>

**Current skill level:**

**What we need to work towards:**

**Factors that promote optimum ability to adjust behaviour to coordinate**

**Factors that restrict the ability to adjust behaviour to coordinate**

**Current skill level:**

**What we need to work towards:**

**Factors that promote Joint Attention skills**

**Factors that restrict Joint Attention skills**

<p><b>Current skill level:</b></p> <p><b>What we need to work towards:</b></p>	
<b>Factors that promote Turn Taking skills</b>	<b>Factors that restrict Turn Taking skills</b>

**Current skill level:**

**What we need to work towards:**

**Factors that promote emotional attunement and affect sharing**

**Factors that restrict emotional attunement and affect sharing**

**Current skill level:**

**What we need to work towards:**

***Top 2-3 priorities for developing my child's SoFS:***

SOCIAL FOUNDATION SKILLS SUMMARY FORM



**Child's Name:** Louis R

**Person completing form:** mum

**Date:** Sep 2009

<b>Factors that promote optimum social orienting</b>	<b>Factors that restrict social orienting</b>
<p>Louis is better at giving attention to others when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• he likes the person</li> <li>• feels comfortable and safe in the environment</li> <li>• there is only one person to deal with during greetings</li> <li>• the other person approaches slowly and waits for acknowledgement.</li> <li>• Mum is with him</li> <li>• he is with adults compared to children</li> <li>• he has deep pressure on body beforehand</li> <li>• he is participating in recognisable routines so he feels safe and confident</li> </ul>	<p>His attention to others is not so good when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more than one person is around him at the one time, particularly if they are all doing different things</li> <li>• when other children approach him to get his attention</li> <li>• he is frightened about being touched</li> <li>• he is in an unfamiliar environment or around unfamiliar people</li> <li>• there is a sensory overload: too noisy, bright or others moving around too much</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current level:</b> Overall his social orienting is pretty good. He pays sustained attention of more than 10 seconds by looking at a person's face, as well as turning his body and moving towards other people. He smiles at others too. He can do this with lots of different people in different situations.</p> <p><b>What we need to work towards:</b> As he gets to know and feel confident in busy social environments (like preschool and early learning) his social orienting will improve but it would be good to teach him to ask others "go away please" when he is frightened. I think I need to educate others not to crowd him or touch him when they approach him. They need to give him time to process what he should do.</p>	
<b>Factors that promote optimum imitation and joint action skills</b>	<b>Factors that restrict imitation and joint action skills</b>
<p>He is better at imitation and joint actions when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the guiding adult, uses clear simple words.</li> <li>• The guiding adult uses exaggerated actions.</li> <li>• Louis is given time to process information and respond .</li> <li>• The game or series of actions are kept similar to the last time it was performed.</li> </ul>	<p>His imitation and joint actions are not as strong when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• his sensory system is overloaded .</li> <li>• There is a chance of being touched by others.</li> <li>• He is in a unfamiliar environment or routine.</li> <li>• Changes are made to a routine.</li> <li>• When the pace of imitation actions is quick</li> <li>• he is tired or unmotivated</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current Skill level:</b> Louis is very good at studying people, learning their mannerisms and what they say. He enjoys imitating others and being part of a group doing the same actions. Sensory Input needs to be dampened, or Louis may stop attending to others due to fear. Louis needs a bit of time to process information. He is usually a little slower at imitating actions in a group.</p>	

**What we need to work towards:**

Louis' joint action skills and imitation skills are overall pretty good. However, I need to let people know that Louis needs space and to dampen the sensory input when encouraging imitation and joint action. Louis needs guidance to not take over and lead a situation or routine once it becomes familiar.

**Performing actions slowly with rhythm**

***Factors that promote optimum ability to adjust behaviour to coordinate***

- He is better at adjusting his behaviour to coordinate when
- a guiding adult takes lead and alters demands according to Louis' abilities
  - there is a familiar routine or sequence of actions that has multiple points where variations can be inserted so that he does not get a rigid idea about the way things are done
  - there is a clear beginning and end of actions
  - visual supports to help Louis understand who is the "leader"

***Factors that restrict the ability to adjust behaviour to coordinate***

- It is more difficult to adjust his behaviour to coordinate when
- he knows the game /interaction so well that he has developed ownership over it
  - he expects from past experience for everyone to follow his lead rather than vice versa
  - activities are easily altered by Louis to include peripheral vision stimulation
  - he has increased emotional vulnerability
  - there is increased sensory input.
  - he is in close proximity of other people
  - he is tired.

**Current Skill level:**

Louis is fairly good at adjusting his behaviour to coordinate with others. He tends to dominate and direct if the behaviour/routine becomes familiar. Louis can easily lose his attention to repetitive behaviour if not kept engaged in the interaction by the other person. Louis is quick to pick up what he is required to do as part of a joint interaction, if he is in a quiet familiar place and the interaction has a clear beginning and end. Louis will tend to use self regulatory echolalia in an interaction, so single word instructions relevant to the task must be used to avoid chunk learning.

**What we need to work towards:**

He needs firm guidance to not take over and instruct everyone else's movements.  
 Adults need to use simple one word labelling terms when giving directions to reduce chunk learning.  
 Louis needs to learn to cope with change to routine and sequences to vary play without having a meltdown.  
 Louis needs space and reduced sensory input by the leader and environment.  
 Louis needs to learn to accept that he doesn't have to control all conditions of play. He needs to learn to respect the leader's turn and pace.

<b>Factors that promote joint attention skills</b>	<b>Factors that restrict joint attention skills</b>
<p>His receptive joint attention skills are improved when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the item of interest is close to him and the adult almost touches it</li> <li>• when he is highly interested in the item</li> <li>• when he is allowed time to work out what he should do.</li> <li>• when the adult uses an obvious point in front of his face to show him where to look.</li> <li>• he has an interest in the item or knows where he last saw it.</li> </ul>	<p>His joint attention skills are not as strong when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adults use expressions alone like saying “wow” and just looking at what they are speaking about</li> <li>• when the objects/items that the adult is showing interest is more than a couple of metres away.</li> <li>• when his is overloaded with sensory input.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current Skill level:</b> Louis usually responds to an invitation to look at a nearby object, if the adult points really obviously in front of his face. It is important to give him time to respond and not repeat the invitation too quickly. He will respond more consistently if the object is of particular interest to him. Louis does not use another person’s gaze or head turn alone to work out what they are looking at. He needs an obvious pointed hand to indicate what is interesting. Louis needs time to work out that he should respond.</p> <p>When Louis uses expressive joint attention, it is usually to get the other person to do what he wants. He seems to have a clear idea about how he wants the adult to behave so it is really like a direction or command. He gets frustrated when misunderstood. Louis uses expressive joint attention to get the other person to do what he wants, e.g. push his trains, the way he wants, name them or to greet people. He doesn’t really show or point to something just to show that he is interested in something or to see what others think.</p> <p><b>What we need to work towards:</b></p> <p>Others need to use simple one word labelling terms when giving direction to reduce chunk learning. Louis needs time to process and others need to not repeat their words during this time.</p> <p>Louis needs help to understand how to request his needs in a way that is more easily understood by others.</p>	
<b>Factors that promote turn taking skills</b>	<b>Factors that restrict turn taking skills</b>
<p>His turn taking skills are greater when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are clear instructions from a guiding adult.</li> <li>• there is a clear beginning and end to activity.</li> <li>• the activity does not involve Louis' own possessions.</li> </ul>	<p>His turn taking skills are not as strong when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• he is turn taking with a child rather than an adult.</li> <li>• there is increased sensory input.</li> <li>• he is in an unfamiliar environment or with unfamiliar people</li> <li>• following a period of stress.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current Skill level:</b> Louis needs firm guidance to not take over and instruct everyone else's movements. He understands the basic premise of turn taking but in a very static manner. Louis' ability to turn take is affected by his mood, stress, sensory environment and the person with whom he is turn taking with.</p>	

<p><b>What we need to work towards:</b>  He needs firm guidance to not take over and instruct everyone else's movements. It would be helpful for Louis to learn that turn taking doesn't have to be so literal as "your turn" and then "my turn" immediately after. Louis needs to let others take their turn in their time. It would help Louis to be taught that turn taking does not mean gaining or losing ownership of an item.</p>	
<p><b>Factors that promote emotional attunement and affect sharing</b></p>	<p><b>Factors that restrict emotional attunement and affect sharing</b></p>
<p>His emotional attunement and affect sharing is better when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is reduced sensory input.</li> <li>• he is in a familiar environment.</li> <li>• there are calm conditions.</li> <li>• He precedes with a period of deep pressure.</li> </ul>	<p>His emotional attunement and affect sharing is decreased when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• he is in an unfamiliar environment.</li> <li>• he is in close proximity to people.</li> <li>• people talk to him while he is upset.</li> <li>• he is outdoors, especially if it is bright.</li> <li>• the weather is windy</li> <li>• the environment is too loud.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Current Skill level:</b> Louis is good at sharing his happiness with familiar people. He is more engaged after deep pressure and a sensory diet. He does not process severe pain well. Louis does not self regulate well during a meltdown or prior to a meltdown but now is able to understand what I do to help him through this process. Louis has less meltdowns and anxiety when he cognitively understands his fears and with a good sensory diet. Louis does not seek comfort from others when he is distressed and being with people does not help him through situations that are stressful. Louis' arousal level increases if he feels he cannot escape from a situation</p> <p><b>What we need to work towards:</b></p> <p>I would like Louis to understand when I am serious. I would like him to know that I am angry and respond appropriately rather than laughing at me. Louis needs to learn how to ask people to go away when he is under stress and having a meltdown. I would Like Louis to have a range of people who he seeks comfort from and enjoys being with.</p> <p>Others need to be educated of Louis' needs during a meltdown. A series of stories about his specific fears will help his cognition and hence improve his anxiety.</p>	
<p><b>Top 2 priorities for developing my child's SoFS:</b></p>	
<p><i>Imitation, social orienting are coming along ok – I just need to mention or educate adults about what helps here. Some personalised information sheets will be useful here.</i></p> <p><i>Adjusting behaviour, emotional attunement/affect sharing, turn taking (TT) and joint attention (JA) all need some attention. Louis is initiating JA with adults so I'll leave that for now.</i></p> <p><i>The areas I'm going to focus on are: Adjusting behaviour (particularly with mum and dad). Learning to do things around the house together where the adult takes the lead more often.</i></p> <p><i>Emotional attunement and affect sharing: learning to read and interpret to a wider range of my emotions particularly when I am serious and showing pain/fear himself.</i></p>	

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