

PRIMARY

# Communication and Language

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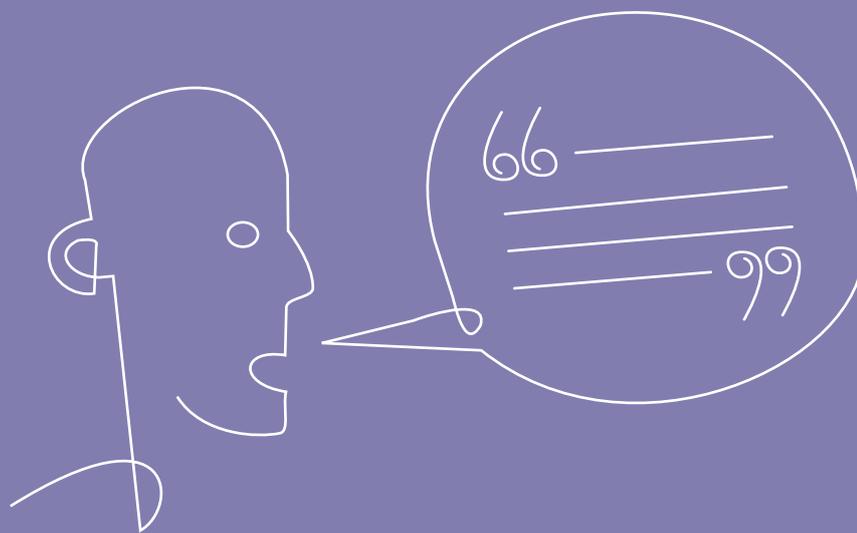
Guidelines for Teachers of Students with

**SEVERE and PROFOUND**

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General Learning Disabilities

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# Introduction

**Communication is central to the whole curriculum and has a special part to play in the education of students with severe and profound general learning disabilities. The term 'language' generally implies verbal communication, oral and written. However, the acquisition of language is quite advanced and is far removed from the first attempts at communication in early childhood. The term 'communication' embraces verbal and non-verbal methods of receiving and giving information, essential when catering for students for whom verbal communication may not be an option.**

It is generally agreed that the development of communication and language takes place within a more general framework of social interaction: the student must have somebody with whom to communicate, and the student himself/herself must be available for interaction. For the student with severe and profound general learning disabilities, the starting point for communication may involve being alerted to the fact that a world exists outside himself/herself. Early learning in this area includes sensory, perceptual, physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development to enable the student to make sense of and interact with the immediate and wider environment. Enabling the student to make the greatest possible use of his/her senses is a very necessary first step for many students who seem to be unaware of their surroundings. Activities to develop awareness, alertness, interest, and concentration should gradually be extended to encourage functional and enjoyable interaction with people and objects.

Learning to associate a sensory experience with a particular activity or person may be developed into learning to associate objects of reference with familiar activities and people. An object of reference is something that the student learns to associate with (and may later use to intentionally represent) a person or activity. At first, objects of reference might make use of two or more senses. For example, a student might learn to associate a certain perfumed, bright scarf with a particular peer, family member, or member of staff. Some students may be enabled to gain the understanding that a photograph/symbol can be used to represent and communicate about a particular need, desire, person, object, or activity. Other students may go on to use hand-signs or words. Some students may communicate with the help of technology; information on this may be found in the section on ICT.

**Communicating intentionally is a very large step for students with severe and profound general learning disabilities. It may take a long time to reach, and may not be achieved by all students.**

### *An interactive classroom stimulates the desire to communicate.*

Play activities have an important role in the development of communication and language. Early investigation of what the world is all about can take place through exploratory play, physical play, and constructive play. Imaginative and pretend play, storytelling, and drama can be very helpful in stimulating interest in oral and written communication. Activities to develop understanding of concepts such as object permanence, causality, purposeful problem-solving, spatial relationships, and imitation of actions and sounds are suggested in these guidelines. Fine-motor activities that lead to the development of written communication are also covered in this section.

The ability to gain control over the environment opens up a world of freedom for the student. An interactive classroom that stimulates the desire to communicate and recognises every effort at communication is essential. The strengths and needs of the student, including physical strengths and needs, should be considered when planning and developing a functional means of communication for individual students. Most students will need to use more than one means of communication. It is essential that every single possibility is fully explored and utilised. The contribution of other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, will often be required, and parents should be fully involved at all stages.

## **Overview of Content**

Content is presented in three strands:

- Receptive and expressive language
- Reading
- Writing.

Receptive and expressive language is of critical importance for students with severe and profound general learning disabilities. The main content in this curriculum area deals with this strand. However, while content is presented in three strands, the strands are intrinsically linked. A non-verbal student who is working towards using tactile symbols or pictures in order to express himself/herself may also learn to interpret such symbols and pictures through early reading activities.

Recording familiar events through writing activities makes possible the reinforcement of receptive language and reading. It can also stimulate expressive language. Every opportunity should be taken to link the three strands when planning the student's communication programme.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EACH STRAND**

### ***Receptive and expressive language***

Awareness of all types of sensory stimuli is a basic first step towards communication. Listening to and discriminating between sounds is important for all students. However, being able to associate a perfume with a particular person, or the smell of food with the dining area may be an enormous step towards receptive communication for one student. Associating certain movements of his/her body with particular activities may greatly increase another student's understanding of what is happening in his/her day. Many students with severe and profound general learning disabilities will depend on visual or tactile symbols in order to communicate. Therefore, the development of all the senses is important.

### ***Receptive and expressive language is of critical importance.***

### ***Pre-intentional Communication***

As the student becomes aware of external stimuli, those working closely with him/her should be alert for any signs of body movement, vocalisations, or changes in facial expression. The adult will often attach meaning to these quite naturally, interpreting a sigh or a smile as a positive response, and then continuing with the activity in order to reinforce that response. Similarly, a frown might be interpreted as discomfort or dislike, and the situation should be adjusted accordingly. If such interpretation is consistent, the student gradually learns that a certain expression, sound or movement will have a particular effect. Learning that there is a connection between his/her actions and the consequences of that action is a vital step in the development of communication. This is called 'contingency awareness.'

As the student's actions become more established, those working with the student should slowly demand more effort from him/her before responding. Some students will become intentional in their behaviour as they learn that they can gain a desired response by acting in a certain way. This is known as means-end behaviour. A variety of activities that involve making a connection between means and ends will enable the student to broaden and consolidate his/her ability to interact with the environment.

*Students need to learn that exerting control over people and objects in their environment is a highly pleasurable and rewarding experience.*

### **Intentional and functional communication**

For students learning to communicate, there must be a tangible reward for all effort. Generally, early communication will be about likes and dislikes, comfort and discomfort. Students need to learn that exerting control over people and objects in their environment is a highly pleasurable and rewarding experience. As a student becomes adept at acting on the immediate environment he/she will need to establish a means of communication that can be understood by all those with whom he/she may wish to communicate. At first, this may be by looking, using facial expression, using body movements, using gestures, and/or vocalising. These can gradually be shaped and refined, for example by expecting more accurate and sustained eye, hand or finger pointing or by encouraging the student to increase his/her range of vocal tones. Some students may go on to use objects of reference, hand-signs, pictures, symbols, or words. The use of technology may offer increased opportunities for intentional and functional communication.

### **Reading**

Reading for students with severe and profound general learning disabilities is far broader than the interpretation of text. Some students may have a particular strength in this area; but most students with severe and profound general learning disabilities will not learn to interpret text.

In this book, activities in the area of reading concentrate on enabling the student to make sense of and derive pleasure from all types of visual and tactile representations. They involve looking at, listening to and touching objects, pictures, symbols, and text in an effort to gain meaning and enjoyment from them. Fostering enjoyment in reading includes listening to stories being read, and looking at and handling books. Functional reading involves attending to and discriminating between objects, pictures, symbols, and text. Some students may progress to linking people and activities with their symbolic representation.

At first, activities should concentrate on people and events that are familiar and have immediate meaning for the student. For example, the daily or weekly timetable could be represented using objects, pictures or symbols. Where a student is learning to interpret text, the written word can initially be used in conjunction with other representations. Interactive books that offer an option to touch represented objects, push a button to obtain a sound, or lift a flap to find a hidden picture can greatly enhance the early reading experience. Commercially, these books tend to be made for very young children, so teachers of older students may need to make a version that will be meaningful in the life of the older student. The use of computer programs offers exciting possibilities for early reading activities.

*Reading for students with severe and profound general learning disabilities is far broader than the interpretation of text.*

### **Writing**

For students with severe and profound general learning disabilities, writing encompasses a broad range of methods of recording using objects, pictures, symbols, or text. For most students, writing will not be concerned with writing letters and words. Activities in this section of the curriculum concentrate on enabling the student to make visual or tactile recordings to communicate meaningful events, experiences, interests, information, thoughts, and feelings. Initial writing activities also centre on making marks in a variety of ways and with as wide a range of exciting materials as possible. Such activities emphasise awareness, discrimination, enjoyment, expression, and creativity.

Some students will progress to recording information for a functional purpose. This may be done in a permanent or semi-permanent way using objects, pictures, symbols, or text. Regularly recording the day's or week's events may help the student to remember what has happened and anticipate what is yet to come. It may also serve as a basis for communication between home and school. Some students may learn to communicate their interests, needs and feelings. Recording personal events and experiences in a way that the student understands can be highly motivating, and it can offer opportunities for increasing vocabulary and stimulating expressive language. It reinforces reading activities, affording meaningful material for students learning to interpret the meaning of recorded information.

*For students with severe and profound general learning disabilities, writing encompasses a broad range of methods of recording using objects, pictures, symbols or text.*

# School planning

Some of the advice on school planning in the *Primary School Curriculum: English, Teacher Guidelines* is applicable when planning for students with severe and profound general learning disabilities. The following section outlines some additional aspects of planning that may need to be considered when planning for this group of students.

## Curriculum and Organisational Planning

### A coherent whole-school communication plan

To be effective in planning for the communication needs of students with severe and profound general learning disabilities, a whole-school policy on the types of communication to be used by the students is essential. Agreeing general communication approaches and methodologies will enable students to receive a coherent education in this central area of the curriculum. Individual needs will, of course, determine the finer details of each student's communication plan, but this should be guided by the overall methods of communication being fostered in the school. For example, teachers might agree to use the same objects of reference or pictures for certain people or activities. Similarly, agreement should be reached on symbols or hand-signs to be used throughout the school. Some flexibility may be necessary, for example, if a student comes from another school with a different communication system.

### A communication-friendly school environment

A good working knowledge of how students learn to communicate is essential for all potential communication partners. All school staff members who are likely to interact with students should be aware of the range of communication methods being used in the school. For example, if a student is using objects of reference/symbols/hand-signs/a particular technical aid in order to communicate, all staff members should be aware of the meaning of each object/symbol/hand-sign and be able to use such symbols or the technical aid in return.

If a student is slow to communicate it is very tempting for adults to jump in and anticipate the student's needs. In the busy school environment opportunities for communication are often lost. It may only be a matter of making all staff members aware of the need to slow down a little and look out for opportunities to challenge students to communicate. For example, rather than anticipating a student's need for a door to be opened to allow them to leave, a staff member might wait for and encourage the student to indicate that need. Instead of wheeling out a student to his/her bus the minute the bus arrives, staff might wait for and encourage the student to indicate that he/she knows the bus is there or that he/she wishes to go home.

Signs normally written in text around the school could also be accompanied by visual and tactile symbols that students in the early stages of reading will understand.

### **Organising a suitable library**

Finding suitable books for students with severe and profound general learning disabilities can be quite challenging. Extra-strong and extra-large books may be required, and interactive books will also be very useful. These can be expensive, and a wide and interesting variety is necessary. Therefore, it may be wise to have a central supply from which teachers and students can choose according to individual needs or interests. A separate room for use as a library is an extremely valuable resource. It enables teachers or special needs assistants to introduce individuals or small groups of students to books in a distraction-free environment.

Having a central supply of sensory material, music tapes, videos, interactive toys, and large play equipment can also greatly assist the development of communication and language. (See the section in the *Primary School Curriculum: English, Teacher Guidelines* on school planning.)

# Classroom planning

**The *Primary School Curriculum: English, Teacher Guidelines* contains advice on classroom planning, some of which is applicable when planning for students with severe and profound general disabilities. The following section outlines some additional aspects of planning that may need to be considered when planning for this group of students.**

## **The centrality of communication and language**

Communication and language plays a central role throughout the student's day. In school, every subject and every extracurricular activity will have a communication element. Since communication and language play such an essential role in all learning, curriculum planning in all subject areas must take account of the communication abilities and needs of each student. Every subject should be examined for opportunities to foster receptive and expressive language. Other subjects may also offer meaningful material for early reading and writing.

## **Ensuring clarity of adult communication**

While the spontaneous use of language is a natural and essential part of any classroom, all adults will need to be consistent and clear in their use of language when interacting directly with students. When communicating formally with students at the early stages of language development it may be helpful to ensure that everyone considers

- using minimal, clear language (possibly agreed key words)
- using consistent language (for example, is 'small' or 'little' to be used, is the student to be asked 'show me,' 'point to,' 'where is?', etc.)
- using clear facial expressions and gestures in addition to oral language
- using additional tactile or visual clues, such as objects of reference or pictures
- making sure the student has any necessary communication aids within reach
- allowing the student sufficient time to attend or to respond (This can be extremely slow; a five-minute wait would not be exceptional.)
- avoiding needless repetition of a question or instruction, as the student may have to reprocess the information, thus slowing and confusing the interaction further.

### **Creating a communication-friendly classroom environment**

Creating a classroom environment that facilitates communication for all students is a challenge for teachers of students who are at the very early stages of learning to communicate. Teachers may find the following general points helpful in creating a communication-friendly classroom:

- Identify activities and rewards that interest and motivate the student.
- Look for a means by which the student can attract attention, and make all staff members aware of this.
- Give the student the opportunity to interact, and look out for or create situations that facilitate this for example, 'forgetting' to do something the student expects and challenging him/her to draw attention to the omission.
- Certain types of toys may encourage communication. Toys such as a ball, dressing-up clothes or puppets might be helpful in encouraging social interaction. Ordinary, safe household utensils can also be a great source of fascination.
- If communication is being encouraged while the student is engaging in a task, the task should be easy, so that the student's attention is not entirely taken up with the task.
- Staff need to interact informally with the student's facial expressions, body language, and gestures. These activities are often done in playful activities at floor level rather than at the table.
- For students who are initiating interaction, opportunities to spend time with students who are more able communicators can be very beneficial.
- Choice-making should be built in to as many activities as possible.

### **Regular evaluation and review**

Staff members should be supported in their use of the various communication approaches. Regular review helps to ensure consistency and accuracy of communication and helps to update staff members on individual students' progress. Regular evaluation of motivators for communication should also be carried out.

*The following summary looks at Communication and Language from the student's point of view.*

## **What can I, the student, learn about communication?**

### **Receptive and expressive language**

- I can learn to use my senses to become aware of people, objects and activities in my immediate environment.
- I can begin to discriminate between sounds in my environment.
- I can listen to language used by those around me.
- I can learn to interact socially with others.
- I can learn to co-operate with others.
- I can begin to develop an interest in interacting with my peers.
- I can learn to indicate my needs and desires. (See the range of methods of communication listed on the next page.)
- I can learn to have an effect on people and objects in my environment.
- I can learn to make everyday choices and decisions.
- I can learn to imitate actions and sounds.
- I can develop an interest in stories and rhymes.
- I can learn to express my feelings and thoughts (using a range of methods of communication).
- I can learn to name and describe familiar people, objects and activities (using a range of methods of communication).

### **Reading**

- I can enjoy looking at objects, symbols, pictures, and text.
- I can listen with interest to stories and rhymes being read by others.
- I can enjoy looking at and handling books.
- I can learn to use books with interactive features.
- I can learn to understand that books hold stories and interesting information.
- I can learn that an object, picture, symbol, or text can mean something.
- I can learn to interpret familiar symbols, signs and words in my environment.

**Writing**

- I can learn to use a variety of painting, drawing and writing implements.
- I can learn to enjoy making marks with a variety of tools on a variety of surfaces.
- I can learn to refine the marks that I make.
- I can learn to record events and experiences using a variety of materials and equipment.
- I can learn to express my needs by making symbols or words.

**I may communicate verbally, but I may also communicate using**

- body gestures
- real objects
- facial expression
- objects of reference
- eye contact
- photographs
- hand-signs
- pictures
- vocalisation
- symbols
- ICT
- eye, finger or body pointing.

## Communication and Language

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ have needs and desires met when indicated by reflexes and very early responses                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>have adults respond to different cries indicating hunger or discomfort, have a reflex interpreted as showing contentment and comfort</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to a stimulus presented in a fast on/off pattern by a familiar adult                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>a stimulus is presented by an adult in an on/off pattern (presented, taken away very briefly, re-presented), be rocked gently, listen to a particular sound, look at a strong visual stimulus, have hands/fingers/feet moved across a tactile surface, feel a vibrating object, be presented with a strong/unusual smell or taste if safe for student</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ have opportunities to accidentally cause pleasurable sensations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>be placed on a blanket on top of crinkly paper so that body movement causes sound, have a bell bracelet placed on the wrist, be placed so that the arms can brush against something soft or something that makes a pleasant sound, be placed so that non-intentional head or eye movements will reap visual rewards, have perfume placed so that head movement will give a smell.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ show response when basic needs and desires are met                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>stop crying when discomfort is removed, relax when placed in a comfortable and pleasant position</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond to a stimulus presented by an adult                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>respond increasingly consistently to stimuli such as those in 'Attending'</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ repeat an action when an accidental action caused something pleasant to happen                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>repeat an accidental action such as moving arms and legs again when on a crinkly blanket, move his/her arm again to hit a mobile, turn his/her head again to see himself/herself in a big mirror</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ increase interest in familiar people in the immediate environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>visually fix and track adults/siblings/other students, listen to and track the sound of person moving about</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond to the use of his/her name in familiar situations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>make eye-contact/become still/turn head/smile when called by a familiar adult. (The adult strategically reduces visual or tactile clues so that he/she is sure that the response is only to the student's name being called.)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ actively seek to indicate basic needs and desires by crying or smiling                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>vocalise to intentionally gain attention when unhappy or uncomfortable, smile to intentionally show that something is pleasant</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show consistent preference for certain stimuli                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show signs of anticipation for some stimuli, clearly indicate like/don't like with body movement, facial expression or vocalisation</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ deliberately make movements to cause pleasant reactions when placed in a responsive environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>deliberately shake the wrist as soon as a bell bracelet is secured to it, deliberately move the body to obtain tactile/olfactory/aural/visual stimulus, deliberately move a limb or drop something when on a resonance board in order to gain auditory or vibratory feedback.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Continued**

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ show beginnings of awareness of people in the immediate environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>visually fix on an adult’s face, look at exaggerated facial expressions, have experience of hands/toes being gently tickled or rubbed, become still and attentive when a voice is heard</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ become aware of his/her own name                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>have opportunities to hear his/her name being used when approached by a familiar adult, have his/her name used when interacting in a one-to-one activity with an adult, have his/her name used in familiar group awareness activities.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ actively seek to interact with people in the immediate environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>seek to continue an interaction with an adult or student using expression/eye movement/body movement/vocalisation, independently terminate an interaction with an adult or student, stare at/wave at/call an adult or student to gain attention, extend his/her arms to be lifted, reach out and pull at a person as they go past, independently reach out for/ask for/move and get objects.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ show beginnings of awareness of objects in the immediate environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>observe/notice the properties of objects placed in his/her hands/placed in front of him/her</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop awareness of the presence of other students in the class                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>attend to the actions of another student in paired activities, participate in group awareness activities</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ have opportunities to play or work alongside siblings or peers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>tolerate the presence of others, become aware that others are playing/working near him/her</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show beginnings of awareness of people and objects in the wider environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>attend to interesting sounds/sights/smells when on trips outside the classroom, become aware of familiar people as distinct from strangers.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ increase interest in familiar objects in the immediate environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show reaction when his/her hands are placed on objects or objects are placed in front of him/her, explore objects by looking/mouthing/feeling with the hands, begin to use both hands/alternate hands, begin to take and give away objects</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond with appropriate non-vocal or vocal behaviour when receiving welcome attention                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>move his/her head towards/ make eye-contact with/ vocalise/smile at/reach out to a communication partner</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show interest in the actions and activities of siblings and peers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>turn his/her head to look/ vocalise, become still to aurally or visually follow movements of siblings or peers</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ differentiate between familiar people and strangers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>smile at familiar people and perhaps look intently or frown at strangers, possibly show more interest in strangers than in familiar people</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show preferences for particular people, objects and activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show interest in certain people/objects, turn away from certain people/objects, turn away from certain people/ objects, wrinkle his/her nose at certain smells.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ actively seek to interact with objects in the immediate environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>independently seek to use toys/equipment for fun or functionally, explore objects with all senses, physically manipulate objects with both hands</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ independently engage in parallel play/work activities with an adult and later a student                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>play/work alongside but without interacting</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ independently play/work co-operatively with an adult and later a student                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>play/work co-operatively and with a shared purpose, independently give objects to another person when appropriate</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ independently observe and imitate the actions of others                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>adults, other students and siblings in activities such as action songs/play/drama</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ look enquiringly at or ask about strangers                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>visitors at home or in the classroom</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ actively seek to interact with people and objects in the wider environment when safe to do so                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>seek to gain the attention of a familiar person when seen outside the classroom/home, interact appropriately with strangers (see SPHE.), show curiosity about unfamiliar objects in the wider environment.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ develop his/her ability to focus visually                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>focus on a lit object in a darkened room, focus on a flashing light, focus on black and white or fluorescent images under ultraviolet light, focus on shiny/sparkly objects, focus on objects with contrasting colours, focus on people and objects in a bright room</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ listen to his/her own vocal sounds being imitated by an adult/another student/played on tape                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>develop his/her ability to focus aurally, for example have his/her attention drawn to familiar sounds in the immediate environment</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ listen to a wide range of sounds                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>voices in the home/classroom, natural, animal and mechanical sounds in the environment, percussion instruments, live music, tolerate unusual and unexpected sounds</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ listen to contrasting sounds                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>soft versus quiet sounds, long versus short sounds, rhythmic versus random sounds.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ visually focus on and track an object, person or activity with decreasing assistance                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>focus and track in a variety of situations with gentle physical/gestural/verbal prompting, track a slow-moving person or object initially</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond to the imitation of his/her own vocalisations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>listen and smile, repeat a vocalisation, take turns with vocalisations</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing assistance, aurally focus on and track sounds within his/her range of hearing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show non-reflexive response to sounds in his/her environment (head or body turning, becoming still, vocalising), aurally a track moving sound with gentle physical/gestural/verbal prompting</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ repeat simple sounds, gestures or actions that cause pleasure or amusement</li> <li>■ imitate simple sounds, gestures or actions made by adults or other students</li> <li>■ imitate familiar sounds in the environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>natural/animal/mechanical sounds as they are heard in context, sounds on tape.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ focus visually on and track objects, people and activities independently                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>generally follow visually all that is happening around him/her</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ experiment with his/her own vocal sounds                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>experiment with making a range of sounds, experiment with volume and tone</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show curiosity about and independently focus on and track sounds in his/her immediate and wider environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>independently focus on and track sounds that interest him/her, draw the attention of others to sounds inside or outside classroom</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ experiment with re-creating familiar sounds in the environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>for his/her own amusement and the amusement/attention of others.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ alternate attention between people or objects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>alternate attention between an object and a person/two objects/two people (When the student is attending to a favourite object/person a second very interesting item is presented and the student is helped to shift his/her attention.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ move from visually and aurally attending in a distraction-free environment to attending in settings with distractions.</li> <li>■ attend to activities involving contingency awareness                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>tolerate being placed in a physically responsive environment</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to the connection between touching a toy or other object (with assistance) and receiving sensory feedback such as sound/light/vibration                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>observe that using a switch will immediately operate a toy/computer appliance</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop an awareness of body image and listen to the language associated with body image activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ alternate attention between people, objects or activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>alternate attention with less prompting, alternate glance when an object is less noisy/shiny, shift attention naturally as activities happen.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond to activities involving cause and effect                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show increased physical activity when placed in a responsive environment, with decreasing assistance initiate and repeat knocking a tower of bricks to make a loud sound or get a reaction from someone, with decreasing prompting press a switch/button to operate a toy/computer/electrical appliance, with decreasing prompting wait for a reward at the end before pressing switch again</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond to body image activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>imitate an action, identify parts of the body on request or perform body movements on request</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond to the use of objects of reference/gestural/pictorial/verbal clues about objects or activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>get his/her swimming bag when an object of reference relating to swimming is shown.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ seek out and use toys and equipment involving cause and effect                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>seek to make things happen with toys and equipment, seek to use switches to control electrical or battery-operated equipment, independently wait for a reward before pressing a switch again</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use knowledge of his/her body image to indicate areas of discomfort                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>indicate a particular part of the body and show by expression, gesture or vocalisation that it is causing discomfort</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ relate items of clothing to parts of the body                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>independently put a hat on his/her head, hold a foot out for his/her shoe</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use individual means of communication to make a request                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>for a favourite object/person/activity</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use individual means of communication to give information and ask questions about events and objects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>make a sign for 'bus' to tell about a journey on the bus, point to swimming togs/a picture of the swimming pool to ask about going swimming, use an object of reference/picture/make a sign for 'home' to ask about going home.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ attend to the use of objects of reference or tactile, gestural, pictorial, or verbal clues for familiar people                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>look at a person and then look at a recognisable item belonging to that person/a clear photograph of that person/listen to that person’s name being said. (A student with visual impairment could smell perfume on the person and smell that perfume on an item of clothing belonging to that person.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to strategies appropriate to his/her ability for indicating basic body needs (in conjunction with SPHE, catering for personal care needs)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>become accustomed to consistent care routines and co-operate with them, develop awareness of what happens next and what is expected of him/her at these times, observe and participate with help in expressing basic needs such as hunger/thirst/need to use the toilet/tiredness (using expressions/actions/pictures/ vocalisation/ verbalisation).</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ respond to the use of objects of reference/gestural/pictorial/ verbal clues about people                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show anticipation when the sound of a familiar person’s car is heard, show excitement when a picture of a favourite person is shown/that person’s name is used.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing assistance, indicate basic body needs according to his/her abilities (in conjunction with SPHE, catering for personal care needs)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>begin to anticipate what happens next in familiar care routines, begin to indicate hunger/thirst/need to use the toilet/tiredness with gradually decreasing assistance.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ use individual means of communication to give information and ask questions about people                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>ask to visit a favourite person, ask about a student/ staff member who is absent, tell news about parents and siblings at home (perhaps linking with a home communication book or other communication arrangements with home).</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ independently indicate basic body needs by using facial expressions/gestures/pictures/ symbols/vocalisation or verbalisation (in conjunction with SPHE, catering for personal care needs)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>express needs such as hunger/thirst/need to use the toilet/tiredness/temperature.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ attend to the use of objects of reference or tactile, gestural, pictorial, or verbal clues for objects and activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>look at/smell/feel swimming togs as he/she enters the pool building, look at the school bus and then look at a model/picture of a bus, look at staff/a student making a sign and using the word for drink as it is served</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice expressing various emotions</li> <li>■ participate with physical help in activities that involve licking and sucking (to develop muscles necessary for speech)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>mouthed objects, licking jam/chocolate from around mouth (check that no feeling restrictions are in place).</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ interpret and imitate facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice expressing various emotions</li> <li>■ imitate more complex tongue exercises and sucking activities to develop the muscles necessary for speech                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>moving the tongue around the mouth, touching chin/nose with the tongue, moving the tongue in and out/up and down, licking lips, sucking through a valve/ordinary/spiral straw (if no feeding restrictions are necessary)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ engage in blowing activities with decreasing assistance                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>blowing bubbles, blowing tissue across a table (gradually increase weight of paper), blowing through straws.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ deliberately use facial expression, gesture or tone of voice to express his/her own emotions</li> <li>■ experiment with tongue exercises and sucking and blowing exercises to develop the muscles necessary for speech. (See activities in Attending and Responding.)</li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ participate with assistance in turn-taking activities with adults and other students                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>participate with full assistance in uncomplicated turn-taking games such as rolling a ball back and forth, familiar turn-taking at circle time, social play activities such as building with bricks in which an adult places a brick and then a student places a brick</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to gestural and speech-action games                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>‘around and around the garden’ ‘incy wincy spider’</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to the social behaviour of others on common social occasions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>observe/feel expressions or gestures, listen to words used on occasions such as those suggested in Responding</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ listen to a wide variety of stories, songs and rhymes for increasing periods.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ respond to prompts for his/her own turn in turn-taking situations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>games, circle-time activities, social play activities</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond by expression, gesture, vocalisation, or verbalisation to gestural and speech-action games                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show anticipation of his/her turn in games such as those in Attending, begin to imitate actions in the game</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing assistance respond appropriately to common social occasions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>make eye contact/smile/extend a hand for greetings, wave or say bye-bye for departures, push/hold out an object when giving, smile/express thanks when receiving, show concern by expression/action/vocalisation</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ fill in gaps left in familiar stories, songs and rhymes using gestures, pictures or words.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ initiate turn-taking vocalisation games with an adult or another student                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>make eye contact with an adult or student and then make a sound used in previous turn-taking routines and wait expectantly for a response, ask for or start the actions for a favourite speech-action game, such as ‘around and around the garden’ or ‘incy wincy spider’</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ experiment with different voices in role-playing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>a favourite story character, voices to suit animal characters</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ initiate common social functions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>initiate ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye’, initiate the giving of things, express thanks on receiving things</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ ask for stories, songs and rhymes using gestures, pictures and words</li> <li>■ recite all or part of familiar stories, rhymes and songs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>from well-loved classroom favourites, songs heard at home, familiar television jingles.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ attend to activities involving object permanence,                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>an object of interest moved slightly out of reach and then brought back after a pause, an object of interest partially covered/fully covered with a cloth and then re-emerging, games of ‘peek-a-boo’ with a familiar person, pushing a train through a tunnel, putting toy cars in a garage, looking at a jack-in-the box</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ have the opportunity to be presented with a choice of two people/items                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>an adult giving the student a taste of two very different foods and then interpreting the student’s movements and expression as an indication of preference for one, two toys being offered simultaneously and signs of increased attention for one being interpreted as preference (the other toy taken away then), two people being presented to the student when going for a walk (one perhaps known to be a favourite person) with each showing his/her intention to accompany the student and the student’s reaction being again interpreted</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ participate in guided pretend/imaginative play                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>washing a doll’s face, sitting in a pretend car.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ with decreasing assistance find objects or people that are partially or fully hidden                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>react by expression/eye movement/reaching/vocalisation when an object of interest is moved, engage with decreasing help in activities suggested in Attending, look for a hidden favourite food/drink/object (at first partially hidden while he/she watches and gradually moving to games of hide and seek with people and objects)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing assistance, make choices between objects/activities/people when opportunities for choice are presented                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>choose by body leaning/eye-pointing/finger-pointing/reaching/grasping/words, choose initially using two (then more) real objects/people, gradually progress to making choice with objects of reference/pictures/symbols/verbal instruction (Choices must be meaningful and it may be helpful to ensure that initial choice opportunities include something that the student really likes.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond appropriately to guided pretend/imaginative play                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>imitate putting a doll to bed, give a doll a drink when a cup is presented.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ engage independently in hide and seek games with people and objects</li> <li>■ know where familiar objects are kept and independently seek them out</li> <li>■ demand and create opportunities for choices                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>go to the fridge and choose a drink from a selection, ask to use toys/equipment and make a choice from what is available</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ assert him/herself by sometimes refusing to do things                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>have reasonable refusals respected and accepted by adults, begin to understand when it is appropriate to expect a choice</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ initiate sessions of pretend/imaginative play                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>make a puppet clap hands, make puppet open and close its mouth to ‘talk’ or ‘eat’, decide to use a box as a car, bring a doll along when called to wash his/her hands and pretend to wash the doll’s hands also</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use nouns in functional or play situations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>use words, symbols or signs.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ attend to the use of familiar nouns                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>look at or feel familiar objects and people as they are named.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to spoken or gestural instruction in familiar and generalised situation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>listen to and be guided into appropriate responses for ‘Give me.’ ‘Where is?’ ‘Show me.’</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ show awareness of familiar nouns                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>look at/point to items when they are named, match an object of reference/picture/symbol/make sign for/ familiar objects or people, use words to name familiar objects and people.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing assistance respond to spoken or gestural instructions in familiar and generalised situations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>‘Give me.’ ‘Where is?’ ‘Show me.’</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ follow short visual or verbal instructions for familiar activities with decreasing assistance                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>start getting ready to go home when shown objects of reference for coat and car, follow two or three sequenced pictures to carry out routine activities such as washing hands, or dressing after swimming, follow a short video sequence for getting a particular piece of equipment in the classroom, respond to a verbal recording of a short sequence of instructions for a familiar activity.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ independently follow simple instructions in familiar situations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>follow instructions in Attending and Responding without any assistance, begin to use those instructions with adults and other students.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ independently follow more complex gestural, pictorial or verbal instructions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>‘Give the ball to Joseph.’ ‘Go to the kitchen and get your cup.’</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ independently follow visual or verbal recorded instructions to carry out tasks                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>follow steps for self-care routines, follow steps for work activities. (See Responding for ideas.)</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ attend to descriptions of people/ objects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>descriptions that can readily be seen and felt such as big/small, soft/rough, tall person/small person, curly hair/straight hair</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to demonstration of common verbs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>look at or feel the action for common verbs, listen to the verb that goes with the actions</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to demonstrations of common prepositions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>have his/her attention drawn to how he/she is sitting 'on' the chair/lying 'on' the mat, have the opportunity to experience walking/being wheeled/creeping 'under' things, experience being 'in' and then 'out' of a small area, listen to the preposition and watch or feel the car going 'under' the bridge/the cup being placed 'on' the table.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ respond to instructions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>'Show me the big ball.'</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show understanding of verbs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>follow requests to carry out actions on himself/herself or a puppet/doll, show a picture of a particular action</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show reaction to personal experiences of prepositions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show reaction to activities in Attending, attempt to go 'under', etc.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ respond to instructions involving prepositions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>'Drive the toy car under the bridge.' 'Put your cup in the cupboard.'</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ make a choice or make a request involving descriptive detail in relation to people and objects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>always choose the red mug, seek to sit on a big chair, seek to play with someone smaller than him/her, show special interest in people with glasses/long hair/a beard</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use verbs in functional or play situations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>'go' to express a desire to go somewhere, 'sit' when making a doll sit</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ physically experiment with common prepositions                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>jumping 'on' a mat, wheeling or creeping 'under' a table, going 'into' a small area</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use prepositions in functional and play situations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>'out' to ask to go out, 'under' to show that something is hidden.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ attend to talk about recent past and present experiences and attend to plans for the future                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>given tactile, gestural, pictorial, or verbal clues.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ respond to questions about recent past or present experiences                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>recap on what happened today at end of the school day, point to dinner/make a sign for dinner when asked in the dining room 'What are you doing now?', recall a special event that happened in the recent past with the aid of photos/video footage/ sound recordings</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing assistance communicate about plans for the future                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>given help, use object of reference/expression/gesture picture/symbol or word to tell about the planned class trip to the swimming pool.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Receptive and expressive language</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ link objects of reference, pictures, symbols, signs, or words to ask questions</li> <li>■ link objects of reference, pictures, symbols, signs, or words to form sentences of two or more words</li> <li>■ tell stories about past or present experiences with objects of reference, expressions, gestures, pictures, symbols, or words</li> <li>■ ask questions about past or present experiences with his/ her own communication system</li> <li>■ speculate about plans for the future with objects of references, expressions, gestures, pictures, symbols, or words                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>use his/her own communication system to ask if he/she will be going swimming later, speculate about who will collect him/ her from school.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ develop his/her awareness of and ability to manipulate objects (See Mathematics, Early mathematical activities.)</li> <li>■ observe and feel differences in the texture, size, shape, and colour of 3-D objects</li> <li>■ observe and feel differences in the texture, size, shape, and colour of 2-D materials</li> <li>■ concentrate increasingly finely on the parts of people and objects</li> <li>■ develop an awareness of 3-D materials that can be used to represent familiar people/ objects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>observe and participate in using objects of reference</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop an awareness of 2-D materials that can be used to represent familiar people/ objects                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>pictures, non-letter signs and symbols, looking from the symbolic to the real thing, feeling the symbolic and the real thing.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ develop his/her interest in and ability to explore objects (See Mathematics, Early mathematical activities.)</li> <li>■ with gradually decreasing guidance, sort and match 3-D objects according to texture, size, shape, and colour                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>inset boards, graded tower buildings, shape boxes</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with guidance, sort and match 2-D materials according to texture, size, shape, or colour</li> <li>■ identify details/parts of people</li> <li>■ identify details/parts of objects</li> <li>■ link familiar objects of reference to their meanings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>link a toy bus with the real bus that brings him/her to school, show excitement when shown a piece of clothing that he/she associates with a favourite person/family member</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ link familiar pictures, non-letter signs and symbols to their meanings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>link the sign on a toilet door to the actual toilet inside, show excitement when shown a picture of a favourite person/object</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use objects of reference, pictures, non-letter signs, or symbols to show preference for a particular person/object/ activity when presented with a selection.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ show curiosity about, experiment with, and investigate objects (See Mathematics, Early mathematical activities.)</li> <li>■ independently sort and match 3-D objects according to texture, size, shape, and colour</li> <li>■ independently sort and match 2-D materials according to texture, size, shape, and colour</li> <li>■ seek out and use an appropriate object of reference, picture, sign, or symbol to indicate needs and desires</li> <li>■ seek out and use an appropriate object of reference, picture, sign, or symbol to ask a question about a person/object/ event</li> <li>■ interpret the meaning of non-letter signs and symbols in the immediate and wider environment                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>recognise a pictorial sign for the PE hall in the school, recognise the ice-cream sign outside a shop.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ develop an awareness of books,                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>listen to stories being read from books, look at pictures in books with an adult/a sibling/another student, feel tactile books, experience the pressing of buttons on interactive books</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ participate in the handling of books                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>opening, closing, turning pages, holding the correct way up</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ become aware of the fact that pictures can tell stories</li> <li>■ observe and attend to the sequence of a simple picture story shown by an adult                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>home-made books of clear photographs relating to the student's own self/family, bright or interactive commercial picture stories</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ observe text in storybooks or books of rhymes (Students with visual problems may need textured text.)</li> <li>■ observe that the reader uses text to read a story. (A reader can help them read.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ show an awareness of the function of books                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>become excited when a storybook is produced, point to pictures as the story is being told</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ choose a storybook from a selection presented</li> <li>■ respond to instructions about handling a book                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>hold it the right way up, turn the pages</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ understand that text in a book relates to the pictures and has meaning                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>understand that the text the adult is reading tells about the picture on the page, understand that the text helps the adult to tell the same story every time.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ seek out a favourite storybook from a selection and ask for it to be read</li> <li>■ handle books appropriately without guidance</li> <li>■ independently put pictures in sequence as an adult tells a familiar story                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>using photos relating to student's journey to school, using pictures cut from a duplicate storybook</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show an awareness that text should tell the same story every time                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show by looking or pointing to text or by gestures/words that the adult has missed some text</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ understand some language associated with reading                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>page, beginning, end, top, bottom, across, word, letter</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ find the starting point for reading text.</li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ have attention drawn to his/her printed name                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>on his/her belongings, at the bottom of his/her painting (A photo can accompany the name where appropriate.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ become aware of familiar letter                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>feel and observe textured and attractive letters, look at letters in his/her own name.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ begin to show interest in and recognition of printed signs in the immediate environment,                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>place printed labels on familiar objects with decreasing assistance, pick out his/her own printed name from small selection, look at/point to printed labels for familiar objects, printed names on desks/above coat-hangers/above facecloths (A photo can accompany name/label for object initially, the photo is gradually decreased in size, then removed.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show recognition of familiar letters                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>match and sort letters with help, pick out letters in his/her own name, play games of finding and matching letters</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show interest in and begin to recognise the pattern of letters in familiar names or words                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>use loose letters to copy words.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ link familiar printed signs or names to objects or people                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>know where to hang his/her own coat/replace his/her own toothbrush by looking at the printed name, know where individual students should sit by looking at their printed names</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use familiar letters functionally and in play                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>sort and match letters independently, place letters of his/her own name at own his/her place on the desk, place letters to request or name a familiar item.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ have opportunities to develop the postural control necessary for drawing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>have a stable position that allows him/her to free one hand/both hands, have a position that allows him/her reach and see easily a drawing surface (upright, tilted surface often best), have opportunities to draw in sitting, kneeling, standing, prone, or side-lying positions, as appropriate</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ accept help with painting and drawing activities                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>tolerate a gentle physical prompt for hand and finger painting, tolerate implements being placed in his/her hand</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ engage in hand-printing and finger-painting exercises                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>paint with thickened textures, paint with vivid colours to attract attention (Warm paint may help the student with a tendency towards spasm.), paint with hands and fingers on textured surfaces</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop an ability to grip drawing implements                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>exercises with variety of materials in holding/grasping/squeezing/pushing/tearing/twisting.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ respond to reminders to maintain a suitable posture for drawing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>with decreasing assistance sit as upright as possible, raise upper body if in a prone position, free upper arm in a side-lying position, stand securely if using an easel, free one hand/both hands, look at the drawing surface</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show an interest in hand-printing and finger-painting                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>react to the feeling of paint on the hands, follow instructions to reach out and make marks on a drawing surface, imitate the direction of strokes made with the fingers</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ refine the ability to grip drawing and writing implements                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>progress (if appropriate) to instruments without special aids, progress to smaller instruments</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop an ability to release drawing implements                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>release when gentle physical help is given to open fingers, release when given a verbal prompt.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ independently adjust his/her posture to accommodate drawing and writing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>stabilise himself/herself in a sitting, standing, kneeling, prone, or side-lying position, independently secure a page with Blue-Tack or hold the paper with one hand while drawing with the other</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ experiment with finger painting to achieve various effects and designs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>colour, movement, texture, drop sand or glitter into paint</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ experiment with a large range of drawing implements on a range of drawing surfaces to achieve various effects and designs                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>free-flowing rhythms of early drawing attempts gradually refined to more controlled movements as hand/eye co-ordination improves.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ become aware of and participate in using a large range of drawing and painting implements                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>large fat tools, paintbrushes padded with foam, finger crayons, triangular pens/pencils (Bells or a weight can be attached to a drawing implement to increase awareness of its presence.), computer drawing programs</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ become aware of and participate in drawing and painting on a large range of drawing surfaces                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>'draw' with the finger in a sand tray, paint with water/coloured chalk on a blackboard, paint on brightly coloured/black paper, paint on textured surfaces</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ become aware that choices can be made regarding implements, materials and colours                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>have choices based on observation of what attracts him/her</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to the colour and thickness of marks created by various implements                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>strong contrast to heighten attention.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ imitate/follow instructions to scribble or paint freely with a large range of drawing and painting implements on a variety of drawing surfaces. (See Attending activities.)</li> <li>■ indicate a preference for particular implements/drawing surfaces when presented with a choice                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>using his/her established communication method</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ begin to develop a left-right orientation for writing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>trace a finger or drive a toy car along a left-to-right 'road' in a sand tray, trace a finger from left to right along a sandpaper road going from 'school' on the left to 'home' on the right.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ seek out/choose materials and methods for drawing, painting and writing</li> <li>■ independently show understanding of the left-right orientation of writing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>play independently at pretend writing with a finger in the sand tray/with finger paint on paper going from left to right, use sandpaper 'roads' from left to right independently.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ attend to the direction of marks created                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>making sweeping and flowing marks with a finger/ an implement in the air/on a large surface</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to the shape of marks created                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>sprinkle sand or glitter onto painted marks and then feel and observe them when dry</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop awareness of the outline of regular shapes                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>trace with the finger around regular shapes, be enabled to colour inside regular shapes</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ attend to the drawing of models of familiar representations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>be enabled to look at a real person/an object and observe a pictorial representation being made, participate with help in making a pictorial representation</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop a sense of ownership of the finished product                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>have his/her work identified and displayed, take home his/her own work, have his/her own portfolio of work.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ imitate (with decreasing help) marks he/she sees being made by an adult                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>horizontal and vertical strokes, circular strokes, a single vertical or horizontal line, a single circle, a cross, a loop, a zigzag line, a wavy line</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ copy (with decreasing help) marks that have been prepared by an adult (examples as above)</li> <li>■ colour (with decreasing help) inside regular shapes                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>move from colouring the whole page to colouring inside a large/medium-sized circle or other regular geometrical shape</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ draw (with decreasing help) around regular templates                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>trace outline with the finger, draw around the finger dipped in paint, draw around with an implement</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ show interest in watching an adult draw a pictorial representation of a familiar person/object                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>look from the real thing to the drawing, point to what is represented</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ draw (with decreasing help) simple pictorial forms                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>representations of self/a house/a flower</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ identify his/her own picture or drawings from a selection presented</li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ draw with direction and control (independently copy prepared examples or create his/her own models)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>horizontal and vertical lines, circles, crosses, loops, zig-zags (possibly as pretend writing)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ enjoy colouring inside shapes and pictures                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>large shapes with thick outline gradually refined to smaller shapes</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ draw, with help if necessary, around templates for a particular purpose                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>draw around the template of an animal to help with a farm collage</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ ask an adult to draw something for him/her                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>give a drawing implement to an adult and indicate what he/she wishes to see represented</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ make a reasonable attempt to copy prepared models of familiar drawings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>a drawing of a person/a face/a house</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ give meaning to his/her own drawings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>indicate self/answer 'Daddy'/ point to an object when asked about a drawing.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Attending	Responding	Initiating
<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ be aware of the work produced by other students</li> <li>■ attend to the creation of significant letters                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>letters of his/her own name, letters of familiar items in the classroom (Clay, Plasticine, paint, a drawing or writing implement can be used.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ use objects of reference/picture/symbols/words to record events and experiences                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>with help place objects of reference on a board to record the events of the day, paste two or more pictures/symbols on a board/into a book to record a recent class trip.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ look at the work of other students when directed to do so.</li> <li>■ respond to the display of his/her own work and the work of other students                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>on display in the classroom, in the school corridor, in a portfolio, at home</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing help, trace over large, bright or textured models of significant letters with a finger/drawing implement                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>letters of his/her own name, familiar letters used in signs (Indicate the starting spot for each letter highlighted.)</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ with decreasing help record events and experiences as outlined in Attending</li> <li>■ with some help record thoughts and feelings using pictures/symbols/words                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>add a smiling mouth to a picture of a face to record happiness, choose a sad face from a selection and add to the collage of a boy/girl to record sadness, place a red sticker on the body part of a picture of himself/herself to record pain in that area.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Writing</b></p> <p><i>The student should be enabled to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ establish his/her ownership of the finished product                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>show his/her effort to an adult or other students, ask to bring it home or have it displayed</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ appreciate and examine the work of other students and know whose work it is</li> <li>■ independently use a finger to trace over significant letters in 3-D and 2-D                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>soft letters, magnetic letters, letters in sand, letters on paper</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ develop an understanding of the left-to-right, top-to-bottom orientation of writing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>independently start at the red spot when tracing over prepared letter models</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ make a reasonable attempt to copy large models of significant letters                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>letters of his/her own name, familiar letters used in the environment</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>■ independently write the letters of significant names or words</li> <li>■ independently seek to record events, experience, feelings, thoughts</li> <li>■ seek to record activities such as those in Attending and Responding.</li> </ul>

# Exemplars

No.	Exemplar title	Page
1.	Conveying preferences	33
2.	What's in the box?	34
3.	' <i>We Go Swimming</i> ' Book	35

## Exemplar 1: **Communication and Language**

**Title:** Conveying Preferences

### Objectives

1. The student will develop a consistent response to a particular activity.
2. The student will engage in a turn-taking activity with an adult.
3. The student will convey a preference for certain materials.

### Lesson

Sample lesson with Aoife, a student, and Margaret, a Special Needs Assistant, working under the direction of the teacher.

Aoife seems to like a soft cloth being rubbed on her face. Staff members have interpreted a slight turn of her head towards the soft cloth as like and a slight turn away from rougher materials as dislike.

Margaret introduces the activity, using minimal language to describe her actions with the soft versus the rougher cloth. She rubs Aoife's face gently with each cloth, looking for a reaction. As Aoife turns a little towards the soft cloth Margaret says, *'Oh! You like that'*, and does it again. The turn-taking goes on with Aoife turning towards the cloth and Margaret obliging with another little rub. As Aoife's response becomes more established Margaret could occasionally re-introduce the rougher cloth and as Aoife turns away say, *'Do you like the soft one more?'* and go back to the soft cloth. As time goes on, Margaret could also pause and wait for increasingly pronounced head turning by Aoife before she rubs with the soft cloth, thereby encouraging intentional communication.

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### Extending the idea

This turn-taking routine can be used to encourage and establish all signs of response. It can also be used with all observed or suspected sensory preferences. Consistency is important, as is a strategic plan for shaping the student's response into a clearer and more intentional effort at communication.

## Exemplar 2: Communication and Language

**Title:** What's in the box?

- Attractive box with a choice of items inside to be used for a circle-time communication lesson
- Subjects and activities involved in the preparation stages
- Geography: going to an appropriate place to look for a box
- Communication: asking for and choosing a box
- Art and fine motor skills: cutting the box to suit, decorating the box
- Music: singing the 'What's in the box' song

### Objectives

The student will

- take turns in doing an activity
- attend to other students as they take their turn
- attend to and investigate the attractive box
- tap on the box
- open the box
- look into/feel inside the box to see what is inside
- choose an item
- show the item to other students.

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### Lesson

A selection of items likely to cater for the particular interests of all students is placed in the box.

Students sit in a circle.

Each student gets a turn to tap on the box, then look in or feel in the box, pick out an item he/she likes. The song (below) is sung for each student.

The attention of all other students is drawn to the student who is taking his/her turn.

Start with the lid of the box open to make it easy the first few times, then make it a little harder by closing the lid and getting the student to open the box in order to search for the item.

### Song

s m s s m m s

Tap, tap, tap, what's in the box?

l s f m r m m f

David, David, what's in the box?

## Exemplar 3: **Communication and Language**

**Title:** *'We Go Swimming'* Book

Making a picture book describing the stages involved in going swimming

### **Subjects and activities involved in this project**

#### **Communication**

- Development of receptive and expressive language through discussion and agreement on the stages involved
- Development of an understanding of symbolic representation through the use of pictures to represent familiar activities and places

#### **Geography**

- Finding the items and places to be photographed

#### **Science**

- Using a camera to photograph objects and places

#### **Visual Arts**

- An attractive presentation of photographs in book form

#### **History**

- Sequencing of a familiar event by putting pictures in the correct order

### **Objectives**

The student will

- collaborate and co-operate in doing an activity
- participate in finding and photographing relevant items and places
- relate the pictures to the items/places they represent
- physically help in constructing the book
- look at the pictures in the book
- become aware of the sequences of events as represented by the pictures
- anticipate the trip to the swimming pool when the book is taken out.

## Exemplar 3: Communication and Language

### Lesson

- Show the students objects of reference that are usually used to announce a trip to the swimming pool.
- Involve the students at their appropriate levels and discuss the stages involved in making a trip to the swimming pool, making the journey in reality if possible.
- Decide on the main stages to be photographed and make a note of them in writing, with drawings or with objects of reference. Involve every student in the recording.
- On a subsequent trip, help the students to use a camera to photograph each step identified. (A digital camera is excellent for this, as it gives immediate results.) Photographs must be clear and uncluttered, focusing clearly on something the students will recognise.
- Examine the photographic results and decide on the ones to use in the book. Get a double set of prints to use for sequencing tasks.
- Arrange the photographs in a waterproof book, attractively presented and decorated.
- Use the book immediately before each swimming trip to build up anticipation of the trip.
- Bring the book on the trip and help the students to match each step in reality with the corresponding picture in the book.
- For more able students, use the extra prints for a sequencing lesson after the trip.

This project can be adapted to suit all situations and can be used for many events: going to PE, going to the local shop, going home or coming to school. (The help of carers or parents can be enlisted.)

A similar approach can also be used for geography lessons, where books are made of a number of routes around the school building and grounds or of safe routes close to the school. Individual students or a small group of students are given a book and, with an adult, the route in the book is followed. They might have to bring back something from various points along the way, such as a leaf from a certain tree. If the class has a digital camera, students might have to photograph points along the route to prove that they were there!