

Communication Boards

Communication Boards are single laminated sheets containing picture symbols that children can point to as a form of communication during their interactions with others.

They benefit children who find it difficult to use spoken words by:

- Helping them to understand and process the word the adult has said by providing a visual support and by slowing down the adult's rate of talking.
- Enabling them to communicate what they want to say by pointing to the symbols.

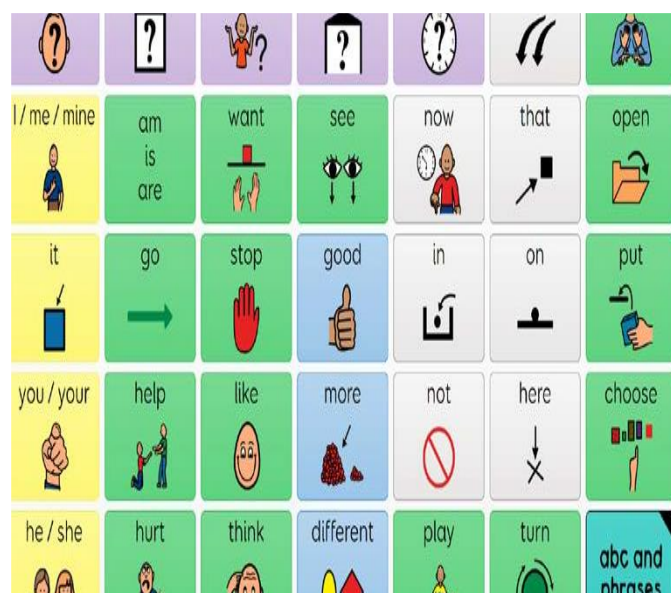
They can be used alongside other strategies children may already be using to support the development of their communication skills such as Objects Of Reference / Symbol Supports, Signalong, Intensive Interaction etc.

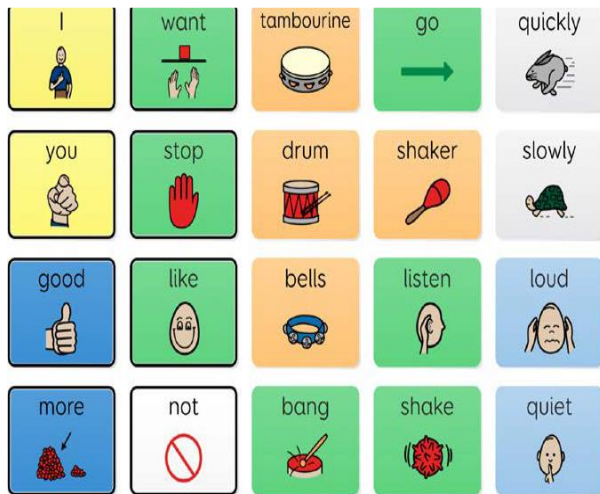
Modelling without Expectation or 'Inspire don't Require'

Communication Boards do NOT use hand over hand prompting. We teach the child how to use the Communication Board by modelling how to use it.

Core Communication Board: - contains exclusively core words also known as 'Power words'-
- core vocabulary makes up about 75-80% of the words we use everyday
- it allows children to communicate across all situations, in all settings and with all their communication partners.

Examples of core words include: I, WANT, HELP, OPEN, MORE, LIKE, GO, STOP, IN,





Activity Boards:

-Include vocabulary related to a specific activity or topic e.g. playdough, sand, music, snack, toileting etc.

-Will contain a mixture of core words and 'fringe' words (lower frequency words)

-Colour coded for parts of speech e.g. nouns are orange, verbs are green, adjectives are blue and pronouns are yellow.

How to use a Communication Board:

- 1) **Make the board available!** - Make lots of opportunities. The more the child gets to see the board being used, the more likely they will learn how to use it themselves to communicate.
- 2) **Find something motivating!** - find an activity that the child enjoys such as a fun toy, tickles, songs etc. If you are having fun together, this will be more likely to create opportunities for communication.
- 3) **Praise and respond to every communication attempt!** - A Communication attempt could be by making a sound, making eye contact, or touching anywhere on the board. E.g. if they hold up a car to show you, point to the symbol and say 'car'. If your child points to a picture then say the word.
- 4) **Model model model!** - Show and model to your child how to use the picture on board to talk do this by pointing to the pictures as you play "my turn" "go!" send car down ramp.... Repeat the same message lots of times to help learning.
- 5) **Expand the message!** - Once the child is pointing to symbols to communicate you can then expand on their message showing them how to link pictures to build their to make a request [want + car] or make a comment [red + car]
- 6) **Pause and wait!** - Once you have been using the Communication Board for a while, you can encourage your child to use it to communicate by pausing in an activity briefly and giving them the opportunity. E.g. hold a car at top of a ramp and wait to see if your child responds by pointing to /Go!/. If they do not point to the symbol, then model it for them as you say the word.

Contact your Speech and Language Therapist if you need more information.