

Introduction to Aided Language Boards

Aided language boards allow visual language (pictures) to be displayed alongside verbal language (speech). This consistent use of picture information alongside verbal can allow children with ASD/language needs to use their visual strengths to support their use of language.

You can model the use of the board with your child by pointing to the symbols that represent the key words in your sentence while speaking. Your child can then see the picture symbols used and can learn how to use the board to support their communication.

This consistent use of picture information alongside verbal can allow children with ASD/language needs to use their visual strengths to support their use of language. The vocabulary on the board is arranged from left to right to loosely imitate sentence structure.

Below is an example of an aided language board for arts and crafts. You could use this board to ask for an art supply, for example, by saying: “I want a red pen” whilst pointing to [I...want...red...pen] or “I want more glitter and glue” whilst pointing to [I...want...more...glitter...glue].

When your child is using the board, you can build up from pointing at a single symbol e.g. asking for a pencil by pointing to the “pencil” symbol, to making a sentence to request using “I want...” They can also use the board to comment on what they are doing “I draw picture”.

Aided language boards can be used as a communication method for non-verbal children as well as a language extension tool to support children to extend their verbal language. When modelling the use of the board it is important to always use the verbal language for your child to hear alongside the symbol so they can start to attach meaning to the words.

