

Activities to Promote Communication 2

If you are still working through the previous activities, don't worry, you can start the following activities when your child is ready. You can also start these activities if you need a change and are feeling demotivated! Follow your child's lead.

Let's get started.

You will need:

- Stickers, paper, some colouring pencils/crayons/markers
- Sunglasses
- Balloons
- A pillow case or any type of bag that will hold a few toys/objects
- Blocks
- Access to YouTube (not essential, but useful for songs – you may have CDs to hand with many of these songs already or you can just sing the song yourself!)
- Animals

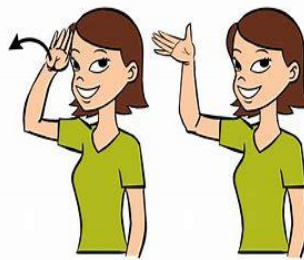
Activity 1: Greetings.

Continue to start your activity with the Hello song. Repetition is really important as it will allow your child time to learn this song and it also lets the child know that fun times are ahead! This is a song that many music therapists, speech and language and occupational therapist sing when they start group work or individual sessions so you and your child maybe familiar with it already. Have a look for it on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x23rTDI4AMs>.



Remember: Make sure that you are at your child's eye level, use your sign for HELLO throughout the song.

Hello, Hello, how are you?
Hello, Hello, how are you?
Hello, Hello, how are you?
How are you today?



Activity 2: Eye-Contact.



The aim of this activity is to attract your child's attention, wear a pair of silly looking glasses (already in your possession or you may need to add some extra bling/stickers/pieces of coloured paper to an old pair of sunglasses/glasses). Put a sticker on your nose or your cheek! I would often do this in therapy sessions as it creates a sense of fun and silliness while also encouraging eye-contact. Reward looking with praise "Great looking at Daddy/Mummy/me today!"



Balloons: **Blow up a balloon**, hold it, when your child looks at you, let it go and watch it swirl around the room! When your child looks at you take this opportunity to ask if they want more. Say and sign “more” if your child looks at you or signs or says more then take a deep breath and blow some more balloons.

When your child begins to become disinterested use your sign or words to indicate that the activity is “**finished**” or “**all gone**”. Show that the activity is over by physically putting the object away into a bag/box.

Activity 3: Imitation/Copying

Copying is an important skill to learn as it involves co-operation and interaction between two people which is necessary for communication. Children learn language by copying what they hear and see. Learning to imitate actions may make it easier for your child to learn how to follow directions and participate in familiar routines. Provide opportunities for your child to copy your everyday routines, wiping the table, washing your hands etc.

Copy your child’s noises, gestures and facial expressions. If your baby says **Mamama, Dadada** just imitate the words.

Blocks:

Join in with your child’s play - if they bang two blocks together you do it too! Then take two blocks and hold them over your head and bang them together, watch and wait to see whether your child imitates the action.

Copying Actions:



Action Songs: If possible, try to have your child facing you. Encourage your child to sing the song with you and go through the actions. If some children are not familiar with the song, teach it line by line while demonstrating the hand motions.

Copying facial gestures: Look in the mirror and make funny faces and silly expressions. Copy your child’s expressions. When you make a face, wait and see whether your child imitates you.



Follow the leader

You will find a song “follow me” on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hW2DDGX7Tcc> Play this song and encourage your child to imitate the following actions: clap your hands, spin around, bend your knees, touch the ground, wiggle your fingers, tippy toes, stretch up high, wave hello, flap your arms, stomp your feet, pat your back, take a seat. You may just target one of the actions!

The Pinocchio Song is one of my absolute favourites and you can have the entire family join in. You will find this on YouTube also: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV-D_K4drsA

Activity 4:

Naming and Understanding:

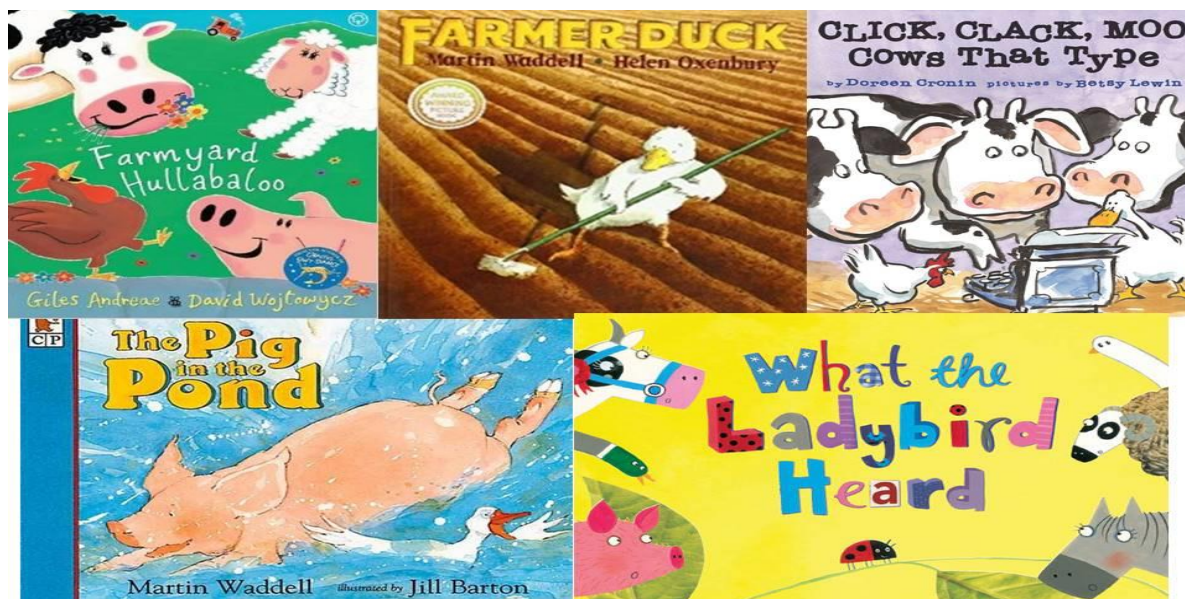
Using the toy bag/box – Place the toy bag between you and your child. Model the activity for your child, pick out the object, your child may spontaneously start to or they may need hand over hand assistance. When an item is taken out of the bag, name it, sign it and then make the corresponding sound. Talk about the object. Play with it, follow your child's lead and move onto the next item when they are ready.

Understanding: Finding Farm Animals

Hide the animals in a bag, under a cushion, under a blanket and ask your child to find them. You may need to model this activity. Look around the room and say "Pig, pig – Where Pig?" when you find it you can say "Pig – I have Pig". Give your child a clue – Where Pig? Continue to look for the **dog, cow, sheep, cat and pig**.

Activity 5:

Reading Together: Reading to your child is one of the most important things that you can do to promote language development. I have a sample of books below that have a farming theme, use whatever books you have. Look at the cover page, talk about the picture and draw your child's attention to the title. Encourage your child to turn the page with you or own their own. Point to pictures, you may notice your child pointing to items, name them and have a chat about them.



Activity 6:

Activity 6: Clean up Song

It's time to sing the clean up song. As you are picking items up you can name them/sign and say the word. When you have placed all of the objects into the bag you can indicate that the activity is over by signing & saying the word "**Finished**" or "**all gone**". Make sure to give positive praise during all tasks: "**Good Job!**" or "**You really helped Mummy/Daddy/me pick things up!**".

If you would like any advice, support or some more activities please contact me:

olive@downsyndrome.ie