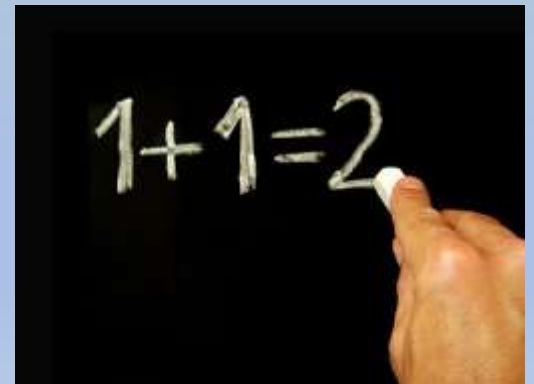


Structured TEACCHing Approaches  
to  
Developing Communication Skills in  
Children and Adults with Autism

# For us and for most typically developing children communication:

- Is learned naturally
- Is instinctive
- Develops as part of social interaction
- Has clear functions
- Is part of social exchange

**IT'S EASY**



# With autism, it's different ...

*'Talking and words are not automatically tied to communication'*

*'Saying nothing is not the same as having nothing to say'*



# Why is communication so difficult for students with autism ?

- It requires theory of mind
- Deals with abstract concepts
- Is a social exchange
- Requires motivation – reason to communicate

What is your favoured mode of communication?



# We tend to conflate Communication with Language





**Body Language = 55%**

**Tone of Voice = 38%**

**Words = 7%**



# COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

SPEECH

LANGUAGE

**PRAGMATICS**



```
graph TD; SPEECH --- LANGUAGE; LANGUAGE --- PRAGMATICS([PRAGMATICS]); PRAGMATICS --> Intent[Communicative Intent]; PRAGMATICS --> Reciprocity[Reciprocity]; PRAGMATICS --> Listener[Awareness of Listener];
```

Communicative  
Intent

Reciprocity

Awareness of  
Listener



Communication is a social interaction and requires:

- Awareness and Understanding of others
- Awareness of self

**Reciprocity**



# Communication

## **Receptive**

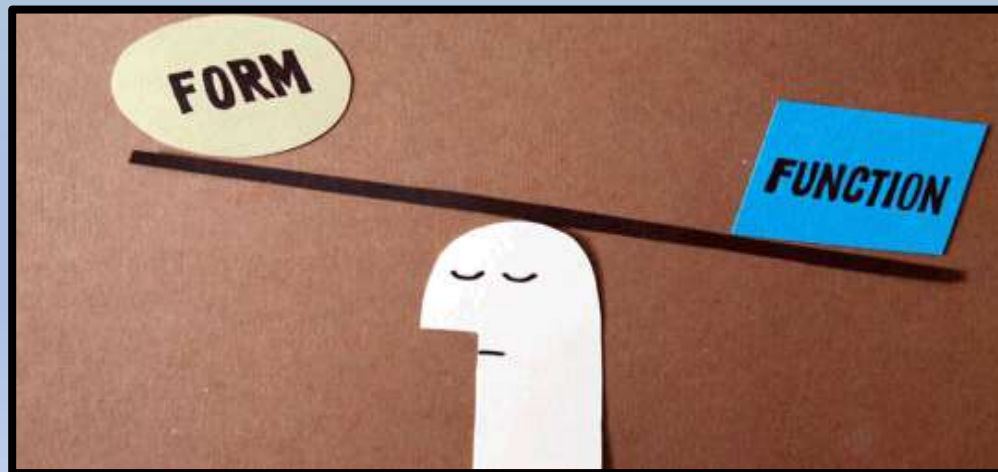
- What a person understands
- Verbal and non-verbal

## **Expressive**

- What a person is able to express
- Verbal and non-verbal

# Form and Function

- Form = **How** we communicate
- Function = **Why** we communicate



# Form of communication – **How** we communicate

- **Gestures and / or sounds**
- **Motoric/ muscle movement**
- **Objects**
- **Pictures**
- **Sign language**
- **Written words**
- **Verbally**



# Functions of communication – **Why** we communicate

- Making requests
- Rejecting/refusing
- Gaining attention
- Commenting
- Giving and seeking information
- Social routines
- Expressing feelings
- A CONVERSATION MAY INVOLVE ALL OF THESE!



# Expressive Communication Involves:

motor planning

co-ordination

theory of mind

social interaction

processing of language

non-verbal cues

attention and focus

flexibility of thinking

sensory processing

**simultaneous and integrated**



# Receptive Communication Involves:

sensory processing

processing of language

theory of mind

social demand

non-verbal cues

attention and focus

flexibility of thinking

**simultaneous and integrated**





Whatever form of communication is being used, pupils require **processing time** to co-ordinate a response.

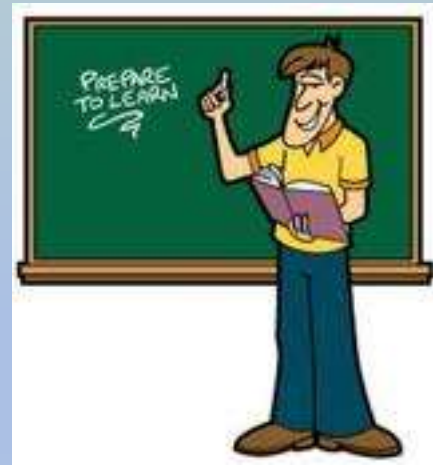


# Story Time



Learning Communication skills is not natural and intuitive for pupils with autism

So how do we teach functional communication?



**Approach  
Expressive  
and  
Receptive  
Differently**

# Expressive Communication Overall Teaching Process

*Start with assessment of spontaneous, directed communication*

- Start where the student is, not where you want them to be:

Observe **how**, **where** and **why** they communicate on his/her own - without being told what to say or do.

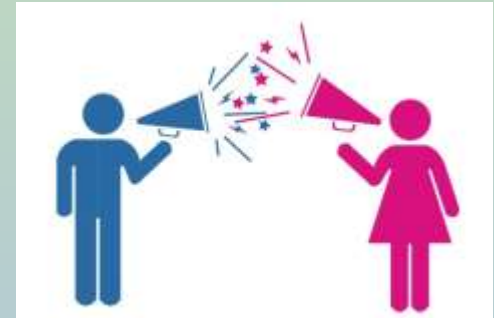
# Receptive Communication Overall Teaching Process

*Start with assessment of understanding*

- Seek out or set up opportunities to observe responses to communications.
- Look for how pupils are understanding of:  
LANGUAGE  
GESTURE  
CONTEXT  
LEARNED ROUTINES

# When teaching communication skills we need to compensate for issues related to learning style:

- Visual learners
- Slow processing
- Problems with Theory of mind
- Difficulty with social understanding



- Provide Visual support
- Message available for long enough to process
- Emphasise social exchange
- Make exchange concrete

# HOW does the student communicate?

- Gestures and / or sounds
- Motoric
- Object
- Pictures
- Voice output
- Sign language
- Written words
- Verbal speech

# WHY does the student communicate?

- Requesting
- Rejecting/refusing
- Gaining attention
- Commenting
- Giving information
- Seeking information
- Social routines
- Expressing feelings

And WHAT  
motivates?



**WHERE** does the student communicate?

- Independent work
- Teaching
- Play / Leisure
- Snack / Meals
- Outside Break
- During Transitions

And with  
**WHOM?**

# Teaching Communication

Once you have determined how, why, where and with whom the pupil prefers to communicate use **visual supports** to build on these strengths and compensate for deficits areas.

**Remember**, you will need to use a system which is meaningful to the pupil.

# Teaching to initiate and direct

## Teaching strategies:

- Social engagement routines
- Motivation
- Visual supports

# Achieving Social Engagement

Possible activities:

*Balloons*

*Bubbles*

*Motoric /sensory routines*

*Grab bag*

*Puppets*

*Music box ...*

**CALM AND ALERT**

# Social Engagement Routines

Create a *shared, fun* experience:

- Engage in an enjoyable and motivating activity
- Exaggerate your communication
- Pause / Interrupt the routine
- Respond to their communication
- Repeat process (for as long as it remains fun!)

# Motivation

- Use what's meaningful
- Use what's motivating (has to be worth the effort for the child!)
- Create a reason to communicate
- Can be motivated by knowing what to do and completion

# Motivation ...



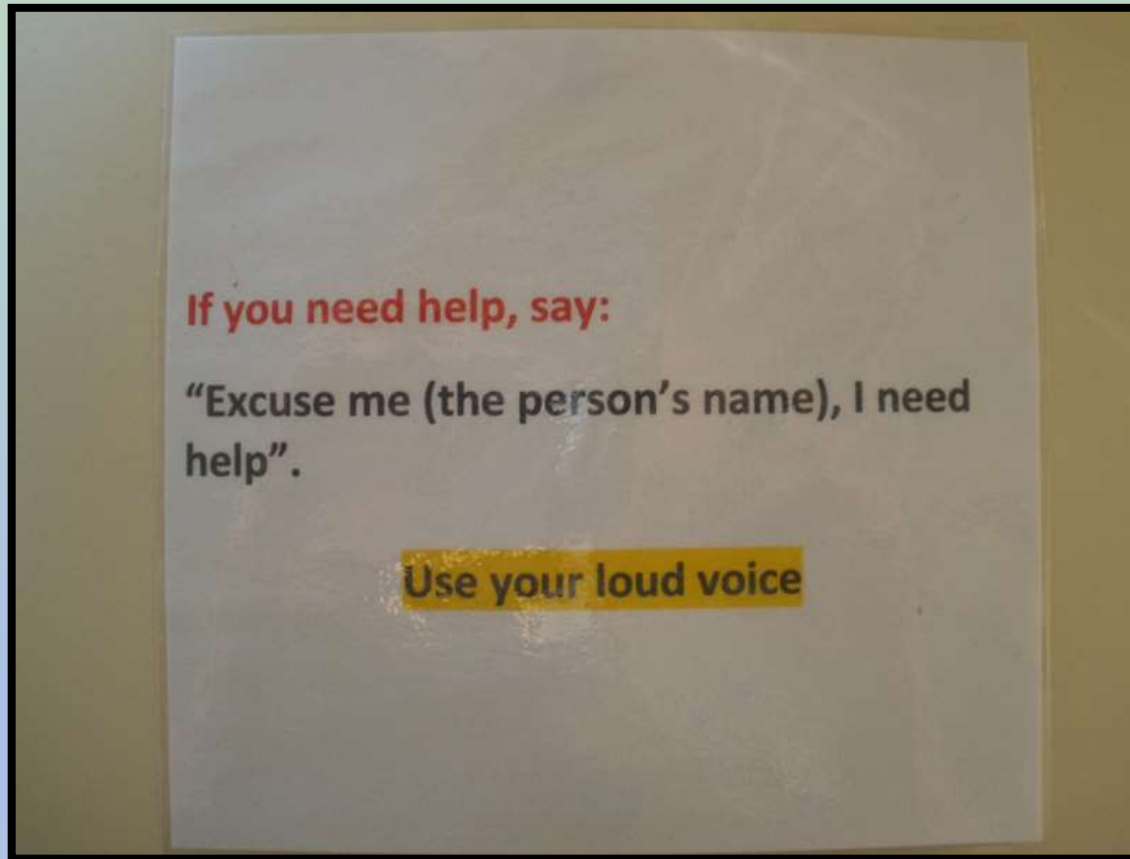
But where's the visual support to enable successful communication?

# Visual Supports for Initiation and Direction





# Visual Supports for Initiation and Direction



# Visual Supports for Initiation and Direction



# Visual Supports for Initiation ...

When I am confused,  
I can raise my hand.



**I can ask my teacher for HELP**

**I might say:**

*I need help!*

*Please help me.*

*I don't understand.*

Raise  
my hand  
teacher  
will come.



# Teaching the process of communication exchange

## Teaching strategies:

- SEE 'back and forth' in action
- Visual scripts and rules

# Exchange (multiple opportunities)



# Exchange



# Exchange

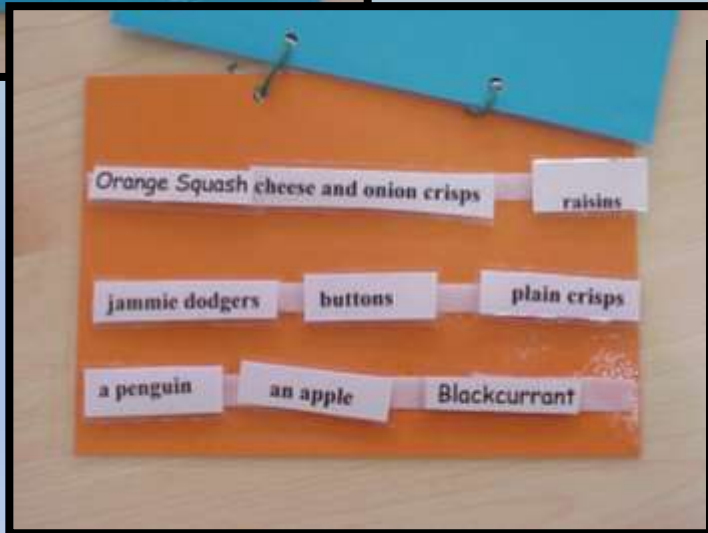
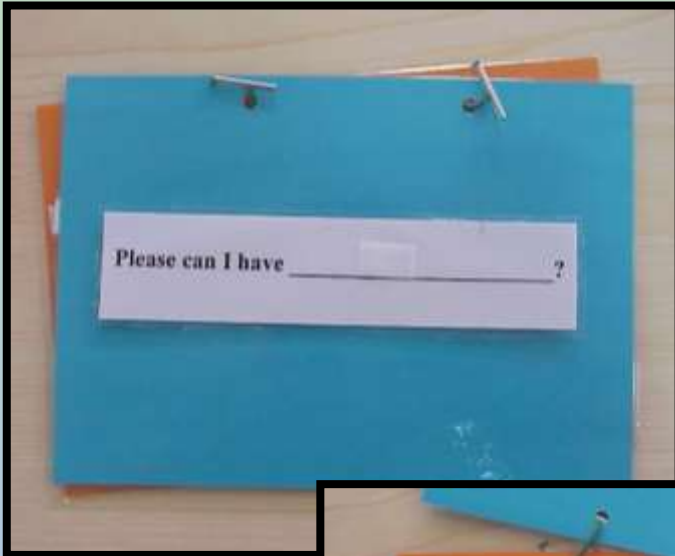


# Teaching how to make a choice

- Choose between preferred and non-preferred
- Choose between two preferred items
- Visual supports can then enable wider choice by:
  - reminding of opportunities
  - limiting options
  - sequencing the process



# Visual supports for making a choice



# Teaching generalisation

## Teaching strategies:

- Teach same skill with different materials, people and places
- Portable visual supports
- Transferable visual supports

# Practice Across Settings

## Domino's Pizza

Phone Number: 01234 785443

Remember: Strong Voice



**REQUEST: I want to order**

**1 small sausage and pepperoni pizza and  
1 small *cheese* pizza for delivery.**

**Deliver to:**

**16 Humber Avenue, Kempston.**

**Phone Number: 01234 75496**

What questions might they ask?

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# WHY does the student communicate?

- Requesting
- Rejecting/refusing
- Gaining attention
- Commenting
- Giving information
- Seeking information
- Social routines
- Expressing feelings

**A CONVERSATION MAY INVOLVE ALL OF THESE**

# Seeking Information

## Visual Support:

- Enables initiation
- Use social greeting
- Listening to response
- Meaningful way for multiple opportunities

Customer Survey

1. Approach an adult and ask,  
"Excuse me. Do you have time to complete a quick survey?"
2. If they say no reply, "that's no problem, thank you". Then ask someone different.  
If they say yes reply, "thank you". Then ask the questions below.
3. Record their answers as a tally in the grid.

Do you like popcorn, <u>yes</u> or <u>no</u> ?	yes 	no If no say 'thank you' and choose another adult.
As a mid-morning snack, would you eat a <u>small</u> or <u>large</u> bag of popcorn?	small	large 
How much would you expect to pay for a small bag, <u>40p</u> or <u>50p</u> ?	40p 	50p 
How much would you expect to pay for a large bag, <u>70p</u> or <u>80p</u> ?	70p	80p 
Would you prefer <u>purple</u> or <u>blue</u> packaging?	purple 	blue

4. That's all, thank you.

① ~~||~~ ② ~~||~~ ③ || ④ || ⑤ ||

## Customer Survey

1. Approach an adult and ask,  
"Excuse me. Do you have time to complete a quick survey?"
2. If they say no reply, "That's no problem, thank you". Then ask someone different.  
 If they say yes reply, "Thank you". Then ask the questions below.
3. Record their answers as a tally in the grid.

I = 1     IIII = 5  
 II = 2  
 III = 3  
 IIII = 4

Do you like popcorn, <u>yes</u> or <u>no</u> ?	yes 	no  <span style="background-color: yellow;">if no say 'thank you' and choose another adult.</span>
As a mid-morning snack, would you eat a <u>small</u> or <u>large</u> bag of popcorn?	small	large 
How much would you expect to pay for a <u>small</u> bag, <u>40p</u> or <u>50p</u> ?	40p 	50p 
How much would you expect to pay for a <u>large</u> bag, <u>70p</u> or <u>80p</u> ?	70p	80p 
Would you prefer <u>purple</u> or <u>blue</u> packaging?	purple 	blue

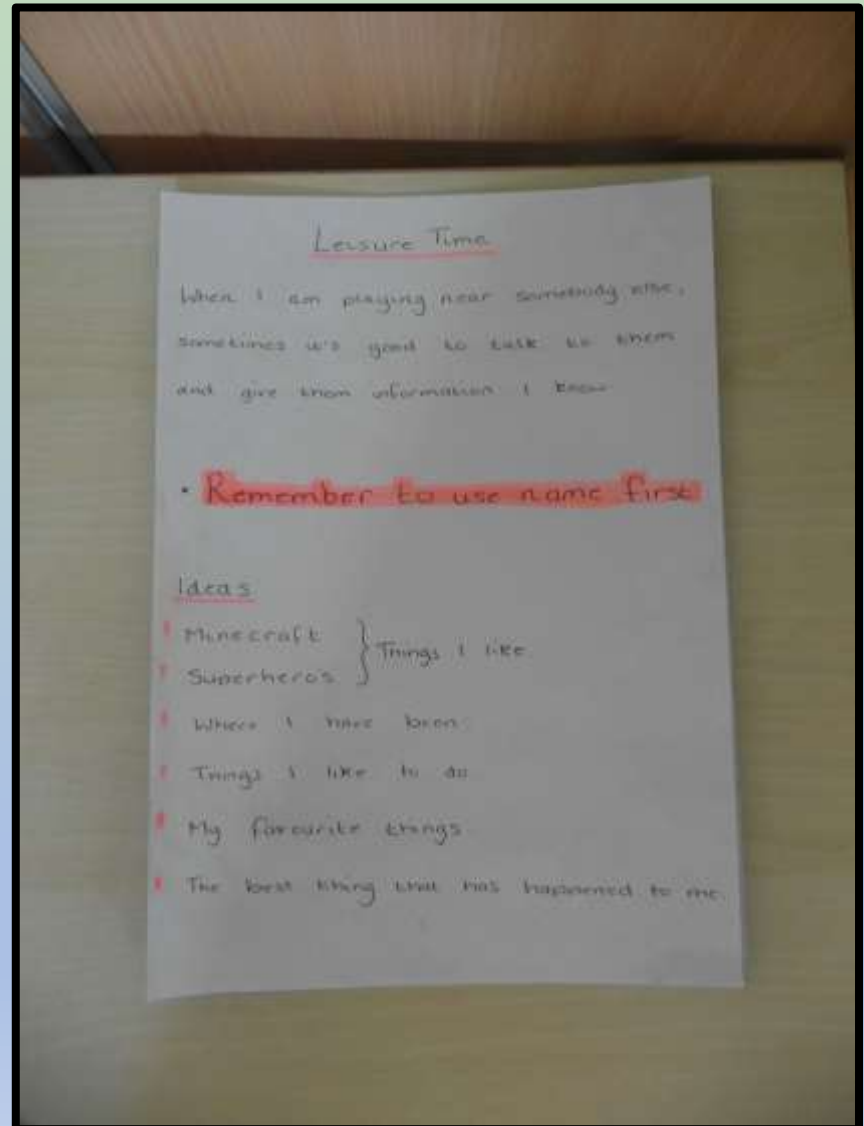
4. That's all, thank you.



# Giving Information

## Visual Support:

- Enables initiation
- Use name to direct
- Motivation
- Remind of possibilities



## Leisure Time

When I am playing near somebody else,  
sometimes it's good to talk to them  
and give them information I know.

- Remember to use name first

## Ideas

- ! Minecraft
  - ! Superheros
- } Things I like.
- ! Where I have been.
  - ! Things I like to do.
  - ! My favourite things.
  - ! The best thing that has happened to me.



# Conversation Skills

- Initiation and direction
- Know when you are being spoken to
- Staying on topic OR changing topic
- Turn taking
- Listening and responding to others'
- Understanding and using non-verbal cues ...

# Initiation Conversation Starters



# Visual supports for building conversation skills



# Practice conversation skills around high interest

## Conversation Rules

1. **Listen** carefully when you are included in a conversation.
2. If somebody would like to know more about a subject you know about, **tell** them what you know.
3. You can start by saying;  
**I know about that..**

# Remember

Develop a system for everybody:

Utilise individuals strengths and interests

Easy to use

Compensates for deficits

Accessible and portable

Meaningful to student and others