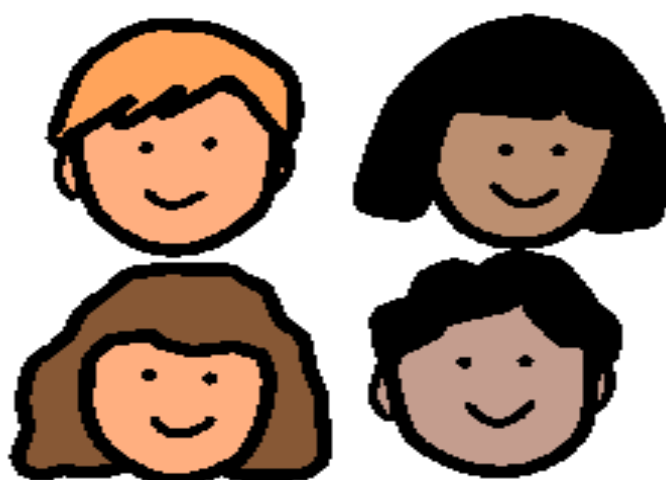




**Central London  
Community Healthcare**  
NHS Trust

**Early Years  
Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)  
(for 0-5 year olds)**



Supporting your child's social  
communication at home  
(Language Partner level)

April 2020

## The Pack

This home programme pack has been designed by Speech and Language Therapists and is based on the most up-to-date research on communication development in the early years.

## How-to-use this pack

1. Take a look at the **top tip**
2. Each top tip has an **activity** idea you could try
3. Think about how you can use the top tip in other **daily routines** (e.g. snack time, small group time, outside play) to increase the opportunities for the child to learn throughout their day
4. If the child isn't responding in the way you expect or the activity isn't working; move on to another activity, and come back to it.
- 5... and finally keep it **fun** and keep it **going**!

## Tip 1: Support your child to say “hello” and “goodbye” to familiar others

**Why?** – It is a frequent and naturally occurring opportunity to raise your child's awareness of others around them

- It's an important skill in starting interactions with others
- It is a building block for forming friendships

### Activity 1: Say hello to Igglepiggle! (or other favourite toy!)

**You will need:** Your child's favourite soft toy

**What to do:**

- Before you and your child go out, put your child's favourite toy somewhere near the door – in a place you will see it as soon as you come home
- Before you go out of the door, stop and wave/say “goodbye Igglepiggle!” (toy's name)
- Encourage your child to look at the toy, wave and copy the words if they can (don't insist – if you keep on doing this regularly, they will pick it up when they are ready) – you can help them wave if they can tolerate this.
- When you come in, stop and say “hello Igglepiggle!” (toy's name)

### Make saying hello /goodbye a familiar routine....

..... when family members come home/go out

..... when you see friends in the street

..... when you go to visit friends/family



**You could also try using some of these ideas for using greetings:**

- Reading books about saying hello/goodbye
- Watch video books on youtube e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGURQ6485Tk>
- Learn a hello song e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x23rTDI4AMs>
- Use a photo, symbol or sign to prompt your child to say hello/goodbye
- Create a pretend play scenario, to practice saying hello/goodbye e.g. play at being a shop keeper saying hello/goodbye to customers

- Using toys or themes your child especially likes in learning is more likely to get and keep their attention
- Repeating words and routines helps children to remember and use them

## Tip 2: Provide regular opportunities for turn taking games

**Why?** To support peer interactions within a familiar game or structured activity

To encourage back and forth interactions with adults and peers

To develop awareness of others



## Activity 2: Bricks in a tube

**You will need:** A long cardboard tube (from wrapping paper or kitchen towel)  
Approximately 10 small bricks that fit inside the tube

### What to do:

- Put the bricks into a small bag or box
- Hold the cardboard tube steady on the floor or table with one hand.
- Use the 'my turn' visual cue card (in the resources section at the back of this pack) to indicate whose turn it is to put a brick into the tube. Place the cue card in front of the person whose turn it is.
- Take it in turns to put one brick into the tube (the bricks will stack on top of each other in the tube)
- When they are all in the tube, you can gently lift up the tube to reveal a tower.
- Use the phrases and corresponding Makaton signs or gestures for 'my turn', 'X's turn', 'waiting' as appropriate to support the child to wait for their turn.
- In time the aim is for the child to ask for a turn using words and/or by giving you the picture symbol.

### You could also try taking turns to:

- Put cars down a car runner
- Operate a toy, such as a Jack in the box, Pop up Frog
- Catch a fish in a fishing game
- Posting pictures into a post box
- Throw bean bags into a hoop

**! Remember** to include the child's interests, for example if the child loves Pepper Pig, you could take turns posting pictures of Pepper pig.

### Tip 3: Support your child to give and follow simple instructions

**Why?** To support understanding that communication influences what others do

To develop ability to follow somebody else's agenda

To develop understanding and use of vocabulary

Practise listening skills



### Activity 3: Musical Instruments

**You will need:** A selection of musical instruments  
Stop/Go visual cue cards (see resources section)

**What to do:**

- First try the activity with just you and your child, then progress to introducing other children, as a paired or small group activity e.g. with siblings or friends.
- First practise stop/go games with the instruments to make sure your child understands the instructions 'stop' and 'go' – you can use visual cue cards to support understanding (see resources section).
- Then let your child take a turn to give the instructions.
- Some children get confused by the visual cue cards and may find it easier with just verbal instructions.

**Extra challenge:** You could move on to giving/receiving instructions about playing the instruments 'loud or quiet.'

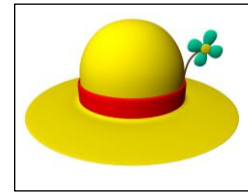
**You could also try:**

- Stop/Go instructions with pushing cars
- Stop/go instructions with jumping, running, clapping etc
- Giving/receiving instructions with bubble blowing – giving the instruction to blow the bubbles 'high or low'

## Tip 4: Support your child to use different people's names

### Why?

- Children with social communication difficulties might leave out the 'subject' (person) in their sentence
- To verbally direct communication to a particular person
- To develop relationships with others



## Activity 4: The hat game

- You will need:**
- The visual resources for the hat game (see resources section) including photos of the people who will be playing the game
  - A selection of hats/glasses that match the visual resources

### What to do:

- Show your child how to use the 'sentence strip' by choosing one of the hat symbols (from the 'what?' choosing board) to place on the green square on the sentence strip. Then place the photo of your child on the orange square, so it reads 'X wear the cap', or 'X wear the sun glasses'.
- Encourage your child to follow the instruction, and select the corresponding hat to wear.
- Then your child can have a turn making the sentence strip. To help him/her focus on the 'person' you can pre-load the sentence strip with a hat visual on the green square. Then your child will only need to choose 'the person' photo from the 'who?' board, for the orange square.
- Encourage your child to 'read' the sentence strip, either by pointing to each symbol and/or by saying the words aloud
- Take turns to choose the hat and make the instruction and involve siblings or friends if they are available.
- Some children with social communication difficulties will find it difficult to follow an instruction given to them - instead wanting to choose their own hat to put on. Try and encourage them to follow the sentence strip, as this is an important skill to learn too!

### You could also try:

- **Dressing up game: Use a photo choosing board with fancy dress items – the sillier the better!** E.g mummy wear gloves (these may be too big!), daddy wear socks (these might be your child's socks and therefore too small!)
- **Use Hello/goodnight songs/routines** – in the morning and at bedtime, use hello songs /have a routine that includes individual family members' names: "hello mummy"... "hello granny"... "hello Michael". If someone is missing, make a game of this too, modelling: "where's Sarah?"
- **When playing turn-taking games** - say who's turn it is next: e.g. "Jamie's turn", "Asif's turn" "daddy's turn".

**Tip 5: Develop your child's ability to use names and action words together, for example 'Daddy jump', 'Mummy open'**

- Why?**
- Developing a foundation for sentence building
  - Extending understanding that communication influences people's actions



**Activity 5: Open the Pot**

- You will need:**
- A see-through container (that the child can't open)
  - A highly motivating toy (depending on child's preference)
  - Photo of the person (e.g. parent/carer) playing with the child

**What to do:**

- Place an object that your child really likes (for example 'car' for car runner) inside the see through container and secure the lid.
- Stick a photo of person playing with the child on the lid
- Leave the container close to the child and move away (but so the child can still see you).
- When the child brings over the container for you to open, model the phrase "[adult's name] open" for example "Daddy open".
- The photo of the adult is there to prompt the child to use the adult's name.

**You could also try:**

Putting motivating items **'in sight but out of reach'**:

- This can work with toys, favourite snacks or objects of reference e.g. a favourite cup to represent a drink
- Put it in the same place each time, so your child knows where to look for it
- If your child stands near the item and lets you know they want something (e.g. by crying, vocalising, looking or reaching) get down to their level and point up at the object
- Model a short phrase e.g. "mummy dinosaur", "want dinosaur" "dinosaur down" etc.





## Tip 6: Support your child to use a wider range of 2 word phrases including action words

**Why?** Action words are important 'building blocks' for sentences

### Activity 6: Playdough: (rolling, cutting, squashing)



dance



brush



kick



dig

#### You will need:

- playdough, rolling pin, cutting/shaping tools
- choice board to support your child's talking (see resources section)

#### What to do:

- Use the visuals in the resource section to support your child to follow simple directions with the playdough
- Point to the relevant pictures/symbols as you give the instruction e.g. "cut the playdough", "add glitter" etc.
- The encourage your child to give you an instruction
- You can add another level by playing with other children (e.g. siblings) and saying who should do the actions e.g. "James roll the dough" – you could use photos for this
- Or add describing word e.g. "Squash the blue dough" or "cut the glitter dough" – you will need to have different kinds of dough for this.

**Your aim is** for the child to form 2 word phrases with a 'person + an action' to give instructions and to follow instructions from others.

This idea can be adapted for a wide range of activities for example:

#### You could also try:

- o Playing with a ball (kick, throw, catch, roll, bounce)
- o Playing with water (pour, splash)
- o Pretend play picnic: (teddy/dolly/child/parent/carer – eat/drink/cut/mix)

You can make your own sentence strips using 'boardmaker' – see:

[www.boardmakeronline.com](http://www.boardmakeronline.com) – a free 30 day trial is available

#### Commenting

- During supported play activities, use 2 word phrases to comment on what the other children are doing, for example at a playdough activity: 'Louis' cutting', 'Mary's rolling'. You can support these comments with visuals if available and or gestures/Makaton signs alongside the spoken action word



## Tip 7: Help your child's vocabulary development and extend their requesting skills

**Why?** To extend ability to make specific requests, for example using two word phrases (attribute + object) – 'red car', 'big ball'



### Activity 7: Cars down a tube/ramp

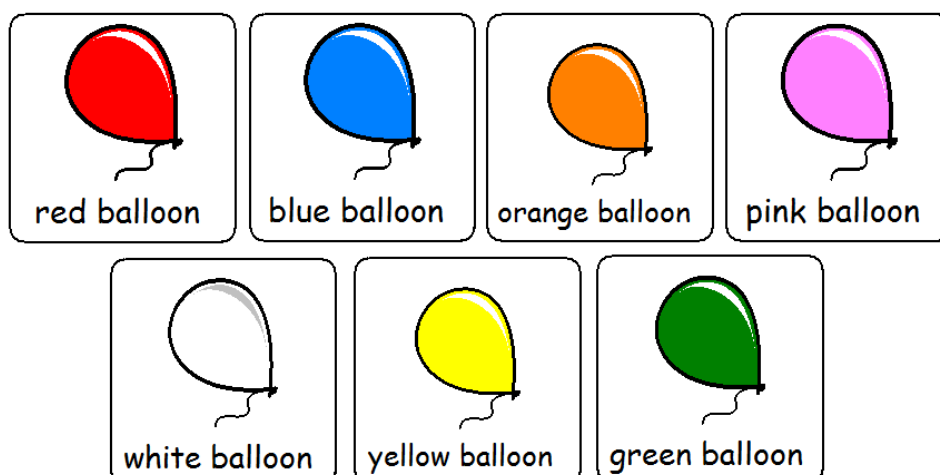
**You will need:** A range of different cars – varying in colour and/or size  
A tube that the cars will fit down or a ramp

#### What to do:

- Offer the child a choice of two balls varying by an attribute, for example "would you like 'red car or 'blue car'?" – hold up the objects to show the child as you offer the choice.
- Verbally repeat the child's choice: 'you want the red car'
- Allow the child to roll the car down the tube or ramp and then repeat

#### You could also try:

- The same activity but using different objects, for example balls of different size and colour, or different coloured balloons filled with a little water to give them weight.
- When your child is able to answer choice questions using (attribute + object) – you could try using choosing boards (see the balloon example in the resources section)



## Tip 8: Support your child to develop their pretend play skills

**Why?** - It is the most important type of play for language development.

**Pretend Play** provides opportunities for your child to:

- Learn what things are for e.g. a teddy is for hugging
- Copy everyday activities e.g. pretending to make tea or bath a doll
- Practicing everyday activities develops a child's understanding.
- Practice new words that they have learnt.

### Activity 8: Soft toy picnic

#### You will need:

- ★ Dolls/soft toys; a toy tea set/plastic cups, plates, spoons, (safe) knives, forks etc
- ★ Toy food/real food items
- ★ A piece of cloth (e.g. a tea towel or scarf) for a 'picnic rug'

#### What to do:

- 😊 Place the toys on the 'picnic rug' and tell your child: "The toys are having a picnic"
- 😊 Show your child how to give a plate, cup, spoon etc to each doll/soft toy
- 😊 Comment in simple language as you give food and drink to each of the soft toys e.g. "Teddy wants an apple", "dolly wants bread"
- 😊 Pretend to make the toys eat the food/drink from the cups



**Children love it if you make funny noises e.g. slurping drinks, saying "nom nom" or "yum yum" when eating or "Yuk!" to show teddy/dolly doesn't like it !**

Give your child lots of real life experiences that can be copied in play e.g. shopping, cooking or going to the park.

Look and listen for any examples of your child pretending and then expand on this e.g. if they pretend to feed themselves perhaps you could join in by feeding teddy

You don't need lots of toys—everyday objects can be the best toy in the house.

#### You could also try....

... using an empty cereal packet as a car

.... a cardboard box can be a train

.... an empty paper towel roll can be a trumpet

..... the laundry basket can be a boat

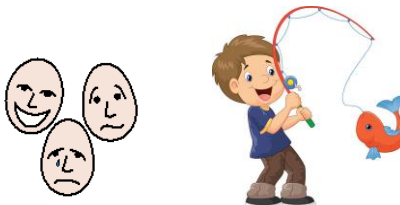
... a saucepan can be a drum

.... shoe box could be teddy's bed

Get the idea?

## Tip 9: Help your child to understand and use simple emotion words

**Why?** – Children with social communication difficulties often find it hard to interpret their own and other people's emotions



### Activity 9: Fishing game

#### You will need:

- Emotions face pictures (see Resources section at end of this pack/ search for your own pictures on-line, that fit with your child's interests e.g. Lego)
- A stick (you could use a pencil), with magnet attached with a piece of string (magnets available at craft shops / online)
- Paper clips
- Paper fish (see resources section or find your own on-line)

#### What to do:

- Cut out the fish and faces and stick them back to back, so each fish has a face on the back.
- Attach a paper clip to each fish
- Take turns to 'catch' a fish with the magnet
- Name the emotion shown on the face picture

#### You could also try:

- Play games using 'emotions' picture cards – for example hide and seek with the pictures -stick them around the room and say... "Who can find... the happy face", rolling a large dice with the pictures attached – label the emotion card and make the corresponding facial expression yourself to consolidate understanding.
- Asking the child to make the different facial expressions themselves, and take photographs to show them/use a mirror.
- When reading stories, comment on the characters' emotions.

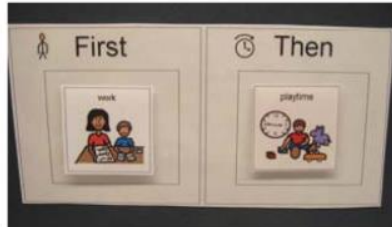
## ! Remember

- Your child may need support first, to learn what the picture symbols represent – label their emotions throughout the day, and label your own and other children's emotions too, for example 'you're happy', 'Mia's feeling sad'. Show the corresponding emotion visual symbol at the same time.

## Tip 10: Use a visual schedule to support your child to follow adult-led activities

**Why?** – Children with social communication difficulties often find it harder to concentrate on activities that are not of their own choosing

### Activity 10: First/Then (Now/Next) Board



#### You will need:

- Pictures or photos to represent activities you know your child enjoys e.g. playing ball, jumping on a trampoline, doing a puzzle (see resources section: visual timetable pictures)
- A now/next board (see resources section)

#### What to do:

- 1) Choose two activities that your child likes (e.g. “first elephant song, then bubbles”).
- 2) Place the pictures on the now/next board, with the activity you are going to do first on the left and the second activity on the right side of the board
- 3) When the first activity is finished, warn your child using a countdown, say ‘elephant song finished’, show the picture for the second activity and start the second activity.
- 4) Once your child has understood that the second activity will follow the first, the board can be used to encourage him to do a less preferred activity first, with the reward of a desired activity afterwards (e.g. first put on coat, then elephant song).

**Now/Next boards can also be good to support transitions between activities**

#### You could also try:

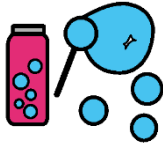
##### Making the day predictable:

- Use a visual timetable for your child's day or part of the day
- Use a visual timetable for turn-taking activities with pictures of the children taking part
- Be consistent in giving warnings before an activity ends – for example a 2 minute warning and then a 5,4,3,2,1 countdown.
- Use visual schedules to complete simple tasks, using pictures of the different steps to take



# Resources

Here you will find visuals and additional information to support the tips and activities in this pack

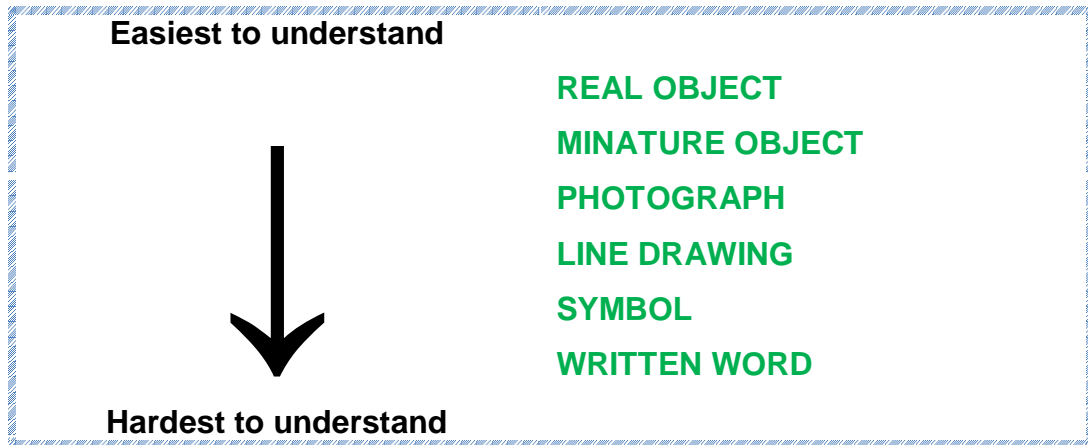


## Using Visuals



Using visuals can be helpful for children because they are **permanent**, in contrast to spoken words which are **transient**. Because visuals don't disappear they can help children understand information and support them in completing tasks.

There are different types of visuals and children may find some easier to understand than others:



Key to the success of visual supports is that they are used **consistently** across all the child's environments, so the message is the **same** at home and at nursery.

### REAL OBJECTS

Real objects can be used to show a child what is about to happen and are sometimes known as 'Objects of Reference'. They are concrete - the child does not need to 'interpret' them in any way. It is vital to choose objects that are relevant and meaningful to X. These may not be the most obvious things to others people!

The object/s chosen should be kept in a place that is **accessible** to X, so that he becomes familiar with the objects and has the opportunity to initiate. This may be a shelf or a bag or basket. **The objects should remain in that place until they are used for communication.**

Examples of Objects of Reference:

<b>Object</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Teddy	<i>It's nap time</i>
Beaker	<i>It's drink time</i>
Plate	<i>It's lunchtime</i>
Football	<i>It's time to play football</i>
Shaker	<i>It's music time</i>
Hat	<i>It's outside play time</i>



## **MINATURE OBJECTS**

As above, but sometimes it is more practical to have small Objects of Reference. If light enough, these can be stuck to a large board using Velcro to create a timetable or choice board. Parts of an object could also be used, for example a piece of towel to represent bath time, or a piece cut from clothing to represent a person.

<b>Object</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Toy bus	<i>We're going on the bus</i>
Piece of towel	<i>It's bath time</i>
Toy spoon	<i>Dessert</i>
Doll's coat	<i>It's home time</i>
Ping pong ball	<i>Outside playtime</i>
Square of dress fabric	<i>Mummy</i>



## **PROMPTING STEPS - OBJECTS OF REFERENCE**

### **STEP 1**

#### **X IS GIVEN THE OBJECT AND LED TO THE ACTIVITY**

This is the easiest level where X only has to co-operate with their key-worker.

### **STEP 2**

#### **X IS GIVEN THE OBJECT AND GOES TO THE ACTIVITY WITH PROMPTING**

This may be physical prompting, gestural prompting, verbal prompting or a combination of some or all of these. The aim is to reduce the level of prompting needed until X moves on to...

### **STEP 3**

#### **X IS GIVEN THE OBJECT AND GOES TO THE ACTIVITY WITHOUT PROMPTING**

When X is able to do this it shows that they have gained an understanding of the meaning that the object has, but they are not yet at the level of initiating.

OR

#### **X GOES TO THE OBJECT SPONTANEOUSLY THEN GOES TO THE ACTIVITY WITH PROMPTING**

This shows that X has some idea that the object has meaning and is able to initiate but is unable to make the connection to the activity without prompting.



## STEP 4

### **X TAKES THE OBJECT, SPONTANEOUSLY AND GOES TO THE ACTIVITY WITHOUT PROMPTING**

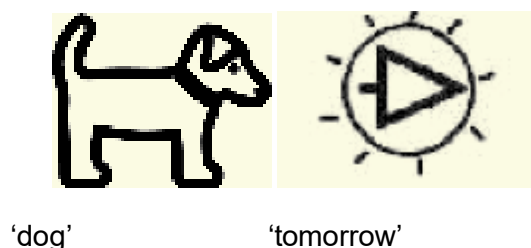
This indicates that X understands the communicative significance of the object and is able to initiate an interaction by taking the object to the activity.

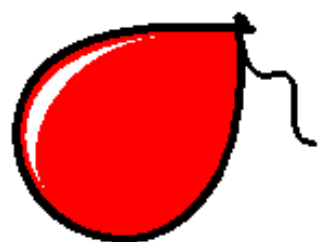
### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs are more concrete picture representations of people and things than line drawings. Pictures of family members, nursery staff and peers can be added to photos of everyday activities (such as circle time, snack time, singing time) to create a timetable or reference board.

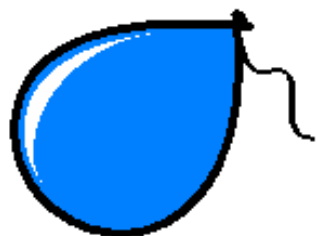
### **LINE DRAWINGS AND SYMBOLS**

There are a number of graphic symbol systems in common use in the UK, including Makaton Symbols™, Picture Communication Symbols™ and Widgit Symbols™. Each system has its strengths and weaknesses and some are more pictorial than others. Pictures that represent a concrete thing or person (e.g. 'dog') are often more easily understood than pictures that represent abstract ideas (e.g. 'tomorrow', 'want', 'on'). Therefore, care needs to be taken when choosing which symbols to use, and some symbols may need to be explicitly taught to children.





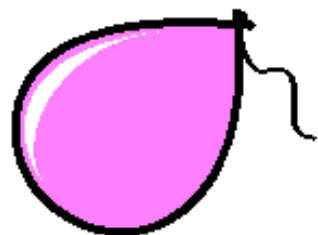
red balloon



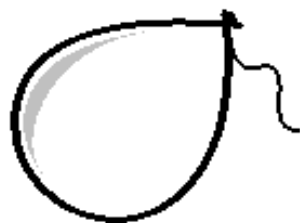
blue balloon



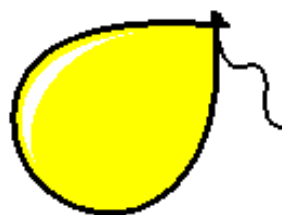
orange balloon



pink balloon



white balloon



yellow balloon



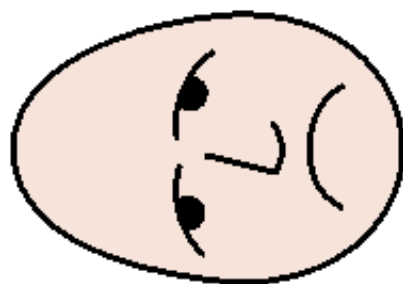
green balloon



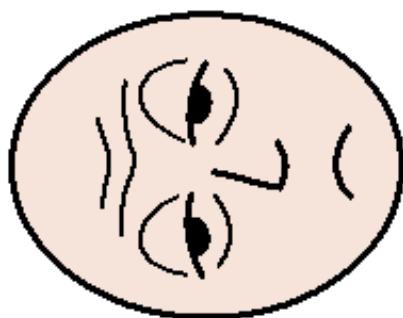
[FreeSignPrinter.com](http://FreeSignPrinter.com)



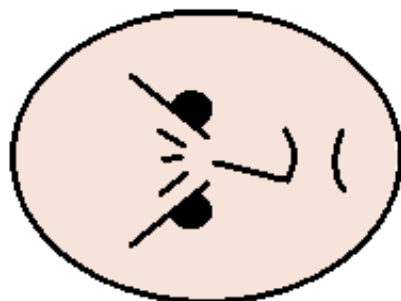
happy



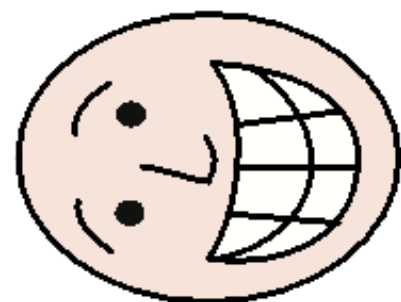
sad



tired



angry



excited



worried



hat



Santa hat



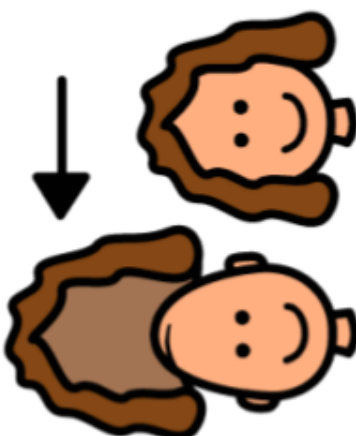
cap



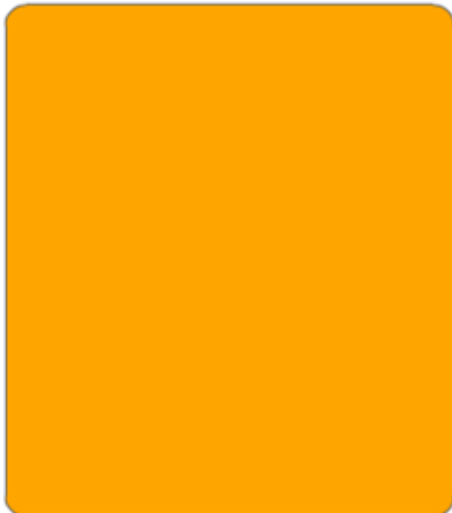
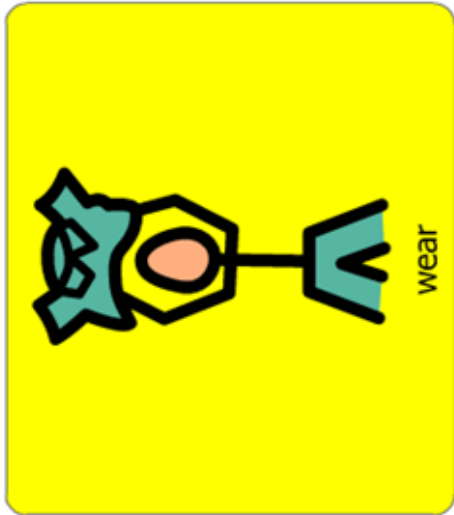
party hat



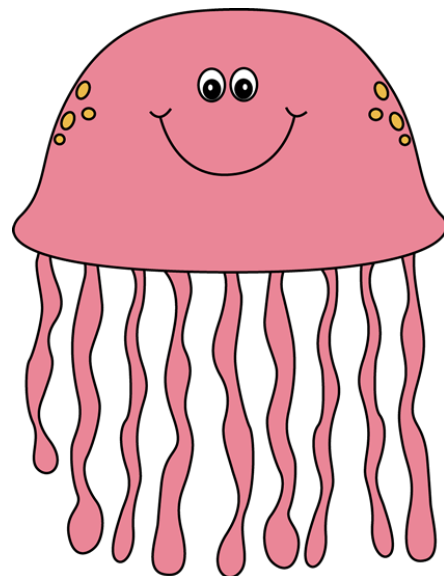
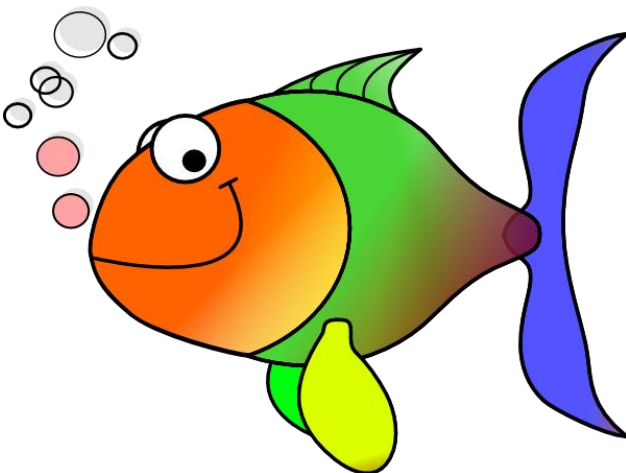
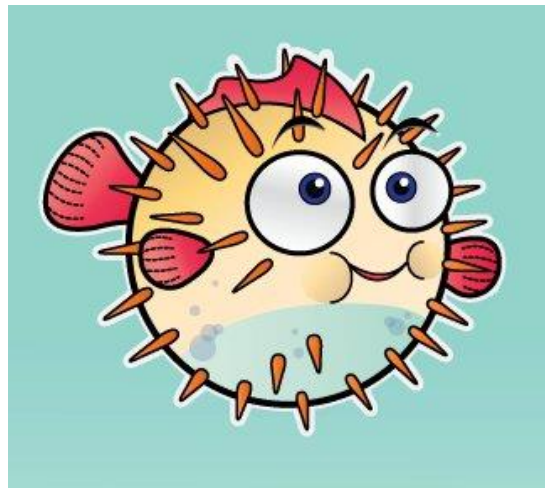
sunglasses



wig



Hat game

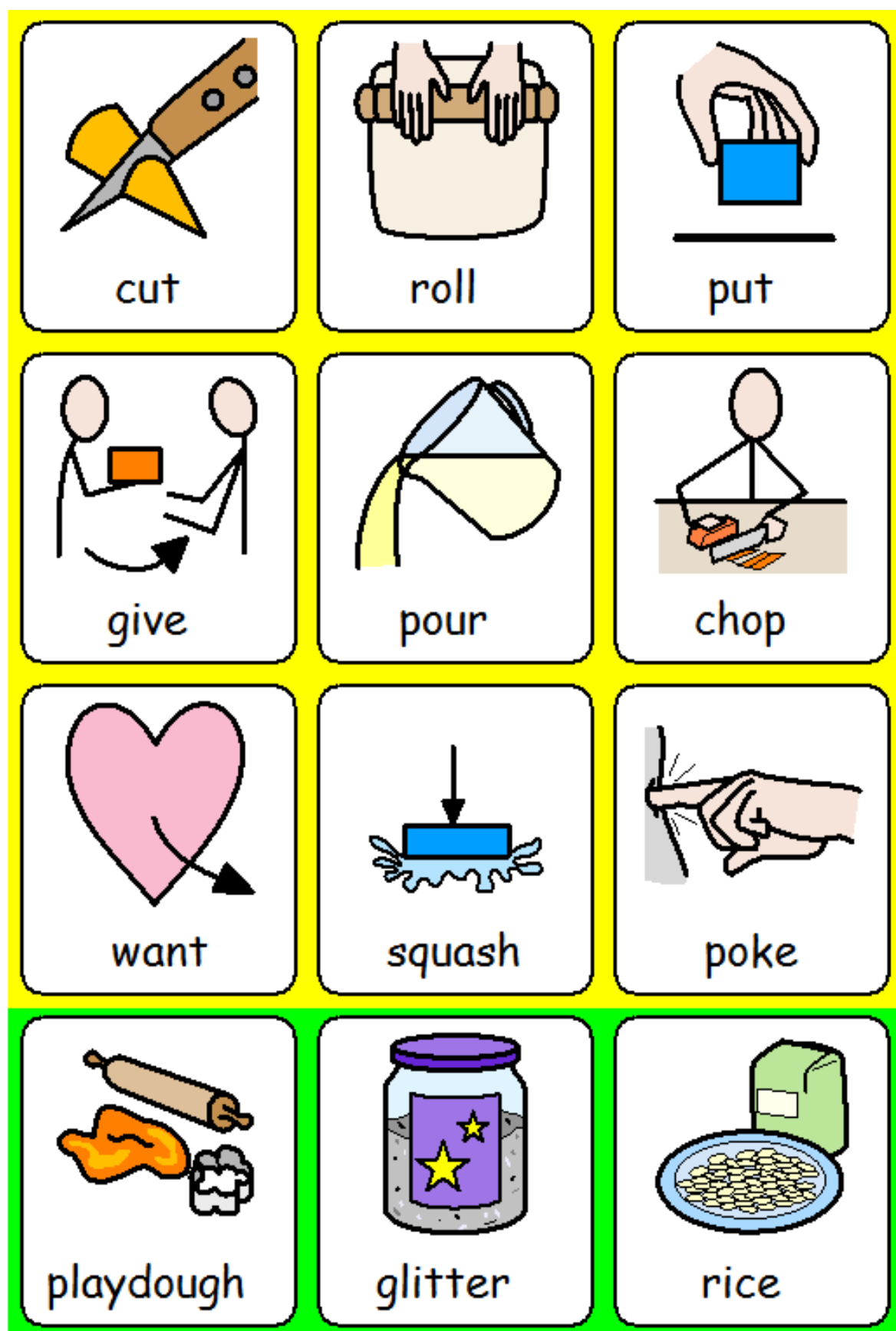


Fishing game



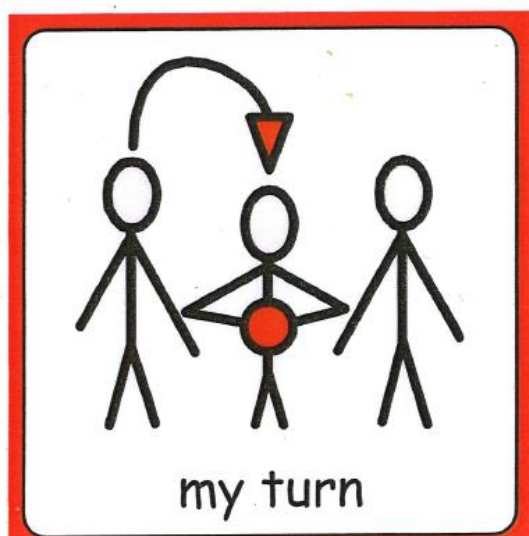
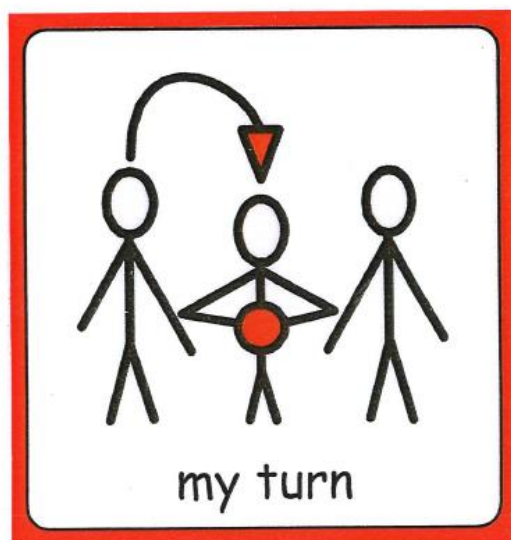
First

Then



Visual supports for 'Action games'

## Visual supports for turn-taking



## Websites

You may also find the following websites helpful:

- ❑ Our speech and language therapy website: <https://www.clch.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy-children>
- ❑ **NSPCC's** 'Look, Say, Sing, Play' campaign' with the following link <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/look-say-sing-play/sign-up>
- ❑ **Vroom:** Boost your child's learning with **Vroom's** fast and fun tips to your phone or via email. <https://www.vroom.org>
- ❑ The **Hungry Little Minds** campaign provides lots of ideas that can help boost your child's learning. [www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk](http://www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk)
- ❑ **Local Offer website:** (search "SEND local offer with the name of your borough). This website has lots of useful information for parents about local help for children with additional education and/or health needs
- ❑ **Parent forums:** Contact for support if your child has additional education/health need
  - Parents Active (Hammersmith & Fulham) [www.parentsactive.org.uk](http://www.parentsactive.org.uk)
  - Full of Life (RBKC) [www.fulloflifekc.com](http://www.fulloflifekc.com)
  - Make it Happen (Westminster) [www.wppg.org.uk](http://www.wppg.org.uk)
- ❑ **The Communication Trust:** for what to expect at different ages [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)
- ❑ **ICAN:** a children's communication charity [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)
- ❑ **Hanen:** [www.hanen.org](http://www.hanen.org)

## CLCH NHS Trust

The speech and language therapy service is provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust.

For more information visit [www.clch.nhs.uk](http://www.clch.nhs.uk) or call us on 020 7266 8777