# Stoke-on-Trent City Council logo

# **Simplifying Communication**

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| Background informationChildren with delayed communication and interaction difficulties may experience confusion and anxiety resulting in varying behaviours. To help reduce this you can simplify and adapt your communication to promote and support their understanding. It is recommended that a co-ordinated approach between practitioners is used to provide consistency. |
| Classroom Strategies to Simplify Communication* To get the child’s attention or when giving an instruction use their name first e.g. “Toby get your coat”. By doing this they will learn that you are speaking to them.
* Where a child’s understanding is significantly delayed reduce your language e.g. replace “Toby, get your coat” with “Toby, coat.” Other examples – “Lucy, sit”, “Lucy, come”
* Use familiar phrases consistently and across contexts and activities

e.g. ‘finished’ when an activity ends. You may also want to use the Makaton sign for ‘finished’. * Model and repeat instructions. Use hand over hand support to help learn new skills where needed.
* Visual prompts will really help the child to follow a good routine and understand what is to happen next and make them more independent. Use a visual routine and objects of reference – we have a further tip sheet on this.
* Use the words ‘first’ and ‘then’ to help the child understand the sequence of events. Alongside this you may want to use objects or reference or a picture board reflecting first/then’

E.g. “First nappy, then outside* Use ‘do’ instructions to communicate what you would like the child to “do” rather than “don’t”.

E.g. rather than say ‘Don’t put the sand on the floor’ replace with ‘Lucy, sand in tray’. * Encourage turn taking when completing activities and use verbal prompts to encourage this e.g. ‘Toby’s turn, Miss Smith’s turn’.
* The child will need ‘processing time’ to respond to a request/prompt from you, so maybe count to 10 in your head as you wait for a response before requesting/prompting again
* At regular intervals make the child aware that an activity is due to end/finish giving a timed countdown. E.g. in 5 minutes, then 3 minutes etc maybe use a visual such as a sand timer to indicate when an activity will end e.g. when their turn on the whiteboard is due to finish.
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| Useful websites & further reading[www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/communicating.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/communicating.aspx)[www.asdinfowales.co.uk](http://www.asdinfowales.co.uk) |