

This week's communication focus...

Ensuring your child's communication book is with them, out, and where possible, visible to them, at all times.

*"The attitudes and expectations of people in the environment may to some extent influence all children's language development, but they may be **critical** for children who use alternative forms because these children depend on the means and opportunities provided by professionals (and those around them)." (von Tetzchner & Grove, 2003 p.15)*

- Your child's communication book is a method of teaching them to use language to express their own specific intimate thoughts, feelings and ideas, and provides them with a tool to do this. Your attitudes towards it will influence the way your child responds to its use and their desire to use it.
- **'See the child, see their communication book.'** Form a habit of taking your child's book everywhere they go, regardless of whether or not it is likely to be used.
- Wherever possible, have your child's communication book within their reach or view, to teach them that it is a tool that is always available to them, wherever they are.
- Take this time to come up with a practical way of transporting your book, so it can be easily remembered and taken wherever your child goes. This may involve finding a suitable carry bag, or attaching a strap.
- Your child is likely to be influenced by any frustrations or negative feelings you have towards their communication system, and this may hinder their learning of it. Try to only talk about these when your child is not present. Remember, learning to use a new communication system is a tricky process for both you and your child. It takes time and patience. Look for support from those around you – please feel free to raise any concerns you may have, however big or small.

Von Tetzchner, S. & Grove, N. (2003) *Augmentative and Alternative Communication Developmental Issues*, London: Whurr.