Social and functional Communication-Gesture

Information for parents, teachers and carers

For more information, please contact Speech & Language Therapy on:

For York and Selby Area: 01904 726599

For Scarborough Whitby, Ryedale Area: 01723 342472
UNIVERSAL LEVEL: ‘What you need to know’
Support, enable and include children through:

- Gesture is a useful way to support both understanding of spoken language as well as to support a child who has unclear speech making themselves known. Using gesture will encourage your child’s speech and language skills. The parts of the brain used for gesture (pointing waving) and talking are next to each other. Gesture stimulates both of these areas in the brain.

- Sometimes we suggest more formal gesture such as signing systems these may include:
  - Makaton
  - Sign-a-long
  - Baby sign

These may be used within your child’s current setting as a whole class approach already or you may have attended Baby Signing classes.

- Access our training courses, such as;
  - Makaton Taster sessions
  - Makaton Beginners Workshop

You can place your name on a waiting list for these by contacting our training co-coordinator Gill Clarke; Gillian.Clarke@york.nhs.uk

- The ‘All About Me’ resource is a free and downloadable pack that is available on the Makaton website: [https://www.makaton.org/shop/shopping/.../Free-resources](https://www.makaton.org/shop/shopping/.../Free-resources)

TARGETED LEVEL:
How to support your child further;

- Your child has been identified as having a speech and language difficulty that may benefit from the use of sign, this is likely to be a short term strategy whilst their expressive language and clarity of speech improves.

- Using official signs can support children in learning abstract concepts such as in/on/under or colours as they give a visual to something that isn’t very concrete.

- Knowing what your child is trying to say helps you to echo back the correct word clearly. Children will increase in confidence to communicate and then drop signing naturally when they are ready. It is paramount to always speak and sign when using signing systems such as Makaton, Sign-a-long.

- In a setting in the initial stages it can be useful to have a sign of the day or week that all staff use.
  
  ➢ Pick one sign that will be of use to your child e.g. Juice

  ![Sign-Example]

  Use it frequently throughout the day in front of your child whenever you would naturally say the word anyway.

- Use your dominant hand as your main signing hand- this helps keep the signs the same

- Always model the correct sign to an individual even if they have their own unique way of signing something

- Use your facial expression to show them what you mean (e.g. tired-tired face)

- Use a tone of voice that matches the word (e.g. tired- sound tired)

- When an individual has difficulty understanding spoken language, but cannot sign themselves or chooses not to, you should still use sign to support them

- Where appropriate give hand-over-hand support to individuals to develop their signing skills

- See also our other advice sheets regarding how to support speech and language development
Tell us what you think

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact;
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Teaching, Training and Research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of staff and improve health and healthcare in our community. Staff or students in training may attend consultations for this purpose. You can opt-out if you do not want trainees to attend. Staff may also ask you to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Patients, relatives and carers sometimes need to turn to someone for help, advice or support. Our PALS team is here for you.
PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or via email at pals@york.nhs.uk
An answer phone is available out of hours.

About Us

Providing care together in York, Scarborough, Bridlington, Whitby, Malton, Selby and Easingwold.

Caring with Pride:

Our ultimate objective is to be trusted to deliver safe, effective and sustainable healthcare within our communities.

Our values:

- Caring about we do
- Respecting and valuing each other
- Listening in order to improve
- Always doing what we can to be helpful