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# Module 4: Having Fun with Communication: Games and Activities

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## Introduction

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This module is number 4 in the package “Supporting Communication through AAC” published by SCOPE. It provides ideas and suggestions for getting going with AAC. To set the scene, Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states “... the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts ... shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational, and leisure activity.”

The Scope Years website ([www.scope.org.uk/earlyyears/parents/downloads.shtml](http://www.scope.org.uk/earlyyears/parents/downloads.shtml)) contains a leaflet entitled “Play and Learning”. It states “Play is vital for all children. It is the way we explore the world about us and our place in it. Play offers opportunities to relax, express feelings, experience success and failure, to learn about communication, our physical capacities – the list is endless.” This module is divided into several sections in the hope that readers can dip into it to find those aspects that they want to know about now, but can return to it later when the next issue arises. Although these games are described and using particular methods of communication, it is very simple to make slight changes and use other methods of communication.

**Section 1** gives some ideas and suggestions for encouraging initiation. This is a very difficult area for all of us as there is no ‘magic wand’ to make a person want to communicate. All we can do is provide the tools and situations and keep our fingers crossed!

**Section 2** gives information for getting going with AAC. It is hoped the ideas will help you to think of many more that are particularly relevant to your child or the adult you are working with.

**Section 3** gives lots and lots of ideas for games that can be played using very simple communication charts.

**Section 4** extends the ideas in Section 3 and provides some suggestions for increasing the vocabulary and linguistic demands of the game.

**Section 5** focuses on games with VOCAs, from using simple single message devices to playing games using static or dynamic displays.

## Section 1

### Having Fun with Communication

In order for a child to learn to communicate and develop vocabulary, learning to use an AAC system must be fun and functional. Vocabulary must be directed, at least initially, at activities the child is interested in and motivated by. New vocabulary should be introduced as part of the activity so that the child sees others using signs and/or symbols and sees the outcomes from that use. This may make the difference between an AAC system being used functionally or simply as a teaching tool. The examples given below can work with signs, symbols and VOCAs at many different levels of language experience. By simplifying the vocabulary used, young children can participate and older children would enjoy similar games with age appropriate vocabulary.

The first step to developing effective communication skills is the ability to initiate. This can be through any communicative means, the child may cry, shout, look, point, move in order to begin a communicative interaction with their parent, carer to playmate. Although at this level, communication may be more attention seeking, it is also initiating because the child is letting you know they want something or something is wrong or funny for example.

This module then provides some sample activities and games for encouraging communication. The examples given are from specific communication books and would need to be adapted for other children. However, they provide a resource for getting going with communication.

#### Initiating

This is a very difficult area. Some children do not seem to be motivated by anything particular. A lack of initiation raises huge anxieties. It must, however, be remembered that not everyone is a great initiator! Some people are naturally quieter than others.

That said, it is important to provide the child with every opportunity to initiate communication and careful observations will enable those working with the child to note how the child initiates. It is possible that initiation may be through a highly subtle means, such as a slight turn of a head or at the other extreme, it might occur through a challenging behaviour.

The following are ideas for encouraging initiation:

- Accidentally forget to give the child a particular item she would usually expect e.g. a spoon at mealtimes.
- Leave the child out when giving out items to other children, paper, books, drinks, sweets (if necessary) in order to provoke a response.
- Play a game where the child is required to ask questions in order to progress. The game Guess Who where the child is required to guess which face/character the other player has selected is a good example of this approach. “what colour eyes”, “what colour hair”, “is he wearing glasses” etc.
- Give the child the responsibility of being the adult. One activity might be for the child to tell others what to do. This might be as a Simon Says Game or by telling someone to draw a picture of certain items, which will make a composite picture by the end of the activity.

## Section 2

### Getting Going

This can be a very scary thought! However, with some careful planning you can have as much fun as the child. The following are ideas to help you get started with signs and/or symbols with a child. The general ideas here will help you to think of ideas that would be particularly relevant to your child as well as encouraging a more general augmentative communication vocabulary.

- **When to use symbols:** One day, your child may have a speaking device; but until they do, and whilst they are learning to use the device, the communication book or board should be seen as the voice box. You wouldn't leave your voice box on a shelf when you go out. The book or board needs to travel with the child. You may think you know what your child needs. This is a disempowering assumption. Imagine wanting wine and being given Ribena! Your child needs to feel s/he can influence you by making choices, by expressing opinions, by answering and eventually asking questions. These are not activities to do from time to time, but should be dovetailed into the daily routine. If you constantly make decisions for the child, s/he will either become frustrated and angry, or just give up and become very passive.
- **Stories and books:** Do make sure the child chooses the books in the first place. Almost all stories and books lend themselves to symbol chat.



You can use symbols to ask questions about what you have read (e.g. ‘What did the boy have for tea?’); to ask opinions (e.g. ‘How do you think she felt about that?’) and to guess what's coming next (e.g. ‘Where do you think they're going?’).

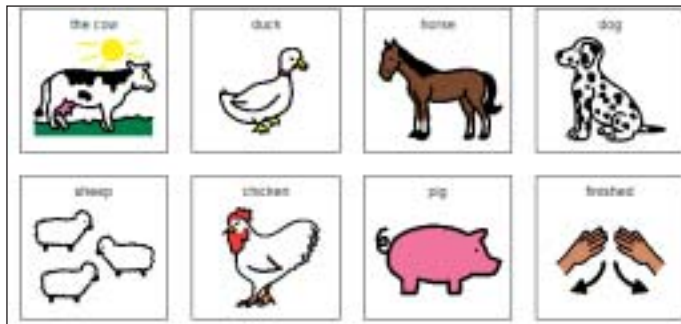


- It can also be fun to make up stories together. You start things rolling with ‘Once upon a time there was a .....’ and the child chooses a person. ‘One day, she met a .....’ and the child chooses another. ‘They went to a café and had.....’ etc. etc. It helps if you have a bit of a plan first, so you know what pages you want to bring in.

■ **TV and videos:** The same comments apply as for books – make sure some programmes are used as an opportunity for discussion with symbols, not just babysitting!

■ **Taking part in daily life:** Try to encourage your child to use symbols to be an active participant in the normal daily routine. Can s/he help to plan shopping lists, being allowed to have real influence over what you buy? Can they choose where you go sometimes? Can they plan what Daddy will have for tea tonight? Can they choose what to do on a wet afternoon? Can they choose what colours to wear today? Can they tell you what colour they'd like you to wear today?

■ **Singing:** Some examples are included below, but many songs have verses that can be influenced by the child. e.g. choosing the animals in 'Old McDonald.'



■ **Outings:** When you are out, and when you get home make sure you use the symbols to chat about what you see and do.

■ **Scrapbooks:** are very useful for sorting and categorising, which are important skills in using communication books. Some individual page ideas are given below. You can also label pages with category names (people, clothes, animals etc.) and cut pictures from magazines and catalogues to stick on these. This is a very useful exercise in helping a child understand the Contents page of the communication book.

■ **Talking Photograph Albums:** These are available from Liberator. They are albums you can record speech into for each page. They are very easy to use, and not very expensive. The child can have a book with photos of family, pets, home, friends etc., which is a lovely way of introducing him/herself to new people. It should also be used as something to show the child, encouraging them to use their symbols to chat about it.

■ **Symbol copies:** For some activities, it can be useful to have symbol flashcards, or little ones to stick on timetables etc. You can draw or photocopy them; but the person who issued the book should be able to print off what you need. If you don't have access to a laminator, sticky-backed plastic is useful.

■ **Cause and Effect:** To encourage an individual to develop an awareness of cause and effect, single message devices can be very motivating. The following are ideas for using a single message device .

■ **Giving control:** e.g

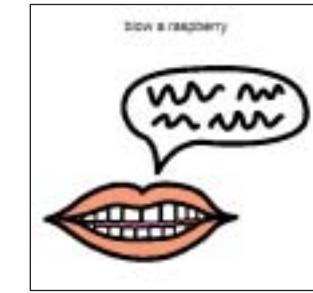
■ Tickle me



■ throw me up in the air (for young children)#



■ Blow a raspberry



■ Come here please.



■ **Home/School Messages:** using the device to tell parents about something that has happened during the day at school, spoken in the first person e.g.  
 "I went swimming today and floated on my back!"  
 "Mrs Smith helped me at lunch time, I had fish fingers and chips."  
 "I painted a picture made of hands".

The same idea can be employed to take messages into school from home. E.g  
 "I went to the park with mummy and daddy, I went high on the swing."  
 "Last night I watched my favourite video, Postman Pat"

Within activities: e.g.

- answering name in registration
- calling for support and help in an activity.
- Delivering the register to the office e.g. "Here's the register for the Owls Class".
- talking to granny on the phone to tell her what the child has been doing.
- Asking for 'more' at mealtimes for food or drink.

■ **Games and Stories:** Repeated line of story, nursery rhyme or game e.g. "Ee I ee I oh" for the nursery rhyme Old MacDonald Had a Farm.

## Section 3

### Games


Games are fun and children love playing at all sorts of levels. Vocabulary could be specific e.g. actually having the words required in a game such as Simon Says and/or it can be more general so it could be used with a variety of games e.g. 'my turn', 'your turn', 'I win', 'cheat' etc. Vocabulary can be introduced and demonstrated during the game without the user necessarily being taught the specific vocabulary for the game first. This makes the activity more spontaneous and motivating for the user.


If games are being played in a group, it might be useful for the adult directing the group to use an easel on which rests a large board covered in velgrip. The symbols necessary for the activity are attached to the board with velcro. The adult wears a velgrip apron and so is able to take symbols from the board and attach them to the apron to focus the children's attention on the symbol and its meaning. If the activity or game is being carried out on a one to one basis a communication chart would suffice.


There is always a series of levels within each task, e.g. simple task, task with distracter, task with more items, task with more difficult distracters etc. The curriculum traditionally emphasises classification by shape, size and colour - and so do many computer programs. But for the development of language skills, it is much more important to work on classification by meaning groups, e.g. sorting into animals or people; vehicles or buildings; actions or things; places inside or places outside.

*The following takes pages from an Ingfield 2x2 book [Module10] (but it would apply to any Introductory Book), and gives some ideas for incorporating symbol use into play. The page samples here have not been customised – your child's book won't be exactly the same. These are activities you would play with any child. Hopefully it shows how symbols can be used to make these activities more interactive and inclusive for a child with speech difficulties.*

The Call Centre website ([http://callcentre.education.ed.ac.uk/Resources/BoardMaker\\_REA/BMGames\\_REB/bmgames\\_reb.html](http://callcentre.education.ed.ac.uk/Resources/BoardMaker_REA/BMGames_REB/bmgames_reb.html)) contains a number of games already to print out, laminate and use. These include Snap, Dominoes, Lotto/Bingo, Connect 4, Guess Who, Supermarket Sweep and Elmer the Elephant.

Basic Needs	Ideas
	<p><b>Doll Play:</b> What's the matter with baby? Have spoon, bowl, bib, cup/bottle, potty, doll's clothes, toy medical kit etc. handy. When doll cries, child uses symbols to say what's needed.</p>











































Family	Ideas
	<p><b>Portrait Gallery:</b> Draw some picture frames on a page, and a blank face in each. Child draws in family portraits and says who they are.</p> <p><b>Photo Album:</b> Look through photo albums, with child identifying people using symbols.</p> <p><b>Scrapbook:</b> Head each page with a family symbol (the person who made your book could probably print off or photocopy spares for you). Have some family photos to sort. Child says which page to stick them on.</p> <p><b>Sorting laundry:</b> if you are sorting the clean laundry, can the child tell you to whom they think items belong?</p>














































People	Ideas
	<p><b>Scrapbook:</b> Head each page with copy of symbols for people. Cut pictures out of magazines + have photos of friends. Child says which page to stick them on.</p> <p><b>Tea Party:</b> Seat doll's house people round a table, and make some miniature playdough food. Child says who is to eat what.</p> <p><b>Outings:</b> On walks or in a café etc. let child identify some of the people s/he sees.</p>


























































Actions	Ideas																
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

























Animals	Ideas																
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cat 	bird 	duck 	chicken 														
horse 	cow 	lion 	monkey 														
pig 	sheep 	elephant 															






















Feelings & Descriptions	Ideas																								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>happy </td> <td>sad </td> <td>hot </td> <td>cold </td> </tr> <tr> <td>angry </td> <td>pain </td> <td>hungry </td> <td>thirsty </td> </tr> <tr> <td>tired </td> <td>excited </td> <td>old </td> <td>new </td> </tr> <tr> <td>afraid </td> <td></td> <td>dirty </td> <td>clean </td> </tr> <tr> <td>big </td> <td>little </td> <td>fat </td> <td>thin </td> </tr> <tr> <td>broken </td> <td></td> <td>loud </td> <td>quiet </td> </tr> </table>	happy 	sad 	hot 	cold 	angry 	pain 	hungry 	thirsty 	tired 	excited 	old 	new 	afraid 		dirty 	clean 	big 	little 	fat 	thin 	broken 		loud 	quiet 	<p><b>Portraits:</b> Draw some blank faces, and child draws in the expressions, saying how the people are feeling.</p> <p><b>Masks:</b> As with portraits, but draw the expressions onto blank cut-out masks for playing with. Child could say who has to put on which mask, and you have to act that emotion. Child might like to do the acting.</p> <p><b>Today I'm Feeling:</b> If you can make, or ask someone to make you a set of feelings pictures, blutack them around the outside of a mirror. Make a sentence card that says 'Today I'm feeling.....', with a space to stick on the missing word. Child looks in the mirror, and decides how s/he is feeling. S/he pulls off the relevant picture from the mirror, and blutacks it onto the sentence card.</p> <p><b>Stories:</b> When you are reading stories, ask how the characters feel about events.</p> <p><b>Sorting the washing:</b> have a doll's clothes washing day. Get all the doll's clothes out, and child decides which are dirty and which are clean. Wash the dirty ones, and fold or iron the clean ones.</p> <p><b>Old/new, Big/small &amp; fat/thin scrapbook pages:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ look through magazines for buildings, cars, people etc. to sort onto opposites pages.</li> <li>■ Child could sort their toys into ones they feel are old and new, and big and little.</li> </ul> <p><b>Music:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Listen to some music together, and child identifies when it's loud and quiet. Also is it happy or sad?</li> <li>■ You sing or play an instrument, and child must instruct you whether to play loud or quiet.</li> </ul> <p><b>Smart Alex computer program:</b> ask the child to tell you how Alex is feeling. You can type in the word with the child pressing a select switch to create the feeling.</p>
happy 	sad 	hot 	cold 																						
angry 	pain 	hungry 	thirsty 																						
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






















Body Parts	Ideas																
<table border="1"> <tr> <td> tummy</td> <td> head</td> <td> leg</td> <td> foot</td> </tr> <tr> <td> bottom</td> <td></td> <td> arm</td> <td> hand</td> </tr> <tr> <td> face</td> <td> hair</td> <td> ear</td> <td> eyes</td> </tr> <tr> <td> mouth</td> <td> nose</td> <td> tongue</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	 tummy	 head	 leg	 foot	 bottom		 arm	 hand	 face	 hair	 ear	 eyes	 mouth	 nose	 tongue		<p><b>Drawing:</b> Child draws person/animal/monster/robot etc., and says what s/he is going to draw; or as in previous section, tells you what to draw and judges it good, okay or rubbish.</p> <p><b>Playdough:</b> people and/or animals, saying what body parts to make.</p> <p><b>Junk modelling or collage monster or robot:</b> saying what body parts to make.</p> <p><b>Mix and Match People:</b> Cut out people from magazines, and cut them up into head, body (tummy), legs and feet. Stick them back, by mixing up different body parts from different people. Child names body parts as you do so.</p> <p><b>Singing:</b> 'Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his nose.' (if you don't know it, tune is 'John Brown's Body' and words are 'Little Peter rabbit had a fly upon his nose (x3), So he flipped it and he flapped it and it flew away.') Child says where fly lands next. 'Here we Go round the Mulberry Bush' child chooses body parts and you sing, for example, 'This is the way we touch our ear,' or 'This is the way we wave our hand.' etc.</p> <p><b>Doctors and Nurses:</b> use a toy medical kit + real plasters and bandages. Child says where his/her pain is as the patient. However, it can be more fun if you're the patient, and child says where s/he must stick the plaster or give you an operation!</p>
 tummy	 head	 leg	 foot														
 bottom		 arm	 hand														
 face	 hair	 ear	 eyes														
 mouth	 nose	 tongue															








































Clothes	Ideas																				
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 trousers	 dress	 shirt blouse	 t-shirt																		
	 skirt																				
 shorts	 jumper	 socks	 shoe / boots																		
 hat	 jacket	 swimwear	 swimwear																		
 gloves	 scarf	 nightwear																			




























Meals	Ideas																								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>breakfast </td> <td>supper </td> <td>sausage </td> <td>burger </td> </tr> <tr> <td>lunch </td> <td>pudding </td> <td>beans </td> <td>sauce </td> </tr> <tr> <td>meat </td> <td>fish </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>eggs </td> <td>cheese </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>vegetables </td> <td>carrot </td> <td>potatoes </td> <td>chips </td> </tr> <tr> <td>peas </td> <td>cauliflower </td> <td></td> <td>gravy </td> </tr> </table>	breakfast 	supper 	sausage 	burger 	lunch 	pudding 	beans 	sauce 	meat 	fish 			eggs 	cheese 			vegetables 	carrot 	potatoes 	chips 	peas 	cauliflower 		gravy 	<p><b>Playdough:</b> Make playdough food. Play restaurants, shops etc. using symbols to say what to make, order and buy.</p> <p><b>Shopping Lists:</b> Child uses symbols to remind you what to put on shopping lists.</p> <p><b>'I went shopping:'</b> Play 'I went shopping and I bought.....' Each person has to remember what has gone before and add one more thing. <i>Make sure your choices are on the child's page so s/he can say what you bought. If memory is difficult, draw the items as you go along, so child has to name the pictures, then add own idea.</i></p> <p><b>Cutting and sticking:</b> Cut out food from magazines, and stick onto paper plates to make meals.</p> <p><b>Choosing meals:</b> Make sure child sometimes has opportunity to choose what will be for lunch or supper. It is especially good if sometimes s/he chooses for the whole family to increase feeling of communication being valued and influencing others.</p> <p><b>Real restaurant visits:</b> Child can tell waiter what they would like with their symbols before you interpret in more detail if need be.</p> <p><b>Scrapbook Vegetable page:</b> Cut out pictures of veggies from magazines and stick onto vegetable page, child naming items as you stick them on.</p>
breakfast 	supper 	sausage 	burger 																						
lunch 	pudding 	beans 	sauce 																						
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






































Snacks	Ideas																
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ice cream 	sweets 	crisps 	sandwich 														
chocolate 	biscuits 	cake 															
apple 	orange 																
banana 	pear 																











































Drinks	Ideas								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td> orange juice</td> <td> apple juice</td> </tr> <tr> <td> ribena</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> water</td> <td> milk</td> </tr> <tr> <td> fizzy</td> <td> milkshake</td> </tr> </table>	 orange juice	 apple juice	 ribena		 water	 milk	 fizzy	 milkshake	<p><b>Shopping/picnics/restaurants/parties:</b> the ideas for these in Meals and/or Snacks would also include choosing drinks.</p> <p><b>Doll play:</b> before pouring pretend drink into cup/bottle, child should say what doll wants.</p> <p><b>Make sure child chooses drinks:</b> even if you are sure you know what they want. If you think they've chosen something they are unlikely to want, give it to them anyway, then they'll learn that symbol choice matters!</p> <p><b>Do you take milk?</b> If you have a friend in for tea or coffee, encourage child to point to milk to see if they want it. <i>Asking questions is an important skill that symbol users sometimes don't learn easily. Although there is no symbol here to imply question form, if your friend is primed to understand what is being said, the function of questioning is fulfilled.</i></p>
 orange juice	 apple juice								
 ribena									
 water	 milk								
 fizzy	 milkshake								

Outdoors	Ideas								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td> tummy</td> <td> flower</td> </tr> <tr> <td> park</td> <td> tree</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> woods</td> <td> beach</td> </tr> <tr> <td> country</td> <td> city / town</td> </tr> </table>	 tummy	 flower	 park	 tree	 woods	 beach	 country	 city / town	<p><b>Planning a map:</b> Use a large sheet of paper, and child decides where the park, the beach, the country etc. are. Draw them on, then draw roads linking them up. Child can then drive a car between them, saying where the people in it are going next.</p> <p><b>Choosing a real outing:</b> If possible, let child make real choices about where you go for days out.</p> <p><b>Going for walks:</b> Make sure the symbols are with you so child can say what s/he sees.</p> <p><b>Indoors/Outdoors Scrapbook pages:</b> cut out pictures from magazines that are things from 'in the House' and 'Outdoors.' Child names them as you stick them onto the right pages.</p> <p><b>Tourist Pamphlets:</b> Go to a Tourist Information Centre when you are out one day, and pick up lots of leaflets about local attractions. See how many things you can find that are on these pages.</p>
 tummy	 flower								
 park	 tree								
 woods	 beach								
 country	 city / town								

In the House	Ideas																
<table border="1"> <tr> <td> house</td> <td> room</td> </tr> <tr> <td> door</td> <td> window</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> stairs</td> <td> light</td> </tr> <tr> <td> TV</td> <td> phone</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> toilet</td> <td> bath</td> </tr> <tr> <td> bed</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> table</td> <td> chair</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	 house	 room	 door	 window	 stairs	 light	 TV	 phone	 toilet	 bath	 bed		 table	 chair			<p><b>Draw:</b> outline drawing of house divided into rooms. Child uses symbols to say what needs to be drawn in each room.</p> <p><b>Photographs:</b> Take some photographs in each room, and make up a 'My Home' album for child to chat about using symbols.</p> <p><b>Doll's House Play:</b> child can say what should be put into which rooms.</p> <p><b>Hunt the Thimble:</b> You hide the thimble on or under places s/he has symbols for. Child says where she thinks it may be hidden. If you have a third person, child can use symbols to tell them where to hide the thimble, and you must guess (make sure you point to the symbols when you guess). If you can't find it, child will have to tell you with symbols.</p> <p><b>Indoors/Outdoors Scrapbook pages:</b> cut out pictures from magazines that are things from 'in the House' and 'Outdoors.' Child names them as you stick them onto the right pages.</p> <p><b>Kim's Game:</b> Put a few items of toy furniture (perhaps start with 3 or 4) on a tray, and encourage child to name them. Cover them up, and take one away. Can child say what has gone?</p>
 house	 room																
 door	 window																
 stairs	 light																
 TV	 phone																
 toilet	 bath																
 bed																	
 table	 chair																

Weather	Ideas																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td> sunny</td> <td> hot</td> <td> cloudy</td> <td> windy</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td> raining</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> raining</td> <td> stormy</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> snowing</td> <td> foggy</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	 sunny	 hot	 cloudy	 windy		 raining			 raining	 stormy			 snowing	 foggy			<p><b>Weather Chart:</b> Buy (e.g. Early Learning Centre) or make a chart that has days of week and weather. Change this each day, with child saying on symbols what weather symbol to choose.</p> <p><b>Draw:</b> Outdoor pictures (child may use Outdoors Page to say what the scene should be), and child says what the weather should be, and draws it in over your picture.</p> <p><b>Cut and stick:</b> people from magazines and catalogues who are wearing different sorts of clothing (e.g. coats, bikinis, rainwear etc.) Child says what the weather is likely to be like, and draws it in.</p> <p><b>Make a weather prediction chart:</b> Make a chart for the week, so each day has a column for 'I think it will be' and 'It was.' Ask the child to guess each night what the weather will be like the next day. Draw it on the chart. The next night, discuss what it has been like.</p> <p><b>Watch TV weather forecasts together:</b> and see if child can find symbols for the ones on the weather map.</p> <p><b>Holiday Brochures:</b> Go into travel agents, and pick up some holiday brochures, including Winter Breaks. Look through them, and talk about the weather, and if it would be nice to go there.</p>
 sunny	 hot	 cloudy	 windy														
	 raining																
 raining	 stormy																
 snowing	 foggy																

Transport	Ideas																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td> car</td> <td> bus</td> <td> van</td> <td> lorry</td> </tr> <tr> <td> train</td> <td> bicycle</td> <td> taxi</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> boat</td> <td> plane</td> <td> tractor</td> <td> fire engine</td> </tr> <tr> <td> caravan</td> <td> helicopter</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	 car	 bus	 van	 lorry	 train	 bicycle	 taxi		 boat	 plane	 tractor	 fire engine	 caravan	 helicopter			<p><b>Kim's Game:</b> Put a few toy vehicles (perhaps start with 3 or 4) on a tray, and encourage child to name them. Cover them up, and take one away. Can child say what has gone?</p> <p><b>Traffic Jams:</b> Draw a road on a piece of paper. Child could line up toy vehicles or draw them in to make a traffic jam. They must name each one before it is added.</p> <p><b>Draw a Map:</b> with a station, airport, farm, lake, garage etc. on it. Child says what vehicles go where. Either draw them in, or if you can find pictures to cut out, stick them on.</p> <p><b>Plan visits and holidays:</b> to people/places the child knows, or that you see on TV, in books etc. Talk about how you would get there.</p> <p><b>Go for a walk:</b> and talk about all the vehicles you see on the way.</p> <p><b>Plan a real outing:</b> if possible, on which the child can choose whether to go by car, train or bus.</p>
 car	 bus	 van	 lorry														
 train	 bicycle	 taxi															
 boat	 plane	 tractor	 fire engine														
 caravan	 helicopter																

Places	Ideas																
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td> zoo</td> <td> park</td> <td> city / town</td> <td> country</td> </tr> <tr> <td> fair</td> <td> farm</td> <td> beach</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> shop</td> <td> church</td> <td> hospital</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> McDonalds</td> <td> restaurant</td> <td> school</td> <td> library</td> </tr> </table>	 zoo	 park	 city / town	 country	 fair	 farm	 beach		 shop	 church	 hospital		 McDonalds	 restaurant	 school	 library	<p><b>Use Bricks/Duplo/Lego etc.:</b> to build a town, child saying what buildings to make.</p> <p><b>Tourist Pamphlets:</b> Go to a Tourist Information Centre when you are out one day, and pick up lots of leaflets about local attractions. See how many things you can find which are on these pages.</p> <p><b>Planning a map:</b> Use a large sheet of paper, and child decides where the park, the beach, the hospital etc. are. Draw them on, and then draw roads linking them up. Child can then drive a car between them, saying where the people in it are going next.</p> <p><b>Go for a walk:</b> around a town, and see how many of these places you see.</p> <p><b>Go for an outing:</b> Tell the child what options are available, and allow him/her to decide where you will go.</p>
 zoo	 park	 city / town	 country														
 fair	 farm	 beach															
 shop	 church	 hospital															
 McDonalds	 restaurant	 school	 library														


Fun	Ideas																
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>toys </td> <td>TV </td> <td>computer </td> <td>music </td> </tr> <tr> <td>book </td> <td>game </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>paint </td> <td>draw </td> <td>swim </td> <td>swing </td> </tr> <tr> <td>cut &amp; paste </td> <td>playdough </td> <td>outing </td> <td>slide </td> </tr> </table>	toys 	TV 	computer 	music 	book 	game 			paint 	draw 	swim 	swing 	cut & paste 	playdough 	outing 	slide 	<p><b>Choosing activities:</b> the most important thing about these pages is that the child be asked to choose what s/he wants to do frequently.</p> <p><b>Timetable:</b> If you have week you can plan, make a big timetable with each day divided into morning and afternoon. Plan the week together, drawing in pictures of the activities the child has chosen. Each day s/he looks at the timetable, and then finds the symbols in his/her book for what he is doing today.</p>
toys 	TV 	computer 	music 														
book 	game 																
paint 	draw 	swim 	swing 														
cut & paste 	playdough 	outing 	slide 														

Special Days	Ideas																
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>birthday </td> <td>Easter </td> <td>Harvest Festival </td> <td>bonfire night </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Christmas </td> <td>holiday </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>present </td> <td>party </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>card </td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	birthday 	Easter 	Harvest Festival 	bonfire night 	Christmas 	holiday 			present 	party 			card 				<p><b>Special occasions:</b> The most important thing about this page is to point out the symbols leading up to and on the special occasions.</p> <p><b>Happy.....:</b> Draw the symbol for 'happy' on a card, and cover with plastic/laminate. If child doesn't have flipout sheet*, Sellotape symbol into the inside of the book's top cover. Do this so it folds into the cover symbols side down, and can be flipped out with the symbol showings to the left of this page. If there is a flipout sheet, add happy to it. Child can then wish people Happy Birthday, Christmas etc. when the time comes.</p> <p><b>Wrapping presents for dolls/puppets:</b> Help child to wrap presents for dolls, child deciding what sort of present it is (birthday etc.). S/he must wish that doll happy..... as the present is handed over. You could plan a tea party on the snacks page as well.</p> <p><b>Calendar:</b> Make or buy a calendar, and draw or stick symbols of special occasions on it. Check the calendar on the 1st of each month to see if there are any special events coming up.</p>
birthday 	Easter 	Harvest Festival 	bonfire night 														
Christmas 	holiday 																
present 	party 																
card 																	

colours	Ideas																
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>red </td> <td>blue </td> <td>pink </td> <td>black </td> </tr> <tr> <td>yellow </td> <td>green </td> <td>purple </td> <td>white </td> </tr> <tr> <td>orange </td> <td>brown </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>silver </td> <td>gold </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	red 	blue 	pink 	black 	yellow 	green 	purple 	white 	orange 	brown 			silver 	gold 			<p><b>Choosing and naming colours:</b> Colours are everywhere, so it's easy to encourage choosing and naming using symbols on this page.</p> <p><b>Sorting:</b> Get some containers (<i>either of the colours to be sorted, or with coloured labels on them</i>), and sort toys, household items etc. in to them, child naming colours as s/he sorts.</p> <p><b>Scrapbook:</b> The child can also sort by sticking pictures from magazines and catalogues onto pages labelled with different colours.</p> <p><b>Art &amp; craft:</b> Child should choose colours of pens, paints, coloured paper, bricks etc. in creative activity.</p> <p><b>Choosing clothes:</b> Make sure child has opportunity to say what colours s/he would like to wear/buy whenever possible. Can they sometimes say what colour they want you to wear?</p> <p><b>Sing:</b> 'I can sing a rainbow' slowly, so you can help child to point to each colour in turn.</p> <p><b>.....if you are wearing:</b> make some cards with actions on them (<i>clap, nod, wave etc – things your child can do</i>). Also write 'if you are wearing.....' on one. Take turns to pick an action card, and choose a colour; then say to the other person (<i>by pointing to the sentence cards</i>) e.g. 'Shake your head if you are wearing green.'</p>
red 	blue 	pink 	black 														
yellow 	green 	purple 	white 														
orange 	brown 																
silver 	gold 																

shapes	Ideas								
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>square </td> <td>rectangle </td> <td>ball / sphere </td> <td>tube / cylinder </td> </tr> <tr> <td>circle </td> <td>triangle </td> <td>box / cuboid </td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	square 	rectangle 	ball / sphere 	tube / cylinder 	circle 	triangle 	box / cuboid 		<p><b>Art &amp; Craft:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Make cars, robots, animals, buildings etc. out of packaging, gummed paper shapes etc. talking about the shapes you are using. Early maths books (e.g. from W.H.Smiths) will have lots of number and shape pictures in them. You will often combine number, shape and colour when describing your designs.</li> <li>■ <b>Look around the house:</b> for shapes you see in everyday objects.</li> <li>■ <b>Playdough and real cooking:</b> use shape cutters for making biscuits, pizzas etc.</li> </ul>
square 	rectangle 	ball / sphere 	tube / cylinder 						
circle 	triangle 	box / cuboid 							

Numbers				Ideas			
1	2	3	4	<p><b>Counting Aloud:</b> To reinforce number sequence (which doesn't always come easily to those who don't speak), regularly hep the child to point to each number in sequence as you say them. Hopefully your child can vocalise too. Later on you may be able to ask them to fill in the gaps, e.g. you say, '1,2.....4.5.6.....8,9....., and child says what should come next each time.</p> <p><b>Reinforcing numeracy:</b> As with colours, numbers permeate daily life, and you should use any opportunities to reinforce numeracy using this page. Counting toys, objects, items on a page, things you see on a walk, cutlery when laying the table, biscuits on a plate etc. are all things people do naturally with a speaking child. Use the book to help your child express numbers in the same way. Early Maths books (e.g. from W.H.Smiths) will have lots of number and shape activities in them.</p> <p><b>Dice Games:</b> Make sure child is encouraged to count the spots and identify the numbers on the page.</p> <p><b>Singing:</b> There are so many counting songs – '5 Currant Buns,' '10 Green Bottles,' '5 Green and Speckled Frogs,' '1,2,3,4,5 Once I caught a Fish Alive,' '5 Little Men in a Flying Saucer,' '10 in the Bed' etc. etc. If you sing them slowly, you can help your child to count the number sequences. Also, you can ask him/her to say how many e.g. frogs are left before each verse.</p>			
5	6	7	8				
9	10						

Alphabet	Ideas
	<p><b>The grid:</b> For a child using a 2x2 grid, this is a lot to look at. It may be that this alphabet is replaced with a grid of just 3 or 4 familiar letters. On the other hand, seeing it in its entirety gives the idea of the alphabet as a whole concept. Decisions will be made according to your child's needs; and don't be afraid to say what you think.</p> <p><b>Reinforce level child is working at:</b> You will know what your child is capable of. It may be just searching for the first letter of their name; it could be that s/he is learning to identify the initial letter of many words; or s/he may use this for practising spelling out some whole words. For some children, the alphabet will be a useful communication tool in the future (<i>if you can give an initial sound, it's a valuable tool; if you can spell, you can say what you want</i>), so it's worth introducing the page early on. If they are just looking for initial sounds of their names and perhaps those of the family, why not stick on coloured spots? If your child is in school, make sure you know what they advise – for example, they may well want you using letter sounds, not letter names (e.g. saying 'a' as in apple, not letter 'ay').</p>

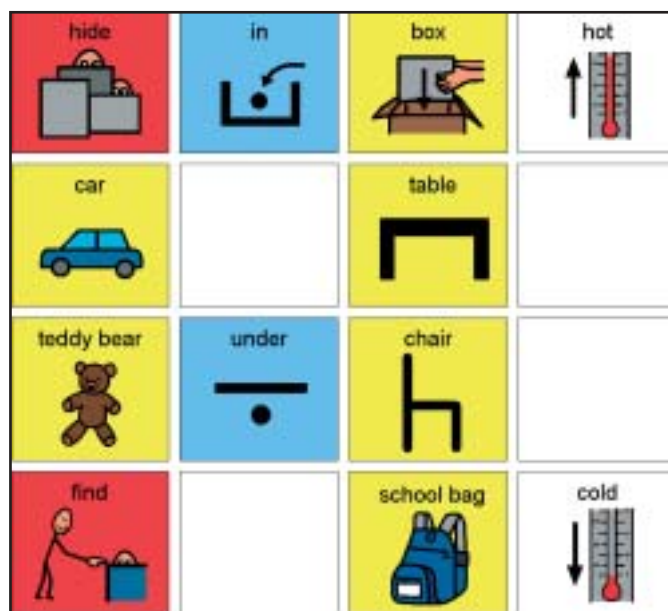
\* A Flipout sheet is a page of useful symbols taped into the inside cover of the communication book. It can be folded out so the symbols appear alongside, and extend the vocabulary of any page.

### Section 4

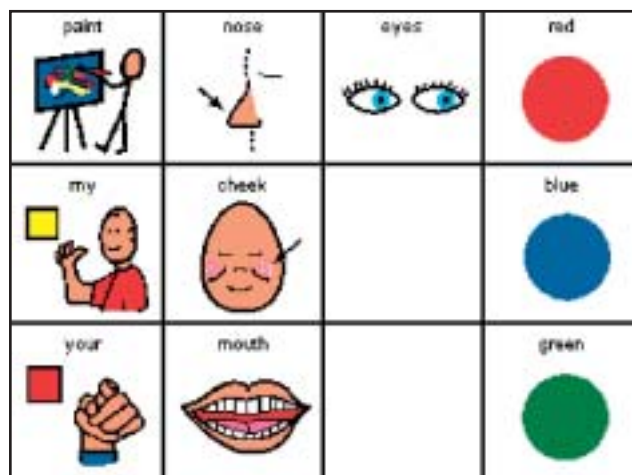
#### Moving on

All of the above activities can be developed to be increasingly sophisticated. The following activities are additional ideas that may be of help in developing the child's use of symbols further:

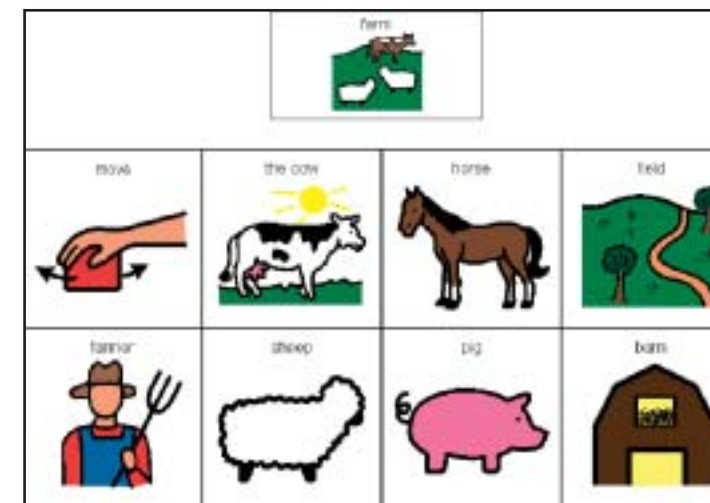
**Hide and seek:** using simple prepositions (in, under, on). The child chooses where to hide and then is hidden there. Another child (or adult) tries to find the hidden child. This can be refined as the child develops an understanding of the preposition to include more complex prepositions (behind) and small toys can be used.



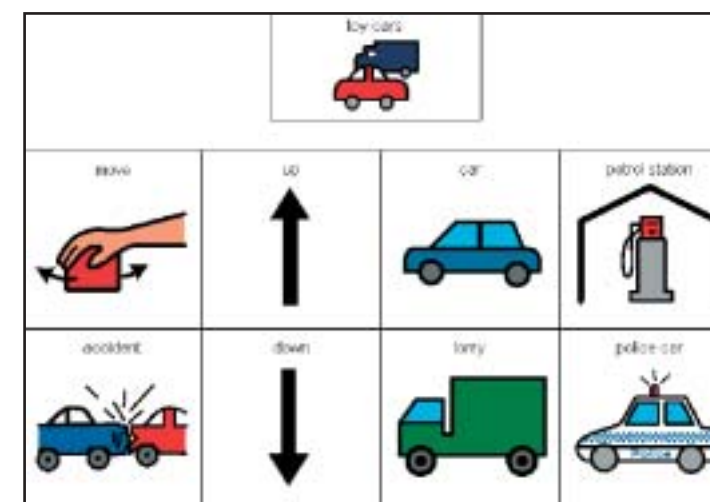
**Face Painting:** by using vocabulary specifically related to the head and face, the child can choose a colour and part of the face for an adult to paint. This can be the child's face or the adult's. In the house: using a doll's house, the child can choose where the furniture and dolls are going.



**Animals and places:** by using a toy farmyard, the child can choose where the animals and people are going in the farmyard and possibly even the farmhouse!



**Transport:** using a play mat or toy garage, the child can decide where the cars etc are going and what is happening to them i.e. getting petrol – who will put the petrol in the car, so toy people can be used to carry out actions related to the cars etc.



## Section 5

### Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCAs).

This can be a very daunting thought – how do I involve the child and help them understand then power of speech output? The following is a list of ideas gathered from many different sources that have been helpful in getting started with simple VOCAS:

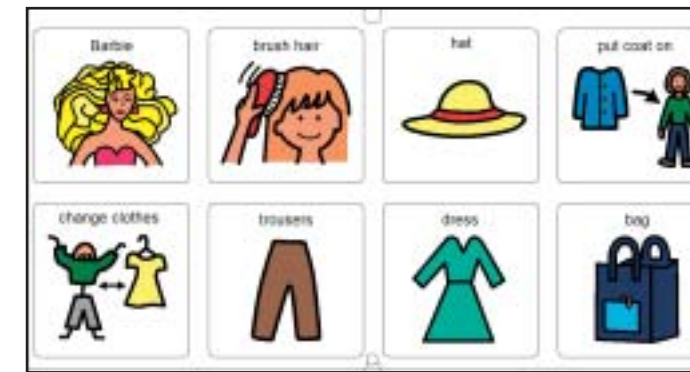
#### Getting Going with simple VOCAs

- Attract attention
- Greetings
- Giving own name
- Answering name in registration
- Calling teacher (teacher's name on device)
- Request a turn during an activity (my turn now)
- Request for an activity to be repeated (again)
- Request more of something e.g. favourite food (more)
- Request help
- Passing messages between home and school (and vice versa).
- Passing messages within school, collecting the register
- Starting a game/activity for peers (Ready Steady Go)
- Games with repeated phrases (Where are you?, Ready or not, I'm coming.)
- Joining in with stories and poems where timing is not important e.g. spound effects to create an atmosphere (sound of a train, storm, sea etc)
- Joining in with the repeated line in stories and songs e.g. Old Macdonald had a farm E I E I O
- Each pupil in a group chooses a sound or phrase e.g. animal sound in "Old Macdonald" and only presses the switch at the appropriate time – when they hear the name (and see the picture/symbol) of their animal.
- School café – calling waiter/waitress or ordering food/drink.
- Sports Day – cheering on the team
- Singing Happy birthday.
- "Volley ball" – team members press the switch for a ball to be passed to them.

#### Moving On

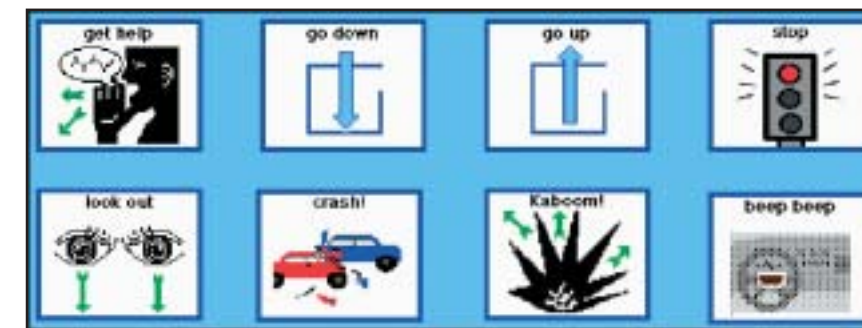
All of the activities listed previously can be carried out using a Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA), although you may want to add some phrases that are relevant to the activity. For example:

**Clothes:** dressing up: you may want to add 'put on ...' and 'take off' or dress dolls. The child could also choose a person and then what they were going to wear.



**Body parts and colours:** could be combined in a face painting activity 'paint my...' or 'paint your...'.  
**Transport:** playing with a toy garage or on a floor mat, add in 'go fast', 'go slow', 'oh no'

**Transport:** playing with a toy garage or on a floor mat, add in 'go fast', 'go slow', 'oh no'



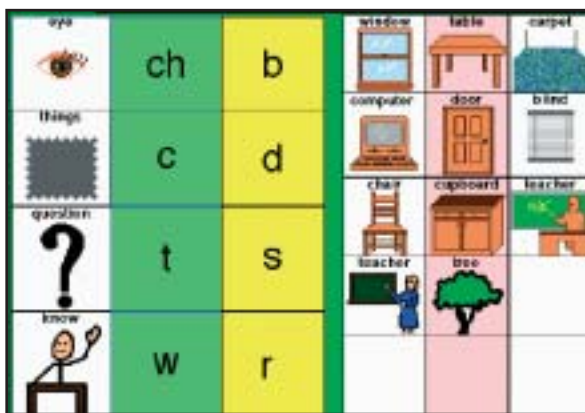
**Telling jokes:** "Telling Jokes can be great fun at all levels on many VOCAs. The example below comes from the Ingfield Vocabularies in Speaking Dynamically Pro."



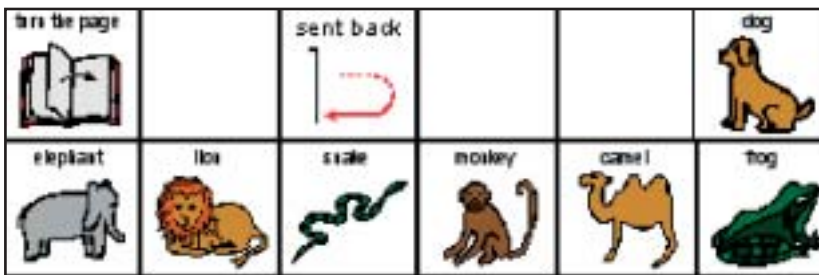
**Body parts:** Playing Guess Who with the relevant questions programmed into the device.



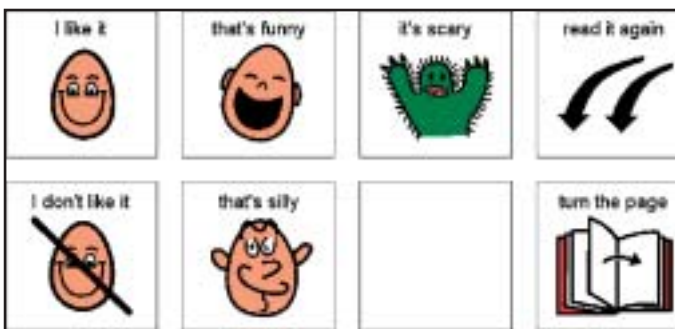
**I spy:** this can be useful for children who are developing initial letter recognition. The phrase ‘I spy with my little eye something beginning with’ together with the relevant letter or letters and the correct answers put on the overlay.



**Story reading:** joining in with the repeated lines of a story.  
Dear Zoo.



**General story reading vocabulary.**



Finally HAVE FUN, there are lots of games out there just waiting to be played!