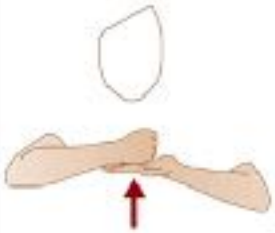
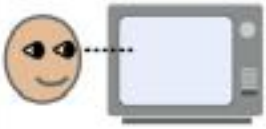
Communicating using Gestures and Pictures

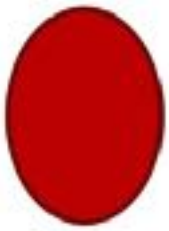
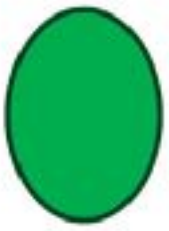
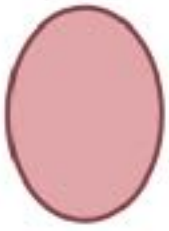
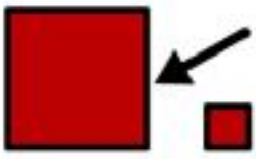
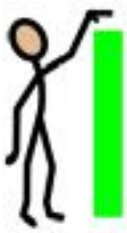
- It is important for caregivers to create communication temptations for children who are non-verbal or minimally verbal and encourage them to express their needs and wants using gestures, pointing, and pictures
- A simple first step is teaching your child to make a finger point with hand over hand assistance and models and have your child point to an object that he/she wants (e.g., cookie, toy)
- Next steps include teaching your child to point to pictures on a core word board containing functional vocabulary or how to exchange pictures and formulate simple sentences using pictures (e.g., Picture Exchange Communication)
- Caregivers are also encouraged to teach their child gestural signs for functional vocabulary (e.g., I want, more, open, help, all done) using hand over hand assistance and models
- Research data supports teaching children to communicate via gestures and pictures to increase their receptive vocabulary and promote the development of spoken words
- When a child communicates using gestures, picture cards, or touches a picture on a communication app, the child has an opportunity to learn how to make choices, communicate, and hear a model of the spoken word
- Teaching children to communicate via pictures encourages them to increase their ability to combine words into simple sentences (e.g., “I want cookie,” “I want blue crayon,” “I see bear”)

Nina Bohmstein MS CCC-SLP

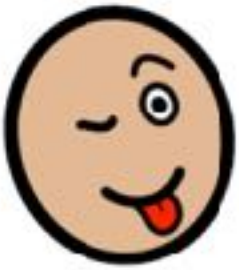
Picture Board for Core Words

I want	more	help 	wash hands	bathroom
eat	drink	play	yes	no
open	close	stop	go	I like
up	down	hi	bye	clean up
read a book	color	sleep	watch TV 	all done

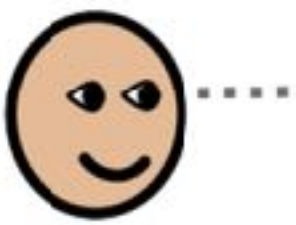
Attributes

red 	yellow	blue	green 	orange
purple	brown	black	white	pink 
gray	big 	small	clean	dirty
hot	cold	fast	slow	strong
wet	dry	tall 	long	short

Emotions

happy	sad	angry	scared
surprised	silly 	worried	calm

Actions

sit	stand	walk	jump
see 	hear	write	brush teeth

References

Frost L., Bondy, A. (2002), The Picture Exchange Communication System Training Manual, 2nd Edition.

Pyramid Educational Consultant company

https://pecsusa.com

Symbolstix®

https://www.n2y.com/symbolstix-prime/

TouchChat

https://touchchatapp.com