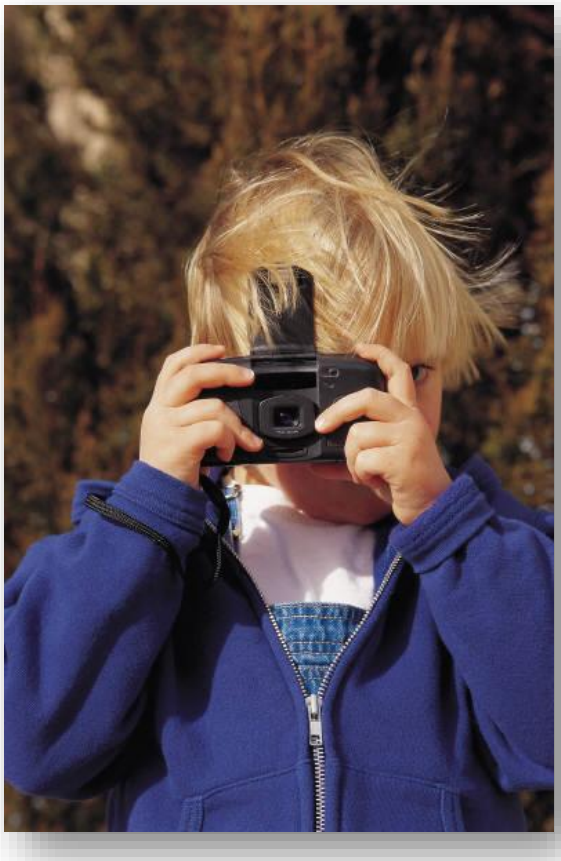
USING PHOTOGRAPHS

To Support Language and Communication in Early Years Settings



Barnet Early Years SEND Advisory Team is committed to supporting early year's settings to move to more inclusive environments for children with a variety of special educational needs and disabilities. This Document has been produced by Barnet Early Years SEND Advisory Team.

Using Photographs to Support Language and Communication in Early years Settings

Introduction



Photographs are a useful way of bringing a child's own world into your setting. They encourage the child to be interested in books/pictures as the photographs are relevant to their own experiences. They aid visual and auditory discrimination and can be a very useful early learning tool. In addition, for some pre-verbal children, photographs can aid communication. They can help to make sense of the world, to aid anticipation of future events and to help to express desires and wishes.

Some Basic Principles of Taking Photographs for use with Children

- Make sure that the subject of your photo is the only item in the photo e.g. if you are taking a photo of a drink of juice make sure that you put the cup on a plain, uncluttered surface, such as a table, without a 'busy' tablecloth. This ensures that when the child looks at the photo they will only see the desired object.

- When developing your photos always get two sets of the prints as this will reduce costs if you want to use them for some of the suggestions below e.g. a matching game. Alternatively if you have taken digital photos, they can be saved onto a computer and printed off as and when you need them.

- It is worth considering getting your photos laminated as this will prolong their life and make them more suitable for pre-school children's hands! If you have children with a visual impairment, consider using matt laminating pouches.

Suggestions of activities for children using photographs

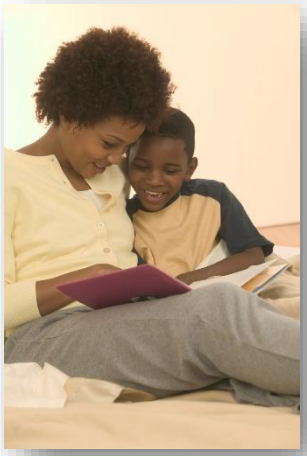
Below are some general ideas of ways of using photographs. Your SEND Advisor will be able to suggest which are most relevant for a particular child and be able to discuss how to best present them

to her/him. If the child has a Speech and Language Therapist, it is important to discuss the use of photographs with them.

- **Early Photo Books**

  These 'books' can be made in a variety of ways:

  - photos printed or stuck onto card (which could be laminated to protect the pages) hole punched and then fastened together using string or treasury tags.
  - photos glued into a scrap book.
  - photos arranged in a small one-picture-to-a page photo album.

  The main rule is to keep the book uncluttered e.g. maybe using only one picture to a page. For some children it may be relevant to print / write the name of the person/object in the photo underneath the photo

  Photos of relevant family members and/or familiar objects help children to become interested in books and pictures and may encourage a child to look at and share a book with an adult. It is a nice idea to theme the books e.g. a book simply of family members, a book about 'Places I like to visit' (shops, park, grandma's etc.) You could further encourage the interest by making the photo book into a flap book by sticking card or fabric over the picture so that the child has to find the photo under the flap.

- **Matching/Selecting/Naming Games**

  A lotto board is a board containing a number of pictures that the child is asked to match using a second set of pictures. If you have made a double set of photos you could make a lotto board using your photos. The second set of photos could then be used to match the pictures to the first set. If you put Velcro on the back of one set of photos and make a lotto board with Velcro on, you could change the photos that you ask the child to match.

  You could use the photos to encourage the child to select a particular picture e.g. "Give me the ..." or to name a particular picture e.g. "What is this? It's a ....." etc.

  In order to aid sound discrimination you could also ask the child to match sounds to the photo e.g. a family member's photo to her/his voice recorded on a CD / tape player etc.

- **Games Using Photographs**

  There are a variety of games that you could devise using the

photos in order to make the games more relevant to the child's experience. Ask your SEND Advisor for more information if relevant. Here are some examples:

- Kim's game - a number of photos are laid out and the child is asked to look at them. The child then hides their eyes and one is taken away. The child then looks and has to guess which one has been taken.

- Picture pairs - a number of pairs of photos are placed face down on the table and the players are asked to turn two over. If the photos match then a pair has been made and the photos are taken out of the game. The winner is the person with the most pairs of photos.

- Board games e.g. use photos to make a map of the landmarks on a journey e.g. a walk to the park. The counter could be the child and/or other relevant family members and the landmarks could be 'safe' areas on the board game. Using a dice, the winner is the first player to get to the park, stopping at all the landmarks.

Using Photographs as Communication Aids

For some pre-verbal children, photos can aid communication as they give a visual cue to help understand the spoken word. Photos can help a child to anticipate future events, help with choice making and give the child some means of making her/his needs and wishes known.

Visual or Photographic Timetable

This is a visual means of describing what the child is going to do on a given day. This can aid anticipation and help reduce anxiety in a child who can be upset by change, especially during transitions.



The visual or photographic timetable consists of photos stuck in a line onto a board from left to right or top to bottom in a particular sequence. This sequence may denote the order of activities that will happen that day or session. For example, what activities may be happening in the nursery that day: arriving, breakfast time, free play, outdoor play, small group time, sleep time etc.

It may also be used to show the sequence of a routine. For example, how to use the bathroom: flush the toilet, wash hands, dry hands, put paper in the bin etc. The photographic timetable will have a picture for each of these activities in order on the board.

This obviously involves having a bank of photos ready, including photos of all the activities that go on at the early years setting. It is useful if each photo is laminated and has Velcro attached in order to be able to fix it to a board (also with Velcro attached or a felt strip or felt notice board). This means that the photos can be changed every day in order to make the photographic timetable relevant for that day.

For some children it may be relevant to have the timetable to use to discuss the activities that s/he has done that day i.e. retrospective. For some children it may be appropriate to start with only two photos i.e. one for the main event in the morning and one for the main event in the afternoon.

Photographic Choices

This can help a pre-verbal child to have some control over what they want to do next. You can offer the child a choice by showing two (or more) photos and asking the child to choose what they wants to do/eat/drink etc. For example, you could offer a choice of activities on offer in the early years setting. At lunch time you could show a picture of a sandwich and a picture of a pizza -

the choice for lunch today. Obviously, you should only offer what you can provide or are willing to do.

It is also possible to use photos as a way of encouraging the child to follow everyday requests by having a photo to take to match in the relevant room. For example, if it is time to go to the toilet the child could be given a photo of the toilet and then match their picture to the one already situated in the toilet when they have arrived there.

Activity Books

Activity books are another way for a child to demonstrate visually what they may want to do. The book may show a sequence of a particular routine e.g. what the child needs to do in order to get ready to go out to the park or the sequence of getting ready for lunch time. These books are a mini photographic timetable for one activity. They enable the adult and child to use all the relevant language for that activity whilst sharing a book together.

Later you could make photographic books that visually explain the sequence of events in a simple craft or cooking activity.

Further advice

The above ideas are by no means exhaustive. For further ideas for your early years setting please contact your SEND Advisor.

