

More Ways to Say It

Simple communication boards for the classroom and home

Every child has something to say. For a child who is not speaking, or not speaking much, a board gives more ways to say it, and using it does not hold speech back. Print these boards, point to the words as you talk, and keep them always within reach.

The idea in one line

Talk to the board as you talk to the child. Two ways are better than one.

✧ Point as you talk

say the word and touch it, every time

✧ Two ways are better

voice and board together, never one or the other

✧ Never a quiz

offer it always, don't test or withhold it

How to print, use and make it last

- Print at A4 or US Letter on normal colour settings - that's all you need.
- Laminate the boards (and cut the quick cards) so they wipe clean and last; a wall copy, a desk copy and a take-home copy all help.
- Add the words and pictures this child uses most on the blank cells, in the language spoken at home too.

Assume the child understands more than they can show. Communication is a right, not a reward, so the boards are always available, never earned and never taken away.

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From Lantern Path Books - a gentle support tool for communication, not medical or clinical advice.

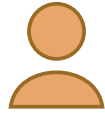
The Core Words Board

The everyday words that work across the whole day

These small, powerful words cover most of what a child wants to say. Point and say them as you go: 'you want MORE', 'time to STOP', 'let's LOOK'. The coloured strips group people, doing words, quick words and questions.



I



you



we

want



more



go



stop

help



look



like



play



eat



turn

make



again



yes



no



finished

what

where

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Quick Words and Feelings

The needs and feelings a child most needs to tell you fast

Keep this where a child can grab it: a desk corner, a lanyard, the calm corner. Cut the cells into cards if that is easier to hold and point. Feelings are here too, so 'I feel' has a fast answer.



drink



eat

toilet

help

hurt

break



finished



more



yes



no

I feel...



happy



sad



cross



worried



tired

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Choosing and Yes / No

Offer a real choice, and always a way to say yes or no

Hold up two options and let the child point, look or reach. A clear way to say YES, NO, MORE and STOP gives a child real say over their day. Write or draw today's choices in the blank cells.



YES



NO



MORE



STOP

Today I can choose:



draw or write a choice



draw or write a choice



draw or write a choice

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For the Grown-Up

Presume competence, and model the board yourself

A board only works when the adults use it too. These notes keep it simple, respectful, and on the right side of the line.

✧ **Model it, don't quiz it**

Say the word and touch it as you talk, many times a day, with no pressure on the child to copy. They learn by watching you use it.

✧ **Always available, never earned**

Keep the boards within reach at all times. Communication is a right, not a reward, and is never taken away as a consequence.

✧ **Presume competence**

Assume the child understands. Talk to them in a full, age-respectful way, and give them time to answer.

✧ **Independent only - a hard line**

The child points, looks or reaches by themselves. Never guide, hold or move a child's hand, arm or the board for them. The words must be the child's own.

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Why Boards Help

The research behind the boards, in plain words

Everything here is built on published research about how children communicate. We make supportive tools, not clinical advice - the notes below are accurate statements about the research, not promises about any one child.

What the research says

- Giving a child more ways to communicate, such as a board, signs or pictures, does not hold speech back. Research finds it often helps speech grow.
- Assume competence: a child who is not speaking, or not speaking much, usually understands far more than they can show. Talk to them as you would any child their age.
- The clearest way to teach a board is to use it yourself: say the word and touch it at the same time, often, with no pressure on the child to copy.
- A communication board is always available, never something a child has to earn or that is taken away.

If you have concerns

A general support tool, not medical or clinical advice. For setting up the right communication support for a child, work with the family and a speech-language professional.

The research behind it

Pope, L., Light, J. & Laubscher, E. (2024). Meta-analysis of AAC and speech outcomes - AAC supports communication and does not hold speech back; it may help it grow. J. Autism & Dev. Disorders.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Augmentative and alternative communication in early intervention - guidance.

Leadbitter, K., et al. (2021). Autistic self-advocacy and the neurodiversity movement - presume competence, centre autonomy. Frontiers in Psychology.

Assume the child understands more than they can show. Communication is a right, not a reward, so the boards are always available, never earned and never taken away.

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