

Use Pictures and Communication Boards

Description

A combination of cards, boards and books with pictures, symbols, alphabets and printed words/phrases can be used to help a person understand the messages of others and for the person to express themselves.

Benefit

Low-tech and alternative communication (AAC) tools can support a person to understand and express a variety of messages, including communication about their physical and emotional wants and needs (e.g., pain level).

Tips

- Ensure tools are easy to access at any time (e.g., cards on a lanyard, board on wheelchair tray; mounted/within reach at bedside)
- You may need to turn on a light and ensure that the person has their glasses on when using tools.
- It may help to write down what they spell to keep track of and clarify their message.
- Show or point to the picture, symbol or printed word as you talk so the person can see and understand your message.
- Confirm what they have communicated by saying the words aloud as they point to them.



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MESSAGE IN

- Use visual information with your message to make sure it is heard, processed and understood.

MESSAGE OUT

- Decrease the cognitive, language and motor demands for the person to respond by using visuals.

CHECKING IN

- Double check by asking the person to point at objects, words or pictures to confirm their understanding.

See [AHS.ca Communication Access](https://www.ahs.ca/Communication-Access) for more Communication Access information. For further learning and support, please contact your local audiologist, speech-language pathologist or practice.consultation@ahs.ca.



COMMUNICATION ACCESS

Alberta Health Services