STARS – Strategies Tips and Resources for Schools

Colourful Semantics

STARS is a resource created to save you time and includes strategies, tips, methods and practical advice for supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

This resource provides adaptable advice for both Primary and Secondary settings, catering to the needs of your school and students.

Colourful Semantics

Colourful Semantics is a teaching approach that aims to teach children how to build and understand sentence structure using a colour coded system. It can be used to support learning across the curriculum. It aims to help children develop skills when it comes to sentence development, understanding 'wh' questions, developing narrative, understanding written text, and developing vocabulary.

How does it work?

It gives each part of the sentence a colour associated with the question prompt.
Who? – Orange
What doing? – Yellow
What? – Green
Where? – Blue
When? – Brown
Describe – Purple
It is best to introduce one colour at a time and then add further details as the child gets more confident in using the initial vocabulary.

Who would benefit from Colourful Semantics?

Colourful Semantics benefits a range of children/young people with Speech, Language and Communication needs, specifically:
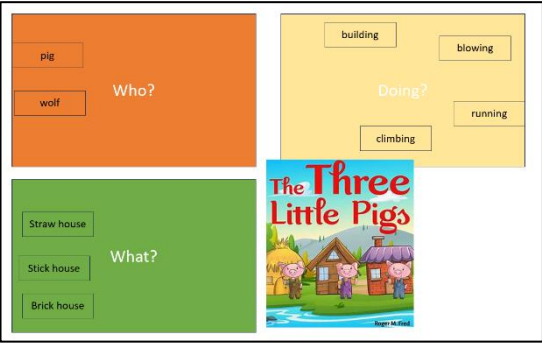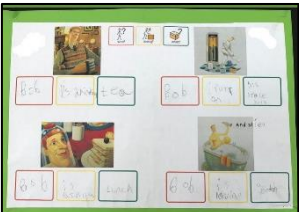
- Children who are **using single words** and **not yet joining words**.
- Children with a **reduced vocabulary**.
- Children that **struggle with word order**.
- Children learning **English as second/additional language**.
- **Visual** learners (that's most of us!).

Visuals are permanent and provide more time for the child to process language and help build independence.

We can also incorporate using sign language alongside using the visual colourful semantics symbols to add further support.

Examples of Colourful Semantics Uses:

Here are some ideas in which Colourful Semantics can be used within the classroom or as an intervention.
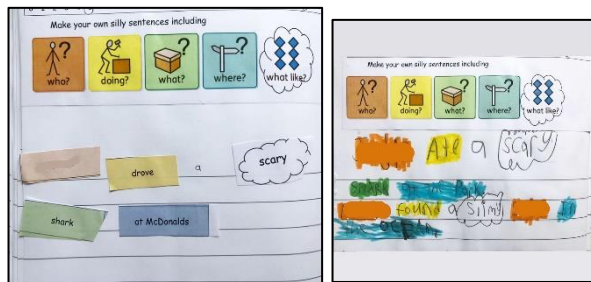
Uses	Explanation
Whole class vocabulary gathering pig wolf Who? building blowing Doing? running climbing The Three Little Pigs Straw house Stick house Brick house What?	It can be great to use Colourful Semantics throughout the classroom/school to add continuity and support all children with sentence structure. In this example we have collectively gathered the 'who+doing+what' vocabulary from the story 'The Three Little Pigs' as a class. They can all then use this to create sentences around the story using the 'who+doing+what' structure.
Creating sentences from pictures	When looking at pictures it can be used to support the child build an understanding of what is happening within the picture and using the colours to create simple sentences about the pictures.

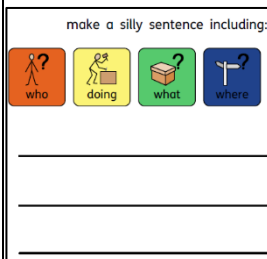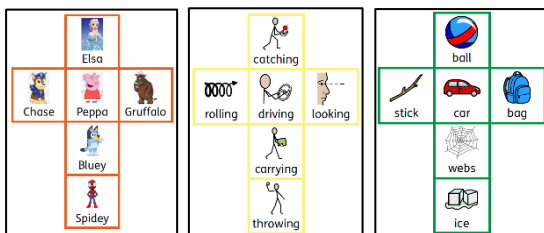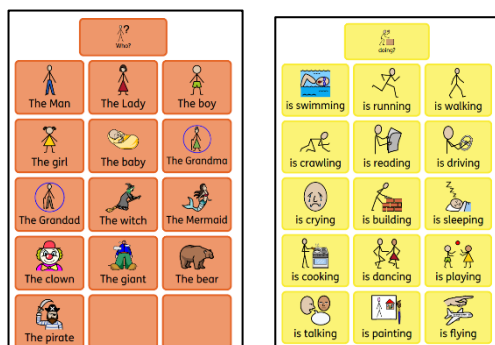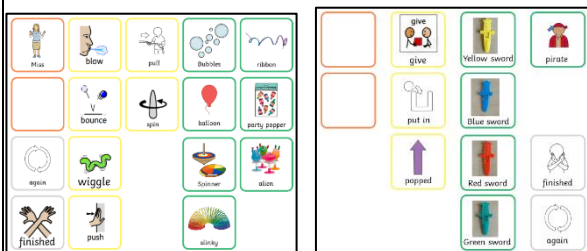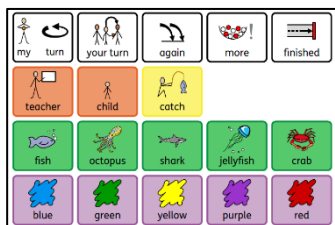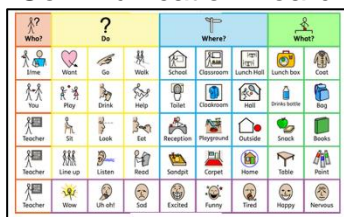|	
Understanding instructions 	You can play games where the child has to follow instructions using the colourful semantics colour coded system can support their understanding.
Creating silly sentences 	Within their writing they could create silly sentences using vocabulary boards and the visual prompt at the top of their page to create a sentence with a specific structure. This can be using visuals, colour words, their own writing highlighted or just the prompt at the top of their page.
Colourful Semantics dice 	A fun way to use colourful semantics is to create dice with characters/people who are familiar to the child. They are to roll the dice to create funny sentences and then put them in the order and say the sentence.
A colourful semantics vocabulary flip book 	Creating a 'key vocabulary' colourful semantics flip book to use within class during lessons can support the child in becoming more independent within creating sentences using the relevant vocabulary.

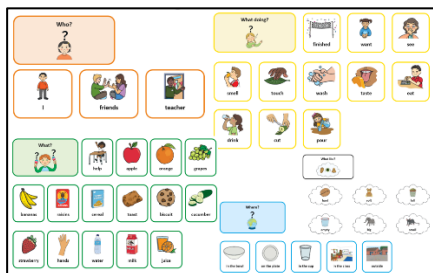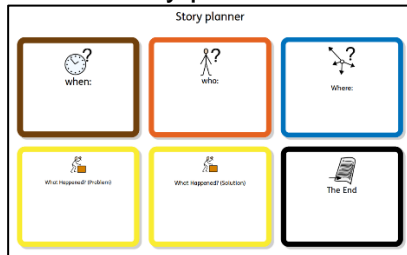|	
Social/barrier games and promoting using sentence structure within speech 	Making games into barrier games is a good way to promote social communication and using colourful semantics alongside this supports their vocabulary. E.g. withholding all the swords during pop-up-pirate so they have to ask 'Miss give me the red sword. It can also support children in beginning to gain a person's attention by using their name prior to asking.
Communication Board 	Use communication boards using the colour coded sections can support learners in communicating with others and have the vocabulary needed to express themselves effectively.
Supporting communication in classroom areas 	Display key vocabulary boards linked to the different areas of the classroom
Story planners 	Use within English sessions when planning stories. Gather key vocabulary around the story within the different colour sections which the learner can then use to write their story.