

Thank you very much for buying Communi-bands

I hope that they will help you with establishing a good “yes/no” response.

To get started I just wanted to share some potentially helpful tips and hints with you.

For your child to start to become an effective communicator, even if they are non-verbal or difficult to understand, a key skill is a reliable, clear, low-tech method of communicating "yes" and "no". Once your child achieves this then the whole world opens out! You can ask them an infinite amount of questions about an infinite number of things - exciting or what?

First of all it will take time. Start slowly.

Decide which hand is going to be “yes” and which “no”. My son has better control on his left side so we decided that his left hand would be the “yes” (yellow wristband)

Start by using something you know is motivational for your child, for example it could be food, a toy, a DVD - you know your child best. It's best to start with specific things they are familiar with. If they **always** want a chocolate button or to watch a Something Special DVD then that will be great to reinforce their “yes” response. Try something you know that they don't want/like for the “no”. It may help to hold up the actual object initially.

Establish eye contact by calling their name.

Use clear, unambiguous language “Would you like a chocolate button?” Make sure that it is just one question and that it is closed for a yes or no response.

Hold out your hands apart and palm up to the child – shake your hand that corresponds to his/her “yes” hand and say “yes”.

Shake your other hand as you say “or no”.

My son started by eye-pointing to the appropriate hand, I then asked him to “look and point” and took his hand and tapped it on my open palm whilst verbalising his response again.

Gradually build up the times when you ask questions – start at every mealtime for example, then add at every playtime, until eventually you can use them all the time.

My next step was to tape yes/no symbols to the arms of his chair (on the appropriate sides) so that he could “look and point” at the symbols after being asked a question. You could also stretch the bands around the arms of a chair.

This gradually progressed to him waving or lifting his arms in response. He has also learned to vocalise a good “no” and only use his “no” arm if I am unsure of his response – some days he can be very windmill flappy and over vocal so it can be difficult to establish exactly what he is trying to communicate. We also still use “look and point” on these days.

A further progression has been to respond at an appropriate time. So give a list and ask for a “yes” when you have said the one he/she wants eg. “Would you like to go to the park, the swimming pool, the woods or the beach?” Say the list first to establish all the options then repeat more slowly giving time for a response. You can also move on to use more conceptual language rather than specifics. “Have you got a girlfriend?” “Are you tired?” etc.

I hope this has helped. Good luck and keep persevering ☺

If you have any questions or would like to leave some feedback please visit www.thegreencrab.com

Many thanks

Al Crabtree



Disclaimer: I am not a qualified therapist. The advice and information given above is based purely on my own experiences as a parent of a non-verbal child with athetoid cerebral palsy.

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