



# Tired of Worrying Something's Not Quite Right?

LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR  
CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT WITH CONFIDENCE.

**BY JOANNA BUTTFIELD**

FOUNDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joanna Buttfield is an Adelaide-trained Occupational Therapist, business owner, and Executive Director of Kid Sense Child Development — one of South Australia's leading multidisciplinary private therapy practices for children, teens, and young adults.

After completing a Bachelor of Arts followed by a Bachelor of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy with Honours, Joanna broadened her clinical and therapeutic skills in the United States, before returning to Australia to establish Kid Sense Child Development.

More than twenty years later, Kid Sense has grown into a thriving, multi-clinic practice offering Occupational and Speech Therapy in sensory enabled purpose built clinics, in the community, and on line (teletherapy). These therapies are also supported Functional Capacity Assessments, Parent and Teacher Education, and in-education support across child care, kindergarten, and school settings. Joanna's belief that "the best therapy happens every day and in every environment" drives the Kid Sense philosophy of empowering families, educators, and therapists alike.

The deeply educational Kid Sense website is a reflection of that mission — a rich, trusted resource for parents, teachers, and allied health professionals seeking clear, evidence-based guidance to support the children and teens in their care.

Over time, Joanna's passion has evolved from providing the very best care as a clinician to training and supporting new as well as experienced therapists as an employer and mentor — and, since becoming a parent herself, to empowering parents and educators with practical strategies and confidence to support 'the team around the child'.

Joanna's professional focus centres on what she calls the three E's of Enjoyment:

- **Enhancing** developmental change in children and teens,
- **Educating** parents and educators, and
- **Empowering** therapists to grow and excel.

This philosophy is reflected in her team's culture of constant and never-ending improvement — a value she embodies daily as both a leader and lifelong learner.

Away from the clinic, Joanna is run ragged by two active teenagers and lovingly supported by a super-nurturing group of mums who understand that juggling family and purpose-driven work takes a community.

With her boundless curiosity, dedication to excellence, and unwavering belief in the power of teamwork, Joanna continues to shape the landscape of child development therapy in South Australia — one family, one therapist, and one joyful success story at a time.

# Welcome

## I'm so glad you're here!

You've taken the first step to understand and support your child's development — and I'm here to guide you along the way.

After helping thousands of families support their children's growth through therapy and education, I've seen first-hand how understanding your child's development can transform everyday life.

This isn't about labelling or comparing your child — it's about understanding what's going on beneath the surface, and learning simple, practical ways to help them thrive.

At Kid Sense, we know that every child learns, plays, and develops in their own way. Some need a little more time, some need a little more guidance — and all benefit from feeling supported, understood, and celebrated for who they are.

When parents feel confident about their child's development, everything changes. Home life becomes calmer, learning feels easier, and children begin to flourish in their own unique rhythm.

### **This guide will show you how to:**

- Recognise when your child might need a bit of extra help.
- Support their development at home, at school, and in everyday routines.
- Build your confidence as a parent by understanding what your child truly needs to succeed.

You don't need to have all the answers — you just need the right information and support.

Together, we can help your child feel capable, connected, and proud of who they are.

*Joanna x*



## Tired of Worrying Something's Not Quite Right?

### Learn How to Support Your Child's Development with Confidence

If you've ever caught yourself thinking, "Why does this seem harder for my child than for others?", you're not alone. Many parents feel that quiet worry — that something's not quite as it should be — but aren't sure what to do next.

At Kid Sense, we understand how confusing and isolating that can feel. You love your child deeply, and you just want to make sure they have every chance to thrive.

The good news? You don't need to have all the answers — you just need the right guidance and a few clear steps to help your child move forward with confidence.

This guide was created by experienced paediatric therapists to help you:

- Understand the signs that your child might need extra support.
- Discover what's really going on beneath everyday struggles.
- Learn simple, effective ways to help your child feel calmer, more capable, and more connected.

You'll find practical strategies you can start using straight away — no jargon, no overwhelm, just clear and caring advice that brings out the best in your child (and in you).

Because every child develops in their own way — and with the right support, they can all shine.



## Section 2: Understanding What You're Seeing

When you're worried about your child, it's easy for your mind to jump to big questions:

“Is something wrong?”

“Should I be doing more?”

“What if it's just a phase?”

The truth is, every child develops at their own pace — but there are times when a child might need a little extra help to build the skills that come naturally to others. That doesn't mean something is wrong; it simply means they're developing differently, and that's okay.

At Kid Sense, we see this every day. Some children find it tricky to focus, sit still, or manage big feelings. Others might struggle with coordination, handwriting, or making friends. These challenges can affect confidence — for both the child and the parent — but with the right support, they're absolutely workable.

### What Might You Notice?

You might see that your child:

- Takes longer to learn everyday skills (like dressing, using cutlery, or riding a bike).
- Avoids group play, new situations, or activities that seem “too hard.”
- Gets easily upset or frustrated when things don't go to plan.
- Finds it difficult to follow instructions or remember what to do next.
- Has trouble expressing ideas, joining conversations, or being understood.
- Struggles to play with others or follow routines.
- Seems unusually tired, clumsy, or distracted during everyday tasks.

These can be signs that your child's development needs a little boost — not a label, not a diagnosis — just understanding, patience, and support to build the skills they need to thrive.

### The First Step: Awareness

The fact that you've noticed these things means you're already doing something powerful — you're paying attention. Awareness is the first and most important step toward helping your child grow with confidence.

In the next section, we'll explore what you can do right now to gently support your child's development at home and school, kindergarten or child care — simple, therapist-backed strategies that fit naturally into everyday life.

## Section 3: Practical Ways to Help at Home

### Simple, Therapist-Backed Strategies You Can Start Today


Supporting your child's development doesn't have to mean adding more to your already full plate. In fact, some of the most powerful changes happen through small, everyday moments — the ones that build connection, confidence, and communication.

Here are a few simple, therapist-approved ways to start helping your child right now:

#### 1. Focus on What They Can Do


When you're worried, it's easy to see only the struggles. Try instead to notice what your child can do — and build from there.

If your child says a new word, manages one sleeve, or joins in play for a few minutes — celebrate it! Then gently guide them to the next step. Every small success strengthens confidence and motivation.

 **Therapist tip:** Praise the effort, not just the outcome. “I love how you kept trying!” helps your child feel proud of their persistence.

#### 2. Turn Everyday Moments into Learning Opportunities


You don't need flashcards or extra hours in the day to support development. Everyday interactions — like mealtimes, getting dressed, bath time, or play — are rich with opportunities to build language, motor skills, and social understanding.

 **Example:** Let your child help you make lunch. Naming ingredients, stirring, and spreading aren't just fun — they build fine motor skills, sequencing, and language (“First we spread, then we cut”).

#### 3. Encourage Movement and Conversation

Movement helps children regulate emotions and focus — and it also creates great opportunities for language and social connection.

When you move together — dancing, playing chasey, or building an obstacle course — you're helping your child strengthen coordination and communication (“Ready, set, go!”).

 **Therapist tip:** Combine words with actions. Using simple phrases like “jump up” or “roll the ball” helps your child link language to movement.

#### 4. Create Calm, Predictable Routines

Children feel safest when they know what's coming next. Routines help them understand expectations, organise their thoughts, and build independence.

Use gentle reminders, visual cues, or a daily picture schedule to make routines clear and consistent. Repeating the same simple language each day ("First bath, then story") builds both understanding and calm.

#### 5. Seek Support Early — It's a Strength, Not a Failure

If you're still worried, reaching out for guidance doesn't mean you've done anything wrong. It means you care deeply about your child's wellbeing and want to help them reach their potential.

Occupational and Speech Therapists can work together to support your child's physical, social, emotional, and communication skills — giving them the tools to thrive at home, in care, and at school.

#### Small Steps, Big Impact

You don't need to do everything at once. Each small, intentional step — a word of encouragement, a shared laugh, a moment of connection — helps your child build confidence and capability in their own unique way.



## Section 4: When to Seek Professional Support (and What to Expect)

### Because Getting Help Early Makes All the Difference

Sometimes, even with all your love and effort at home, your child may still seem to be finding things harder than expected — and that’s okay. Every child develops differently, and sometimes they just need a little extra support to build key skills in communication, play, movement, or emotional regulation.

At Kid Sense, we see reaching out for support as an act of care and confidence — not worry or failure. You’re not “fixing” your child; you’re helping them develop the skills they need to feel confident, understood, and connected.

### When It Might Be Time to Reach Out.

You may consider talking with a therapist if your child:

#### Communication & Social Skills

- Struggles to express their needs or feelings clearly.
- Has difficulty understanding or following spoken instructions.
- Uses fewer words than other children their age or finds conversation tricky.
- Avoids talking in groups or finds it hard to make friends.

#### Physical, Emotional & Learning Skills

- Avoids or gets upset by tasks that involve coordination or fine motor skills.
- Seems easily frustrated, anxious, or withdrawn when things feel too hard.
- Finds transitions or following routines challenging, even with support.
- Is falling behind in areas like self-care, attention, or classroom participation.

If a few of these sound familiar, it doesn’t necessarily mean something is wrong — it simply means your child may benefit from targeted support to help them build confidence in those areas.



## What Happens Next

When you contact Kid Sense, you'll meet a warm, understanding team who will take the time to listen and explore your concerns. We'll work together to understand your child's strengths, challenges, and daily routines.

Depending on your child's needs, we may recommend:

- Occupational Therapy — to support skills like movement, coordination, focus, play, and emotional regulation.
- Speech Therapy — to strengthen communication, understanding, social interaction, and confidence in expressing themselves.

Together, we'll create a personalised plan that fits your child's needs and your family's life — practical, achievable, and full of hope.

There's no judgment, no pressure — just caring professionals ready to help your child thrive.



## You Don't Have to Do This Alone.

Parenting a child who's developing differently can feel confusing or overwhelming at times, but you're not alone. With the right support, things quickly become clearer — and everyday life gets easier and more joyful for everyone.

Every small step you take today helps your child grow in confidence, communication, and independence.

♥ At Kid Sense, we've helped thousands of children find their voice, their confidence, and their calm — and we'd love to help yours too.

## Next Step

If you're ready to feel more confident about your child's development:

- 👉 Book a friendly consultation with Kid Sense today, or
- 👉 Download our Parent Support Checklist to know what to look for and how to help.

**Your child's potential is already there — we'll help you bring it to life.**

## Section 5: Helping Your Child Thrive at School, Kindergarten, or Childcare

### Practical Ways to Support Communication, Learning, and Confidence

Whether your child spends their days in childcare, kindergarten, or school, each environment brings countless opportunities to grow — socially, emotionally, and academically.

It can also be where developmental differences become more noticeable. The great news? With the right understanding and gentle support, these settings can become wonderful places for connection, confidence, and growth.


Here are some therapist-backed ways to help your child feel calm, capable, and confident wherever they learn and play:

#### 1. Build Strong Partnerships with Educators

Your child's educators and teachers want to see them succeed just as much as you do.

Share what you've noticed at home — how your child communicates, plays, and learns best. You might say, "We've noticed our child sometimes struggles to follow multi-step instructions — do you see this too?"


When parents and educators share observations, it helps everyone respond consistently and compassionately.


 **Therapist tip:** Ask teachers how your child interacts with peers or participates in group discussions. Collaboration helps support both communication and learning across settings.

#### 2. Help Your Child Feel Ready for the Day

Children thrive when they know what to expect. A calm, predictable start can make transitions into care or class smoother.

Talk through what's ahead: "Today you'll play outside first, then have story time." Using consistent language and visual cues builds both understanding and emotional security.

 **Speech tip:** Repeat key words and phrases daily ("first pack bag, then shoes on"). This supports comprehension and routine language.

 **Occupational tip:** If mornings are rushed, prepare bags, lunches, and clothes the night before to reduce stress.

### 3. Support Communication Throughout the Day

Strong communication helps children participate, make friends, and enjoy learning. Encourage teachers to use visual aids, gestures, and simple language to help your child understand and express themselves.

If your child finds speaking difficult, model short phrases or give them extra time to respond.

💡 **For younger children:** Encourage turn-taking games and naming activities during play.

💡 **For school-aged children:** Support confidence with classroom sharing (“Can you tell the class what we saw at the park?”) or use “show and tell” to practise speaking skills.

### 4. Encourage Movement and Sensory Breaks

Movement and sensory play help children regulate their emotions and focus — especially in busy environments.

Ask educators about small breaks for movement or quiet time during the day.

💡 **Speech tip:** Movement and rhythm activities (like clapping games, rhymes, or songs) also strengthen listening, sequencing, and early literacy skills.

💡 **Occupational tip:** Physical play like climbing, balancing, or pushing heavy objects builds strength and attention.

### 5. Focus on Confidence, Not Perfection

Every child learns at their own pace. Whether your child is mastering sounds, letters, self-care, or friendships — celebrate every small step forward.

Confidence grows when children feel capable and understood, not when they feel pressured to “get it right.”

💡 **Therapist tip:** Use encouraging language: “You’re getting better at telling me what you want!” or “I love how you kept trying even when it was tricky.”



## 6. Work as a Team — You, Educators, and Therapists

If your child continues to find communication, play, or classroom participation difficult despite support, it might be time to seek professional guidance.

Occupational and Speech Therapists can collaborate directly with teachers and carers to create strategies that help your child thrive — from making friends and expressing needs, to managing focus and emotions.

💬 *“Once we worked together — home, school, and therapist — my child started to enjoy learning again.” — Parent of a Prep student*

### Remember:

Children develop at their own pace, and every environment — from the playground to the classroom — can be a place where they shine.

When parents, educators, and therapists work hand-in-hand, children don't just catch up — they grow in confidence, communication, and joy.




## Helping Your Child Feel Calm, Confident, and Ready to Learn

Use this simple checklist to notice areas where your child might need a little extra support — whether at home, during play, or in group learning environments.

It's not a test — it's a conversation starter between you, your family, your child's educators, and (if needed) your therapist.


### **Attention, Listening & Learning Skills**

- My child finds it hard to stay focused during play, learning, or group activities.
- They need instructions repeated often or forget what to do next.
- They appear unsure when routines change or when asked to try something new.
- They have trouble recalling what happened earlier in the day or retelling events.
- They avoid or lose interest in activities that require concentration or persistence.

 If attention or listening is tricky, try breaking instructions into smaller steps, using visual cues, or giving extra time to process information.


### **Speech, Language & Communication Skills**

- My child struggles to express needs, feelings, or ideas clearly.
- They find it hard to follow directions or understand longer sentences.
- They use fewer words or shorter phrases than others their age.
- Their speech is sometimes unclear or hard for others to understand.
- They are quiet in groups or seem unsure how to join conversations.

 If communication feels difficult, use short, clear sentences, model new words, and pause to give your child time to respond.


### **Physical, Play & Everyday Skills**

- My child tires easily or avoids activities that require drawing, cutting, or writing.
- They find it hard to use cutlery, dress themselves, or manage zips and buttons.
- They appear clumsy or uncoordinated during play and physical activity.
- They struggle to sit upright and attend to a task for an appropriate amount of time.
- They find it difficult to plan and complete multi-step activities without help.

 If you notice these challenges, include playful practice in daily routines — like stirring, stacking, climbing, or drawing together.

### **Social Interaction & Play Skills**

- My child prefers to play alone or watches others instead of joining in.
- They find it hard to share, take turns, or understand social rules during play.
- They don't always recognise or respond to others' feelings or cues.
- They become frustrated or withdrawn when communication breaks down.
- They rarely start or maintain back-and-forth conversations.

 If your child finds social situations hard, try modelling friendly language (“Can I play too?”) and praise small efforts to connect.

## ❤️ Emotional Regulation & Confidence

- ❑ My child becomes easily upset, anxious, or frustrated during everyday activities.
- ❑ They find it hard to calm down once distressed or disappointed.
- ❑ They resist trying new things for fear of making mistakes.
- ❑ They often say “I can’t” or give up quickly when things feel difficult.
- ❑ They need extra reassurance when separating from parents or starting the day.

💡 If your child struggles with confidence, use gentle encouragement, praise effort, and keep routines predictable and calm.

## 👉 Next Steps: Partnering for Progress

If you’ve ticked several boxes, remember — you’re not alone. Many children need extra support at different stages of their development, and with the right help, they can thrive.

### Here’s what to do next:

1. Share what you’ve noticed with your child’s educators or carers.
2. Ask for their perspective — children sometimes show different strengths in different settings.
3. Reach out for professional guidance. Speech and Occupational Therapists can work together to build your child’s confidence, communication, and participation across all areas of life.

💬 “Once we worked together with our child’s therapist and educators, everything made sense — and daily life became calmer and more connected.” — Parent of a 5-year-old

## 🌟 Remember:

You know your child best. This checklist isn’t about identifying problems — it’s about understanding what might be getting in their way.

With care, teamwork, and the right support, every child can build the skills they need to grow, communicate, and thrive — wherever they learn and play.



# What's Next?

If you've noticed areas in your checklist where your child might need a little extra support, please know — you're not alone. Every child develops in their own way, and with the right guidance, small, consistent changes can make a big difference.

If you're ready to better understand your child's needs — whether that's support with communication, play, attention, or confidence — we're here to help.

Book a free, no-obligation consultation with one of our friendly Kid Sense therapists today. Together, we'll:

- Talk through your child's unique strengths, challenges, and communication style.
- Identify practical, evidence-based strategies you can start using straight away — at home and in everyday routines.
- Explore how Speech Therapy or Occupational Therapy (or a blend of both) can help your child feel more confident, connected, and capable in daily life.

You don't have to figure this out on your own. With the right support, your child can thrive — at home, at school, and everywhere in between.

[!\[\]\(0230214116c86dbf511158ea2e1aae13\_img.jpg\) Book Your Free Consultation Today](#)



# Thank-you

Thank you for taking the time to read **“Tired of Worrying Something’s Not Quite Right? Learn How to Support Your Child’s Development with Confidence.”**

At **Kid Sense**, we’ve dedicated our work to helping families understand and support their children’s unique developmental journeys. We know how much love, patience, and strength it takes to nurture a child who’s finding some things harder than others — and we want you to know, you’re doing an incredible job.

Just by seeking out this information, you’ve already taken a powerful step toward helping your child thrive. Your willingness to learn, observe, and take action makes all the difference in your child’s development and confidence.

We’re so grateful to walk alongside families like yours — providing practical strategies, understanding, and encouragement every step of the way.

Thank you for trusting Kid Sense to be part of your journey. Together, we can help your child feel happier, connected and proud of who they are.

♥ With care and appreciation,  
The Kid Sense Team



# ENHANCE EDUCATE EMPOWER

Are you ready to help your child thrive with confidence?

Our amazing team of Speech and Occupational Therapists offer therapy and parent support services that help children build the skills they need to thrive — from communication and play to coordination, focus, and confidence.

Our Therapists use practical, evidence-based strategies to support children’s development at home, in childcare, kindergarten and school. We empower parents with understanding, guidance, and tools so they can feel confident, connected, and supported every step of the way.

## BUILD CONFIDENCE TOGETEHER

Book a Discovery call with our caring team here:  
[childdevelopment.com.au/new-enquiry/](http://childdevelopment.com.au/new-enquiry/)

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