

Constructing an "All About Me" Book

It can often be difficult for communication partners to know how to talk with people with severe communication impairment, if they have little or no information about whom they are, what they enjoy, and how they communicate. The aim of setting up an "**All About Me**" book is to **give** others this type of **information**, and to **encourage them to interact** with the person with communication difficulties.

It should contain **simple written information**, as well as **photos** of items of interest to that person (e.g. family, friends, favourite places or toys).

It should also contain photos of the person, showing how they communicate specific messages through gesture and body language. This can help others interpret what the person may want, in turn giving the person more opportunities to be active in communication.

Use the following guidelines to help develop an All About Me book. Any one who knows the person well should be involved in this process (e.g. family members, close friends, school staff).

MATERIALS

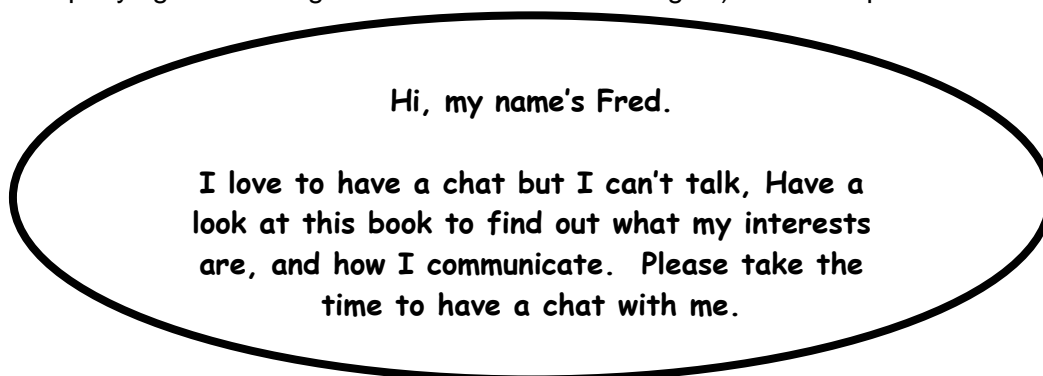
- Robust book or folder (e.g. photo album, book with clear plastic sleeves)
- Camera/photos
- Information collecting forms (at the end of this handout)
- Paper, glue, other stationery

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gather relevant information about the persons' everyday life, interests and relationships that you are happy to include in the book. This could include:
 - Name, age, place of residence
 - Family members (immediate and significant extended family)
 - Pets
 - Friends
 - Favourite places to go
 - Favourite toys or activities
 - School and relevant information about teachers and class
 - Any relevant daily routines
2. Collect photos of people and items relating to the information gathered, and place into the book with a sentence or two explaining what the photo is about.
3. If photos can't be collected for some information, simply use written information. However, make sure language is kept simple, and easy to read. Ensure writing is neat and clear, or typed text is in a large, easy to read font.

COMMUNICATION INFORMATION

1. **Gather** as much **information** as possible about what **gestures, facial expressions, body movements** and **behaviours** the person performs to communicate specific things. The last page to this handout is a **form** you can photocopy and give to everyone who can give information for the book. Each person should fill in each section for every gesture etc they know the communicator makes to communicate something.
2. **Take photographs** of the person performing the gestures, where possible, that will be included in the dictionary. If photographs do not clearly indicate the meaning of the gesture, or if it is not possible to take photographs, then provide a **written description** (and a drawing if possible)
3. Clearly label each photograph with an **appropriate message** for communication partners (eg. "SCRUNCH UP MY NOSE – when I do this, I am uncomfortable, and need help to change my seating position. I may also try to wriggle or squirm").
4. **Place each photograph, picture or description** in one sleeve of the book.
5. Put a **label** on the front of the book to explain how to use it. (A photo of the person accompanying the message can make it more meaningful.) For example:



6. Keep the book in an **easily accessible location** so that communication partners can refer to it as needed. If more than one book is needed (eg one for home, one for school or work, one for respite), plan for this beforehand. Make sure you have enough copies of photos, pictures, written descriptions and books to make all the copies you need.
7. **Update** the dictionary as necessary.

If you have any questions regarding putting together an All About Me book, please contact the speech pathologist from the CATS team on 02 9890 0181.

All About Me book for: _____

Personal Information

Personal Details and Important People	Favourite Places and Activities	Routines and tasks/ Other

People involved in completing this form: _____

Date Commenced: _____

Date Completed: _____

All About Me book for: _____

Communication Information

What _____ does	What this might mean	What you should do

People involved in completing this form: _____

Date Commenced: _____

Date Completed: _____