

A QUICK GUIDE: VISUAL COMMUNICATION

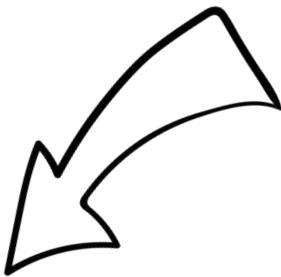
Objects

Using objects is a very concrete way to communicate meaning through a visual and tactile media. By consistently presenting a pupil with an object to signify that a new activity is about to begin the pupil will attribute meaning to the object. The object chosen should be considered carefully and should be meaningful for that pupil. This approach is known as 'Objects of Reference'.



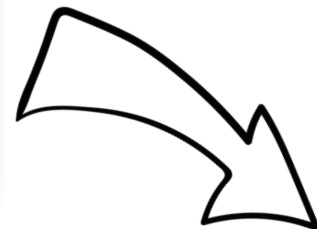
Photographs

Photographs offer a more realistic representation than symbols but are more abstract than using objects. Sometimes pupils respond more effectively if they are in the photograph engaging in an activity. Photographs are often used as part of a 'now/next' timetable to cue pupils into a change of activity.



Symbols

Standardised symbols are more abstract than photographs but are more accessible than written words. Symbols should have the written word displayed beneath them. They can be used as part of a 'now/next' timetable or a timetable showing a longer sequences of activities depending on the pupil's cognitive ability. Sometimes using symbols in this way is incorrectly referred to as using 'PECS' (PECS is a separate structured scheme for developing communication); however, using symbols to support communication in this way can be very effective.



Words

Words are the most abstract form of visual communication. Whilst systematic synthetic phonics offers an approach for decoding unfamiliar words and can be an effective method for teaching many pupils, some pupils respond more effectively to different approaches. Methods that teach whole word reading, such as flashcard activities, can be very effective for certain pupils.