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Ten Things to do with  
Low Tech Communication  
Devices

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## Ten Things to Do With Low Tech Communication Devices



### Introduction

For many people with a physical or learning disability, communicating using language is difficult or impossible. In some instances people who are non-verbal or who need to replace or augment their speech will simply use text to spell out words and sentences to communicate with others.

For some children, using an Alternative or Augmentative Communication system (AAC), means that they can use technology to assist them communicating with others. Children who are non-verbal or who are slow to develop speech can use a range of devices and systems to help them communicate with those around them, from very simple low-tech solutions to complex high-tech systems.

Many examples of Low Tech communication devices are available on the market, some of which including the Big Mac and the Step by Step produced by AbleNet™, allow you to record a single, or a series of messages which will play once the child presses the switch. These simple devices allow you to record messages directly on the devices (up to 2 minutes) for the child to activate whenever required.

This information sheet has been produced to provide you with some suggestions as to how to get the most from this simple but effective Communication Technology.



### **1. Tell People Who You Are.**

Try using the Big Mack or Step by Step to record your child's name and some personal information. For example, "My name is Ahmed and I am six years old".

### **2. Tell Your Friends What You Did at the Weekend.**

Everyone arrives back to school with news about their weekend, what they did, who they saw and so on. Use the Big Mack to record a message telling everyone what your child did at the weekend. For example, "Me and my family spent the weekend at my Grandparents House, and I played with my cousins" or "We went to see a movie at the weekend and afterwards went to McDonalds for a burger and fries". The Big Mack can then be brought to school for the child where they can press the button at news time or circle time to tell everyone what they did at the weekend.



### **3. Bring a Message Home to Your Family**

Let the teacher in school use the Big Mack to record a message meant for the child's mother or father, so instead of sending notes home in the schoolbag, record a message, for example "On Thursday we will have Sports Day, please make sure Ahmed is wearing a Track Suit". The child can then play the message for their family when they get home from school.

### **4. Answer Questions or Respond to a Greeting**

Set up a Big Mack so that a child can answer a simple greeting, for example record the message "Wa Alaykum Saalam", so that when someone says, "Salaam Alaykum" the child can press their Big Mack to answer back.

### **5. Say Prayers.**

Use the Big Mack to record prayers or extracts from the Qu'ran so that the child can recite part of their prayers when in class or at home.

## **6. Give More Information about the Child's Surroundings.**

Place a low-tech communication aid on the door frame, making sure it is at a suitable height. The

communication aid can then be recorded with information about the room to give auditory clues about the room, what will be happening or what to expect.

## **7. Tell People What to Do.**

You can use a Big Mack or Step By Step to make activities much more active and fun for a child. For example when reading to a child, telling a story or talking through a picture book, record some instructions such as "Read that Again Please" or "Please Turn the Page". Alternatively make a child much more active in games such as blowing bubbles, simply record the word "More" and ask the child to tell you when he/she wants you to blow more bubbles.

## **8. Cheer on a Favorite Sports Team**

Let a child join in the fun when watching sports with his or her friends, record the sound of people clapping and cheering, so that a child can press their Big Mack to cheer and celebrate every time their favorite team scores a goal or wins a game. It can be used in front of the television if they are sitting at home watching a match with their family.

## **9. Sing a Song**

Record the chorus of a favourite song by holding the communication aid up to a speaker.

Record someone signing the song for a more personal message. Record songs for assembly's, concerts or even just classroom activities. Record who is No.1 in the chart and bring this information to school talk with school friends or a teacher about whether the song is liked or disliked.

### **10. Practice “Turn Taking”**

Use the Big Mack to record part of a story, and allow the child to press the switch to deliver their part of the story at the right time. For example, if it is a story that other children in class are reading, allow every child to read one line, with a Big Mack available with one line recorded on it. When the times comes for the child to read their line, all they have to do is press the device.



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