

## Communicating with Technology

Sometimes people with disabilities have problems communicating even their basic needs and wants. This is frustrating for them and those around them.

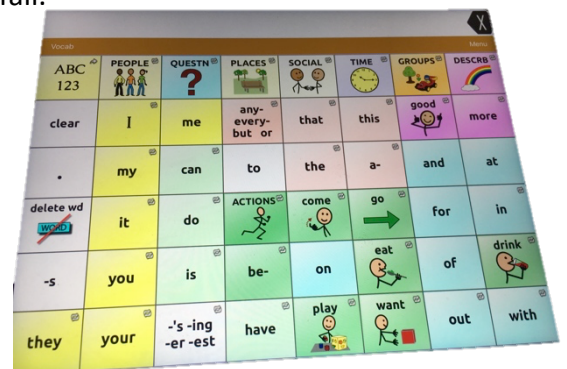
Communicating is a complex task, which, at its most basic level, is about understanding and being understood. There are many components to the process of communication, like understanding and using:

- Non-verbal communication e.g body language, facial expression, signs, writing, pictures and drawings
- Verbal communication:
  - making speech sounds
  - words and sentences (language)
- Social rules e.g turn taking, listening and staying on topic

If someone has a problem with any of these areas then it can make communication difficult. A speech Language therapist is skilled in identifying where the break down in communication occurs and finding solutions to these problems.

The use of technology can help some people struggling to communicate however **not** everyone. Others may benefit more from low-tech solutions. Independence can be enhanced with the use of technology too. For those who technology would help Speech Language Therapists can help with:

- identifying what sort of communication method would best assist the person communicate e.g. switch, iPad and software.
- giving advice and support to those around the young person on the use of communication devices or switches to interact and communicate.
- referring to Talk Link for assessment.
- training support people to use a communication device as part of the person's daily routines.
- supporting the client to use their communication device so they become an independent communicator e.g. when ordering food and drink
- developing a low tech option should the technology fail.





- Use of switches to:
  - communicate e.g. greet people
  - assist with independence e.g. to operate a CD, turn on a blender.



Therapy Professionals Speech Language Therapists are experienced working with people of all ages and many kinds of disabilities. Whether you are older having had a stroke or you're a child with an intellectual and physical disability we can help.

If you need help with a communication problem our friendly Speech Language Therapists can help just contact us.

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