**Oxford Island Communication Board**

Using a communication board to support understanding: The communication board will help children to make links between a real object, a picture and a spoken word. Visuals help us all to understand. A picture is more like an object than a spoken word.

• There are lots of things in playgrounds and a lot of potential new words for children! Pick out one or two words to start.

• Point to the picture and say the word, for example ‘swing’.

• You can make a gesture or a sign too if it will help to support their understanding.

• Make sure to use the same word consistently with the picture.

• Then bring your children over to the swings. You might need to repeat this routine many times before they understand the link between the word, the picture and the swings!

We need to understand what a picture or a word means, before we can use it. Using a communication board to support a child to use words or sentences:

• Bring your child over to the communication board

• If you know that their preferred activity is the slide, show them where this picture is on the board. Say the word as you show them the picture.

• Encourage them to point to the picture too. You can use hand over hand to help them if they are comfortable with this.

• Then go to play on the slide.

• Repeat this routine, and the word ‘slide’ many times. You can repeat the word on its own or in short phrases like ‘Down the slide!’

• You can also give your child a sentence starter, such as ‘I want..’ This will give them an opportunity to use the word expressively and finish your sentence. You can point to two different pictures to help your child to put words together. Like ‘big‘ + ’slide, ’ ‘small‘ + ’slide’ or ‘finished + slide’. This will help to expand your child’s language use

Your child may want to free play in Oxford Island Play Park first to get used to the space and play equipment. You will know best when to use the communication board with your child.

**Enjoy & have fun!**

What is a communication board?

A communication board is a board with pictures that can be used to share messages. The communication board in Oxford Island has pictures of things in the play park, action words, feelings, and words that can be used to request, like “more”. We are using everything in our communication toolbox, including pictures, gestures, signs, and words, to get our message across. Everyone should have a go at using our new communication boards and experience a new way to share messages!

Communication boards are for everyone

• Children and young people who are in the playground can use the board to play word games, plan, and talk about what they are going to do

• Children and young people who are learning language can use the pictures on the board to help them to understand new words and to put words together

• Children and young people who have difficulties with understanding will benefit from being able to see a picture of what you are talking about

• Children and young people who have difficulties with using language will benefit from being able to get their message across clearly, quickly, and effectively

• Children and young people who find making speech sounds difficult and have difficulty being understood by adults or other children will benefit from being able to show you exactly what they are telling you about

• Adults can use the board to start conversations with their child

• Adults who have difficulty with understanding or using language can use the board to share and receive messages