

Working towards AAC

Dr Anne Emerson, Division of Psychology, Nottingham Trent University

Dr Jackie Dearden, Educational Psychologist
Nottingham City Children's Services

**A collaboration between Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham
City Children's Services**

Participants

- ◉ 2 boys and 1 girl of 12 years with ASD, minimal communication and little engagement
- ◉ Action research
- ◉ Worked alongside teaching staff
- ◉ 2 year project
- ◉ School wants us to train more staff

J's Work Programme

English comprehension P4

- Demonstrate understanding of own name and class names
- Follow verb instructions jump, turn, supported by signing and symbols
- Show understanding of big/small and different colours
- Imitate oral movements

J's Work Programme

Reading P6

- Find a specific book on request/identify beginning and end of book
- Matches colour words brown, black, orange, pink
- Use magnetic letters to learn sounds

Profile of J (from MRO form)

- **Main means of communication**
Pointing to symbols, facial expressions, body movements,
Behaviour
- **Main reasons to communicate**
Inconsistent intentional communication of basic needs,
expressing himself, refusing
- **Opportunities**
Makaton signs and symbols and PECS.
- **Untapped potential, wants to communicate more is
unable to demonstrate full ability**
- **Barriers**
Lack of understanding of complex language, fine motor
impairments and word-finding difficulties.

Current situation

- **J can read a wide variety of single words and short phrases**
- **He is beginning to select letters in order to spell**
- **He is using pointing at words to communicate including initiating requests**

What made the difference?

What do you think?

- Means - could already point and read
(mother knew he could)
- Reasons - to demand
- But given opportunities has been able to
communicate ideas, likes, opinions and shown
pleasure in communicating
- Expectations of ability, cooperation and interest

A

- ◉ Observation of videos showed us that he is trying to speak - generalised to other situations
- ◉ Engaged in activities
- ◉ Cooperative and keen to have sessions
- ◉ Started to use hands
- ◉ Enjoying books

H

- ⦿ Behaviour greatly changed - unable to resist joining in!
- ⦿ Mostly quiet, happy to come, cooperative
- ⦿ Initiates holding adult hand to point
- ⦿ Starting to point independently
- ⦿ Enjoying books
- ⦿ Agreeing to adult choice of activity