



Communication boards



A communication board (other names: theme board /aided language display) is a picture symbol board that can be used to support an interaction around an activity. The pictures (words) on the board will enable a child and the adult supporting them to make comments, requests or give a direction to each other. Communication boards worked well with children or young people who struggle to communicate using speech and who will benefit from a picture support system to help them get their message across and children that have good picture recognition and can point to a picture or sequence of pictures to communicate a message.

Step 1

Discuss as a class team/department what key areas your student needs with a communication board:

ie: Development around asking for lunch, choose activities, specific lessons, expressing feelings

Step 2

Create the symbols needed using board maker. The symbols boards can vary in the number of pictures and the amount of core words on them. Core words are words we routinely use in our sentences to build messages e.g. /I, you, want, go, like/.

Step 3

Demonstrate to the pupil how to use the communication board

Step 4

Respond to all your students attempts to communicate. They may hold up the car to show you and you can point to the picture to comment "it's a car".

Show and model to your child how to use the picture on the board to talk. Do this by pointing to the pictures as you play "my turn" "go!" send car down ramp....

Do lots of repetition of communication messages using pictures

If your student points to a picture then say the word or phrase

Expand on their message showing them how to link pictures to build their message e.g. child points at car picture, you can respond by linking up two pictures to make a request [I want + car] or make a comment [it's a red car]

Fix any errors so if they combine two words using pictures but wrong way round "car red," you can model back the correct way to link the pictures "yes red car."



Tips



- Encourage child to use pictures to talk by pausing in an activity hold car at top of ramp wait to see if your child responds by pointing to /Go!/ or withhold all the cars see if your child points at picture to request [I want car]
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmuBaL-xWfw>
- Some student's may require PECS but this would need to be assessed and staff need the appropriate training.

