

# Universal Strategies: Minimally Speaking Children

## Language

- Say the child's name before speaking to cue them into listening.
- Get down to the child's level when talking to them.
- Reduce language levels- chunk information to give one pieces of information or instruction at a time. Repeat this where possible.
- Allow additional processing time for children to respond
- Support their spoken language with objects, photos, natural gestures and Makaton signs where possible.
- Model how to use communication tools by pointing to symbols or photos as you speak. Show how they can use them without expecting them to copy you straight away (*Refer to the Top Tips for Modelling handout*)
- Honour all communication attempts in all different forms. Use detective work to establish what the child means. If you are unsure of what they mean, repeat, nod and smile.

## Environmental

- Consistent use of a visual timetable- used for the whole class and referred to often. Ensure that symbols are taken off when completed.
- Use of now/next boards to support a child's understanding of what is happening next.
- Use of visual supports such as sand timers and hand prompts (counting down on fingers) to support transitions.
- Place communication boards in key activity areas (e.g. role play, construction, snack area) to provide accessible language related to those tasks.
- Use of a visual cue (symbol, photos, objects etc) to indicate what happens next at points of transition.
- Use of lanyards with transition symbols or core vocabulary to ensure visuals are easily accessible and can support communication in all environments in school
- Reduce visual clutter in the classroom environment.
- Label the majority of learning resources with symbols/pictures and words.
- Consider background noise levels when trying to communicate.

## Further information

**KELSI: The Mainstream Core Standards**



**Children's Therapies: The Pod**

