

ACHIEVING COMMUNICATIVE INDEPENDENCE

Communicative Independence – A hope and dream

Hold onto your hopes and dreams; be realistic – they will motivate you and inspire you.

Parents have different hopes and dreams for their child, but to be able to communicate independently at whatever level is often one that is highlighted. Being able to:

- Tell you if they can't find something
- Hand in money for an after school activity at the office
- Find out this week's spelling words if they have lost them
- Say if they have not understood a discussion
- Participate in show and tell
- Join in with chats at the dinner table
- Give a detailed account of a film watched at school.
- Tell others how to play a game



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Independent Communication - a hope and dream.

➤ REF: 4.1 Share your hopes and dreams, talk about your expectations

How my child communicates, why they communicate and who do they communicate with?

Our means, reasons & opportunities to communicate independently.

(Extended from an original idea by Della Money and Sue Thurman)

My child's world is expanding now that they are at school. They can communicate independently with their current language skills. It's about use of language, not level of language skill. I can make a few changes or plan ahead to give my child more opportunities and more success at communicating independently.



More experiences and knowledge will enhance conversations.

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Think, plan and succeed at communicating independently.

➤ REF: 4.1 Giving my child more opportunities and more success

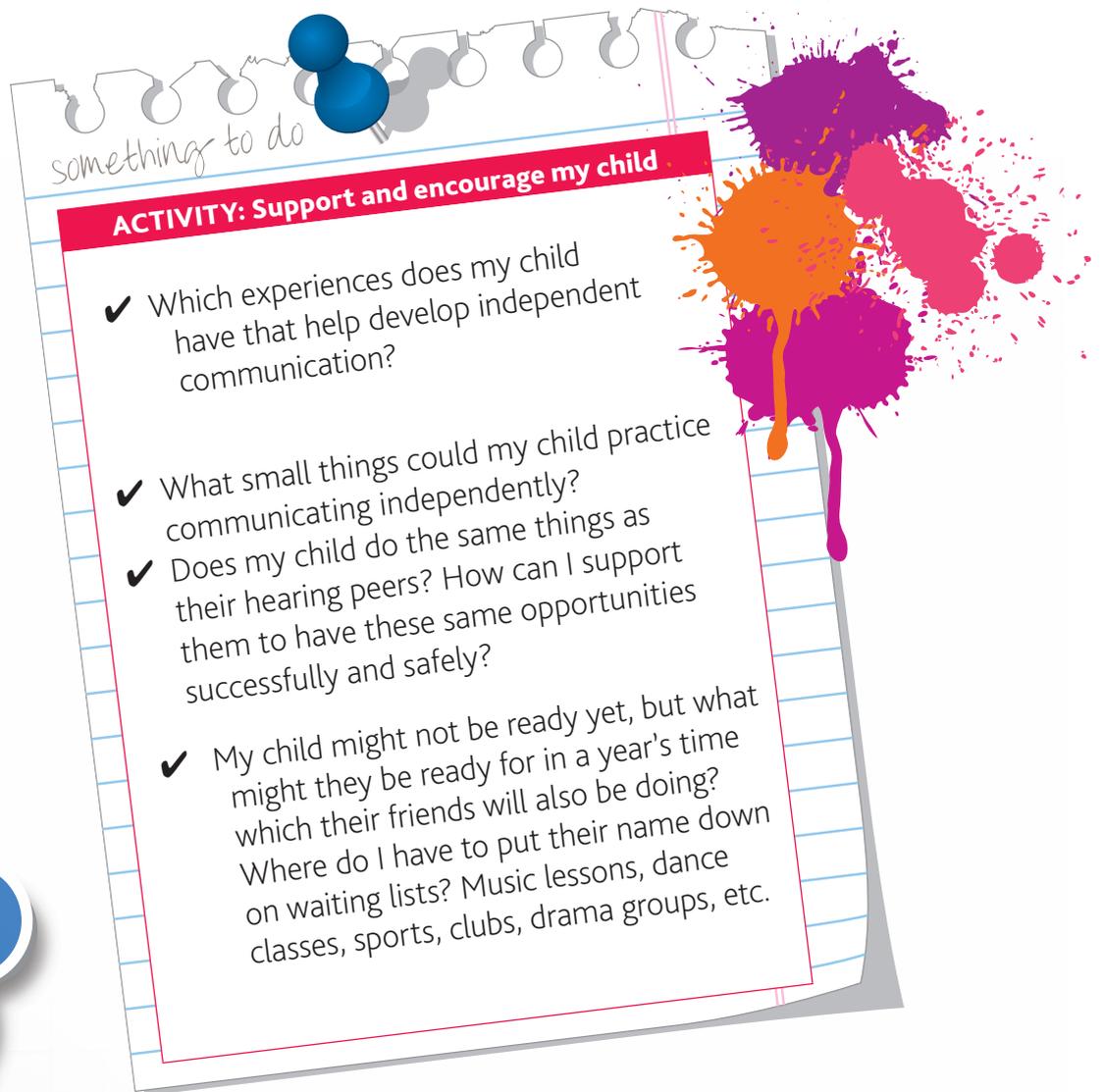


We are aiming that "he gets involved in exactly the same way as any other child." Parent





How I communicate with my child will be how my child communicates with me.



Remember: Wearing hearing technology means my child can hear and use speech.

HOW MY CHILD COMMUNICATES

Children communicate in many ways including through words, sign language, gesture, pointing and facial expression.

Ask yourself:

- How is my child communicating?
- How do I want my child to communicate?
- How do I communicate?

Identify within your family how you communicate together.

- Do we use one spoken language or two?
- Do we use sign language?
- Who uses which languages?

Identify if communication changes in any way.

- Does my child communicate differently with different members of the family?
- Does my child communicate differently in different situations?
- What influences how my child communicates differently? Is it due to the listening environment, or the activity, or the people they are communicating with?

Ultimately, how you communicate will reflect your child's current language needs, but it will also influence your child's language learning. Your child will learn from how you communicate with them. In reality, this means that if the 'how' you communicate with your child involves more signing and very little speech, your child is not seeing 'how' to communicate in any other way than to sign to you. Go back to your hopes and dreams – if you want more spoken language, the 'how' you communicate is as important as how your child communicates.



To use my hearing technology and develop spoken language – Challenge ¹

Sometimes we need challenges and nudges to achieve our hopes and dreams.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN HEARING TECHNOLOGY

Whether your child is building up their spoken language, or moving from sign language to spoken language, start helping them to take some responsibility for their own communication. Always be positive, encourage and challenge (nicely)!

Encourage your child to take responsibility for their modern hearing technology, BUT that it is so important that it's working all day, every day, that you also need to check | monitor its functioning and use.

ACTIVITY: Challenge Cards

Encourage your child to practice using their spoken language. Create opportunities to practice – Examples:

- ✓ I will go into a shop and buy something on my own.
- ✓ I will make a sandwich for myself on holiday. I will ask Mom and make a sandwich for her.
- ✓ I will go to the school office to hand in my dinner money or a note from Mom.
- ✓ I will look in a picture recipe book and tell Mom what to do as she makes something.

THE BALANCE BETWEEN USING SIGN LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPING SPOKEN LANGUAGE – CHALLENGE ME!

These are available in the Resource Section. Cut them out and give them to your child for encouragement.

- ✓ I will learn how to connect up my cochlear implant or hearing technology.
- ✓ I will learn how to check my hearing technology.
- ✓ I will learn the names of every part of the hearing technology I use.
- ✓ I will wear my hearing technology all day, every day.
- ✓ I will use all my knowledge to tell my friends about my hearing technology during a show & tell or a technology topic.

Why does your child need to be reminded? If they need to tell you something or want some information, they have a REASON to use their spoken language.

Think back to the **how** and **why** we communicate. In which situations does my child sign and in which do they use spoken language. If they sign well, why would they use their spoken language?

Value the good signing and the independence this brings. Think about why they would use their spoken language.

Think: When your child is with hearing children they use more spoken language, and when they are with their deaf or hearing impaired friends they might sign. After a day at school mixing mainly with hearing impaired friends, they actually spend very little time with hearing friends and therefore may not speak to others much. Following a few changes, you can increase their opportunities to communicate using spoken language.

Think through your child's week:
How much time do they spend signing with others and how much time do they spend speaking?

Remember: They need growing responsibility, but they are too young and it is too important for them to not have support.



Talk with my child about their spoken language. Help them to take responsibility.

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Give me opportunities to hear and use spoken language.

› REF: 4.2 Challenge me



Research has shown that there is a natural shift towards spoken language becoming the child's first language during the first three years using a cochlear implant or other devices establish hearing thresholds within normal limits. We are not talking about not signing, but the LEAPing On with Language program is focusing upon developing spoken language. Many children will continue to sign or will return to sign at a later date as their second language. If they have not done so already, it might be time to consider how you can encourage this shift to the first language being spoken. You will need advice and support from school and local professionals, but if they can, and if it is appropriate for them to do so, now is the time to begin to nudge the balance between their use of sign and spoken language. It can get harder as they get older, but seek advice; make up your own mind because as parents you are good at making decisions to help your child. You can always give it a try, nudge the balance and see how it goes. If it is going well you should continue. If your child is not responding, persevere for a bit, try different things and monitor progress. You will know what's best.

My child needs to take responsibility for their hearing technology but I also need to continue to monitor and check it.

something to do

Identify a time each day when you and your child can talk together, play the conversation games and do some of the activities suggested in LEAPing on with Language. It's a bit like learning to drive or learning to play the piano. You have to practice and that practice needs to be regular. So build it in; otherwise, it gets squashed out.

How can I support and encourage my child and so ACHIEVE communicative independence.

