

Speech and Language Therapy: Family Resource Pack

April 2020

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Introduction

This pack has been put together by the Speech and Language Team at The Walnuts School to support families at home.

The Walnuts School is committed to working in partnership with pupils, parents and other professionals to develop every individual's communication skills, to respect each pupil's preferred means of communication and to provide a communication friendly environment.

The Walnuts School employs a specialist team of onsite Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT). Our Speech and Language Therapists work with students intensively in individual and class-based sessions and small groups targeting specific areas of communication development. We use a *Total Communication* approach throughout the school environment.

Speech and Language therapy is focused on developing an individual's Speech, Language and Communication needs (SLCN). This pack contains suggested activities to help to develop various areas of SLCN and a selection of resources that you can access online or purchase.

If you have any general questions or queries please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at: therapyteam@walnuts.milton-keynes.sch.uk

TOTAL COMMUNICATION

Children with communication difficulties often struggle to understand and use spoken language, and need support to communicate basic needs, wants and desires. *Total Communication* makes use of the skills an individual has, such as non-verbal communication and may include the use of Augmentative and Alternative communication (AAC). We encourage you to use a similar approach at home and encourage your child to use all methods of communication accessible for them.

Total communication can include the following:

- Speech
- Non-Verbal communication: facial expression, eye pointing, and body movement.
- Sign and Gesture
- Vocalisations
- Symbols, photographs or objects of reference
- Written Words
- Art
- Switches and Voice Operated Communication Aids (VOCAs)
- Sensory cues i.e. music and aroma

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Why?

Anxiety is a normal part of children's development, but children and teenagers with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can experience anxiety more intensely and more often than other children. When we feel anxious or stressed our brain does not operate at its best; our executive function skills (such as working memory and organization skills) are impaired, and so we are not in the best state to learn. Therefore, it can help to get your child to notice anxious feelings and use strategies for managing their feelings of stress.

We recommend that you incorporate one of the following activities into your daily routine and at times of increased anxiety.

How?

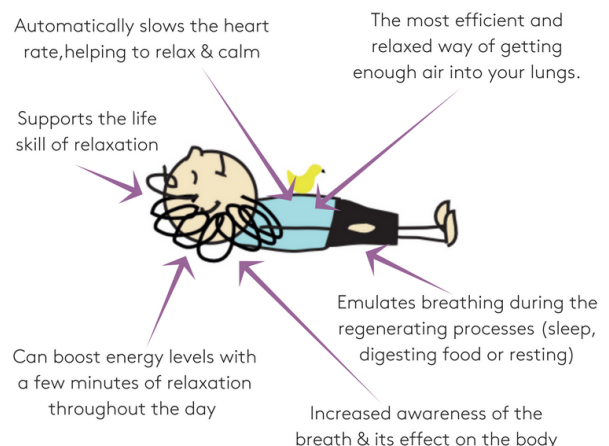
We like to start all of our sessions with some breathing and movement exercises to calm the nervous system and help our students get ready for learning.

Practice the following activity daily before you get up in the morning and before going to sleep at night for 5 - 10 minutes gradually increasing this to 3 or 4 times a day.

- Put your hands (or a book) on your belly, focus on filling up your belly from the bottom to the top taking a slow deep breath. (The aim is not to fill yourself to bursting but to inhale enough air so that you can feel the difference between a shallow breath in just the chest area and a deeper breath to your belly).
- You should feel your belly rise and your hands being raised gently up and outward until you feel your belly and chest expanding.
- Breathe out slowly to a count of 5.
- Repeat the exercise 10 times

Once they get it right, practice as often as possible sitting, standing and while doing other activities eventually your child will be breathing naturally from their belly.

Belly breathing

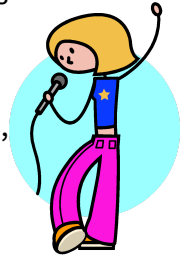


Laughter: Make yourself laugh for 5 minutes and make sure everyone joins in. Laughing is contagious and a great way to release anxiety.

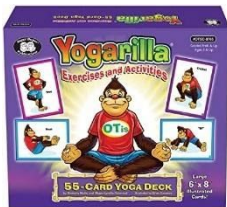
Singing: The rhythm acts like a guide to help you breathe, it takes the focus and often the pressure away from producing accurate, clear fluent speech and in reducing this anxiety naturally increases intelligibility and 'easy' speech. Try this simple exercise:

Recite small sentences - such as "It's cold outside. I need a coat." - to clapping hands, the beat of a drum, tapping the table etc...

Make up short rhymes and silly songs, have some fun being silly.



Yoga is also a great way to get children moving and using their good breathing to help them to feel settled, relaxed and ready to learn.



We use 'Yogarilla' activities and exercises you can buy them from:
<https://www.superduperinc.com/> or Amazon.

You can also access some great yoga and movement sequences online we like:

https://www.yogajournal.com/poses/5-kid-friendly-animal-poses-to-introduce-children-to-yoga#gid=ci020f118ad00024a1&pid=gorilla-pose_zz

'Cosmic Children' on YouTube has lots of great yoga sequences for children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhYtcadR9nw>

More...

There are so many activities and resources available to help your child to feel calmer; here are a few of our favourites:

- Help your child to understand their emotions by drawing an outline of a person's body. Inside the outline, help your child draw or write what happens in each part of their body when they feel scared or worried.
- Create or buy a Worry Monster – your child can write or draw their worries and put them in the mouth of the monster

(available on Amazon)



- Use a book or diary for them to write their worries in so the worries are in the book and not in their head.
- Listen to calm music.
- Count, draw or colour.
- Exercise: run around the garden or house five times; do 50 jumps on the trampoline.
- Look at a collection of favourite or special things.
- Sit in a quiet part of the house.
- If challenging behaviour is an issue try using a [behaviour diary](#) to help to work out if the behaviour is a way of telling you something.
- Offer other ways of expressing 'no' or 'stop'.
- **Childline CALM Zone** - There are lots of ways to feel calmer. Find out more by clicking [HERE](#)

ATTENTION and LISTENING

Why?

Being able to pay attention to your environment, to the people communicating with you and listening to sounds and voices is one of the most important skills for developing speech, language and communication skills. It can take some children longer to learn how to listen. Some children can find it difficult to attend and listen, not because they have a hearing loss, but because they cannot listen carefully to the sounds they hear. Children with ASD can find it difficult to filter out the less important information and particularly to focus on speech sounds and on the non-verbal aspects of speech such as facial expression, vocal tone, body language etc. If there is too much information, it can lead to 'overload', where no further information can be processed. This can lead to language delays or disorders and often means that they miss out on important developmental milestones. The strategies and activities below can help your child to improve these key skills.

How?

We have some general strategies to gain attention and encourage good listening that we use when we are working with our students:

- Always use their name at the beginning of a conversation or activity so that they know you are talking to them.
- Make sure your child is paying attention before you ask a question or give an instruction. The signs that someone is paying attention will be different for different people.
- Use your child's special interest, or the activity they are currently doing, to engage them and keep their attention.

Joint Attention Activities:

Here are some ideas for working on developing joint attention at home:

Copy what your Child Does:

The first thing you can do to try to get joint attention is to copy exactly what your child is doing. If your child is playing with toys, get down on the floor and play with those toys in the exact same manner. If they are stacking blocks, you stack blocks. If they are lining up cars, you line up cars. If they are spinning in circles, you spin in circles etc...

Start quietly at first, just to see if your child will notice. Just play along beside them or imitate actions. If they look at you or notice what you're doing, just smile and act like you're enjoying yourself.

Gradually, draw more and more attention to yourself and what you're doing. See if you can persuade them to start paying attention to you and reinforce every time it happens (with praise, hugs or high fives whatever they like most).

Next, start to comment on what they are doing. Point out the cars that are being lined up, the actions made and talk about what thoughts and feelings may be experienced.

Share Box ('What's in the Box'):

For the next part, fill a box with things that your child loves. It could be grapes, toys that light up, Lego, iPad, a book...

If you're not sure what will be really motivating, find some toys/items that you think may be motivating and present them to your child two at a time. For example, hold up a flashing toy and a shaky toy. Show what each one does and then hold them both up hopefully your child will reach toward one.

Let your child play with the toy for a moment and then take it back. Introduce a new toy and then hold that toy up alongside the one he chose before. Let them pick again. Continue to do this until you have a good idea of the types of items your child typically picks. These will be the items you will put in the box.

Reinforce Proximity:

Now that you have a selection of things you know your child likes, put those things away (out of sight) for a few days. You want them to be new and exciting when you pull them out to do the activity.

Activity - Stand a little distance from your child and pull out *one* thing from the box and hold it so they can see that you have it. If it is a toy that does something (lights up or makes sound), activate it once so they get interested.

If your child moves close to you (and the object), say "you see my ____" and then give it to them. At this point, you want to reinforce your child for just coming close to you. This is the first step of joint attention.

Let them play with it for a few moments and then say "my turn" and take it away and walk a few feet away. Once they come close to you again, say "you see my ____" and give it to them again. Keep doing this until they consistently come close to you to share in what you have. If they lose interest, switch to a different reinforcer. With some children, you'll need to switch each time.

****ALTERNATIVE**** If the reinforcement is an activity, like getting tickled, you can start by doing the activity and then walking a few feet away. For example, tickle the child until they are smiling, and then walk a few feet away and wait. If the child comes toward you, tickle them again.

More...

- Try Intensive Interaction – we love using this with our non-verbal students to help them to feel heard and let them know we are listening to them, our students love it! This site has lots of activities and resources to support you to do this at home: For ideas about what to do follow this link: <https://www.intensiveinteraction.org/>
- Sing songs and action nursery rhymes to help encourage listening and attention skills.
- Use puppets to act out nursery rhymes.
- Say nursery rhymes using different voices e.g. quiet, loud, happy, sad, etc.
- Make music with the children e.g. shakers, drums, bells etc. Can the children listen to you then copy?
- Hide musical toys in a box, next to an empty box. The children have to locate the sound.
- Play 'Ready Steady Go' games (e.g. build brick towers, children take turns to wait for command before knocking the tower down).
- Listen to sound lotto tapes, find the picture that matches the sound.
- Read 'lift the flap' books with repetitive story lines, the children take turns to lift the flaps.
- 'Cause and Effect toys' you can find some great toys on Amazon, like 'ball-popper toys', toys that light up if you press a button, maze toys that need you to solve a puzzle before revealing a light or ball...here is a link to some ideas:
<https://www.nationalautismresources.com/toys-gifts/cause-and-effect/>
- Use a multi-sensory approach (e.g. interesting visual materials and textures to handle)
- Allow fidgety children to hold something (e.g. bean bag, squeeze ball) when you need them to focus.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

Why?

Social communication includes three major skills:

Using language for different reasons, such as:

- *Greeting.* Saying "hello" or "goodbye."
- *Informing.* "I'm going to get a biscuit."
- *Demanding.* "Give me a biscuit right now."
- *Promising.* "I'm going to get you a biscuit."
- *Requesting.* "I want a biscuit, please."

Changing language for the listener or situation, such as:

- Talking differently to a baby than to an adult.

- Giving more information to someone who does not know the topic. Knowing to skip some details when someone already knows the topic.
- Talking differently in a classroom than on a playground.

Following rules for conversations and storytelling, such as:

- Taking turns when you talk.
- Letting others know the topic when you start talking.
- Staying on topic.
- Trying another way of saying what you mean when someone did not understand you.
- Using gestures and body language, like pointing or shrugging.
- Knowing how close to stand to someone when talking.
- Using facial expressions and eye contact.

(These rules may be different if you come from another culture.)

How?

One of our favourite ways to develop social skills is by playing games, especially turn-taking and role play games. Lego based therapy is a fabulous tool that helps to develop all aspects of communication and is especially useful for our students with social communication difficulties.

This specific type of therapy improves children's abilities to change their behaviour, understand and talk about their feelings, solve problems and learn about the world in which they live.

Below is a brief guide to setting up a group, you can find full instructions and visual supports here:

<https://www.lego.com/en-gb/themes/classic/building-instructions>;

<http://thewackywarehouse.com/lego-therapy/>

Lego-based therapy



Each child within Lego Group has a role either: **engineer**, **supplier** or **builder** and together they follow visual instructions to build a model. By giving each player a role they have a predictable structure to improve their social interaction skills. You can also include a 'freestyle' build to encourage imagination and working as a team.

What do I need?

Lego, Duplo or similar building bricks.

Roles:

- Engineer: oversees the design and ensures the instructions are followed.



- Builder: puts the bricks together.
- Supplier: keeps track of which size, shape and colour bricks are needed and passes them to the builder.

Rules:

- Structures must be built together by the group.
- If you break something, you have to fix it or ask for help to fix it.
- If another group member is using something and you want it, ask for it. Don't just take it.
- Use quiet indoor voices without shouting.
- Use kind and polite words.
- Keep your hands and your feet to yourself.
- Do not put Lego in your mouth.
- At the end, tidy everything away and put it back where it came from.

More...

Using Language for Different Reasons

Ask questions or make suggestions to help the person use language in different ways.

What You Want Your Child To Do	Suggested Question or Comment
Comment	"What did you do?" "Tell me about..."
Request	"Tell your friend you want to..." "What do you want?"
Question	"Ask me..."

Use everyday situations. Give your child chances to practice good social communication during the day. For example, practice staying on topic by talking about school. Have your child ask others what they want to eat for dinner to practice asking questions. Let your child ask for what they need to finish a project.

Changing Language for the Listener or Situation:

Role-play conversations. Pretend to talk to different people in different situations. For example, have your child explain the rules of a game to different people. Show her how she should talk to a child or an adult. Or, how she would talk to a family member or a stranger.

Practice messages. Ask your child what he would say if he wanted something. Talk about different ways to present a message, such as being:

- Polite or impolite. He could say, "Please may I go to the party?" or, "You better let me go."
- Indirect or direct. He could say, "That music is loud," or, "Turn off the music."

Discuss why people might be more willing to do something if they are asked in a different way.

Conversation and Storytelling:

Say something about the topic of conversation before talking about it. This may help your child stay on topic and change topics more easily. Get her to talk more about a topic by asking questions or adding information.

Use visual cues, such as pictures or objects to help tell a story in the right order (see also symbols, timetables, [Social Stories™](#) and [Comic Strip Conversations™](#) – see below).

Practice rephrasing when someone does not understand what the person means. Ask questions like, "Did you mean...?"

Show how nonverbal cues are important to communication. For example, look at pictures of faces, and talk about how the person might feel. Talk about what it means when a person's face doesn't match what they say. This may happen when someone smiles as they say, "Get out!"

- Use less non-verbal communication (e.g. eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body language) when a person is showing signs of anxiety.
- Be aware of the environment (noisy/crowded) that you are in. Sensory input may be affecting how much they can process.

UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE (Receptive Language Skills)

Why?

Receptive language means the ability to understand information. It involves understanding the words, sentences and meaning of what others say or what is read. To understand, children need to be able to listen, understand the main words, and remember what was said. Receptive language is the ability to understand words and language. It involves gaining information and meaning from routine (e.g. we have finished our breakfast so next it is time to get dressed), visual information within the environment (e.g. mum holding her keys means that we are going to get the car, a green light means go), sounds and words (e.g. a siren means a fire engine is coming down the street, the word ball means a round bouncy thing we play with), concepts such as size, shape, colours and time, grammar (e.g. regular plurals: cat/s, regular past tense: fetch/ed) and written information (e.g. signs in the environment like “no climbing”, written stories).

Some children who have difficulty understanding oral language (words and talking) may appear to be understanding because they may be able to pick up key words and get visual information from the environment or from gestures.

How?

We love using Carol Grays’ Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations to help our students to understand their environment and to problem-solve difficult situations. In addition to helping students to understand social situations, it helps them to develop their ability to understand language.

Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations encourage understanding of possible events and can also help a student to reflect on events that have happened and may have caused some difficulty. They are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, and include specific information about what to expect in that situation and why.

This is an example of a social story used to explain COVID-19:

https://theautismeducator.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1Lo4boaycfrYbpNM_ZhHOvMm-9DTgRqUmwE7EFD7LzbClj3nale5i5N_w

For more information and lots of examples of social stories see:

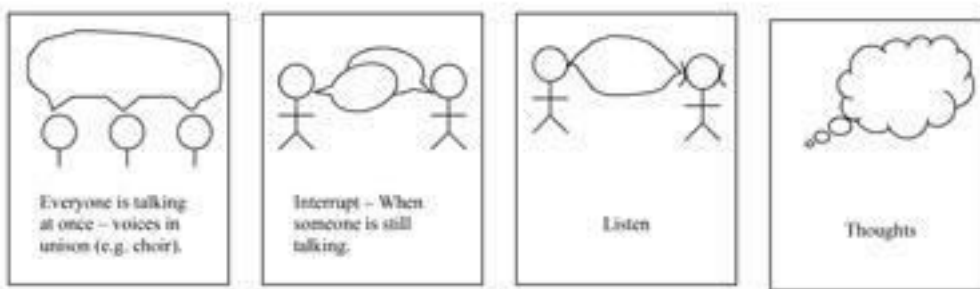
<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/social-story-sampler/>

Comic Strip Conversations are simple visual representations of conversation. They can show:

- the things that are actually said in a conversation;
- how people might be feeling;
- what people's intentions might be.

Comic strip conversations use stick figures and symbols to represent social interactions and abstract aspects of conversation, and colour to represent the emotional content of a statement or message.

We have found that creating comic strip conversations has been extremely helpful in facilitating conversation, resolving social issues between peers, helping them to take turns in conversation and providing them with different social scenarios within various contexts.



(From Carol Gray – Comic Strip Conversations)

Comic Strip Activity:

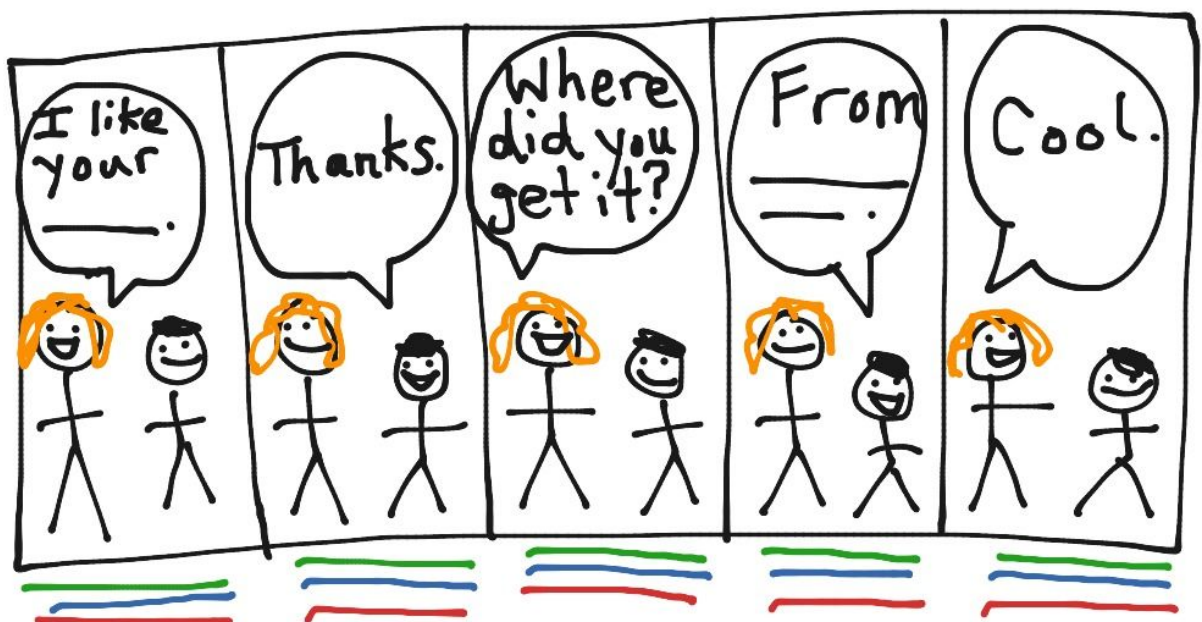
- To make a comic strip conversation you can use just paper, pencils, crayons and markers, use computer word processing applications, or you could use an app.
- Ask the person you are supporting to choose what materials they would like to use.
- Some people may like to have their comic strip conversations in a notebook, or saved on their smartphone or tablet, so that they can refer to them as needed, and easily recall key concepts.

- Comic strip conversations can help people to understand concepts that they find particularly difficult. People draw as they talk and use these drawings to learn about different social situations.
- In a comic strip conversation, your child takes the lead role with you offering support and guidance.
- Start with small talk (for example, talking about the weather) to get your child familiar with drawing whilst talking and to mimic ordinary social interactions.

Questions to Ask:

- Where are you? (draw a symbol to represent where they are)
- Who was there? (draw 'stick figure' representations of the people there, usually with their first initial to distinguish between people)
- What were you doing? (draw relevant items/ actions)
- What did you say? (write this inside a speech bubble)
- What did others say? (as above)
- What did you think? (write this inside a thought bubble)
- What did others think? (as above)
- What did you feel/What did others feel?

The Compliment Conversation



Next Steps:

Summarise the event or situation you've discussed using the drawings as a guide.

Along with the student, identify possible solutions to the problem and discuss the advantages or disadvantages of each.

Identify this list as possible options for the student to use the next time the situation occurs.

Consider making an action plan.

For more information and activities:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>

More...

There are lots of activities and websites that support the development of language skills. Here are some additional ideas for supporting language understanding:

- Say less and say it slowly.
- Use specific key words, repeating and stressing them.
- Pause between words and phrases to give the person time to process what you've said, and to give them the opportunity to think of a response.
- Don't use too many questions.
- Use less non-verbal communication (e.g. eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body language) when a person is showing signs of anxiety.
- Use [visual supports](#) (e.g. symbols, timetables, [Social Stories™](#)).
- Be aware of the environment (noisy/crowded) that you are in. Sensory input may be affecting how much your child can process.
- Avoid using complicated language such as irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions, idioms or exaggeration. If you do use these, explain what you have said and be clear about what you really mean to say.

USING LANGUAGE (Expressive Language Skills)

Why?

Expressive language means being able to put thoughts into words and sentences, in a way that makes sense and is grammatically accurate. Expressive language skills include being able to label

objects in the environment, describe actions and events, put words together in sentences, use grammar correctly (e.g. “I had a drink” not “Me dranked”), retell a story, answer questions and write a short story. Expressive language is important because it enables children to be able to express their wants and needs, thoughts and ideas, argue a point of view, develop their use of language and engage in successful interactions with others. Expressive language can be conveyed using speech, symbols, signing, writing, technology etc.

How?

We like to use lots of different activities to help our students to develop their language skills, here is an example of how you can adapt lots of different resources to engage your child in language activities:

Sand, Water, Toy...Play

For children that are beginning to use single words or put 2 words together; with voice, symbols & sign...

These activities help to:

- Improve their speech and language skills
- Encourage them to use single words or 2 words together during play sessions
- Increase their understanding of spoken language

Which means they can:

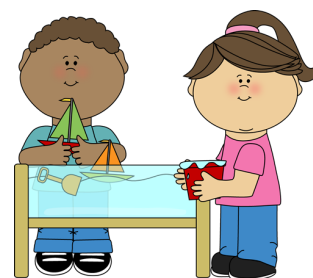
- Use single words whilst playing
- Start to understand of 2 – 3 word instructions

Method

- In a pair use favourite activities e.g. sand play, water play, train track, cars, dolls, lego...
- Let children ‘lead’ the play and chat, follow their lead
- Model the ‘correct’ language for them e.g. name something if they point at it, say the word slowly or with emphasis to draw attention to it
- Expand on what they say - add just 1 or 2 more words e.g. if they say ‘spade’ say ‘red spade’, or if they say dig sand, say ‘digging sand’
- Repeat words or short phrases relevant to their play e.g. ‘splashing water’, ‘in the sand’, ‘more water?’
- Offer choices e.g. do you want bucket or spade, red fish or green fish

Resources

- Sand tray or water tray, this could be a washing up bowl



- Toys, e.g. trains, lego, cars, dolls (give them a choice of 2 whenever possible)
- Peer or communication partner (parent) to play with or alongside them.

ALTERNATIVE and AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)

Why?

AAC includes all of the ways we share our ideas and feelings without talking. We all use forms of AAC every day. You use AAC when you use facial expressions or gestures instead of talking. You use AAC when you write a note and pass it to a friend or co-worker. We may not realize how often we communicate without talking.

People with severe speech or language problems may need AAC to help them communicate. Some may use it all of the time. Others may say some words but use AAC for longer sentences or with people they don't know well. AAC can help in school, and at home when talking with friends and family.

You can use AAC with your child to communicate at home and help them to practice and develop their communication skills by using AAC with all of the activities that we have listed above.

Types of AAC:

There are two main types of AAC—unaided systems and aided systems. You may use one or both types. Most people who use AAC use a combination of AAC types to communicate.

Unaided Systems

You do not need anything but your own body to use unaided systems. These include gestures, body language, facial expressions, and sign language.

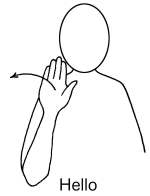
Aided Systems

An aided system uses some sort of tool or device. There are two types of aided systems—basic and high-tech. A pen and paper is a basic aided system. Pointing to letters, words, or pictures on a board is a basic aided system. At school many of our students use symbols and pictures to communicate. Touching letters or pictures on a computer screen that speaks for you is a high-tech aided system. Some of our students use an iPad with special software like Proloquo2Go or GridPlayer to help their communication

How?

Signing

We use a sign system called Makaton with our students. Signs are used, with speech, in spoken word order. This helps provide extra clues about what someone is saying. Using signs can help children who have no speech or whose speech is unclear. Sign does not replace speech; we use speech alongside the sign to encourage understanding and the development of expressive language.



Makaton is a unique language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate. It supports the development of essential communication skills such as attention and listening, comprehension, memory, recall and organisation of language and expression.

These are some of our favourite resources for using Makaton with our students:

- Mr Tumble - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p07ctlr6/mr-tumble>
- Singing Hands -:
 - <https://singinghands.co.uk/>
 - YouTube, *here's one for you* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0peZ5AN5vs8>
- Makaton - <https://www.makaton.org/aboutMakaton/>

Symbols

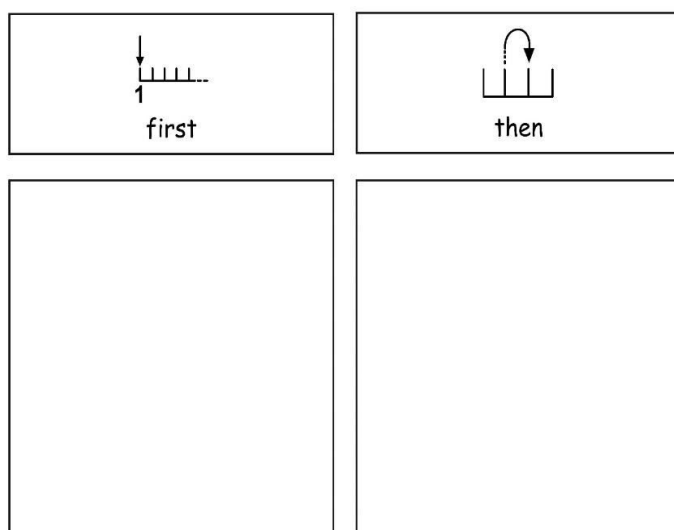
Symbols are special pictures that are used to represent concepts e.g. a drawing of a person drinking out of a cup is used to represent the concept of having a drink. They are used both to support understanding and to help someone express themselves.

At home you can support your child by using the same approaches that we use at school such as a simple now and next board, schedule or a communication board for their favourite things. You do not need specific symbols to communicate with your child this way. If you do not have access to a programme to make symbols you can cut out pictures, draw symbols or make it interactive and ask your child to help you to draw or find a picture that they think the word looks like.

- For each board (see below) you will need a base (this could be a piece of cardboard, a small white board, a flat baking tray...) (for high-tech systems your tablet or iPad first page grid.)
- For the symbols you will need sheets of paper that you can cut into squares, the size of the square is up to you and depends on how easily your child can access different sized pictures and symbols.

- To keep the symbols in place use velcro or blue tac to stick symbols on to the base and remove them.
- If you can it is a good idea to laminate the board and symbols so that they can be re-used.

First and Then board:



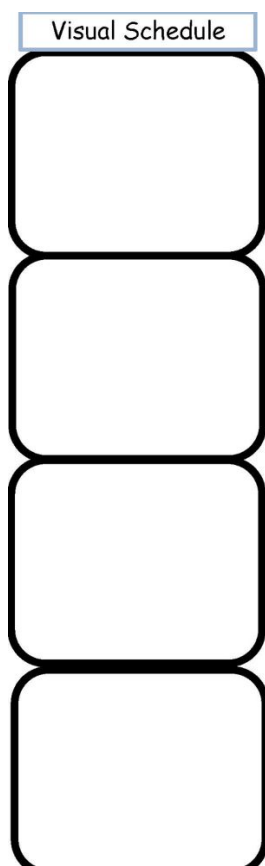
1. Put the pictures on the board in order of when they will happen e.g. *first* - school work, *then* - iPad. You could also show your child the real items for the activities.

2. Show your child the board and use simple language when explaining what is going to happen.

3. When the activity is finished, tell your child "X is finished" and point to the picture. Take the picture of the board. Then put the next picture in the "first" slot.

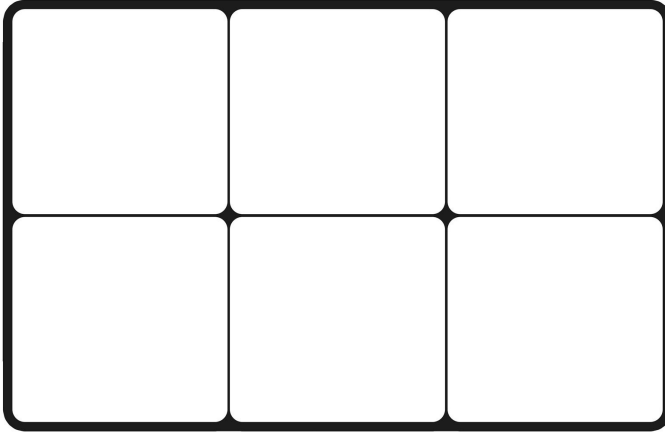
Visual Schedule:

Visual schedules help children to organise their day and understand the general sequence of events. If a child has difficulty remembering what is going to happen, he or she can refer to the schedule to be reminded.



How to use a visual schedule?

- 1.** Ensure you have pictures of the main activities your child carries out each day. If you do not have the visuals or symbols you need you could search Google images and find appropriate images there.
- 2.** Make the schedule base and place this somewhere accessible for your child for example, on a clear wall or on the fridge. Include a 'finished' envelope which can be taped to the bottom of the schedule.
- 3.** Put the activities of the day in order on the schedule. Place the first activity to be completed at the top of the page. Place the next picture below it etc. Starting with about 4 pictures is usually good as then there is flexibility in what is happening later and the information isn't too visually overwhelming.
- 4.** You may also want to have less or more pictures on the schedule at a time, depending on how your child can manage the number of activities.
- 5.** When the activity is finished, tell the child it is finished and remind him/her to "check your schedule". He/she can put that picture in a "finished" envelope at the end of the schedule. Continue with this throughout the day.
- 6.** You can keep the extra pictures nearby in a zip-lock bag or 4 envelope.

Communication Board:

1. Always have your communication board available. Keep it somewhere easily visible. Try to remember to use it all the time, children need lots of experiences to learn new vocabulary. The more you use it, the more exposure your child will have to various words.

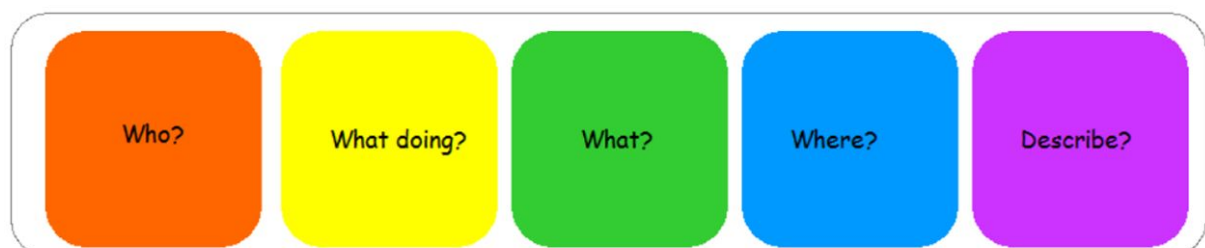
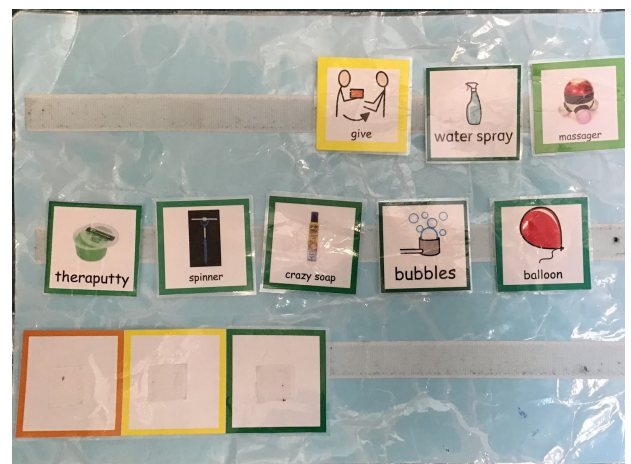
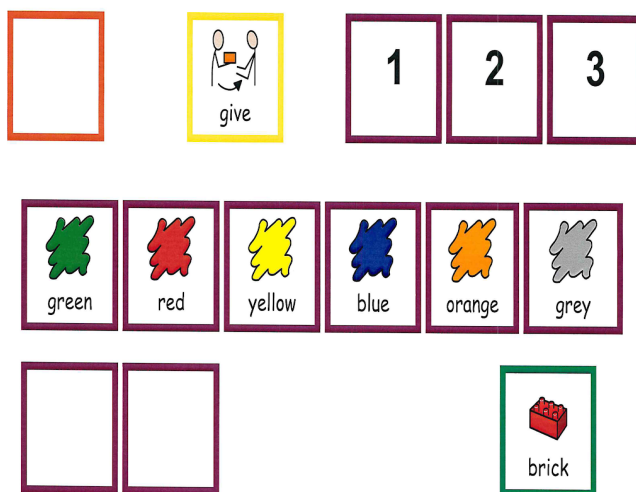
2. Find something motivating When you're getting started with a communication board, it's essential to find a motivating activity. This should be something that makes your child smile and laugh. It could be as simple as a special toy or playing their favourite video on YouTube. Our students love sensory input, so tickles and squeezes work too.

- 3. Choose a word** Make the communication board easily accessible and visible to your child and choose a word that makes sense.
- a. Your first goal is to persuade your child to use the communication board. Use a motivating activity to start e.g. snacks. All you have to do is touch the word on the communication board and then say it at the same time. For example, if your child is really motivated by biscuits, put the communication board next to the child and say 'biscuit' while pointing to it on the board.
 - b. Then, give them a bite of a biscuit. After a bite stop and model it again, 'biscuit', while holding the biscuit up. Keep repeating this until your child starts to understand the association.
- 4. Pause** After you do this for a few times the next step is to pause. You should have your child primed and ready for a bite of biscuit, but then, instead of modelling, just wait and see what happens. Usually your child will look up at you and expect you to continue the routine. This is the moment when you provide them the word to ask for what they want. You can point to the word 'biscuit' and see if they point after you, or see if they try to 'say' the word on their own, by speaking, pointing to or picking up the symbol/picture.
- 5. Once your child is able to request using one object, begin to expand the sentence.** Your next step is to have your child request and acknowledge the person they request from. So

have a picture of yourself available. Using the steps above your aim is for your child to say 'Mum/Dad/Fred etc...biscuit' by selecting or pointing to the appropriate symbols.

As your child becomes better skilled at using symbols to communicate you can add more symbols and use a wider range of grammatical structures. We use a structured approach with our students called 'Colourful Semantics' (see below) which helps our students to understand how words are put together to communicate. Take a look at the examples below to help you to create activities and ideas using symbols and pictures.

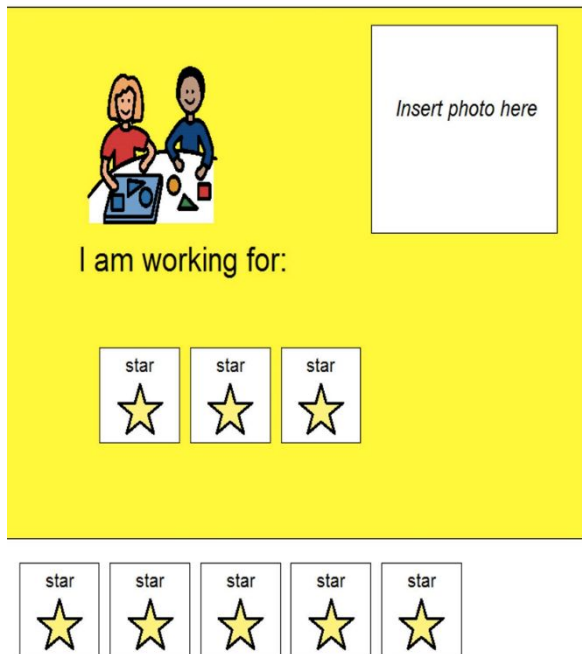
Colourful Semantics – Colour coding:



I'm working for chart

Why use an 'I'm working for' chart?

I'm working
for chart



This chart can be used to motivate your child to complete non-preferred tasks throughout the day or to reduce challenging behaviour.

How to use an 'I'm working for' chart?

1. Set up the schedule by making a board and symbols as above. Encourage your child to choose a reward. Ensure it is something they are very motivated by e.g. treat, favourite game, time on the iPad etc. Place a visual that represents the reward on the 'I'm working for' board.
2. Be very clear and specific about which behaviour you are rewarding and try to ensure that the goal is achievable. For example, 'Sitting at the table for breakfast' is a specific behaviour that you can observe, but you may need to add a time limit to the reward if your child has difficulty sitting for a long time. For

example, 'Sitting at the table for 5 minutes, during breakfast.' or 'Sitting at the table until you have eaten a piece of toast.'

3. Give the child a sticker immediately after they have done what it is you want them to do. So, the positive behaviour and/or completed specific tasks etc. Give the star and lots of verbal praise, naming the behaviour e.g. 'That was really good sitting. Here's your star.'
4. Once your child has received the star, encourage them to put the star on the 'I'm working for' board and offer lots of praise.
5. Try to stay positive. If your child doesn't earn a star, it is best to move on and focus on encouraging the child to try again. Stars should not be removed from the board.

More...

- Always praise every communication attempt. Communication attempts can be as simple as making a sound, making eye contact, a gesture or sign, or touching anywhere on the board. They don't have to touch the right word, it just has to be some type of initiation.

- Try not to force your child to communicate. Instead, be strategic about choosing highly motivating activities and then tempting them to communicate. Some children pick this up right away while others may need time and lots of repetition before they get the hang of it.
- It's important to remember that this is a completely different way of communicating. The only way a child will learn is if adults around them show them how to do it. Start small with one activity for 15 minutes a day and then slowly build up from there.
- And finally, don't be afraid that using a communication board will prevent your child from talking. There is a lot of research that shows it is actually quite the opposite. The more strategic exposure to language we give a child, the more likely they will be to start verbally communicating, if that is a possibility for them. We find that once a child starts understanding language, then they are more apt to start using it on their own. Visual supports such as a communication board help children with autism to understand language better.

You can make, download or buy printed pictures, or you can use an app. Here is a list of resources and websites to help you with AAC:

AAC - <https://aacbooks.net/books/UsingLowTechSymbolSystemsChildren/>

ASD Visual Aids - <http://www.asdvisualaids.com/>

Books Beyond Words - <https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/story-app>

Colourful Semantics -

<http://integratedtreatmentservices.co.uk/resources/speech-and-language-therapy/>

Visuals For Kids - <http://www.orkidideas.com/>

Makaton - <https://www.makaton.org/shop/>

Symbols - <http://symbolworld.org/>

The Internet Picture Dictionary - <http://www.pdictionary.com/>

Therapy box - <https://www.therapy-box.co.uk/assistive-technology/>

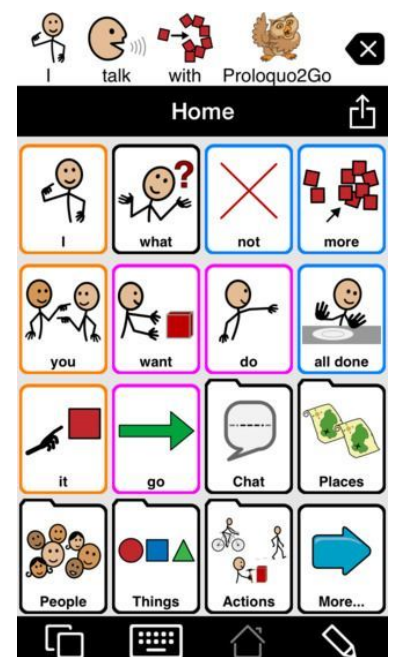
Proloquo2Go help sheet:

For a reminder of what each editing icon means:

- Click the pencil at the bottom of the screen
- Click the little green circled? in the bottom right hand corner
- This will label all of the icons you can use in edit mode
- If you click on "Learn more about Edit Mode" in the right hand left corner, it will bring up the users manual (click "Contents" in the left corner)

To hide buttons/folders (don't delete! Either hide them or move them to storage):

- Click the pencil at the bottom of the screen



- Click the button or folder you want to hide on the page, a menu will populate below · Choose either “button” or “folder” on the left
- Click “Visibility” and change from “Normal” to “Hidden”
- Click “Done” at the top right of the page, in the black bar

To create a new button/folder:

- Go to the page where you want the button/folder
- Click the pencil at the bottom of the screen
- Empty buttons will populate (they have a + in the middle of them)
- Click the spot where you want the button/folder
- Choose “Add Button” or “Add folder”
- First type the “Text to Speak” you want, this should populate a picture with additional choices below (you can use what they give you, or you can choose something else)
- If you want, you can choose a sound by clicking the speech bubble with the + in it (laughing, yawning, etc)
- When you are done, choose “Done” at the top right of the page

To move buttons:

- You can’t move some of the buttons, they are part of the template (you will see a T light up next to them, mostly pronouns and verbs)
- For those you can move, click the pencil
- Press and hold the button until it starts jiggling (just like an app)
- Move button to where you want it (if you are moving to a spot where there is already a button, it will swap the two)

To change verb tense:

- Click and hold down the button you would like to change, a folder of different tenses will pop open

To print a paper page:

- Press the Home button and the sleep/wake buttons on your iPad at the same time, this will take a picture
- Go to your photo roll and either print them straight to a printer or email them to yourself and then print

To create a new user (to play around with, to use with another student):

- Click the gear in the bottom right corner
- Click “User” up top
- Click “Add User” and follow instructions... Proloquo2Go recommends setting Intermediate Core as your vocabulary, but you can choose Basic depending on the student · You can change the voice under Speech and Language

To create activities pages:

- Open the “Activities” folder on the Home page

- Click the editing pencil
- Click the folder
- Different templates will pop up, choose one (or not... there is a “no template” option)
- Name the folder and pick a picture
- Once you click “Done” at the top, it will bring you into the folder
- Add buttons per instructions on page 1 (or hide the buttons you don’t want, per instructions on page 1) 9. To export files into Dropbox: · Hit the gear in the bottom right hand corner.
- Scroll down to “Dropbox” and turn on “Dropbox Integration.” Give the app permission to access your Dropbox account.
- Go back to the previous page. Click on “Backup.” Then click “Export Backups.” Dropbox should now be at the top as an option. Click it.
- The student’s file should then be successfully exported and saved in Dropbox.

Link to the full Proloquo2Go user’s guide:

<http://orin.com/access/docs/Proloquo2Go-4-Manual.pdf>