

Especially for infants with disabilities

Picture This

Symbols and Signs

Young children especially enjoy seeing pictures of people and things they like. Some children with disabilities have difficulty recognizing even familiar pictures. This practice guide also includes ideas for helping a child use pictures to tell someone what she wants.

What is the practice?

This practice will help your child recognize people, objects, and actions in pictures. Using pictures as part of everyday activities will make it easy for a child to tell you he notices things.

What does the practice look like?

This practice uses pictures of people and things a young child is familiar with to communicate recognition. Take diaper changing for example. A mom puts a picture of herself changing her baby's diaper on the wall by the changing table. While changing her baby's diaper, she points to and talks about the photo. The baby smiles and gets excited. Mom responds, showing how pleased she is about her daughter's effort to communicate.

How do you do the practice?

Try these things to make it easy for a child to show you she recognizes pictures of people and things.

- Take pictures of people, things, and actions your child knows and likes. Try non-glossy pictures or photographs that have little or no glare. Show the pictures to her as part of activities like looking at a book. This will encourage her to “tell you” she knows what she sees by vocalizing, getting excited, or making gestures.
- If your child has trouble seeing, use large pictures or drawings to make it easier for her to see them. Try using real objects rather than pictures to make it easier for the child to recognize familiar things.
- Make a homemade book of four or five pictures of familiar people. “Make up” a story about the people as you show your child the pictures. Try using pictures of your child's favorite toys.
- Use pictures of activities like eating, drinking, and bath time to show your child what is about to happen. It will not take very long for her to know what is about to happen.



How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your child beginning to recognize more and more pictures?
- Is your child “telling” you what she sees in pictures more often?
- Does your child “know” what is about to happen next when she sees familiar pictures?

Take a look at more fun with symbols and signs

Snack-Time Signs

It is hard for Christopher to tell someone he is hungry or thirsty, or when he wants to do something. His mother uses four different sets of “picture cards” for the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, and living room (play area). The picture cards for the kitchen have pictures of foods, drinks, and Christopher eating and drinking different things. Mom shows him the pictures and says, “Show me what you want.” Christopher points to or touches a picture. Mom says the name of what he is asking for (for example, “Do you want milk to drink?”). Christopher has gotten better at asking for things. He also tries to repeat the words his mother uses.



“Ruff, Ruff!” says the dog.”

Hannah just had her first birthday. She sometimes gets confused and mixes up things she sees. Her mother and father have found a fun way to help Hannah know the differences between things. Using sounds with pictures helps Hannah see how pictures mean real things (like “meow” for cat and “woof” for dog). Mom and Dad show Hannah a book of animal pictures. They name what is on a page and say the sounds the animal makes. This has helped Hannah see the differences among animals.

“A Picture’s Worth...”

Nora is a 12-month-old child with low vision. Mom uses a fun way to help Nora notice the differences between everyday objects. At meal times, for example, Nora picks the right object to ask for something to eat or drink. Mom sits Nora in her high chair and asks, “Do you want something to drink?” She then puts the baby’s cup and bowl on her high chair tray and says, “Give me your cup.” Nora touches both the bowl and cup to “figure out” which one to give her mother. She has learned to recognize many different objects by doing these activities.

