

10 tips for making communication successful

1 Reduce background noise.

Choose a quiet place so you can both concentrate on the conversation.

2 Face the person you are talking to and make eye contact.

However, remember not all children and young people will be happy, or able, to look you in the eye. Those with autism may find this particularly difficult and young people using some sort of communication aid or book/board will have to look at what they are doing.

3 Tell them if it is the first time you have met and talked to a person who uses an alternative method of communication.

This will give the other person the opportunity to show you the best way to communicate with each other.

4 Ask them what helps.

Ask them to show you how they use their AAC system to help you understand what, if anything, you need to do to make communication successful.

5 Establish how they communicate 'yes' and 'no'.

This may not always be the obvious nod and shake of the head.

6 When you ask a question wait for a reply.

This sounds obvious but for some people it may take them longer to reply than you may usually wait for an answer.

7 Be patient.

Sometimes it can be tempting to finish off a person's sentence for them and some welcome this as a way of speeding up communication. However, others may find this annoying so always ask if the other person is happy for you to do this.

8 Always be honest about how much of the conversation you have understood.

This will give the other person opportunity to explain points that have not been understood, or ask for support.

9 If you don't have enough time, then agree to meet later.

You will need to give time to the conversation.

10 Check back and recap.

When finishing a conversation, make sure that you both agree you have said all what you wanted to and check you have both understood everything that was communicated.