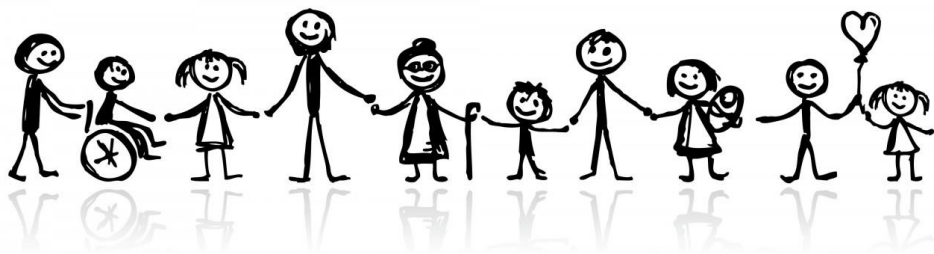


Building Communication Skills



Communication is vital to every person. It enables us to express ourselves to say what we like or dislike, how we are feeling, what we need or want, and to form relationships with people and the world around us.

Every person can communicate in some way. The key is working with, listening to and observing to find out exactly how the person would like to communicate.

Communication takes time set your child realistic goals, give lots of praise and make it fun!

Ways to communicate

1) Music gives children a way to express themselves and interact with others without using words. Music can also be used to motivate children, manage mood and behaviour.

Playing music and encouraging your child to move to the music or sing along especially if they have a favourite song. If you have instruments, encourage your child to choose an instrument. Initially encourage them to make a noise then introduce games where they have to make a noise to respond to a word or question. Use the instrument to make discussion.

2) Touch is a great way to communicate with children who are blind and/or deaf. Touch can help children build concepts as they link objects to experiences. Giving them different textures to play with can help their bodies learn those skills. You can make a sensory box of different textures and encourage your child to say if they like/ dislike the texture, can they say what it is? When reading a story, you can use associated objects to encourage participation e.g. Goldilocks and the three bears- include teddy bears, a bowl, spoon.

3) Art is a way for children with special needs to express themselves without using words. For children who are non-verbal or limited in verbal communication, it is a creative outlet. Try to use a variety of textures and mediums including paint, pencils, crayon, modelling clay, textiles.

Ways to communicate

4) Movement helps children with special needs feel more engaged in learning. Movement increases focus, attention, and impulse control in children. Movement can also be a form of self-expression for children with special needs who have difficulty expressing themselves with words. Play music and encourage your child to move to the music. As they gain confidence, you can encourage your child to make different movements based on emotions such as a happy movement, sad movements and movements for different vocabulary such as rabbit, dog.

5) Communication boards and Interactive books help children, especially autistic children, manage social situations. For those children who struggle with transitions during their day, creating a schedule using pictures can help them understand what activity is next on the schedule, making transitions easier. They can also be used to promote your child's independence through giving them the tools to express themselves and develop.

6) Technology has provided a whole new way for children with special needs to communicate. Children who are nonverbal or have limits in verbal communication can type on iPads or use voice output devices. Some apps can help children communicate by typing words or allow children to create sentences based on pictures.

7) Gestures Using gestures is a non-verbal way to communicate to a child with special needs and can be very beneficial for children who have auditory challenges. For some children, they might not notice gestures, so make sure the child is paying attention before using them.

Ways to communicate

8) Motivators – All children respond well to encouragement and praise. Giving small rewards can help children feel motivated to complete a difficult task or get through a challenging social situation.



To access further information and resources on disabilities, strategies to support children and young people and resources, please visit our online information and resources platform
 Realize More: www.realizebelize.org