

Communication and Language

The ability to communicate our feelings, likes and dislikes and our needs to others is very important and we place great emphasis upon developing an effective means of communication for each individual child. Methods of communication vary from one child to another. Some children rely upon a smile, a glance, a flicker of an eyelid or eye-pointing, while others are able to use simple gestures, signing, symbols or speech. We use Intensive Interaction, Makaton signs and Mayer Johnson symbols which are accompanied by spoken language, gesture and facial expressions. We call this "Total Communication" since it encompasses a variety of communication systems. We also use objects of reference which encourage children to associate an object to an activity. This is a vital form of communication for children who have a visual impairment. We also use Big Mack switches to encourage independent communication. We encourage all children to make independent choices on a daily basis through their preferred method of communication. Communication skills are taught during 1:1 work in small groups but we feel that the teaching of meaningful communication is an integral part of our day, learning to respond to daily routines and communicate our needs. The communication and language area of learning includes ways to develop our listening and attention, understanding and speaking.