



ARASAAC

The pictographic symbols used are the property of the Government of Aragón and have been created by Sergio Palao for ARASAAC (<http://www.arasaac.org>), that distributes them under Creative Commons License BY-NC-SA.



Text and graphic design: Justyna Małyska (logopeda)
www.mowergency-polskilogopeda.pl



Acknowledgments: Ewa Grzelak (logopeda, AAC Therapist)
<https://apraksja.pl/>

HELP ME TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATION SKILLS

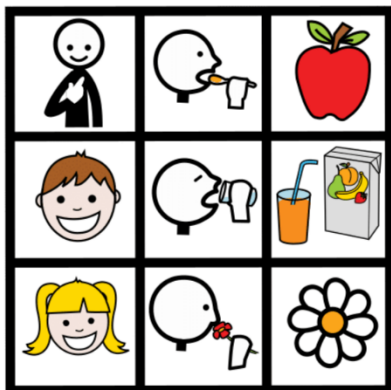
A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WORKING
WITH CHILDREN WHO USE
COMMUNICATION DEVICES



OWNING A TABLET OR A COMMUNICATION BOOK DOESN'T IMMEDIATELY MEAN THAT THE CHILD KNOWS HOW TO USE IT AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

A child learns how to use their communication tablet/book by watching other people using it. You should consider yourself as a key element of introducing and developing a child's communication skills. The more people actively use a child's tablet, showing them how they can use it for communication, the higher are the chances that the child will start to communicate their requests, observations and thoughts by using the tablet themselves.



ARASAAC

What is modelling?

Modelling means nothing other than using pictograms from the child's communication device while speaking to them. There are various ways of modelling:

*While speaking with a child we should point to a key pictogram from their communication device. A key pictogram means the picture that is the most suitable in terms of showing the meaning of our words. E.g. while saying 'Let's go for a walk', we point to 'a walk' or when saying 'I'm so thirsty, I need a drink' we point to the 'drink' pictogram.

*We observe the child and try to interpret their behaviours, assuming that the child is communicating through them. We use these situations to model the appropriate pictograms. E.g. when we see the child starting to show some symptoms of distress and/or looking towards the lavatory, we can say: "I think you need to go to the toilet" and simultaneously point to the 'toilet' pictogram.

Don't give up if you don't see immediate results.

Some children may need two demonstrations, others two hundred and twenty two, of a pictogram used in a range of various situations before they attempt to use it themselves. You should never give up. Every time you model using a child's communication device, you act for the sake of the child's communication skills and development.

Will communication based on pictures stop a child from developing verbal speech?

Both the scientific evidence published globally and the experiences of practitioners working with children around the world show that using pictograms does not stop verbal speech development. Quite the opposite, it supports language(s) acquisition. When we use pictograms, we still speak to a child, the same as if we don't use any device. The idea that a child simply chooses to use pictograms instead of talking because they don't want make an effort to speak is incorrect. Verbal speech is the easiest, fastest, and most available means of communication. If a child has psychophysical potential sufficient to develop verbal speech, they develop it regardless of other forms of communication they may be familiar with.

Great idea but when to do it? (Not enough time)

Try to model whenever you can. You don't have to model everything you say but you need to remember that more modelling increases the chances of a child being able to express himself using his communication device. Ask for help from other people who spend time with a child: his older siblings and grandparents, the childminder, nursery practitioners, therapists with whom the child meets. Take care of the device. Prepare it so it's available and ready to use. Attach a belt to it so it's easy to carry. Remember to charge it so the battery is full.

IF YOU BELIEVE, YOU CAN ACHIEVE!

FAQ AND DOUBTS

I don't think I need it, I can understand a child just fine without it.

A child needs a way of communication that will be clear for everyone they meet. Not every person will easily recognise the meanings of behaviours or sounds produced by the child. The great majority of people will be capable of understanding and reacting to the pictogram(s) pointed to by a child. If you understand the child well, you have a great opportunity to exercise modelling. Even doing a little is more than doing nothing. Please try to remember that the more often the child sees other people using his communication device, the higher the chances that he will start spontaneously using the device himself.



