

Strategies to support developing communication

Communication that uses spoken language or signs may take longer to develop in a child with multisensory impairments.

BUT, that does not mean that your child is not communicating.

It is important to recognise and respond to your child's communications at its earliest levels.

Below are some simple strategies to help you with this, (Adapted from Gibbons 2018)

1. DEVELOP SHARED LOOKING

By supporting your child to follow the line of your arm as you reach for an object, this allows them to begin to understand the concept of pointing, and to share attention on an object that is outside of their own body.

2. USE TACTILE OBJECTS

Use real objects with your child, those that give immediate rewards are helpful to use at first to develop your child's interest e.g. bells, shakers, beads, chains, bunches of keys or measuring spoons.

Participate with your child in exploring them together, by moving your hand next to or under your child's as they explore.

Bring objects closer to your child so that they can discover them almost by accident.

3. USE GAMES THAT INVOLVE TOUCH

Ideas for this may be bouncing games, tickling games, songs such as 'Row, Row, Row your Boat' and massage.

4. MAKE FULL USE OF SOUND AND VIBRATION

Use objects that offer auditory reward, place them on a surface such as a table-top where vibrations can also be felt through the surface. An object can also be explored using tapping

so vibrations can be felt. Tap an object together or encourage your child to feel your arm or hand as you tap.

5. **USE WATCH, WAIT, FOLLOW** Lee and MacWilliam (2008)

An interest in objects may be subtle, such as your child becoming still, or slightly inclining their bodies towards an object or sound. Alternatively movement levels may increase.

WATCH- To notice these unconventional communications in your child

WAIT- Give your child plenty of time to respond (this may feel like a long time! But it is important to allow it)

FOLLOW- Respond consistently, so your child begins to understand that their action is being responded to.

It is equally important for your child to develop a receptive understanding of what is being communicated to them.

Strategies to develop this at early levels are as follows-

1. DEVELOP ROUTINES AND SEQUENCES

This will help your child to remember and recognise events and their patterns. If your child can anticipate what is about to happen it will reduce their anxieties

2. USE TANGIBLE OBJECTS

By attaching a tangible object to a routine it will help to further develop an understanding and anticipation of what is about to happen e.g. If you put a bib on your child every time you feed them, allow them to touch the bib with you before you put it on. This can be done initially by placing your hand under your child's, and allowing them to feel your exploration of the bib. Gradually your child may explore the bib themselves without feeling pressured to do so.

References

**Gibbons, P. (2018) *Using Objects to Promote early Language and Communication* BATOD
Last updated 12/4/2018 Available from**

Children's Services and Skills Directorate
SEND 0-25 Service
Special Inclusion Support Service
Sensory and Physical Impairment Team



<file:///C:/Users/sampe/Desktop/UNI/Using%20objects%20to%20promote%20early%20communication%20and%20language%20for%20deafblind%20children%20-%20BATOD.html>

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Lee, M. and MacWilliam, L. (2008) *Learning together: A Creative Approach to Learning for Children with Multiple Disabilities and a Visual Impairment*. LONDON: RNIB