

No Longer Fragile

An education seminar on fragile X syndrome

Unit 3: Communication and Socialisation

FraXgile



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Communication & Socialisation



Communication

- Our children have difficulty with
 - Expressive language
 - Verbal processing
 - Extreme social anxiety
 - Language pragmatics
 - the ability to use language appropriately



Communication strengths

- Enjoy communicating with others
- Enjoy social interaction
- Understand non verbal communication
 - Gesture, emotion, body language
- Look to others for information (social referencing)
- Good imitators
- Able to communicate non verbally
 - Action based



What stops our children talking?

- Anxiety
- Developmental delay
- Dyspraxia
- Weak facial muscles
- High arched palate
- Cognitive profile



What stops our children from talking?

- The child's communication environment
 - Anticipating our children's needs
 - Providing no means to communicate
 - Limited time with others
 - Distractions



What stops our children from talking?

- Our communication style
 - Communication pressure
 - Testing
 - Negative tone or body language
 - Direct communication
 - Not enough response time
 - Too much verbal language. Not enough visual language.

Communication environment

- Expect communication
 - Provide the child with a way of communicating with others
 - Provide an environment that encourages communication





Total Communication

- Uses a combination of language forms that suit the child
 - Gesture
 - Sign
 - Pictures, drawings or photographs
 - Objects
 - Verbal communication
 - Facial expression



Expressive Communication Strategies

- Visual supports
 - Encourage communication
 - Improve speech clarity
 - Improve topic maintenance
 - Help the listener understand what the child is talking about
 - Communication tempters
 - Topic boxes
 - Conversation starters
 - Memory books
 - Communication bridge
 - Home/school books

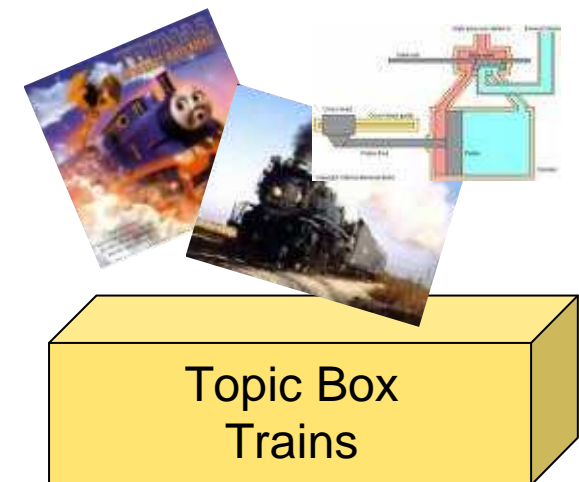


Communication Tempters

- Create an environment that tempts the child to communicate
 - Blow bubbles in front of the child. Then close the bubble bottle tightly so the child needs you to undo it. Place the bottle in front of the child
 - Put your child's drink or food into containers that they require your assistance to open.
 - Ask a speech language therapist for more ideas communication tempters that will suit your child

Topic Boxes

- A bag or box of high interest objects that provide ideas for your child to talk about.
- Items may include pamphlets, maps, postcards of favourite places, small toys or photographs.
- Useful for conversations at meal times, in restaurants, while travelling, during wait times and when chatting to a family member or friend
- Add new high interest and topical objects to the box regularly



Memory books

- Photograph events and activities your child enjoys so that your child may show and talk about the event with others
- Use at school for story writing ideas or to support news presentation



Conversation starters

- Questions or topic ideas to start conversation
- Use topics that interest your child
- Add picture symbols to written words to support reading or use photographs

What do you like to do best on the computer

Talk about the biggest fish you have caught



Communication bridge

To provide information about the child's day to someone who was not present

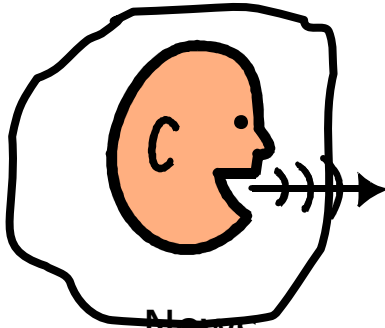
- Collect items from the place your child goes to
 - A shell
 - A postcard
 - A train ticket
- Save the packet of the treat they ate
- Take photographs of favourite activities



- Use real objects
- Photographs
- A written message
- Picture symbols

Communication bridge

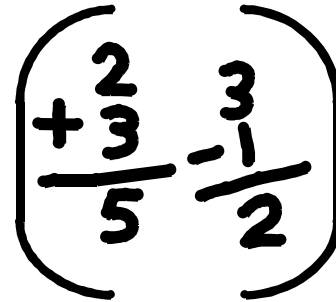
What did you do at school today?



News



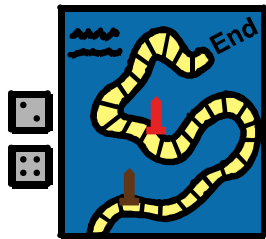
Big book time



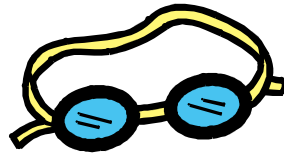
Maths



Concert practise



Games



Swimming



Computer



Fitness



Expressive Communication Strategies

- Support verbal communication
 - Model
 - Provide a script
 - Visual or verbal cue
 - Start the sentence, let the child finish
 - Increase response time
 - Use the child's preferred communication partner



Scripted communication

- Scripts provide the exact words that the child should use for a given situation
- Use when the child is unsure of what to say or if the child is anxious about speaking
- Let the child rehearse what they will say
- Add picture symbols or drawings to support the child's ability to read the script

Can I have a Big Mac
please.



Using visual or verbal cues

- Use a visual or verbal cue to support a specific response
 - Use a verbal cue to support letter formation
 - Use sign language as a cue for the child to ask for help
 - Use a picture symbol to cue the child to take a break from work

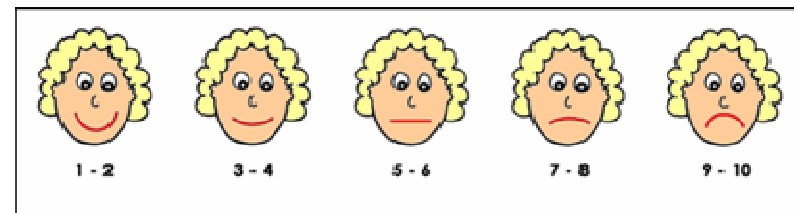
Expressive Communication Strategies

To reduce communication pressure

Use visual communication forms rather than verbal when the child is stressed

- Low anxiety settings such as bath time, swing time, cooking or when working in a small group are great times for conversations or language therapy

How was school camp?



From do2learn.com





Receptive language strategies

- Improve understanding by
 - Getting the child's attention before speaking
 - Reducing distractions
 - Using short instruction intrinsic to the task
 - high interest topics
 - Using visual communication to reinforce the main message

Receptive language strategies

- Parallel conversations
 - Let the child hear you tell another person the information you want them to act on





Expressive Communication

- What are your child's strengths and weaknesses?

Expressive Communication Strategies

- 
-
- What strategies are you using?



Receptive Communication

- What are your child's strengths and weaknesses?

Receptive Communication Strategies

- 
-
- What strategies are you using?



Teach pragmatics

- Asking and answering questions
- Initiating conversations
- Giving information
- Asking for help
- Greeting
- Topic maintenance/changing topic appropriately
- Changing language use according to your communication partner



Teach Pragmatics

- Use expressive language strategies
 - Scripts
 - Topic boxes
 - Conversation starters
 - Games that involve asking & answering questions
 - Go fish, quiz questions, I Spy
- Teach social understanding
 - Social stories
 - Cartoon conversations
 - Play

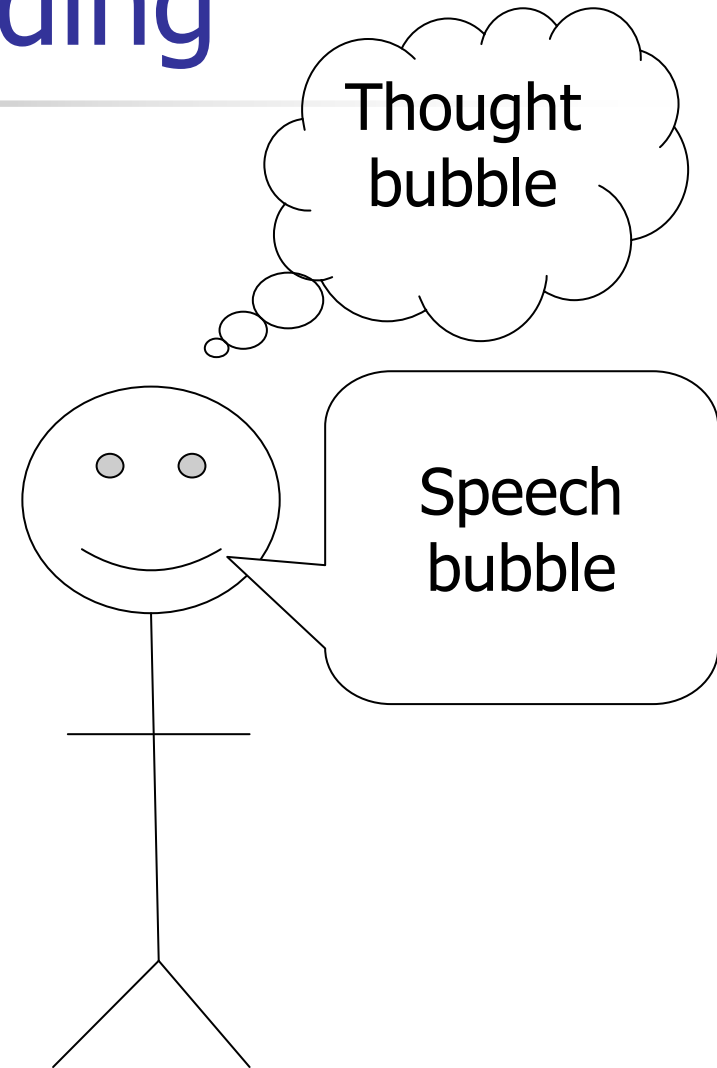


Social stories

- A story written to help students understand an experience that they find confusing
- The story should focus on what the child should do
- Use photos to illustrate key points
- Do not add too much unnecessary detail
- Make sure the child will be interested in the story

Social understanding

- Cartoon Conversations
 - Use simple drawings (stick figure people) with speech or thought bubbles to communicate a simple idea.
 - Use to review an event or to communicate what is about to happen.
 - Cartoon conversations are particularly useful for fragile x students because they can be produced quickly and are visual so more easily understood than auditory messages.



Cartoon conversations

- A whiteboard cartoon conversation about how to answer the telephone
- I used laminated photographs with a magnetic strip to hold them onto the whiteboard





Play

- Play provides
 - a relaxed setting to interact with others
 - opportunities to practise pragmatics, such as:
 - Asking and answering questions
 - Initiating conversations
 - Changing language use according to your communication partner
 - opportunities practise working with others:
 - Turn-taking
 - Sharing
 - Imitating
 - Responding

Playing with others

- Set up one activity at a time. Pack up when finished
- Organise play materials so they are visible and ready to play with
- Play with the same materials alongside others
- Play games with rules
- Revisit successful play routines





What is fun?



How will we support this student's
interaction with others?



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FRAGILE X TRUST (NZ)

*Supporting New Zealand
families living with
fragile X syndrome*