

Many people with severe speech, language and communication difficulties can communicate by 'reading' and indicating symbols. People who are unable to read can often understand information if written words are supported by picture symbols. (Not everyone can recognise and understand pictures and symbols - very young or developmentally young children may still be at the level of needing concrete objects.)

(People often think that coloured photos are easier to recognise than symbols but this is not necessarily always true - photos can be poor quality, not contrasty enough, or too 'busy' visually, so that foreground and background cannot be easily distinguished, whereas symbols are usually simpler to perceive.)

BoardMaker is a popular and easy to use program that allows staff to create good quality Picture Communication (PCS) symbol materials quickly, and to personalise these to fit individual users' needs, or particular settings and activities. BoardMaker is not designed to be used by the person with communication difficulties directly.

Some ideas for symbol materials:

- picture symbol labels (for labelling objects around the room)
- bank of picture symbol cards (for use in PECS programme)
- small size symbols for sticking into story books, underneath written text, to make them 'readable' by pre-literate users
- song boards (to build language on rhyme & song activities)
- story charts (so child can participate in story-telling, answering comprehension questions, assessing reading etc.)
- work sheets for curriculum linked activities (eg letter/word picture matching)
- weather (or days of week etc.) chart (regular use at morning circle time)
- symbol cards on a keyring attached to belt, for asking for things
- personal communication books (for everyday conversation and work)
- overlays for voice output communication aids (or concept keyboards etc.)
- topic charts (eg art, music, computer etc.)
- symbol 'tops' (for BigMacks, or other single message voice output devices)
- menu cards for choosing meals or drinks



CALL Centre
University of Edinburgh, Paterson's Land,
Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ
Tel: 0131 651 6236
<http://www.callcentrescotland.org.uk>

C ALL Centre

Copyright © CALL Centre 2003

- place mats, for meal-time conversation
- instructions for following recipes or stages of a task
- to illustrate a Personal Passport
- class/school newsletter
- shopping list
- instructions to shop keeper/cafe staff/bus driver etc.
- posters or information leaflets for explaining procedures or policies
- keeping diaries or minutes of meetings.

AND MORE - ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS AD INFINITUM.....