

Tips and Techniques on Communicating with Disabled Children

It is always important to look at the child's behaviour

The behaviour can give you an indication of what is happening with the child.

- A behaviour incident chart will give you an indication of what the child's behaviour is like over a period of time.
- The ABC of behaviour is a functional assessment. You can gauge what happened before the behaviour - antecedent (A), the behaviour (B) and the consequence (C).

Communication Passports

This can be a pro forma that belongs to a child and indicates how they indicate yes and no etc.

Communication Tools

Pictures of items and symbols – perhaps the most important one is the stop symbol.

Preparation for Advocacy or any other meeting

If you are planning to meet with a child to do advocacy or other work, write a letter to the child in words and widget symbols letting them know that you are going to visit them. Include a picture of yourself with the letter.

All about me

It is good for children with communication difficulties to have pictures of people in their life who are important to them.

Medical Passport

This could be pictures of different types of medication for different ailments. The child could then point at the appropriate one and show other people eg if they have a stomach upset etc

Talking Mats

These can be developed to help children prepare for different situations. Pictures can be taken of children going to different events, such as the doctors. These can then be put into sequence and talked through with the child.

Helping the child prepare for a meeting.

A blank board can be used and the child could be supported to stick on pictures and symbols representing what they want to say. The focus for the meeting must be the child and if the child will not be in the meeting, a picture of the child could be placed in the room to remind professionals who they are talking about.

Mosaic Approach

It is important to use different forms of communication. This can include art work etc.

Chat box

This can be a box filled with objects of reference that the young person can use to symbolise what they want to do. Eg a spoon – means that they are hungry. A plastic duck – they want to feed the ducks. Different kinds of plastic bags from supermarkets and other shops – indicates where they would like to go to shop.

Tools to have available when working with disabled Children

A digital camera this can be used to communicate what a child wants. Eg A child took a picture of the sky – this was interpreted to mean that they like being outside and not inside all the time.

Blu Tac – to put up on the wall a picture of what a child is important to a child

A laminator – so pictures etc can be laminated

Two boxes – one covered in gift wrap and the other a rubbish bin

Things that are valued by the child can be placed in the former box and things that the child does not value placed in the latter.

Training Opportunities on working / consulting with disabled children

NYAS – specific training on advocacy for disabled children which provides an overview of the service. It is similar to “I’ll go first” and aims to enable advocates to interest and engage young people.

Advocacy skills with disabled children and young people

www.triangle-services.co.uk/index.php?page=course8

Introduction to Communication and Consultation

www.triangle-services.co.uk/index.php?page=course3

Two Way Street – Training video and handbook about communicating with disabled children and young people – Triangle

<http://www.triangle-services.co.uk/index.php?page=publications>

Resources

I’ll go First

<http://www.widgit.com/symbols/publications/publications/gofirst.htm>

Accessible Symbols – www.through-the-maze.org.uk

Link to the signalong site which include signalong symbols

www.signalong.org.uk/pubs.html

Makaton core vocabulary development project

www.makaton.org/resources/core-vocabulary.htm

A voice of their own – a toolbox of ideas and information for non instructed advocacy

http://www.bild.org.uk/03books_new.htm#AVoiceOfTheirOwn

Information on Consultation / Participation / Advocacy and Rights for Disabled Children

Consulting with disabled children and young people – Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/741.asp>

Speaking out - A guide for advocates for children and young people with learning disabilities

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/NewsAndEvents/InformNews/SpeakingOut_a_sp_ifega26009.html

Children's Society Resources on work with disabled children

<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what+we+do/Our+work/Disabled+children/>

Askability – a really good accessible website by the Children's Society for disabled children on advocacy – worth seeing

www.askability.org.uk

A campaign run by the Children's Society on disabled children and their rights

<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/all+about+us/media+centre/latest+news/Disabled+children+news/Javine+in+Trafalgar+Square.htm>

Resources on working with disabled children on Children's Society website

<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what+we+do/Policy/Disabled+Children/Advocacy+Resources.htm>

Resources from organisations who work with disabled children – if link below does not work – go into above link and it is the second document under resources from other organisations

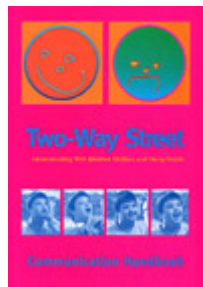
[Growing Up <http://advocacyresource.net/artman/publish/growing_up.pdf>:](http://advocacyresource.net/artman/publish/growing_up.pdf)

Speaking Out : Sounds Good Project A guide to advocacy for young learning disabled people in transition (16 -25) by the ARX Sounds Good Project

I can tell you what I want – The Children's Society Disability Advocacy Project

I can tell you what I want, a report, accompanied by a DVD, in which disabled children and young people shared their experiences of living away from home and said what they found most important about The Children's Society's advocacy services. The report is now being distributed to local authorities and health authorities to promote how vital it is for disabled children's voices to be heard.

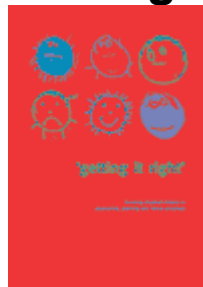
Publications available from Triangle - <http://www.triangle.org.uk/>



A handbook about communicating with disabled children and young people which also contains details of the main communication systems in current use in the UK and annotated references to good practice publications.

Price: £5.00

Getting it right (2003)



A practice guide for involving disabled children in assessment, planning and review processes. Written with help from disabled young people, it is full of practical ideas for making initial contact with children, working directly with children, observing children respectfully and representing children's views.

Price: £5.00

Three Way Street



Three Way Street - Communicating with Children and Young People is a unique training and development tool, designed to develop confidence and competence in communicating with children and young people. Three Way Street shows how to get direct communication going with a child in the presence of another adult, using their knowledge and skills when you need to.

Made with the active involvement of children and young people, the pack demonstrates a range of practical skills and strategies and a model of three way communication in which the child is central. The film looks at what helps and what doesn't help, taking children's views into account at every stage.

Price: £75.00