

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Communication Book

What is a Communication Book?

A communication book is a book of symbols, pictures and photos that a child will learn to point to, to communicate with those around them.

Why use a communication book?

Speech is difficult for some children. They may find it difficult to make people understand what they are trying to say. They might say less than they want to because the words are hard to say. If the child is able to **show** their listener as well as **tell** them what they are trying to say they are more likely to get their message across.

Will using a communication book stop a child speaking?

No! A communication book is just another way of supporting communication. It is used **as well** as speech not **instead** of it. If speech is easier (or becomes easier) a child will naturally choose to speak rather than point to pictures.

What will the book include?

Your child's Speech and Language Therapist will request vocabulary from you and from school staff so that the book is meaningful and useful to your child.

The symbols are then presented in the book with "core vocabulary" on the left and "fringe vocabulary" on the right.

The "core vocabulary" is words that will stay the same on each page as they are words we use frequently in lots of different situations. The "fringe vocabulary" is more specific topic-based vocabulary that will change on each page. Topic pages might include things such as foods, activities, emotions .

How to use a communication book

- It is important to remember that this is a **new way** for your child to communicate, therefore they will need lots of time and support to learn how to use it effectively
- Children usually learn language by having adults and those around them, use the language themselves, which the child then learns to then copy. It is the same principle with using a communication book. The adult will need to use the book often to give the child the opportunity to copy this. The following steps will break this down further:

How to model the communication book for your child

- Choose an activity your child is interested in, for this example we will use cars.
- Open the communication book on the “cars” page and place it so both you and the child can see and reach the book
- As you start to play, comment on what you and your child are doing , as you do this, **point** to the key words that you are saying, in the book.

For Example :

“look **car**” “ a **police car**” “ do you want a **car**?” “ in the **garage**”

“ we **crashed**” “ let’s **race**” “ready, steady... **go**”

- Pause each time you model a word or phrase, allowing your child time to copy by also pointing, if they feel ready to.
- If you child points to any of the pictures, it is important to name the picture they pointed to, and then respond appropriately. For example, if your child points to “garage” you would say “ garage” and then maybe hand your child the garage, or place a car in the garage.
- As your child develops, you may start to point to more than one key word at a time. For example, you might say “oh no the **car crashed**” pointing to car and then crashed. The Core vocabulary can be used to create longer phrases for example “ **I want** the **police car**”

