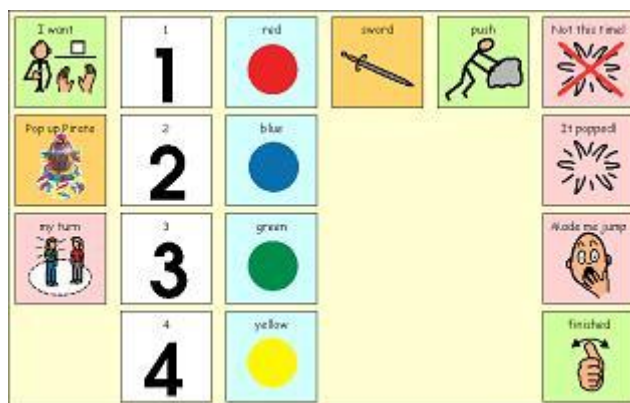


Using Communication Boards to Facilitate Expressive Language Skills

Communication boards are a visual way of representing speech/sentences. The client is required to point to the symbols to make up the sentence: they may or may not be able to speak the message as they do this.



The number of symbols used to make up a sentence will be dependent on the client's ability. Please discuss this with a speech pathologist if you are unsure.

When making a communication board, the following points should be considered:

- Arrange the symbols from left to right; in the order that you would construct the sentence.
- Include a variety of vocabulary to maximise the sentences that the client can create.
- Different parts of the sentence could be colour coded to help the client structure the sentences, for example, green for verbs, orange for nouns, blue for adjectives, pink for social phrases. (This uses the Fitzgerald Key, see Colour Coding handout for further explanation).
- When making a board for a game, ensure that there is a variety of sentence types: requests, comments, and a way to end the activity.
- Gradually increase the complexity of the boards to help the client to develop his/her expressive language skills further, increasing the length and complexity of sentence used.

When using the communication boards with the client, the following points should be considered:

- The client requires that the communication partner who is to interact with him/her, can also model the correct sentence structure and new vocabulary. This could be parents, teachers, or a more verbal classmate.
- The client should point to each symbol to make up the sentence, speaking the words as he/she does this, if they capable.
- If a client finds speech difficult, do not force them to speak, but accept pointing as their mode of communication.

Please Note: This information is provided for the purposes of information only, and should not be construed as a recommendation. Any prices and details are subject to change so please confirm details with supplier.

- Use the communication boards in a variety of situations including games, structured activities, activities that involve speaking in front of the class.
- Phase out visual prompts once the client is using the sentence structure you are working on consistently. (This may take months of practice.)
- Try to generalise into everyday situations, so that the client is using longer sentences in everyday activities.

Examples of activities in which communication boards can be used:

- Games (Pop up Pirate; Mr. Potato Head; Beetle Drive; Simon Says, etc.)
- Giving news (“At home, I ...” or “At school, I...”)
- Giving presentations in class/ in front of school.
- Working on use of verb phrases (describe pictures in books)
 - Person + Action, e.g. ‘boy jumping’
 - Person + Action + Object, e.g. ‘boy kicking ball’
 - Introduce ‘the’ and ‘is’, e.g. ‘The boy is jumping’
 - Extend with a preposition phrase, e.g. ‘The boy is walking on the grass’
- Working on the use of preposition phrases
 - Answering ‘Where’ questions, e.g. ‘in the box’
 - Extend by adding person, e.g. ‘The girl is in the box’
 - Making requests, e.g. ‘I want lolly in the box’
- Working on use of adjective phrases
 - Colour, e.g. ‘I want red lolly’
 - Size, e.g. ‘I want big car’
 - Shape, e.g. ‘It’s a square’
 - Number, e.g. I have 4 lollies



If you have any questions about putting together a communication board, please call the speech pathologist on the CATS team on 02 9890 0181.

Please Note: This information is provided for the purposes of information only, and should not be construed as a recommendation. Any prices and details are subject to change so please confirm details with supplier.