Boarshaw Primary School

Supporting pupils with a

Communication and Interaction need

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Communication and interaction

Communication and interaction is one of the four broad areas of need, identified in the SEND code of practice.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Children and young people with SEN may have difficulties in one or more of the areas of speech, language and communication. These children and young people need help to develop their linguistic competence in order to support their thinking, as well as their communication skills. Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or a physical or sensory impairment such as hearing loss may also lead to communication difficulties.

Those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) cover the whole ability range. They find it more difficult to communicate with others. They may have problems taking part in conversations, either because they find it difficult to understand what others say or because they have difficulties with fluency and forming sounds, words and sentences. It may be that when they hear or see a word they are not able to understand its meaning, leading to words being used incorrectly in or out of context and the child having a smaller vocabulary. It may be a combination of these problems. For some children and young people, difficulties may become increasingly apparent as the language they need to understand and use becomes more complex.

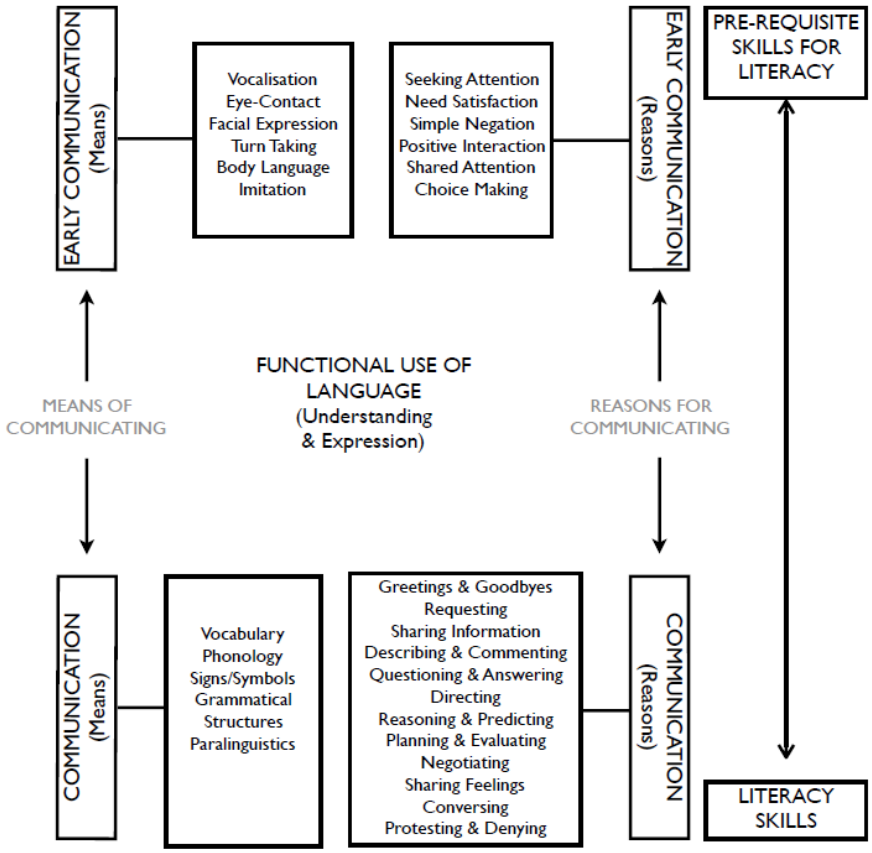
Children and young people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, have difficulty in making sense of the world in the way others do. They may have difficulties with communication, social interaction and imagination. In addition, they may be easily distracted or upset by certain stimuli, have problems with change to familiar routines or have difficulties with their co-ordination and fine-motor functions.

Whatever means of communication a person uses, a total communication approach will make it easier to connect meaningfully with someone who communicates differently to you.

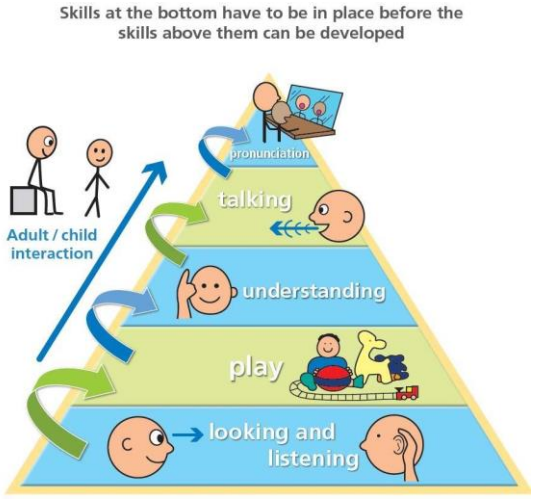
Total communication is about creating a positive environment that helps people to communicate and interact e.g. reducing background noise, changing lighting, eliminating distractions, moving positions so the person can hear/see you better.

https://youtu.be/yjZS7uuHy98

The Communication Pyramid



Speech and language therapist may talk to you about the “pyramid of communication development”. The skills at the bottom of the pyramid (attention and listening) need to be strong in order to create a good foundation for the other layers. A speech and language therapist may suggest developing attention and listening skills and play skills before working on receptive and expressive language.



Early Communication - Means of Communicating

There are many different ways in which pupils start to communicate:

VOCALISATION

Some of our pupils express themselves through vocalisation. Communication through vocalisation may initially be achieved through the use of 'babble' or non-speech sounds. Adults will repeat these sounds back to a pupil in order to model that exchange. Over time, pupils will be encouraged to imitate the adult and to make new and different sounds, potentially leading to speech production.

EYE CONTACT

Eye contact is an important element of social interaction. Pupils will be encouraged to establish and prolong eye contact in order to obtain information that is relevant to them. For some pupils, eye contact with another person is a particular challenge, and pupils will be given strategies to show their attention and maintain contact, perhaps using a more fleeting glance. They may also use eye pointing as a means of indicating a choice by looking at the desired object or activity.

FACIAL EXPRESSION

Reading other peoples' facial expression is an important communication skill. For example, it can show interest, tension, boredom or excitement. It provides pupils with additional information about a given utterance for example, smiling after saying 'good boy' or frowning after saying 'no'. Facial expression can also be used as an alternative means of communication; pupils may be taught to smile for 'yes'/'more' or an absence of any facial expression or grimace could be taken to mean 'no'.

TURN TAKING

We teach and actively encourage pupils to demonstrate the ability to wait, share and take turns. This enables them to observe and use a range of verbal and gestural clues that are found in daily routines. There are many opportunities throughout the school day where this can be achieved, for example waiting for their turn during a group game.

BODY LANGUAGE

Pupils are encouraged to communicate how they are feeling, their wants and needs through the use of appropriate body language. For example, a pupil may put their hands down when they are ready to participate in an activity or reach out and touch in order to interact with another person.

PONITING

Pupils may point at objects as a means of communicating needs and wants.

IMITATION

Imitation can be used as a stepping stone to more functional communication skills. For example, imitating basic physical actions such as clapping can be used as a step to learning recognisable signs. Imitation of sounds and simple words is helpful in developing pupils' confidence to use words spontaneously. Games in which adults take turns with a pupil to vocalise or carry out an action can be very empowering and pupils learn to take the lead and then to respond to someone else's cue. This early form of communication is a fundamental step in learning the concept of a reciprocal exchange.

Early Communication - Reason to communicate

We all need a reason to communicate. The first reasons young children usually communicate are being hungry, tired or happy or feeling poorly.

Later, they learn to communicate to convey a range of intentions, for example, to make requests, reject, comment or share an interest. They could do this non-verbally and/or verbally, for example by shaking the head and by saying, “No!”

Adults can provide lots of reasons to help a child communicate by creating little obstacles and then waiting and looking expectantly for the child to indicate what they need or want: for example, by placing favourite toys out of reach, giving the child a paintbrush but no paints, giving them half of an orange/biscuit or by not filling the glass to the top with milk/water. (See “**sabotage**” worksheet)

At these early stages of communication there may be some pupils for whom their communication is non-intentional, by this we mean that they may have developed the ability to vocalise or give eye contact, but do not yet understand the concept that this has meaning for them or another person. Through careful pupil-adult interactions (intensive interaction, shared and joint attention activities), pupils may develop an understanding over time, that their communicative behaviours carry meaning and can have a purpose, including:

SEEKING ATTENTION

This is a very simple form of communication where the pupil asks to be given attention in the sense that their presence is acknowledged. We aim to teach appropriate ways in which someone’s attention should be gained such as reaching out gently, approaching another person, crying or making a sound to get attention.

NEED SATISFACTION

This is where the pupil communicates a desire either for an object or for assistance to do something such as pointing for a drink or tugging at their trousers to use the toilet.

SHARED ATTENTION

Shared Attention is where the pupil wants another person to share an object or an event with them which they find interesting. This is different from NEED SATISFACTION in that the pupil does not want anything except to share the experience.

POSITIVE INTERACTION

This is more advanced than merely seeking attention and covers actions such as turn taking and forms of interaction which express positive emotional reactions such as giving objects to other people or clapping to indicate pleasure.

SIMPLE NEGATION

When a pupil appropriately communicates that they wish to be left alone, want to stop their involvement in an activity or don’t want to be involved in the first place, this is called simple negation. Examples of this are waving goodbye when they want someone to go or frowning to show displeasure. Refusing would not always be accepted in all circumstances e.g. where educational activities need to be completed.

CHOICE MAKING

Choice making is encouraged at a very early stage in order to give pupils advocacy. The pupil is required to make a simple choice between objects and/or activities which is then accepted such as indicating their preference of drinks between orange and blackcurrant at break time. To begin with the number of options will be limited but later widened.

Early Communication- Opportunities to communicate

The child needs opportunities to communicate with others in order to develop their communication skills. It is important that adults give the child time to respond to and to initiate interaction. Peers may often interpret what a child wants, for example, they may approach the adult to say, 'He wants a drink', which then means that the child's opportunity to communicate has been taken away.

Sabotage!

- Put favourite things in view but out of reach and then wait.
- Offer a **choice** then wait.
- Hide things in clear plastic jars with screw top lids.
- Choose 'People Toys', activities that your child can't do without your help. For example; bubbles were your child needs your help to undo the lid.
- Offer things bit by bit and then…wait. For example, a little bit of juice and your child has to request 'more'.
- Do something unexpected then…wait. For example; put your child's gloves on their feet!!
- Stop a favourite activity and wait for your child to request it to happen again.
- Take turns playing with your child's toy and encourage your child.
- Put one part of an activity out, so your child needs to request the other. For example, paint without paper.

Requesting 'more'

One of the first messages a child will learn to communicate is to say they want something! This may be as simple as a baby crying when they want milk, or a toddler reaching for a favourite toy. Another early message that children learn to communicate is to say that they want "more" of something. This may be drink, food, an activity, a toy, a person…

Ways that a child can request "more":

- looking at what they want
- crying/facial expressions
- reaching/pointing
- vocalisations
- signing "more"
- saying "more"

Motivation

Watch what your child is doing and look for activities that they are really interested in (we might say "what motivates your child?" or "follow your child's lead") This might be playing with toy cars, watching bubbles, playing with musical toys. Go with what **your child wants to play with** not what *you* want your child to play with.

Be inventive!
Think about all the senses - things we hear, things we see, things we feel, things we taste, things we smell, and movement. You might be surprised at what you find really motivates your child.

You might want to try:

- Bubbles
- Musical/ flashing light toys
- Songs and nursery rhymes
- Tickling or rough and tumble play
- Inset puzzle
- Building blocks
- Bouncing on your lap or on a trampoline

More!

- Now you know what motivates your child it's time to encourage them to ask for "**more**".
- Let them have a go with the activity – for example if you have chosen a car on a track, let the car go down the track a few times with your child helping to push the car.
- Then STOP and WAIT. Look at what your child is doing. Your child might be looking at the car and at you, they might reach for the car, they might make a sound or a physical action.
- Give your child verbal praise "**more** car". Your child has just requested **more**!
- If your child loses interest it is okay, try again at another time or you might want to find another activity which they find highly motivating.
- Keep your response consistent. The aim is to teach your child that if they do something e.g. look at you and then the car or reach for the car they will get **more**.

Choice Making

What is choice making?

- Choices are a good way to encourage your child to say new words, without them feeling as if they are 'performing' for you.
- When you offer the choice you have modelled the words for them with visual support
- You are giving your child the chance to tell you what they want, without relying on pointing or nodding/shaking their head.

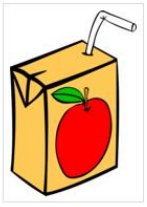
How can you help?

If you want to encourage your child to say what they want it is best to offer them a choice.

E.g. "Do you want milk, or juice?"



or



Turn Taking

If you ask a question like this, they need to indicate milk or juice – otherwise you won't know what they want.

This is much better than asking a yes/no question e.g., if you say "Do you want milk?" – your child only needs to say yes, or no, and doesn't get the chance to practice.

Things to try:

Any activity can be used to practice choices, although it may mean that things take a bit longer than usual e.g.:

1. Choosing between two books, videos, toys, sweets, drinks, snacks
2. Choosing between two activities, drawing or dressing up, park or garden
3. Getting dressed – What next? – socks or T-shirt etc.

What is turn taking?

Some children find it difficult to wait, share and take turns. Turn taking is a really important skill to develop at an early stage to help develop the rules of turn taking in conversations.

How can you help?

- Before you do an activity, demonstrate it first. Make sure your child knows what to do.
- Indicate whose turn it is by saying e.g. "Mummy's turn", "Katie's Turn", and use pointing/gesture if necessary.

Give and Take Games

Posting boxes – take turns to post objects into a box.

Balls – sit opposite your child and encourage them to throw the ball backwards and forwards.

Cars – take turns to roll cars towards each other.

Floor Play

Building beakers or bricks – take turns to add another beaker or brick to the tower.
Lift out puzzles – take turns taking pieces out/putting back in.
Musical instruments – take turns banging a drum or shaking, for example, a sealed pot of rice.
Skittles – take turns to roll the ball and knock them down.

Objects of reference

What is it?

An object of reference is a whole physical object, part of an object, that you hold or touch to represent or identify;

- A person (e.g. perfume = Mum)
- An object (e.g. a cup = drink)
- A place (e.g. towel = bathroom)
- An activity (e.g. goggles = swimming)
- An idea (e.g. different shape = day of the week)



If you are using objects of reference as a means of communication, you need to think about how that object will make sense to the person you are using it with.

- Items are often chosen because of their multi-sensory properties (e.g. a piece of scented soap to signify washing) or their link with the activity (e.g. a piece of seat belt/buckle to signify going in the car).
- The object of reference must be relevant to the individual, so two people may have different objects of reference for the same toy or activity.
- Avoid objects made of a material the person dislikes.
- Manipulating the object helps the child build up a mental picture of it.
- The object may be a miniature version of the real object, for example a toy car to represent a real car.

Objects of Reference can be used to support

- receptive language/understanding
- memory and sequencing of events
- signalling the beginning or end of an activity
- choice-making
- requesting items and activities
- story-telling and recalling events
- expressive language
- understand more of what people are saying

How to use Objects of Reference

Over time, a connection develops between an object and what it means. Regular repetition with a few objects makes it easier to make the connection between the object and its meaning.

- Give the pupil the object of reference before you start the activity. Give an instruction with sign (if possible) ‘Now we are going to paint’.
- After giving them the object of reference, it is important to start the activity immediately.

- Use the object consistently every time you do that activity.
- When the activity starts, take the object of reference from the pupil and put it away.
- Once the pupil understands the connection between the objects and the activities, they can be offered objects to choose an activity.
- It is useful when multiple adults are working with a pupil, to put a picture/symbol with the object. This enables all staff to know what the object means. It also prepares the pupil for the next step which are symbols.







Objects of reference top tips…

If you have complex disabilities and use objects of reference, the objects need to be:

- Personal to you.
- Used to mean the same thing every time.
- Presented in the same way every time.
- Presented before an event or activity.
- Used every time you're going to do something you know about, meet someone you know or go somewhere you know.
- Kept near you during the event, activity or meeting.

If you use objects of reference to communicate with someone with complex disabilities, the objects need to be:

- Personal to the person you're communicating with.
- Used to mean the same thing every time.
- Presented in the same way every time.
- Presented before an event or activity.
- Used every time the person is going to do something they know about, meet someone they know or go somewhere they
- Kept near them during the event, activity or meeting.

Also:

- Try to spend time observing closely how they do something, or what they do when they meet someone.
- Use all your senses to learn how they experience someone or something. This can help you to identify objects of reference that have meaning for them.

Developing Play Skills

Children learn best through play because it is fun. Children will learn best when they are interested and when they choose to lead the play themselves. This means we let the child choose what to play with and how and them the adults join in with the activity.

You can help a child learn through play by providing the toys and **opportunities**, watching how they play and showing them how to play in new ways. This will help build new skills.

There are several different types of play which a child will learn gradually as they develop:

- **People Play**
- **Sensory & Exploratory Play**
- **Cause and effect Play**
- **Physical Play**
- **Construction Play**
- **Creative Play**
- **Pretend Play**

Play is vital for the development of communication skills and can help to improve social skills such as turn taking, eye contact and copying. It can also help to develop understanding, attention and listening and imagination.

People Play

Children need to learn how to engage with, and play with people before they play with toys. People play is the first kind of play that children learn to do and is fundamental for the development of interaction, communication and learning.

People games are games without toys, just involving you and the child in an easy relaxed environment where you are both enjoying each other's company. These games work because they have a predictable and repetitive element that all young children enjoy.

Repetitive tickle games and rough and tumble play are the best ways to encourage a child to become giddy and excited, to anticipate what is going to happen next and then to request more of the same activity.

Play games like:

- **"I'm coming to get you…."**
- **"1…2…3…tickle…"**
- **"Ready, steady……."**

Your child might like more physical games such as bouncing them on a bed or trampoline and spinning around.

Try to build the anticipation of the tickle or fun part, and give the child a smile or a cuddle at the end to indicate the rhyme has finished. Repeat, repeat, repeat! Lots of repetition of the rhyme will help the child to learn it. When the child is familiar with the rhyme or song, build in a pause and wait. Wait for the child to indicate that they want you to continue – this may be in the form of a look, a sound, a movement of their own or your hands, a smile.

More games:

- **Round and round the garden.**
- **This little piggy went to market. Peek a boo.**

This is the child's turn in the interaction and is the basis of turn-taking and communication. Let the child lead the interaction and have fun playing with them. Children need to learn to succeed at these people games before they will be successful communicators.

Sensory Play

Sensory and Exploratory play helps children to learn about the world around them. It also:

- helps children become more accepting of new sensory experiences including food
- helps children to develop movement and coordination
- helps children learn that they can have an effect on the things around them

Activities to try;

- Create a sensory bin. It's simple for children to enjoy sensory play when you create a sensory bin for them to explore. ...
- Playing with food. ...
- Sound tubes. ...
- Play dough. ...
- Balance beam. ...
- Calming bottles. ...
- Sandbox. ...
- Swing, swing, swing…

Physical Play

Physical play is the type of play that gets your child moving from big movements like running and jumping to small movements like **picking up a pencil or tying a knot**.

Activities that promote these benefits:

- 'Tag' or 'it'
- Running around.
- Climbing.
- Swinging.
- Skipping.
- Riding (bike, scooter, skateboard)
- Ball games.
- Dancing.

Construction Play

Construction play, also called constructive play or manipulative play, is the type of play a child engages in when **manipulating objects or toys to construct or create something**. The child explores the materials and objects around him and learns how to create intentionally with them.

Cause and effect Play

Developing cause and effect is an important stage in a child's play, learning and social communication development. This kind of play helps the child to learn that their actions can cause something to happen. When a child pushes a ball down a hole the ball falls, when the child pulls an adult they come. This helps to develop curiosity, shared attention and communication.

The activities below all help to develop cause and effect skills:

Toys you can squeeze and shake (sensory toys)



'Lift-the-flap' books and books that make noises.



Pull and push along toys



Musical toys such as shakers, drums, keyboards and noisy push button toys



Pop-up toys such as a jack-in-a-box, pop-up animals



Toys you can blow like bubbles or a whistle



Stack cups or blocks into a tower and knock them down



Wind-up toys



Creative Play

Everyday Creative Play examples include **playing musical instruments (percussion), painting, collage, home corner play, dress ups, singing nursery rhymes and action songs, puppets, story-telling, dancing to the beat**.

Pretend Play

Examples of pretend play are: being superheroes, playing 'mummies and daddies', playing shopping, dress-ups, playing flying to the moon, tea-parties, playing trucks in the sandpit and playing with dolls and teddies to name a few.

Intensive Interaction

What is Intensive Interaction?

Intensive Interaction is a way of entering the world of and communicating with nonverbal children and adults who may have autism and/or complex needs. The approach is based on the way we observe and respond to the actions and noises of babies, and interpret these as communication. It helps a person and their communication partner to connect and enjoy each other's company more.

It's about watching closely how a child or adult responds to different situations through their body language, voice and facial expressions – and responding to this.

Intensive Interaction is two-way communication and can be used at all times in all environments.

- Play based, practical approach to interacting with children who find being social and communicating difficult.
- Helps to develop pre-speech and early communication skills e.g. eye contact, sounds, facial expressions.
- It can reduce repetitive and self-injurious behaviors

Prior to initiating Intensive Interaction techniques, we might observe behaviors that will often revolve around the individual communicating with themselves through a variety of ways:

- Touch – stroking, knocking objects, hitting themselves
- Rocking
- Making sounds – vocalising, tapping objects etc.
- Visual – flapping with fingers or spinning objects etc.

As a communication partner, we need to reflect back these movements and sounds, as that is the language they are using and are familiar with. A session will involve spending some time with the individual in a quiet relaxed environment, observing, and following their lead. If they make a movement, respond by copying the movement, if they vocalise copy the vocalisation. These sessions may be very brief to start with, but as the individual becomes more relaxed around the communication partner, the sessions increase and the individual's responses, and ultimately initiation, increase. This is more than just copying, it is more like developing a conversation, responding, turn taking and developing an interaction. The copying can be altered, varied, added to, or done in different forms as well, and this will help the process develop. The individual's development of simple communication skills will increase their acceptance of other people being around them, which in turn may reduce their stress levels and challenging behavior.

How Intensive Interaction Benefits Pupils

- Awareness of others
- Being comfortable and accepting the presence of those around them.
- Engagement for longer periods of time (small increases)
- Interact in more complex and diverse activities.

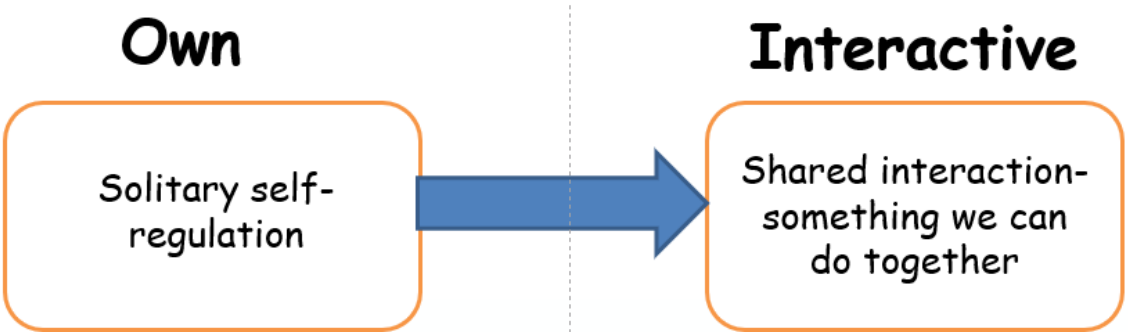
- It involves ‘learning their language’ and responding. Not just ‘what’ but ‘how’.

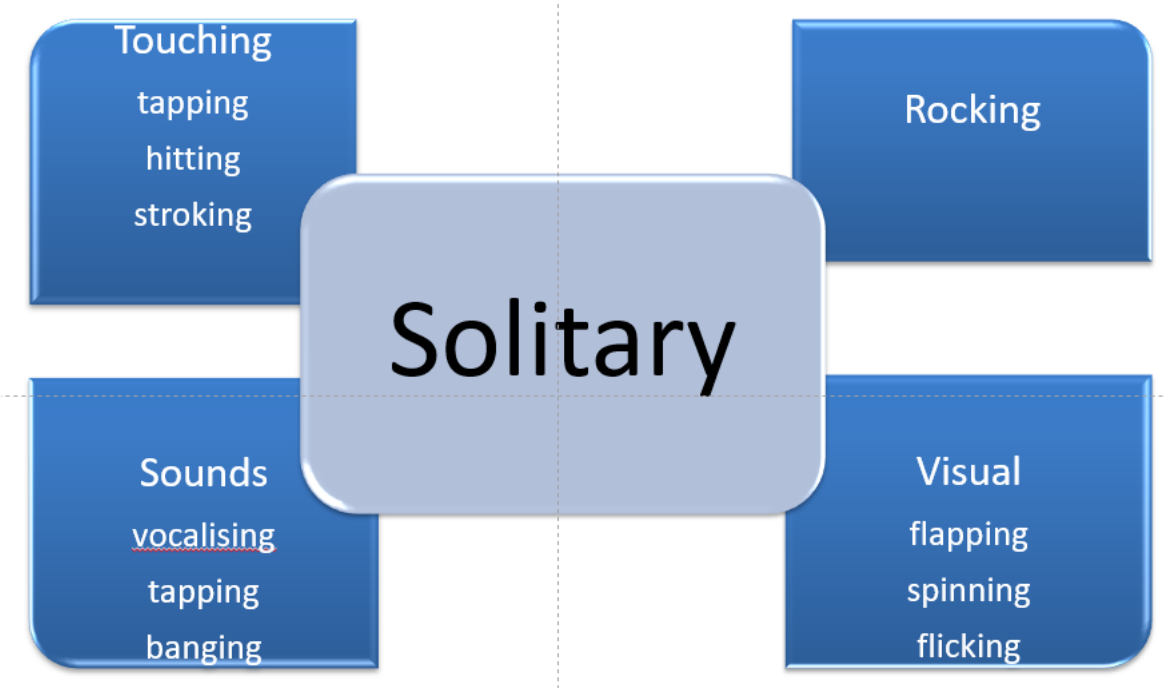
Ultimately, we are looking for the individual to:

- Accept our presence
- Allow some presence in personal space
- Attend to another person (even fleetingly at first)
- Allow and use some touch
- Engage in eye contact
- Use facial expression
- Focus on body language and facial expression
- Take turns in communicative behaviour
- Take turns using vocalisation which may start to have meaning
- Experiment with communication
- Learn cause and effect

How Intensive Interaction Works

- Intensive Interaction is a fun process!
- The Communication Partner is guided and ‘tunes in’ to what we know about early communication and applies this.
- It’s more than just copying and mimicking, it is entering their world and understanding possible intent of their actions.
- What the child finds meaningful.
- Emotional engagement and setting up signals that the brain recognises.
- Shift the attention from solitary stimulation to a shared activity.
- Focus on the person you're supporting and put aside any thoughts or pre-conceived ideas of your own.
- Adjust your own approaches/behaviour/voice to appear less threatening.
- Observe what their body language is telling you.
- Treat everything the person you're supporting does as if it's communication.
- Use timing and rhythm in the interactions, which can lead to games, anticipation and turn-taking.
- Rather than always mimicking exactly, use slight variations and have fun





Shared interaction

- As a Communication Partner, we need to reflect back these movements and sounds, as that is the language they are using and are familiar with.
- A session will involve spending some time with the individual in a quiet relaxed environment and observing and following their lead.
- If they make a movement, respond by copying the movement, if they vocalise copy the vocalisation.
- These sessions may be very brief to start with, but as the individual becomes more relaxed around the communication partner the sessions increase and the individual's responses, and ultimately initiation, increase.
- This is more than just copying, it is more like developing a conversation, responding, turn taking and developing an interaction.
- The copying can be altered, varied, added to, or done in different forms as well, and this will help the process develop.
- The individual's development of simple communication skills will increase their acceptance of other people being around them, which in turn may reduce their stress levels and challenging behaviour

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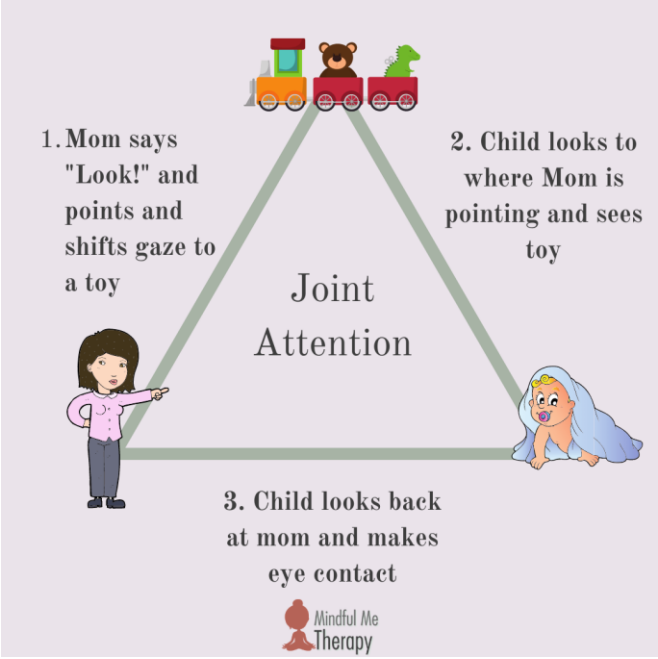
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Joint and Shared Attention

What is Joint Attention?

- Joint Attention is the ability to share focus on an object or area.
- When one person directs their attention to another person's focus of attention.
- 'Attention' is an invisible concept.
- Assumed attention is gained by other forms of physical behaviour e.g. turning head, following gaze, sharing looks.
- Not only sharing focus on the object, but an awareness that the other person is also attending to the stimulus.
- If the child does not demonstrate psychical behaviour e.g. does not turn head, then it is suggested the child does not have an awareness of the object and the shared attention from the adult.



Why is Joint Attention important?

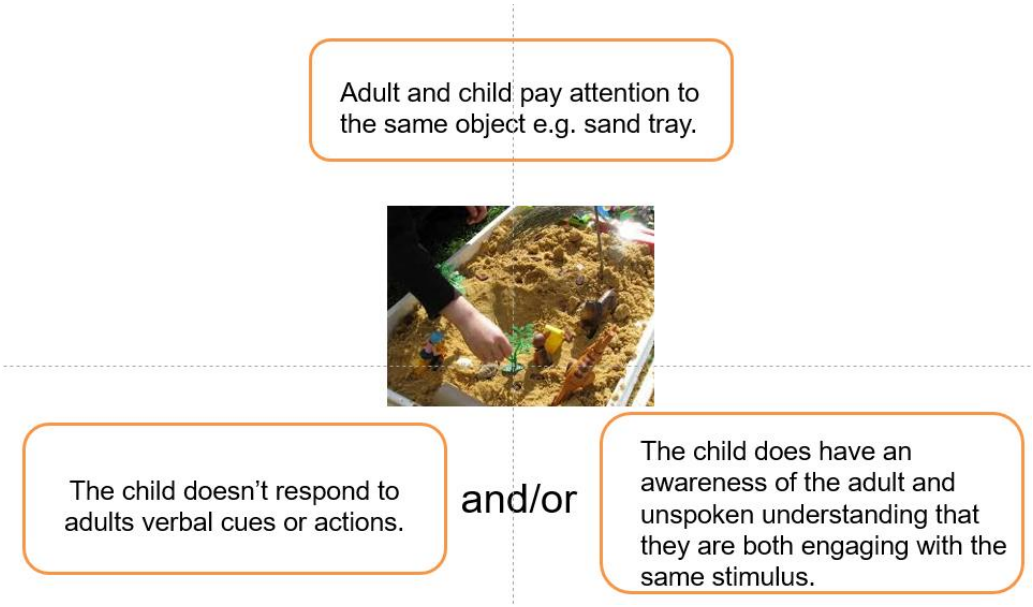
- Joint attention is important to develop communication and language learning.
- Joint attention therapy focuses on improving specific skills related to shared attention such as:

  Pointing

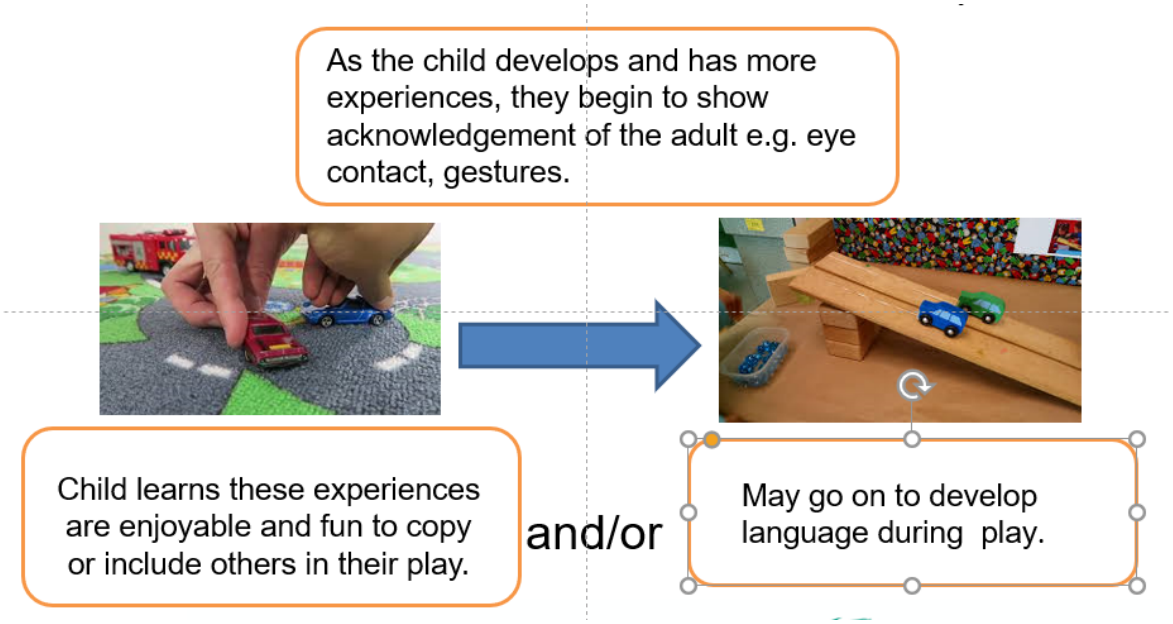
  Showing

  Coordinating looks between a person and an object

How Joint Attention Develops



How Joint Attention Develops?



- 0- first months: babies pay attention to people when they are face-to-face with them.
- 5-6 months: babies start paying attention to objects in their environment.
- When care givers notice this, they will join in while their baby is exploring. This develops 'Joint Engagement'.

Joint Attention or Joint Engagement?

- **Joint Attention-** specific skill that involves directing someone's attention with eye contact and gestures and/or language in order to share a moment with that person.
- **Joint Engagement-** when an adult and child are interacting together while focused on the same object for a period of time.

What we can do to support?

- When children are interacting and engaging with an adult, this is an important stage in their development to learn modelled behaviour and language.
- Quality of engagement and then extend the interaction.
- Copy what the child does- on their level, play in the same manner. Start quietly at first and see if the child notices. If they do, smile and carry on!
- Find something the child finds motivating and interesting- selection of stimulus.
- Reinforce proximity- keep the curiosity!
- Gradually increase level of engagement-extend expectation of engagement.
- Gradually increase the amount of time of engagement.
- Variety of activities to hold joint attention

https://youtu.be/qt5UarKBYMQ

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_5AIqUR7U0

Communication Skills

(Means of Communicating)

VOCABULARY

Pupils need to have a relevant vocabulary, be it spoken, signed or symbolic which will not only enable them to make requests and choices, but also to comment on the world around them and communicate their understanding. Single words are usually taught first and these are both names of concrete things, such as cup, as well as abstract ideas such as ‘go’ or ‘more’. Single words can then be combined in order to create increasingly complex sentences.

The 3 main factors in teaching new vocabulary are:

I Understanding

At this stage pupils are taught that the object/action/concept has a label which can be defined using a spoken word, a photograph, a symbol or a sign.

2 Expression

Here pupils are encouraged to use the label; be it spoken, signed or by selecting a photo or symbol. They will be encouraged to use this consistently in a controlled environment so that they gain confidence using it and then will be given opportunities to use this more spontaneously in a range of contexts.

3 Generalisation of the concept

If assessment showed that, for example, the word `drink’ is not part of a pupil’s existing vocabulary, we would then go on to teach this word. It would be of little use, however, if we taught a pupil to sign the word ‘drink’ but they were not able to generalise it to include different types of drinks, e.g. milk, orange, tea, coffee, water or lemonade in all situations. This very much relates to how teaching programmes are devised and implemented, combined with the type and choice of teaching materials used. We aim to use a wide range of different materials/pictures to teach the same word. This is vital in helping our pupils to generalise their language skills as they are being taught, ensuring that the learning does not become ‘situation specific’. A teaching programme is incomplete if a child can only succeed using certain teaching materials in a specific situation.

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

Once a pupil has a wide vocabulary of single words it is appropriate to start teaching simple grammatical structures, beginning with putting 2 words together e.g.: Want + Drink, Hit + Ball.

Teaching would then be extended to include further grammatical structures including: questions; the use of ‘and’; commands; and developing the use of complex and multiple sentences.

PHONOLOGY

Some of our pupils who develop spoken language experience difficulty in producing the sounds needed to form words correctly. We aim to help these pupils speak more clearly and confidently not only through their general language work but also through specific individual teaching objectives.

These may include helping them to overcome physical difficulties with their articulation, using strategies to support their auditory processing or teaching them new sounds.

PARALINGUISTICS

Paralinguistics includes all remaining aspects of spoken language; volume, intonation, rhythm, stress, fluency and the emotional content of speech. Many pupils at this level of development will acquire these skills naturally but where appropriate they too will be targeted through individual teaching objectives.

Communication Skills

(Reasons for Communicating)

As pupils' language develops, we aim to build on their existing communication skills to enable them to communicate for a variety of purposes. The following reasons to communicate illustrate the range of situations which we provide to encourage pupils to develop their ability to communicate effectively. It is important to consider however, that language development is not linear and that no communication should be restricted to a particular purpose.

- Greetings and goodbyes
- Requesting
- Conversing
- Sharing feelings
- Sharing information
- Describing or commenting
- Questioning and answering
- Directing
- Persuading
- Reasoning and predicting
- Planning and evaluating
- Negotiating
- Protesting and denying

Pupils are given the opportunity to speak in a range of contexts and to consider different audiences not only in the classroom, but also when welcoming visitors, when representing their peers in the student council or when out and about in the community.

This skill of 'listening' is also developed to encourage attention of the world around them. Pupils are taught to extract information from what they hear, be it to identify an animal sound or a peer voice or to decipher key facts from spoken words. Pupils will also develop awareness of the social conventions that surround having a two-way reciprocal communicative exchange such as nodding or making appreciative sounds.

Communication Skills

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)

For a proportion of our pupils the acquisition of spoken language is either delayed or does not develop at all and alternative methods of communication are necessary. Pupils continue to be exposed to spoken language which is used alongside their specific communicative device or approach. Using an AAC device does not hinder speech development nor is it a last resort. It can be a powerful tool of augmentation, providing a primary output mode as well as an input mode to acquire new vocabulary through adult modelling.

Examples of alternative communication tools are:

Objects of Reference: These are objects which have had specific meaning assigned to them and which are used consistently across the school for individual pupils. Objects enable pupils to physically hold, explore, receive and give as part of a communicative exchange. At Frank Wise School we have a small library of objects which are used to communicate to a pupil what is happening next in their day. The objects are chosen for their sensory specificity and durability. For example, a small carpet tile denotes going to the classroom. This is presented to the pupil prior to them going and they are encouraged to keep hold of it until arriving in the classroom. Once in the classroom, the pupils will be encouraged to take notice of the carpet tile as the adult says, “Classroom.”

Symbol Based Communication; which may be paper-based or electronic

At Boarshaw Primary School we use Clicker ( ), which offers pupils a huge vocabulary of symbols for both concrete things such as a ‘cup’ and a more abstract concept such as ‘under.’ These can be made available to pupils on voice output devices in the form of single switches or more complex grids. Likewise, paper-based versions can be presented as single symbols, combinations of single symbols which a pupil builds up to form a sentence from a choice array or a grid, from which pupils select key words as part of a dialogue. Teachers, in consultation with the speech and language therapists assess which system is the most appropriate in terms of functionality and the individual pupil’s communicative level. Where appropriate, we aim for all pupils to have a paper-based version of their communication system, so that in the event of the technology failing for any reason, they will still have a means to communicate.

Sign Language

It is our policy to use **Signalong**, a vocabulary of signs derived from **British Sign Language** to ensure consistency across the school. We teach signing in context and reinforce the signs with spoken language. For many pupils signing will supplement their verbal communication but for others it will be their primary method of communication.

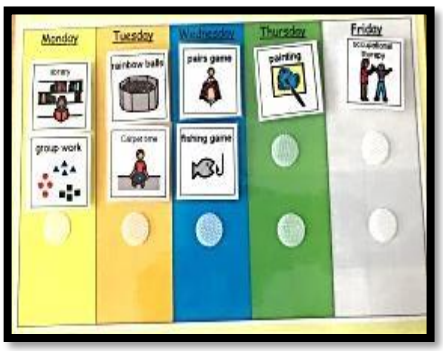
It is important to emphasise that the use of communicative systems is both multi-layered and interchangeable, with the aim of creating a personalised, communicatively rich learning environment, rather than defining a child as being a particular type of communicator.

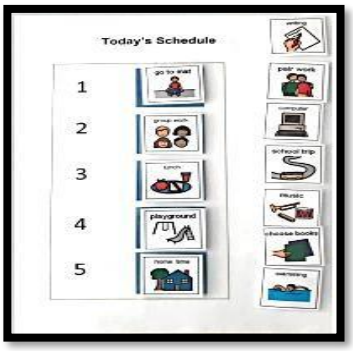
Using visuals to help communication

Visual Timetables

What is a visual timetable?







A visual timetable shows what is happening over a certain period of time in a visual way. It might use real photographs, cartoon pictures or symbols. It could show a short amount of time e.g. what is happening now and what is going to happen next or it could show longer periods, such as the plan for part of, or all of the day. Simply, a visual timetable shows the plan, in pictures.

Why use a visual timetable?

We all like to know the plan, we like to know what is happening and when, so we know what to expect. This is just the same for young people. For some of the young people we work with it is even more important to them to know what is happening and when. Using visual timetables can help young people to see and understand what is happening and help them to prepare for what is coming next. There are many benefits of using visual timetables, here are just a few:

- ***Helps to manage anxiety*** - Using visual timetables can help young people to manage their anxieties by helping them know what to expect.

- ***Easier to understand*** - It takes the pressure off verbal language skills and gives the young person more time to process the information. Words come and go so quickly, whereas pictures can be referred back to.

- ***Supports independence*** – Visual timetables can support young people to know what they are doing in the day and enable them to prepare for tasks themselves. They can be used as part of a morning routine or to help sequence a task e.g. getting dressed, as well as to help the young person to be able to do things independently.

- ***Supports decision-making*** – Visual timetables can support young people to make and communicate decisions about what they would like to do. For example young people can be given an option of activities and they can choose what and when they would like to do things e.g. “after lunch do you want to play with the cars or do some painting?”.

- ***Helps to manage challenging behaviour*** – all behaviour is communication. When young people are feeling big emotions, they can behave in ways which challenge us. Using visual

timetables can help young people to see what is happening and be clear about the expectations. This can support them to manage situations better.

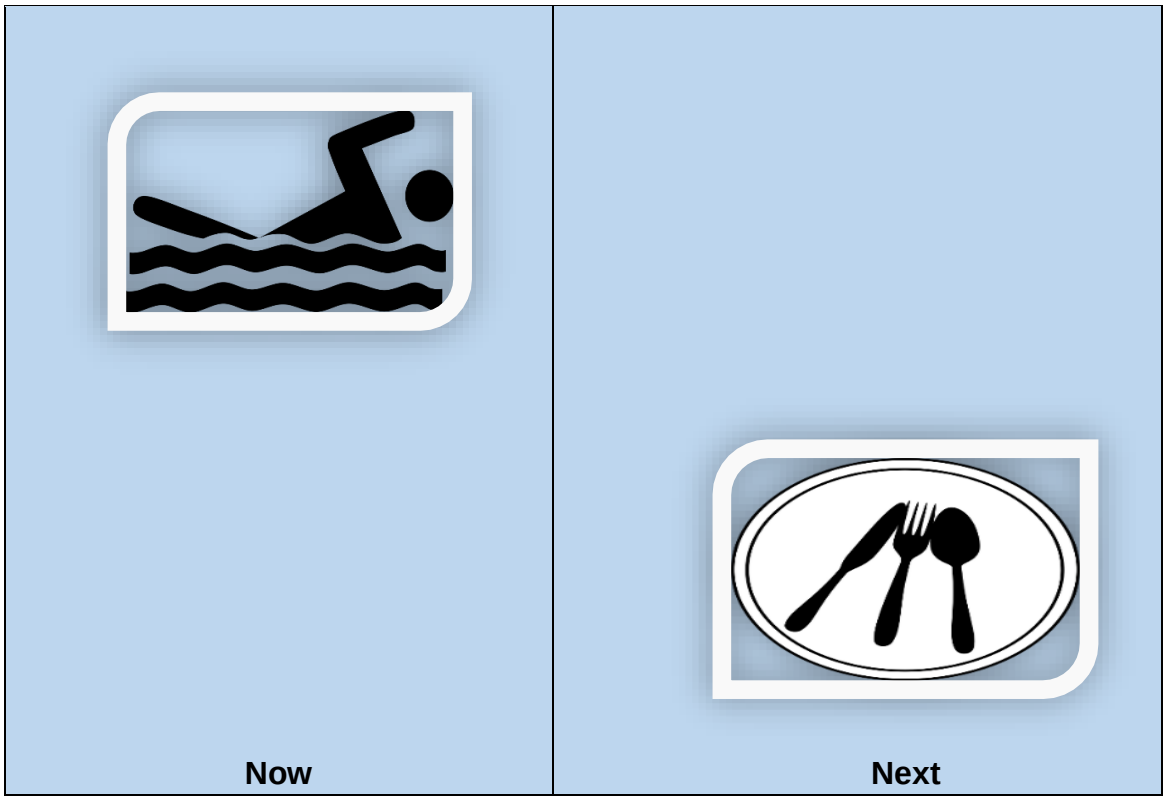
How do you use a visual timetable?

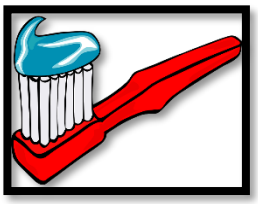
There is no right or wrong way to use a visual timetable, it is about finding out what works best for the young person. Below we have a guide about what a visual timetable could look like:

1. Create the template.

Most visual timetables start with a template. The template will remain the same and the activity pictures can be changed. Depending on the young person, the timetable will show different amounts of information. Remember not to try to fit too much into the timetable, as this can be overwhelming. The timetable could show what is happening now and what is coming next or it could show the activities across the day. You might want to use different templates for different situations. Some young people will be happy knowing just the activities, which are happening in the day, for others they may want to know exactly when things will happen. You can use a simple template or you could personalise the template to reflect the interests of the young person.

- Typically, the pictures attach onto the template so you will want to think about how you are going to do this. Some people laminate the template and the pictures and attach them together with Velcro. Other people use paperclips or blue tack. It can be helpful to include an envelope, pouch or small box as part of or near to the template to store the pictures in.

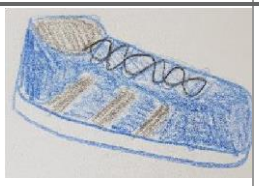


			
Tooth Brush	**School**	**Dance**	**Home**

10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00
				

2. Choose your pictures.

It is important that the young person understands what the pictures on the timetable mean. It can be fun to include the young person in choosing the pictures. Some young people like to draw their own pictures to use on the timetable. Some young people will need to have real photographs and some will need photographs of the exact objects e.g. their actual shoes. Some will prefer to have cartoon pictures of the activities and some may prefer to use symbols. Again, there is no right or wrong answer - it is whatever works best for the young person!

Actual Photo of their own item	Generic Photograph	Cartoon	Drawing	Symbol
				

3. Now it's time to try it out!



Together with the young person place the pictures onto the timetable and talk about what the plan is. Allow the young person time to ask any questions about the plan. Use the timetable to show the

young person what is happening now and what is coming up. After an activity is complete, take that picture off the timetable to help the young person know where they are up to. It may take a while for the young person and the family to adjust to the visual timetable but many people find it to be a helpful tool. It is important to be consistent with the timetable and to keep using it. You may want to adapt your timetable as your young person grows or you may want to make a few different kinds to use in different situations.

Communication friendly classroom toolkit