

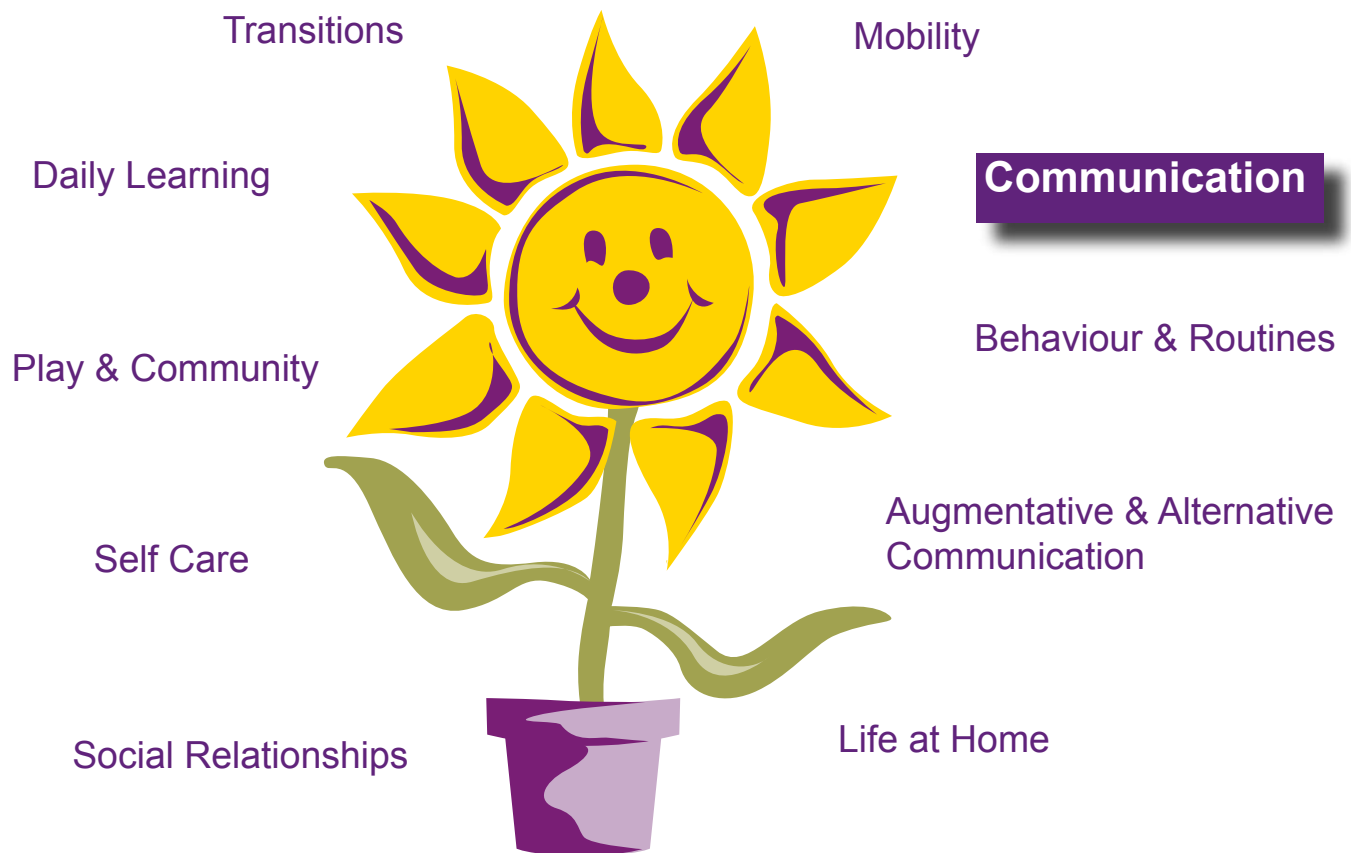
Helping you set goals for your child

At Therapy Focus, we recognise and value your role as parents being the experts on your child and family.

Our Services are a support to help your child reach their potential and enhance their participation in the community. Educating and empowering you to help your child is

an important part of our holistic therapy services.

This brochure is a starting point for discussion about your child and your family. It offers ideas to create new activities your child is able to do with encouragement and support.



The way we work

- We recognise that family is central to therapy. Families bring knowledge and expertise about their child to help identify the child's needs, develop goals and practice strategies.
- The family, therapy team and teaching staff work together to identify problems and share ideas. Each has a role to play in developing the child's skills.
- We use every opportunity in the family's and child's routine and environment to develop skills.
- Therapists work as a multidisciplinary collaborative team, sharing skills to meet the needs of the child.
- We recognise the child's strengths and how they can be developed to increase participation in the activities of life.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the way we exchange our thoughts, feelings, opinions and information through talking, writing, signs or facial expressions.

Speech (expressive language) and understanding (receptive language) are often confused, but there is a distinction between the two:

- Speech is the verbal expression of language and includes articulation, which is the way words are formed.
- Language is much broader and refers to the entire system of expressing and receiving information in a way that is meaningful. It is understanding and being understood through communication - verbal, nonverbal, and written.

Although problems in speech and language differ, they frequently overlap; if your child does not understand the meaning of a word, they will be less likely to use it.



Consider the following:

- Is your child's speech not understood well by you or others?
- Does your child have difficulty following instructions at home or in class?

- Is your child able to identify the different sounds within words when reading?
- Does your child have difficulty finding the words he/she wants to use?
- Is your child unable to put words together to tell a story or tell news at school?
- Can your child follow the give and take of a conversation with peers?

Strategies to assist your child's receptive and expressive language skills

- **Use Every Opportunity** by allowing your child to participate whenever possible throughout their normal routine. Talk about your child's actions and those of other people when your child is engaging in an activity such as playing, riding in the car or eating. This helps your child learn to connect what they see, hear, do, and feel with the words to describe them.
- **Provide the right words** when your child speaks or points to an object, be sure to imitate the sound and then give your child the label (the name of the object). For example, if your child points to a dog, give the label, "dog".
- **Monitor your speaking rate and stress**, talking at a speed your child can understand. You may need to talk more slowly than you usually do. Stress the words you are teaching by saying them louder, longer, or in a high voice.

- **Expand** on your child's topic by adding related information. If your child shows you a dog, talk about what a dog sounds like or eats. If they are commenting on things they are looking at ask them questions about that object.
- **Use Encouragement** to let your child know they are doing a great job. This will help them to keep motivated and boost their self-esteem.
- **Being Patient and Calm** is important when when teaching your child new skills.

Example

Sally is a 10 year old girl with an intellectual disability. Sally's parents are concerned that she does not follow instructions and uses only basic three word sentences to communicate with her family and peers.

Her parents would like to see Sally become more independent in responding to instructions and also increase the length of her sentences. Following consultation with Sally's family and therapy team the following goals were established:

Goal 1- Sally to follow two step instructions independently.

Goal 2 - Sally to use five to six word sentences independently at conversation level.

Memory games and visualisation strategies were used at home and school to support Sally's ability to follow instructions and directions. Her peers would complete instructions which included words like

"beneath, beside, secondly". Sally followed their lead until she understood what the words meant.

Various visual supports were used to encourage Sally to extend her sentences, for example, a symbol of a train with several carriages representing words in a sentence.

Sally's family, teachers and peers also understood ways in which to prompt Sally to add more words and create longer sentences.

Outcome: After two school terms of support and practice, Sally was able to follow complex instructions with minimal support. She still requires support in

Resources to help your child's communication

Chat Books (also known as Remnant Books):

Children with communication needs often spend a lot of time learning how to ask for their basic needs, but they miss out on the social closeness of having a chat with peers.

Chat Books can be used to help your child have a conversation with others. A Chat Book consists of pages or plastic sleeves filled with souvenirs and mementoes (remnants) of places seen, people met, gifts received or activities completed; anything your child might like to talk about with others.

Remnants that might go into the Chat Book include an empty McDonald's chip packet, movie ticket stub, photos from a party, pressed flowers from a favourite park, or hair clippings from a hair cut.

Clear Speech Chart:

This chart can be used to teach your child strategies to improve their speech and encourage them to self-evaluate their speech intelligibility.



Glossary of Terms

Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC): A means of communication to support or replace speech. AAC tools may be low tech, such as pictures, signing, and alphabet boards or high tech, such as a computer or electronic communication aid.

Articulation: Movement of the articulators (mouth, throat, tongue and teeth) together to shape sounds.

Articulation disorder: Difficulty in pronouncing particular consonants and vowels (speech sounds).

Developmental Language Delay: A child's language is slow in development and is similar to that of a younger child.

Developmental Language Disorder: A child's language is not following the usual order for language development.

Dysfluency/Stuttering: A disorder which affects the fluency of speech production. Stuttering speech is characterised by "involuntary interruptions" (usually repetitions of sounds or words), "prolongations" (where the person extends a sound) and "blocks" (where the person is unable to produce a particular sound).

Dyspraxia (Verbal): A co-ordination difficulty. The brain transmits the wrong messages about when and how the muscles of the throat and mouth should move to make voice and speech. Speech may sound muddled because the wrong sounds are produced in the wrong places. Sometimes words are said automatically and sound clear. Other forms of dyspraxia can affect other parts of the body also.

Echolalia: Repetition of words / phrases overheard. A good example would be repetition when watching television shows or listening to the radio.

Expressive Language Difficulty: Difficulty affecting the child's ability to speak, write or gesture.

Hearing Impairment: A hearing loss that can be either temporary or permanent and can range in severity from mild to profound.

Non-verbal Communication: Communication which is not spoken or written. Non-verbal communication includes facial expression, body language, natural gestures, tone of voice, drawing and use of symbols.

Receptive Language Difficulty: Difficulty affecting the person's ability to understand other people or to read. May be developmental or acquired.

Semantic Disorder: Difficulty understanding and using the meaning of words. May be developmental or acquired.