

Getting Started with Pictures

Factors to Consider

- Visual abilities – size of picture, where should pictures be placed, black and white vs. colour, need for borders
- Symbol set – photographs vs. line drawings (ex. PCS)
- Vocabulary – needs to be functional and motivating
- Learning – any new system needs to be introduced gradually and taught and practiced

Establishing Meaning for Symbols

- Start with concrete, easily represented items (ex. food, favourite toys)
- More abstract concepts are more difficult to represent and may need to be taught explicitly and with repetition (ex. actions, feelings)
- Integrate the pictures into daily routines and activities. Model their use and refer to them often to improve a child's understanding of their meaning
- Feelings are among the most difficult concepts to represent. Start by introducing a positive and negative symbol only (ex. "happy" and "sad"). Model their use by using them to refer to yourself and others when discussing their mood.

Implementing Symbols in a Progression

- Label the environment
- Pair with objects when doing choice making
- Model use
- Refer to pictures during routines and activities
- Use pictures on visual schedules

Augmentative Communication Service, KidsAbility™ Centre for Child Development.
Updated October 2019.

Adapted from "Introducing Pictures into the Environment", CTC, 1998