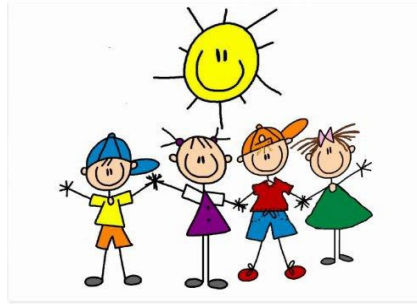


Promoting Language and Communication through Routines

A resource for tutors and teachers to support the Home or School
Based Summer Programme



Overview:

This document was developed by NCSE Speech and Language Therapists to provide support for teachers working with students through the summer programme. All students benefit from structured routines. This document provides some advice and strategies that teachers can use to provide opportunities to develop students' language and communication through routines.

This resource supports the key principles of 'promoting calm' and 'promoting hope'.

Layout of tool:

This document was designed to consider the everyday activities that may make up a daily routine for a student engaged in the summer programme at home or at school. Many of the strategies within these activities can also be applied to other activities that you may include in your day.

Considerations when using this tool:

All students will be at different stages in terms of their language development. Activities may need to be differentiated depending on their language abilities and means of communication. It is important to accept and acknowledge all communication attempts from students. Some students may be communicating verbally. Other students may use alternative or augmentative means of communication e.g. using signs, gestures, pictures, communication devices.

Revised May 2022

The content of these handouts is adapted from information sourced on:
<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com;https://specialkids.company/blogs/latest-news/tips-for-reading-children-with-special-needs>

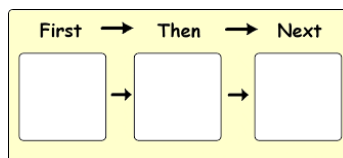
Hello and Plan for the Day

1. Say Hello



This is an important step in developing any social routine and starting a daily routine when returning to school. You can wave and say “hello_____” or “good morning_____”. If you have visuals available, you may use this with the student(s). You could sing a “hello” song if you feel this is appropriate. You can also use this time to model other social comments like “it is a beautiful sunny day”. Accept and acknowledge any attempts the student makes at greeting or communicating. The student may use words, wave, facial expression, a gesture, Lámh sign or point to a picture.

2. Plan the Day



You can involve the student(s) in planning your activities for the day and support them to make their own choices. There are several ways you could do this and this would depend on the language and communication abilities of students. The amount of language you expect the student to use should be based on his/her current skills. You could:

- Ask the question “what would you like to do today?”
- Present choices verbally “would you like to _____or_____?”
- Present choices visually by holding up objects or pictures and also asking “would you like to _____or_____?”
- Include the use of gesture or Lámh signs as appropriate.
- Include activities of daily living e.g. snack time, washing hands etc.
- Write down the plan using words or pictures. This can help the student(s) to understand what is coming next and can support them in transitioning from one task to the next.

Washing Hands/Using the Toilet



You can use every day routines such as washing hands or using the toilet to support a student to understand the sequence and language of these activities, which will support them when returning to a school routine.

1. Labelling words:

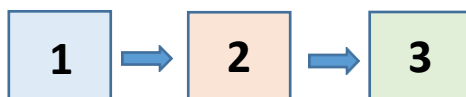


Use every day routines to label words, describe and talk about what the student is doing. You can also use gestures, signs or pictures to support a student to understand the language of the routine. The following are some examples of the language of the routine of washing hands:

- Object Labels e.g. *sink, tap, towel, soap, dispenser, plug, water, hands, fingers, nails, suds*
- Action words e.g. *press, turn, twist, put, wash, plug, rub, dry, lather*
- Position words e.g. *on, off, in, between, under, middle*
- Describing words e.g. *hot, cold, wet, dry, slippery, clean, dirty*

If appropriate you can ask questions to encourage the student to use these words themselves e.g. “what do we do with a tap?”, “what do we use to dry our hands?”, “what is this?”, “are your hands clean or dirty?”.

2. Sequencing/Following Directions:



You can work on sequencing and following directions while completing toileting and washing hand routines. You can support the student’s understanding of simple instructions during these routines. For example, give them one step instructions like “turn on the tap” or “dry your hands” or two step directions like “turn off the tap and then dry your hands”.

If available, you can refer to picture directions with all of the steps to complete that task. For example, you could place a washing hands picture strip at eye level next to the sink.

3. Understanding Time



You can help a student to develop an understanding of time during a routine like washing hands. You can help the student to wash their hands for 2 minutes by singing the happy birthday song together two times, using a countdown app or putting a timer on a phone.

Language During Mealtimes

Snack time and lunch time provide us with lots of opportunities for communication during the school day.



1. Requesting

You can promote requesting of food during meal times by:

- **Offering choices:** Some students may be able to make choices from a number of items, other children may find it easier to make a choice if only two items are presented
- **Placing items out of a student's reach:** The adult should accept any form of communication as a request e.g. shift of eye gaze, nodding head, hand gesture, and immediately give the student what they requested
- **Giving a little, then waiting:** Only give a little bit of juice in the student's cup, or give one raisin etc. and wait to see how the child seeks more. Again, accept any form of communication and then model and repeat the word 'more' multiple times
- **Adding language:** If a student uses one word to request, you can encourage them to use a two-word phrase to request by adding a word and repeating this a number of times e.g. if the student says 'milk' to request, you could say 'more milk' to encourage them to use this in the future

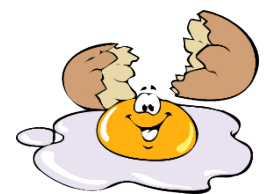


It very is important to accept and respond to all means of communication, verbal and non-verbal. The amount of language you expect a child to use should be based on his/her current skills. If a student's primary method of communication is through non-verbal means, ensure that you respond, modelling words for the student but not expecting them to say them.



2. Describing what you are eating

Meals are a great time to talk about textures, smells, and tastes. You can talk about how the foods feel with your hands or in your mouth. You can also have the student smell the foods before they eat them. Once your student does try the food, talk about how it tastes and feels. You can talk about if it is sweet/salty/sour and about if it is crunchy/chewy/juicy, etc.



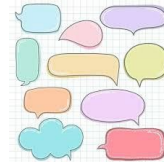
Going Outside



1. Preparing to go outdoors

Before you go, encourage the student(s) to think about what they might do, see or hear when you go outside. Ask them what they would like to do, using visual support or offering choices as required. Tell the student(s) what you are looking forward to doing!

2. Labelling words outdoors



- **Comment** on what you see or what the student or others are doing when you see them, e.g. "She is running very fast!", "that's a shiny red car", "it is very windy today".
- **Label** any new vocabulary for the student(s) e.g. branches; stepping stones; dandelion etc.
- Use words to describe what is happening or the student is experiencing when they are outdoors e.g. **dry** grass; **tall** ladder; **buzzing** bees; **loud** birds; **tasty** lunch, etc.
- Think of all the new **action words** (verbs) that the student(s) are experiencing when they're outdoors e.g.

•skip	•push	•slide
•pick	•kick	•jog
•Hop	•climb	•jump

3. Outdoor Games to Encourage Language and Communication

- Play '**I Spy**' as you walk around outside.
- Play **sound bingo**! Listen for sounds like:



- Car horn
- Dog barking
- Airplane
- Lawnmower
- Ambulance
- Motorbike



- Play a **guessing game!**
 - Find something that you **dig with** (spade)
 - Find something that you **wear on your head** (hat; cap)
 - Find something that **flies** (bird; butterfly; kite)
 - Find something that you **kick** (ball)
 - Find something that **barks** (dog)
 - Find something that you **climb** (ladder)
 - Find something that **is slippery** (slide)



- Play **run and touch**: “Run and touch...”
 - The bench
 - The gate

Make it harder by adding another item:

“Run and touch...”




- The door and the bench
- The basket and the fence



Story Time

In many classrooms, story time is an important part of the everyday routine. Stories and books help students to develop listening and attention skills, and hear lots of words. Stories provide many opportunities for communication and language development. When introducing books to students who find understanding or using language difficult, consider the following:



- **Choose books that will interest the student:** this is a good starting point, if a student loves dinosaurs, a dinosaur book is a good way to engage them in story time 
- **Read the same stories again and again:** if students have difficulty understanding or absorbing information, repeat readings provide an opportunity for them to catch words and concepts they may have missed the first time. It is also a good way for a student to build their vocabulary 
- **Build up the time you read:** some children find it difficult to sit for long periods. If you read for too long at first, student(s) may lose interest and begin to have negative associations with books. Start off by just reading for a few minutes, using a visual timer or stopwatch so that your student(s) knows when it will end. This will help a student to stay engaged and gradually they may be able to build up the time they spend reading 
- **Use objects:** using objects can help focus children and bring a story to life. Student(s) may be able to hold an object and act along with the story as you are reading e.g. if the story is about a queen, give them a crown to wear. Having something to hold may also support children who tend to fidget or lose concentration

While Reading...

- ★ Make comments about the story or the character rather than always asking questions e.g. when looking at pictures, don't say 'what's that?', label the picture for your student(s), providing a clear model of the word
- ★ If it is a story your student(s) know well, create an opportunity for communication by changing a word or surprising them by inserting their own name in to the story
- ★ If a student uses verbal language, ask questions which help them to think about the story e.g. 'I wonder why...?' 'What might happen if...?'
- ★ Take turns when turning the pages, praising the student when they wait for their turn

Review events of the day

Talk about the events of the student's day with them as they near the end of their time with you. When you are reviewing the student's activities, consider how you can support their language and communication skills to enable them to be active participants in the discussion.



Ask the student to tell you or others about their day

- For students who have more difficulty with the language of this, try asking very specific questions about their day, such as “**what** did you eat for lunch?” or “**who** did you build the Lego tower with?”
- You may want to start with questions that you know the answers to so you can help the student if they get stuck
- If a student struggles to understand or answer questions, ask ‘yes/no’ questions or offer choices e.g. did we have carrots or apples at snack? And use objects to support the student's understanding

Use visual supports to help your student(s) to recall the events of the day

- Refer to the visual timetable or use objects from activities they participated in
- If a student does not use verbal language, narrate their day for them, offering opportunities to the child to contribute using visuals e.g. then we read a story book, did we read ‘The Gruffalo’ or ‘Room on the Broom’ and show the child the books to support their understanding
- Have ‘yes/no’ visuals to support the student to respond to questions about their day

For older students or those with more language, try sequencing events from the day by talking about what happened first, next, and last

- If you did a craft activity during the day ask them what you made, how you setup, what materials you used, what you did first, next, and what you did last



