Core board

You can use a core board to assist your communication if you don't use speech, or your speech is difficult to understand.

Core boards use high frequency words, or words that we use a lot, and in different contexts. These core words are important because they make up 80% of what we say.

You can talk about a range of topics, activities and situations. They can be used in conjunction with other communication tools to allow for access to communication everywhere.

Language is best learned in real situations daily, especially when the activity is motivating. A child may need to learn the language behind the core board first.

Familiarise them with the words using these 3 tips:

1. Model
2. Create opportunities
3. Respond

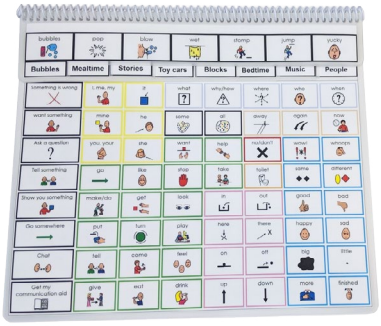
1. Model

Use the core board yourself. Show the child what it looks like to communicate with symbols. Point to the symbols as you talk.

Example: ***What*** *would* ***you*** *like to* ***do****?*

I want *to* ***go*** *to the* ***toilet****.*

You don't need to model every word you say, just one or two words more than your child can communicate. For example; If the child is not yet using single words, model at single word level.



2. Create opportunities

Children learn by doing. Provide opportunities for your child to see you using the board and to have a go themselves. The great thing about core words is that we say them in all contexts, throughout the day. Try to use the board in the same way. Think about using the core board while reading a story, singing a song, visiting grandparents, while at the park, or ordering lunch.

3. Respond

Make sure to respond in a positive way to all communication attempts. This will encourage the use of the core board and teach the child the power of communication. Having a back and forth taking turns pointing and adding meaning to the words is an important part of every interaction.

Example: The child points to 'happy', and you respond immediately with *"Does this activity make you happy? I like playing bubbles too".*

Remember we are all multi-modal communicators, using much more than our voices to communicate. Respond to and encourage all the ways your child communicates, such as eye contact, body language, spoken words, vocalisations or pointing to pictures.