

# iDecide



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## Pupils with Communication and Language Disorders

### Communication Disorders



Erasmus+

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## Communication Disorders



### Classroom-based tips (focus on instructional methods)

- 1. Minimise unnecessary classroom noise/distractions as much as possible.** Get the attention of pupils with Communication Disorders (CD) before speaking. If necessary, use written notes to communicate with them.
- 2. Be a good speech model.** This will indicate to all that good communication is desirable. Speak to the pupils with CD naturally. Use a slower speech to facilitate the processing of information by keeping visual contact with the pupils. However, it is important the speech rate is not so slow that the continuity of the message is lost.
- 3. Differentiate your instruction for pupils with communication disorders.** Give simple directions and break down complex tasks into small and manageable ones. You can use photographs or visual signs to give directions. Facial expressions, gestures, and other body language will help convey your message (Dodd, 2013).
- 4. Use Visual cues:** pictorial self-instruction, such as picture activity schedules, enhance pupils' ability to independently complete tasks. Create a visual dictionary with pupils to help them learn new vocabulary.
- 5. Use storyboards and song boards with pictures illustrating language:** The teacher places and removes pictures from the board as she tells the story or points to the appropriate picture while singing a line (Gevarter et al., 2013).
- 6. Use multimedia to teach social skills.** A lot of pupils with communication disorders tend to be visual learners thus videos, simulations, virtual environments and other multimedia can be effective teaching tools (Lorah et al., 2015).
- 7. Employ accessibility features and/or available assistive technology for providing access.**
- 8. Give pupils with communication disorders time to express themselves;** do not interrupt or try to fill in gaps for them. Increase wait-time by using time delay. Time delay is a system in which the prompt is concurrently presented with the target stimulus and then faded with small increments of time over successive trials. Time delay and simultaneous prompting proved to be effective in pupils with severe communication disorders, teaching vocabulary for words and definitions across content areas (Baker and McLeod, 2011).
- 9. Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).** AAC is defined as the use of other communication modalities to support or replace verbal communication.
- 10. Consult the Speech and Language Therapist concerning each pupil with a communication disorder in the class.** Consult the Speech and Language Therapist for the properties and features of the AAC system.

**11. Make arrangements for sitting and positioning in classroom to facilitate the use of AAC system during learning and teaching.** Consult the Speech and Language Therapist for specific seating needs.

**12. Assign independent practice activities;** challenge pupils to learn independently with the use of AAC system (e.g. to select new vocabulary words). Provide equal opportunities to the pupils to engage in classroom activities and meaningful communicative exchanges with others in their environment by using AAC. Consider alternate activities/exercises that can be utilised by the pupils with CD, but have the same or similar learning objectives. Create opportunities for group work in order to involve class in supporting the pupils with communication disorders. An atmosphere conducive to easy and good interactive communication should be established and maintained in the classroom (Weiss and Riosa, 2015). Use Social Stories (Stories written to positively depict a situation in which a pupil has a difficult time) providing the pupil with appropriate ways to interact or respond). For reinforcement, repeat new vocabulary in different contexts, use context as a memory aid, and make meaning and application absolutely clear (Ganz et al., 2014).

**13. Promote generalisation and maintenance by prompting pupils to use their AAC system,** providing praise and other forms of reinforcement. Give constructive and positive feedback to all the pupils for their effort.

**14. Use naturalistic interventions.** Naturalistic interventions involve structuring the environment to create numerous opportunities for desired pupil responses (e.g., holding up a toy and asking, “What do you want?”) and structuring adult responses to a child’s communication (e.g., the child points outside and says, “Go with me,” and the teacher says, “Okay, I’ll go with you”). Effective milieu teaching more closely resembles a conversation than a structured instructional episode (Kaiser & Grim, 2006).

**15. Provide assessment on an on-going basis rather than at the end of learning.**



## School-based practical tips (focus on instructional methods)

### Announcement / Sign at School

**1. Inform all the teachers and assistants** of the school about the presence of pupils with CD and pupils using AAC (e.g. by conducting presentations, or through school projects and storytelling).

**2. Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won’t be any sudden changes to pupils’ schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.

3. **Make special arrangements in advance for pupils using AAC system during visits/field trips.**
4. **Put visual signs of places within the school area** (e.g. dining area, toilets, canteen, principal's office, school yard, teacher's office, emergency exit door and gym).
5. **Provide training for teachers and special education teachers from external agencies**, such as educational psychologist services, to address the main difficulties of pupils with communication disorders in classes, the signs for early identification and assessment, and practical tips for the teachers in order to support those pupils in the class. Focus the training on specific areas such as use of AAC devices or the use of social stories. Examples of social stories can be found at: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/every-learner/6692>
6. **Provide teachers/ teaching assistants with a communication form** and telephone numbers of parents and caregivers in case of an emergency. Also ask the teachers to contact parents to confirm special dietary requirements, medical needs and behavioural issues (if needed).

## Class Divisions / Arrangements

**Accommodate the classroom environment** so as to respond to the needs of the pupils. Place the pupils in the front seats, close to the teacher to maintain visual contact with them.

## Community

1. **Provide training for teachers and special education teachers from external agencies**, such as educational psychologist services, to address the main difficulties of pupils with communication disorders in classes, the signs for early identification and assessment, and practical tips for the teachers in order to support those pupils in the class. Focus the training on specific areas such as use of AAC devices or the use of social stories. Examples of social stories can be found at: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/every-learner/6692>
2. **Involve peers in the process of communication.** Peer-mediated or implemented treatment approaches incorporate peers as communication partners for children with language disorders in an effort to provide effective role models and boost communication competence. Typically developing peers are taught strategies to facilitate play and social interactions; interventions are commonly carried out in inclusive settings where play with typically developing peers naturally occurs (e.g., preschool setting). [Reference: <http://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589935327&section=Treatment>]

## Curricular Adaptations

1. **Accommodate the classroom environment** so as to respond to the needs of the pupils. Place the pupils in the front seats, close to the teacher to maintain visual contact with them.
2. **Provide training for teachers and special education teachers from external agencies**, such as educational psychologist services, to address the main difficulties of pupils with

communication disorders in classes, the signs for early identification and assessment, and practical tips for the teachers in order to support those pupils in the class. Focus the training on specific areas such as use of AAC devices or the use of social stories. Examples of social stories can be found at: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/every-learner/6692>

**3. Foster a warm, supportive environment** in which the pupil will feel accepted and encouraged to communicate and respond to others. In order to achieve such an environment, other pupils or family members may benefit from education about CD.

[Reference:

<http://www.education.udel.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2013/01/LanguageDisorders.pdf>]

## Educational Visits / Field Trips / Camps / School Exchanges / Trips Abroad

**1. Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won't be any sudden changes to pupils' schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.

**2. Make special arrangements in advance for pupils using AAC system during visits/field trips.**

**3. Involve peers in the process of communication.** Peer-mediated or implemented treatment approaches incorporate peers as communication partners for children with language disorders in an effort to provide effective role models and boost communication competence. Typically developing peers are taught strategies to facilitate play and social interactions; interventions are commonly carried out in inclusive settings where play with typically developing peers naturally occurs (e.g., preschool setting). [Reference: <http://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589935327&section=Treatment>]

**4. Include the pupils into school events by asking them to contribute in different roles** according to their abilities.

## Food: Canteen / Visits / Camps / Trips

**1. Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won't be any sudden changes to pupils' schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.

**2. Provide teachers/ teaching assistants with a communication form** and telephone numbers of parents and caregivers in case of an emergency. Also ask the teachers to contact parents to confirm special dietary requirements, medical needs and behavioural issues (if needed).

## Parents / Parents' Associations

- 1. Collaborate with the parents** in order to get information with regards to specific needs of the pupils (eg diet, medical care, mood and behavioural information).
- 2. Provide teachers/ teaching assistants with a communication form** and telephone numbers of parents and caregivers in case of an emergency. Also ask the teachers to contact parents to confirm special dietary requirements, medical needs and behavioural issues (if needed).
- 3. Foster a warm, supportive environment** in which the pupil will feel accepted and encouraged to communicate and respond to others. In order to achieve such an environment, other pupils or family members may benefit from education about CD.

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## Safety

**Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won't be any sudden changes to pupils' schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.

## Scheduling Events

- 1. Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won't be any sudden changes to pupils' schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.
- 2. Make special arrangements in advance for pupils using AAC system during visits/field trips.**
- 3. Involve peers in the process of communication.** Peer-mediated or implemented treatment approaches incorporate peers as communication partners for children with language disorders in an effort to provide effective role models and boost communication competence. Typically developing peers are taught strategies to facilitate play and social interactions; interventions are commonly carried out in inclusive settings where play with typically developing peers naturally occurs (e.g., preschool setting). [Reference: <http://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589935327&section=Treatment>]

**4. Include the pupils into school events by asking them to contribute in different roles** according to their abilities.

## School Breaks

**1. Provide teachers/ teaching assistants with a communication form** and telephone numbers of parents and caregivers in case of an emergency. Also ask the teachers to contact parents to confirm special dietary requirements, medical needs and behavioural issues (if needed).

**2. Involve peers in the process of communication.** Peer-mediated or implemented treatment approaches incorporate peers as communication partners for children with language disorders in an effort to provide effective role models and boost communication competence. Typically developing peers are taught strategies to facilitate play and social interactions; interventions are commonly carried out in inclusive settings where play with typically developing peers naturally occurs (e.g., preschool setting).

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**3. Include the pupils into school events by asking them to contribute in different roles** according to their abilities.

## School Celebrations / Events / Activities

**1. Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won't be any sudden changes to pupils' schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.

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**4. Include the pupils into school events by asking them to contribute in different roles according to their abilities.**

## School Projects

**1. Involve peers in the process of communication.** Peer-mediated or implemented treatment approaches incorporate peers as communication partners for children with language disorders in an effort to provide effective role models and boost communication competence. Typically developing peers are taught strategies to facilitate play and social interactions; interventions are commonly carried out in inclusive settings where play with typically developing peers naturally occurs (e.g., preschool setting).

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**2. Include the pupils into school events by asking them to contribute in different roles according to their abilities.**

## School Purchases

**Equip the classes in which pupils with CD are included, with audio/visual technology.**

## Pupil Support

**1. Involve the Speech and Language Therapist of the school in the class.** Provide an interpreter to the bilingual/multilingual pupils with CD.

**2. Equip the classes in which pupils with CD are included, with audio/visual technology.**

**3. Accommodate the classroom environment** so as to respond to the needs of the pupils. Place the pupils in the front seats, close to the teacher to maintain visual contact with them.

**4. Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won't be any sudden changes to pupils' schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.

**5. Make special arrangements in advance for pupils using AAC system during visits/field trips.**

**6. Put visual signs of places within the school area** (e.g. dining area, toilets, canteen, principal's office, school yard, teacher's office, emergency exit door and gym).



7. **Foster a warm, supportive environment** in which the pupil will feel accepted and encouraged to communicate and respond to others. In order to achieve such an environment, other pupils or family members may benefit from education about CD.

[Reference:

<http://www.education.udel.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2013/01/LanguageDisorders.pdf>]

## Teacher Professional Development

**1. Inform teachers about pupils with communication disorders when they need to travel** (e.g. equipment they need to carry with them, the schedule of the day and lunch). Make sure that there won't be any sudden changes to pupils' schedule as this will make them feel upset; pupils with CD need to know the schedule in advance. Inform the teachers to make necessary adaptations to their lessons and tasks.

**2. Make special arrangements in advance for pupils using AAC system during visits/field trips.**

**3. Provide training for teachers and special education teachers from external agencies,** such as educational psychologist services, to address the main difficulties of pupils with communication disorders in classes, the signs for early identification and assessment, and practical tips for the teachers in order to support those pupils in the class. Focus the training on specific areas such as use of AAC devices or the use of social stories. Examples of social stories can be found at: <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/every-learner/6692>

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## Technology

## 1. Equip the classes in which pupils with CD are included, with audio/visual technology.

### Supportive Literature

A communication disorder is an impairment in the ability to receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal and graphic symbol systems. A communication disorder may be evident in the processes of hearing, language, and/or speech. A communication disorder may range in severity from mild to profound. It may be developmental or acquired. Individuals may demonstrate one or any combination of communication disorders. A communication disorder may result in a primary disability or it may be secondary to other disabilities.

[References: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (1993). Definitions of communication disorders and variations [Relevant Paper]. Available from [www.asha.org/policy](http://www.asha.org/policy).]

“AAC is any tool, strategy, or technology that compensates for, enhances, expands, or helps develop communication skills” (Saloviita et al., 2014).

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)—supplementing or replacing natural speech and/or writing with aided (e.g., picture communication symbols (PECS), line drawings, Blissymbols, speech generating devices, and tangible objects) and/or unaided (e.g., manual signs, gestures, and finger spelling) symbols. Whereas aided symbols require some type of transmission device, the production of unaided symbols only requires body movements.

[Reference: <http://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589935327&section=Treatment>]

### Useful sites

<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/>

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/communication-disorders/understanding-language-disorders>

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