



(Schroeder, 2010)

RESOURCE PACK TO SUPPORT SOCIAL SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Rationale

This resource pack for the Socially Speaking game is designed to effectively support classroom management by improving social skills and teaching better emotional coping strategies to children whose behaviour can be disruptive, challenging and/or hold them back from reaching their full potential (Schroeder, 2010). It will demonstrate how it promotes the child's well-being and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales (2022). This classroom management tool also links to theorists, such as Maslow (1943), Dweck (2017), Rogers (1951; 1957), Vygotsky (1978), Dreikurs (1964) and Ginott (1972). The when, how, and why of using this resource will be explained, along with detailed instructions, and accompanying photographs will be shown in the appendix.

Resources are essential for effective classroom management because they can engage pupils in learning by capturing their attention; interactive games, hands-on materials, and visual aids can transform a lesson from being deemed boring to inspiring and fun learning (Supply Desk, 2025). Games are a core part of human culture, fulfilling many purposes, including developing social skills (Sousa, Neves and Luz, 2023).

Interactive learning is a way of learning collaboratively, which helps pupils to learn the skills needed to handle the challenges of 21st-century life (Aina and Abdulwasiiu, 2023). Collaborative learning creates a positive environment with freedom for them to discuss their ideas and difficulties through social interaction (Amalia, 2018). Learning collaboratively also provides opportunities to practice their language skills and improves the quality of their conversations, as pupils absorb new knowledge from their peers as well as teachers (Amalia, 2018). This way of learning also stimulates critical thinking abilities and supports mental functions through questioning, reasoning and problem solving (Amalia, 2018).

Several educational theorists support the benefits of collaborative learning. Growth mindset is a term developed by Dweck (2017), which argues that everyone has the potential to learn anything if they have the correct mindset; collaborative learning nurtures this growth mindset as it emphasises the importance of being open-minded, adaptable, and appreciating different perspectives (Dweck, 2017; StratX Simulations, 2025). Other vital elements of a growth mindset are actively participating, actively

listening, effectively communicating, problem-solving and the ability to work as part of a team (StratX Simulations, 2025). Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) believed that social interactions and peer support could enhance a pupil's ability to learn through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where collaborating with More Knowledgeable Others (MKOs) can bridge the gap between what a pupil can do on their own and what they can achieve with support from those around them. (McLeod, 2025b; Futuristic Playground, 2013). This zone is where collaborative learning encourages growth (McLeod, 2025b).

Maslow (1943) also recognises the importance of social interactions in meeting a person's basic human needs, as social connections and emotional support foster a sense of belonging, and a person's motivation to reach their full learning potential will only come after these basic needs have been met (McLeod, 2025a). Likewise, Rogers (1951) believed that personal growth could be fostered through unconditional positive regard, the building of strong relationships, and a safe, non-judgmental environment where a person can express themselves freely. This unconditional positive regard in social interactions essentially creates healthy relationships, acceptance and a sense of belonging (Rogers, 1951; Rogers, 1957). Ginott (1972) agrees with this non-judgmental aspect of communicating with others; his congruent communication theory detailed the importance of remaining non-confrontational and responding to the behaviour rather than judging the pupil. In contrast, Dreikurs (1964) believed that encouraging children and helping them understand the logical, natural consequences of their actions were the most valuable tools for creating social discipline in the classroom.

The Curriculum for Wales (2022) is underpinned by 12 pedagogical principles, including encouraging collaboration and authentic learning experiences. It is designed as a learner-centred framework for teachers to use to create lessons that are meaningful and flexible to individual needs, with an emphasis on creating emotionally literate and socially adept, lifelong learners (Welsh Government, 2022). Steiner (1984) highlights the importance of emotional literacy in improving relationships and quality of life through increasing an individual's personal power. Understanding emotions and building or repairing relationships is a fundamental part of restorative practice in a school's Positive Discipline Policy (School A, 2023).

Whilst the Curriculum for Wales (2022) acts as guidance for education in Wales, it is the teachers who are responsible for delivering appropriate education to pupils and mentoring them for “academic and life success” (Aina and Abdulwasiiu, 2023).

Therefore, teachers should not only focus on academic outcomes but also on life skills; one of these life skills is social competency, and this is a “fundamental element for lifelong learning” (Vita-Barrull *et al.*, 2024). Game-Based Learning (GBL) is a practical and highly effective way of facilitating the development of social and emotional competencies (Vita-Barrull *et al.*, 2024; Cès *et al.*, 2025). However, the way in which games are used should be monitored by the teacher to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved (Vita-Barrull *et al.*, 2024).

The Socially Speaking board game is designed to target the skills children will need for social interactions across a variety of settings, such as school, home and the community (Schroeder, 2010). It is suitable for children aged from 7 years upwards (Schroeder, 2010). It can be played 1:1 or with a small group of up to 6 players (Schroeder, 2010). The game will take between 20 and 30 minutes to complete (Schroeder, 2010). This game must be returned to the teaching resource cupboard after use, as if it is left out for children to use without adult supervision, it will lose its desired effect as a strategic intervention tool (Sousa, Neves and Luz, 2023; ELSA Network, 2017; Schroeder, 2010).

The purpose of the Socially Speaking board game is to reinforce and teach social skills and emotional literacy through interactive learning (Schroeder, 2010). It requires pupils to work collaboratively through turn-taking, eye contact, conversation, compliments, appropriate sitting, and active listening (Schroeder, 2010). It is intended to be supervised by, or played with, an emotionally available adult who will support and model proper responses or prompt pupils with questions when they are unsure how to answer (Schroeder, 2010). This game will help to develop pupils' critical thinking, social skills and emotional literacy (Schroeder, 2010).

This game can be used as part of an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) intervention to support the development of social skills and emotional literacy, as well as nurture self-esteem (ELSA Network, 2017).

Instructions for Use

The Socially Speaking board game is suitable for 2–6 players and ideal for children aged 7 or over. It will take between 20 and 30 minutes to complete.

The Socially Speaking board game can be located in the teaching resource cupboard (see Appendix 1).

This game is an intervention activity and must be supervised by an emotionally available adult, for example, an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. Teachers or Learning Support Assistants can play this game with a child or children if they have sufficient time to dedicate solely to this activity.

How to Play

Players take turns to shake the dice and move their piece around the board the number of squares shown on the dice. The square they land on determines whether they must practice a social skill or answer a question related to a specific social situation. When a player lands on a situation square, they pick up a corresponding card and are challenged to answer a question or complete a task that focuses on one of four different scenarios:

- School
- Out and About
- Home
- Socially Speaking

Each time they complete a scenario, they get a hoop to put on their playing piece that corresponds with the colour of the scenario card.

The winner is the first player to reach the finish line and complete all four scenarios.

Set Game Up

Find a quiet space where the game won't be interrupted.

Take the board, cards, game pieces, hoops and dice out of the box.

Lay the board on a table, place scenario cards in their allotted places and put the corresponding-coloured hoops next to each set of cards.

Let each player choose which coloured playing piece they would like to use.
(Discuss calmly and ask players to compromise if they all want the same colour – role-model good social behaviour).

Place all playing pieces on the start line.

Decide who will throw the dice first. (Again, role-model socially acceptable ways of deciding this if all players want to go first).

Start Game

Player one throws the dice; whichever number is shown when the dice stops rolling is the number of squares the player moves their piece. If the player lands on a social square, then they complete the instructions on that square (see quick reference guide below for more information).

Player two goes next and repeats the above process (see Appendix 2).

This continues for each player; everyone sits and tolerates turns.

Throughout the game, all players should be actively participating and listening to others, they should be engaging with their peers and you.

Once all players have been, it goes back to player one, and the cycle continues.

The winner of the game is the player who gets a hoop from each scenario and reaches the finish line first.

Quick Reference Guide

1... squares - The player completes the statement, for example, "I would like to go on holiday in the summer" (see Appendix 3). You could then follow this statement with a question or positive reinforcement, such as, "Where would you like to go?"

➤ ? squares - The player must ask the player to their left (or opposite if there are two players) a question starting with that word, for example,

"What did you do on the weekend?" (see Appendix 4). This can be followed by a discussion among players about what they did.

➤ Emotion squares – The player must say, "I have peas for tea" with the appropriate voice, facial expression, and body language to convey the emotion shown on that square (see Appendix 5). This can be followed by a discussion about how the emotion was expressed.

➤ Compliment corner – The player should give the player on their left (or opposite if there are two players) a compliment, such as, "You tell the best jokes!" (see Appendix 6). The recipient must acknowledge the compliment appropriately, for example, "Thank you!". This can be followed by positive reinforcement from you, like, "That was a lovely compliment and great manners."

➤ Situation Squares – The player picks one of the four scenario cards (School, Home, Out and About, or Socially Speaking) as indicated by the square (see Appendix 7, Appendix 8, Appendix 9, and Appendix 10). They then role-play the scenario described on the card either with you or another player. This can be followed by positive feedback from you, such as, "You took turns to talk," "You made great eye contact," or "You asked a great question."

End of game

Once a player has collected all the hoop colours and reached the finish line, the game ends (see Appendix 11).

Give all players positive feedback on their efforts.

You could follow this up by asking them what their favourite part of the game was.

Ask all the players to help put the game away neatly back in the box.

Place the box back in the teaching resource cupboard.

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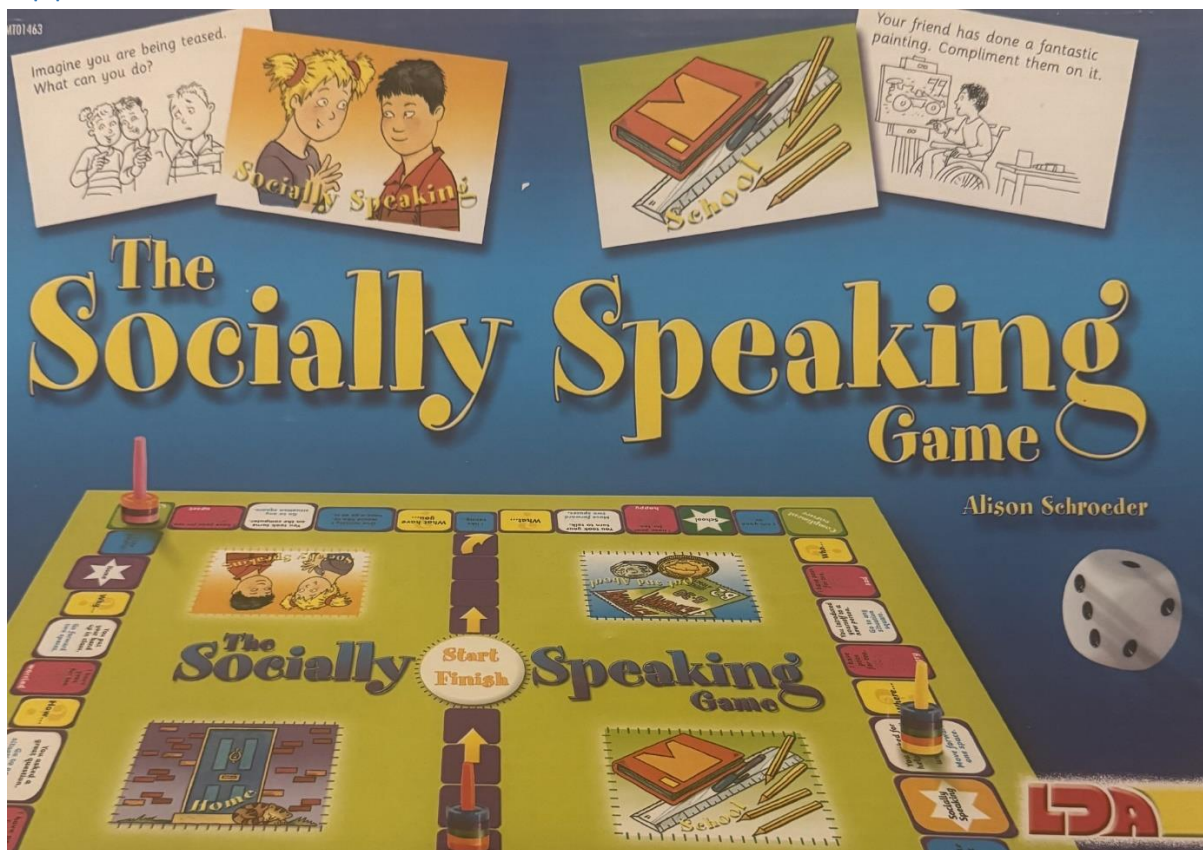
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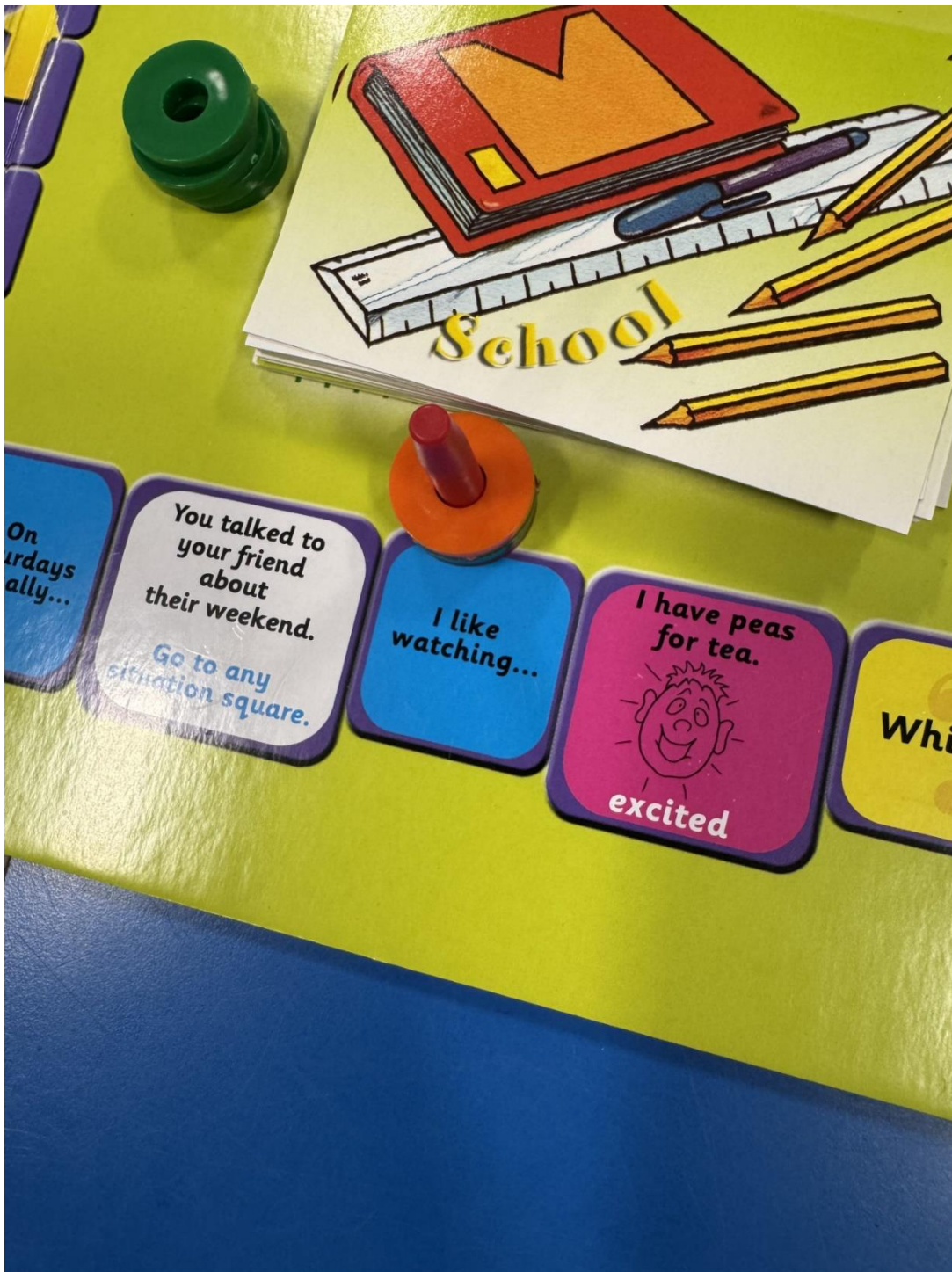
Appendices



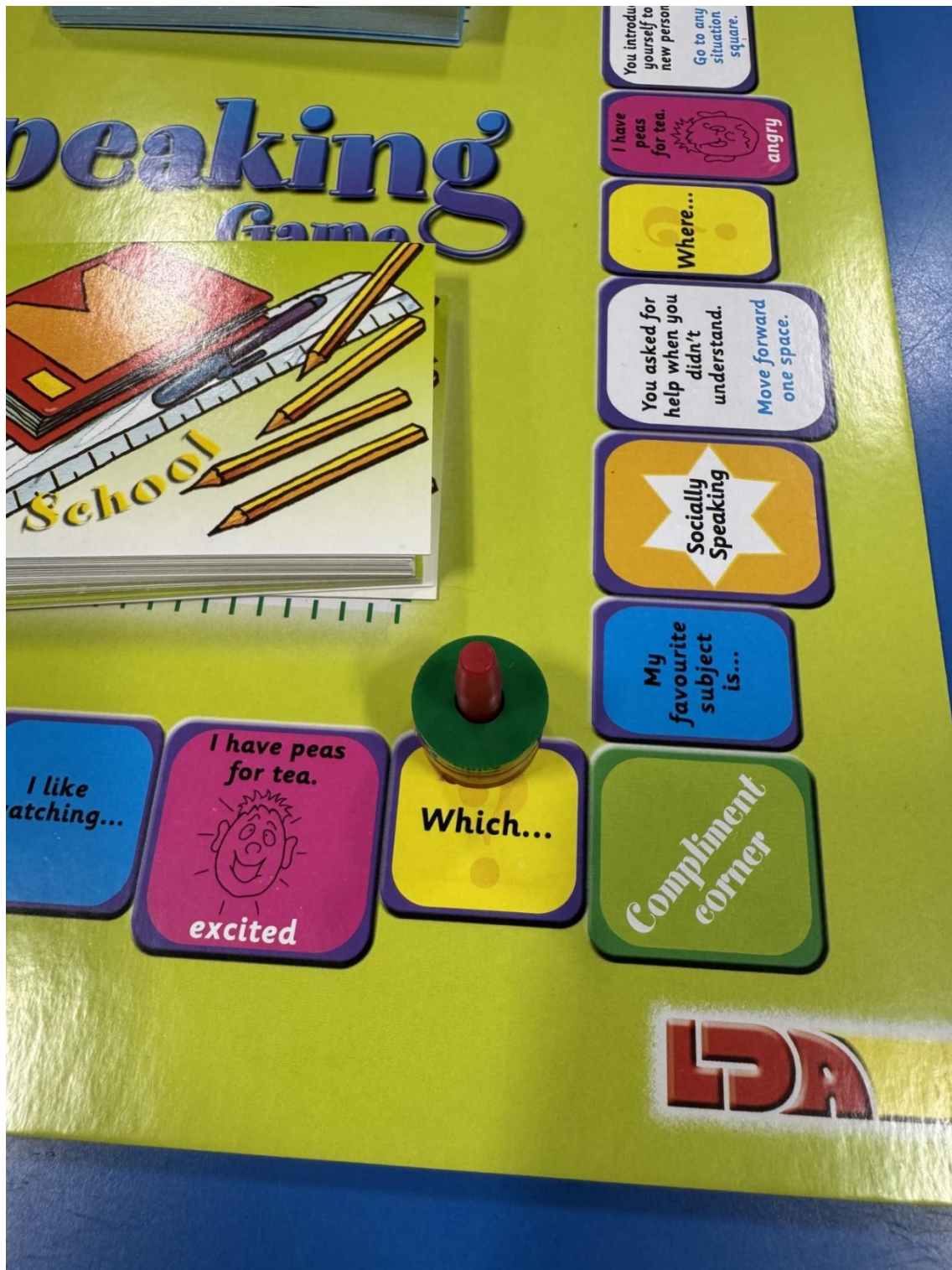
Appendix 1



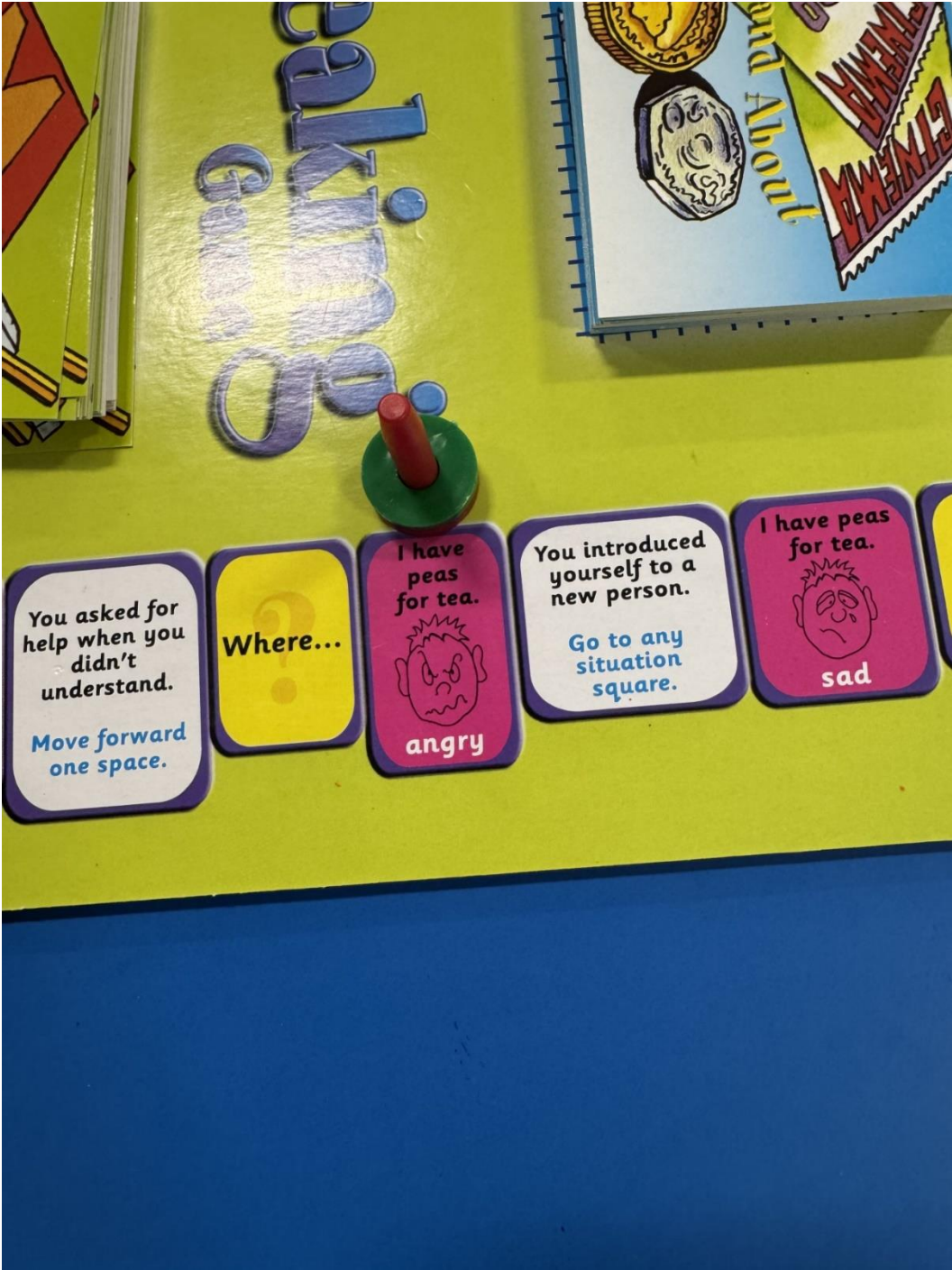
Appendix 2



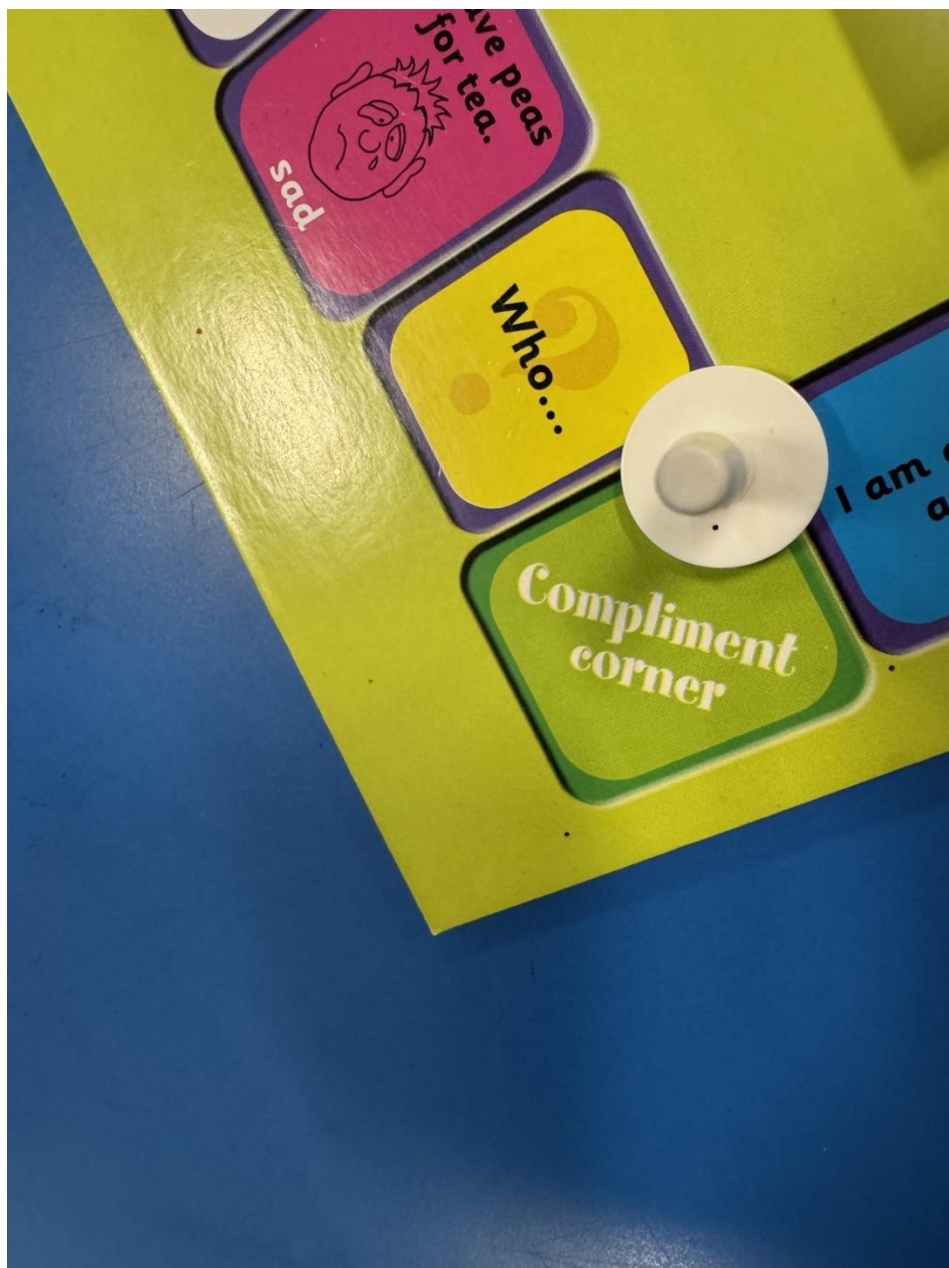
Appendix 3



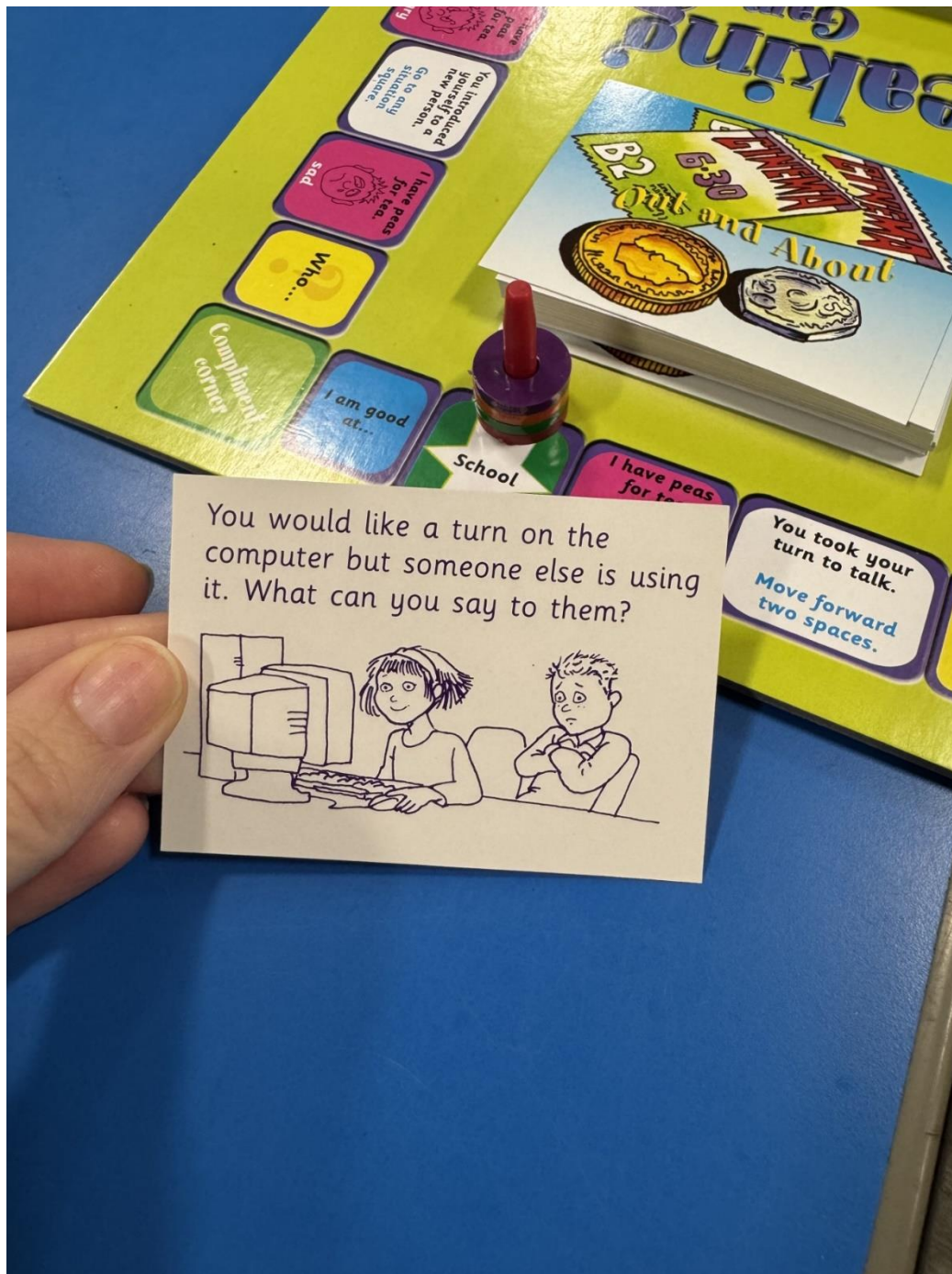
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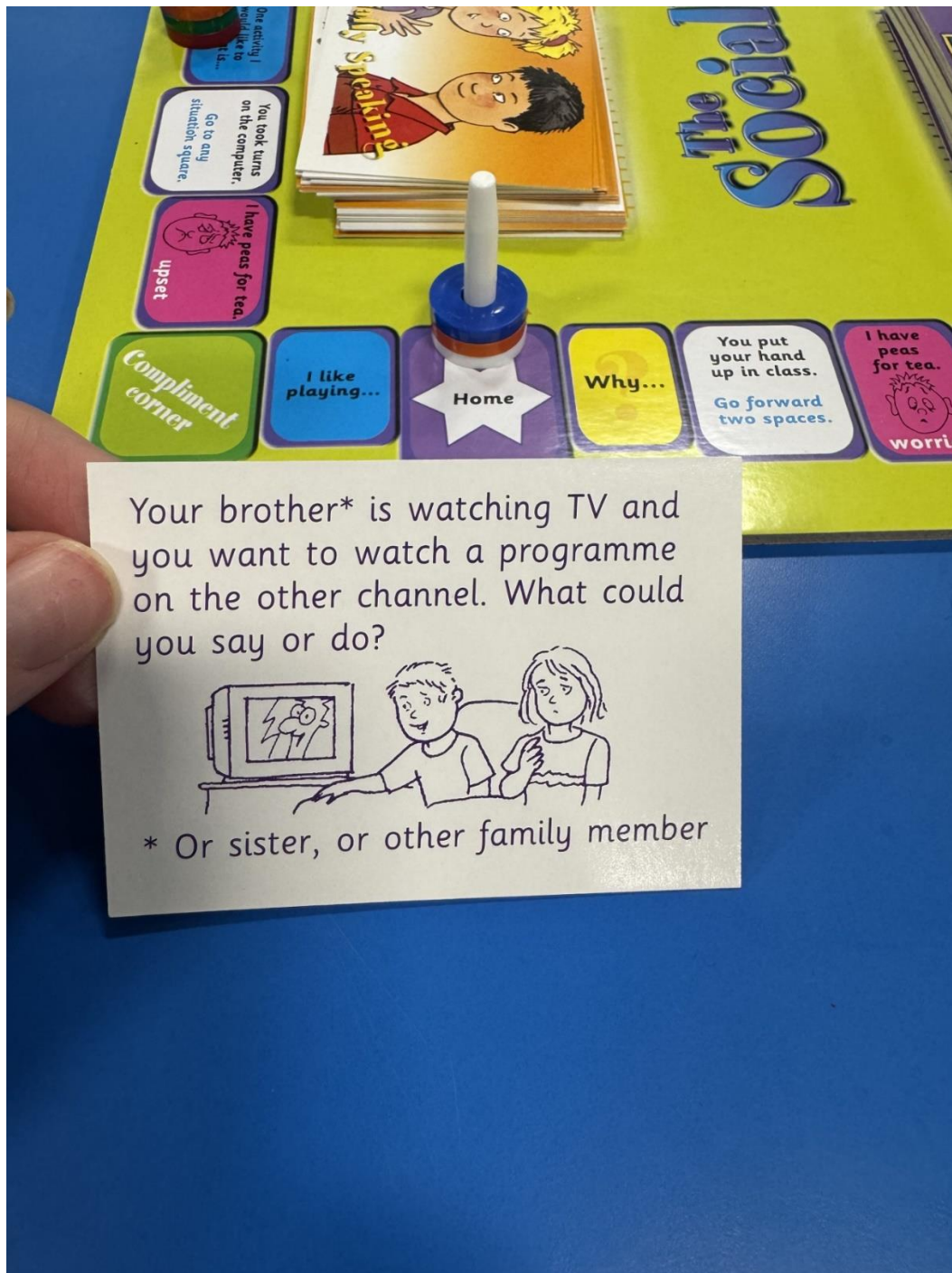
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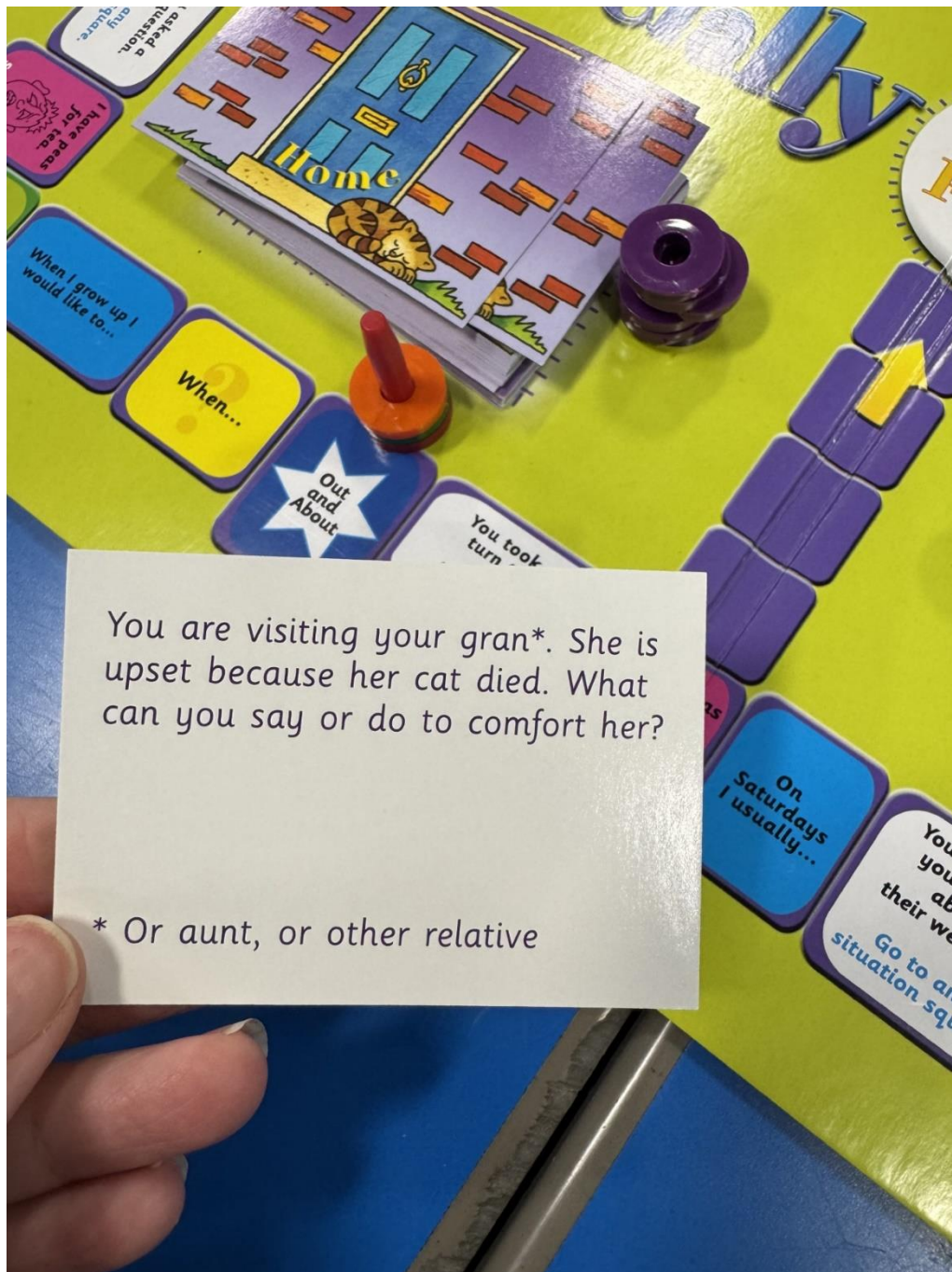
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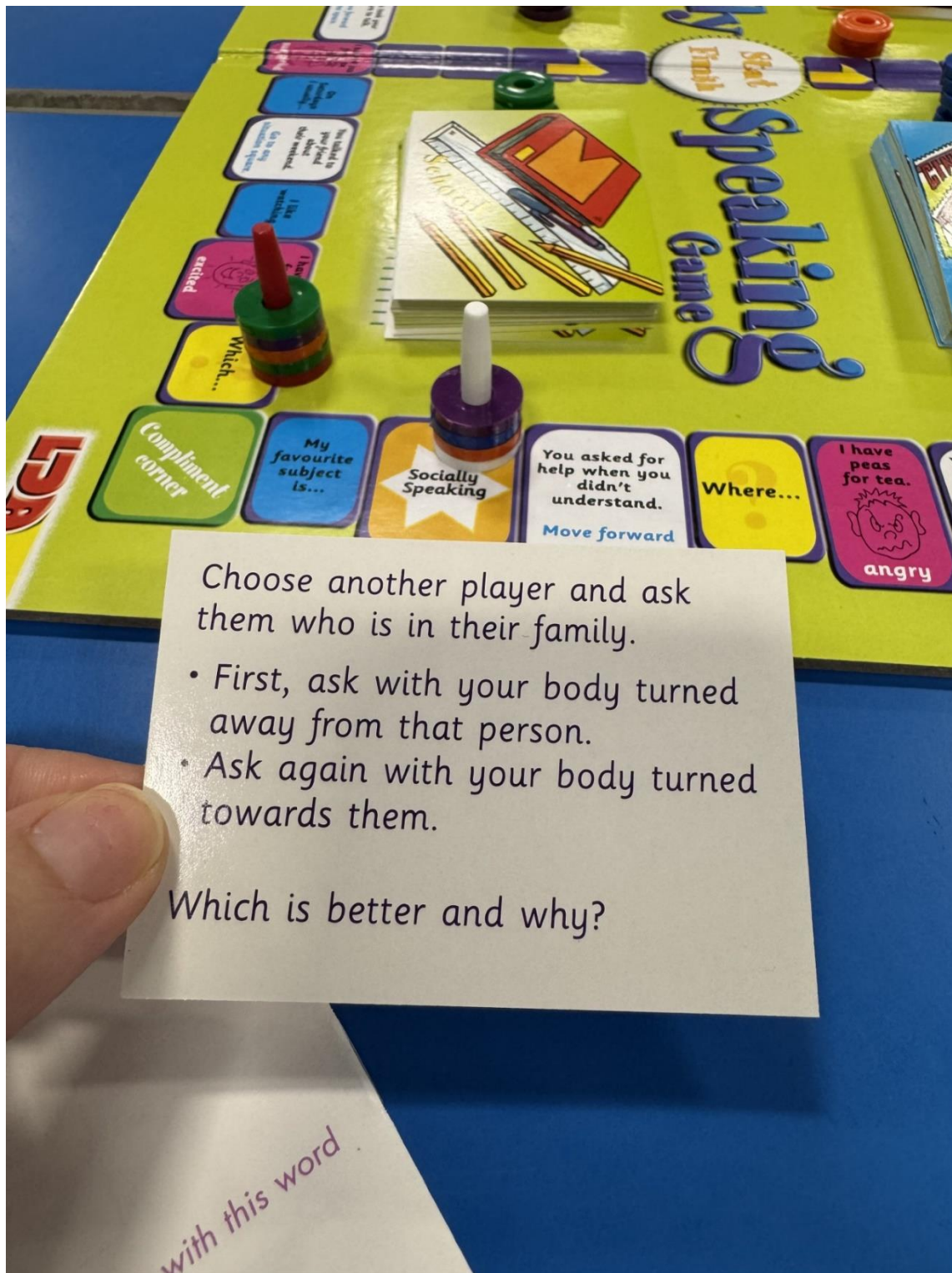
Appendix 7



Appendix 8



Appendix 9



Appendix 10



Appendix 11