

Young Person Case Study – Speech and Language Therapy

Young Person: 'L'

Age: 12

Case study focus: To develop L' expressive language skills, using Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC).

Background:

L has been a day student at Underley Garden School since 2018. He is a non-verbal child and relies on visual support in order for him to understand and access the world around him. Following Speech and Language assessment, it became clear that L is able to understand symbols. L has been using a piece of iPad software called Clicker Communicator for a number of months. To ensure continuity of use, in school he has access to a dedicated iPad funded by Underley Garden. L is able to use this communication device to make requests well. After discussion with his class teacher we decided to focus on L' independent use of his AAC device, including using it in different situations and recognising the need to bring it with him to different activities/places.

Recent Speech and Language Therapy Input:

I have seen L regularly and liaise with his Teacher and his 1:1 Teaching Assistant. We have worked collaboratively to ensure that L' AAC device is kept up to date with relevant vocabulary. L appears to be progressing well and requires new words and topics to be added to his device regularly in order to ensure that he is able to communicate his wants and needs.

It is important that L has access to his AAC device at all times. He responds well to verbal requests from familiar adults e.g. "get your iPad". In order to support L to take his AAC device with him when transitioning to activities or going offsite, I have created a visual tick list which staff prompt L to look at before leaving. This means that L doesn't need to rely on adults telling him specific items he needs and therefore supports his independence. (At the moment, due to Covid-19, L is not going on offsite activities).

I have also worked with Education staff to extend L' use of the iPad from purely 'requesting' to 'commenting'. One example of this is encouraging L to recognise and label emotions in others. The relevant vocabulary has been added to his AAC device and L is asked to

comment on the facial expressions of familiar adults. The aim of this is to develop L' recognition of emotions in others, before we progress to him communicating his own feelings.

Outcomes:

L' Therapy plan was reviewed in April 2020. He has made good progress on his outcomes, however Covid-19 has impacted on how these can be carried out at the moment. At a recent multi-disciplinary target setting meeting, we have discussed ideas for how these targets could be adapted and included into on-site activities.

1. L will take his communication device with him on offsite activities with minimal prompting from staff. **Target achieved**

As noted above, L is able to consistently take his AAC device with him when staff remind him. We have recently progressed to using a visual list to limit the amount of specific verbal prompting L needs.

2. L will be able to label 'happy', 'sad' and 'angry' facial expressions when these are modelled by an adult. **Target achieved**

Again, L has made good progress with this target. He is often able to correctly label these emotions when Education staff model them. L uses his AAC device to do this. He is progressing well with the expansion of new topics in his device and appears to be able to navigate categories well in order to locate the vocabulary he needs.

Conclusion and evaluation:

L continues to communicate well using his AAC device and is developing his vocabulary knowledge rapidly. He requires regular Speech and Language Therapy input in order to expand his vocabulary and generalise the use of his iPad.

Recent discussions with the local NHS Speech and Language Therapy team have also highlighted possible funding routes which I am in the process of researching. It is hoped, that should funding be approved, L would be able to also have access to a dedicated communication device when at home.