

Pictures + Symbols with text + Pamphlets = A Vacation Communication Tool

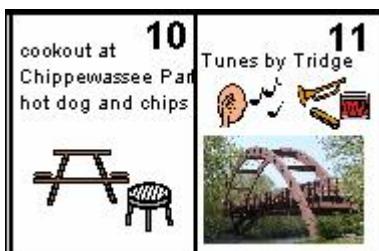
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This summer, prior to our family vacation, we used our computer to create a special notebook. It included photographs, calendars and stories with symbols to help our son, Mike, to communicate with friends and family on the trip. During the trip, pictures and tourism pamphlets were added. Everyone enjoyed it.

Mike uses a combination of speech, sign language, and stories with symbols, pictures and text to communicate. The 3-ring notebook had a semi-clear cover. Whenever Mike approached anyone with the notebook, they could see through the cover. They were interested in what Mike was about to show them.

In order for Mike to share some of his recent activities, we included in the notebook:

- A monthly calendar. The following image is of two days in July with Park and Recreation activities.



- A daily schedule of work activities.
- A story about the Troll Stroll written with text and symbols. (See below.) Photos of the trolls were included, too.
- A series of grids, which included pictures and symbols of people and activities.

To help Mike understand whom he would be seeing and where we would be going, the following are some of the items that were placed in the notebook:

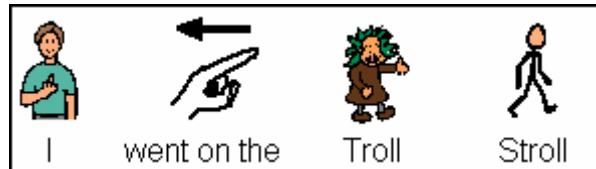
- A page with pictures of family members grouped according to their family and labeled with their names.

- A map of the United States with our route highlighted. It also allowed us to show where other people were coming from.
- A couple of boards with menu items for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Mike could use them to communicate choices, if desired.
- A calendar showing what we would be doing each day of the trip, including where we were staying using pictures / logos of motels. We acquire the logos prior to the trip, because Mike enjoys watching for the motels and he looks for the logos on billboards.

During the trip:

- People commented that they enjoyed seeing the notebook and seeing the pictures and the calendars of activities. They could easily talk about the activities with Mike because of the combination of text and symbols.
- Mike took pictures with a Polaroid camera. Some people signed their pictures, which then were placed on a magnetic photo album page. We also took pictures and had some processed at a one-hour photo center. The pictures were a very useful, quick communication method.
- Mike collected pamphlets from tourism sites and placed them in protective sleeves. The notebook continued to expand!
- As we traveled, several times Mike asked us to write down what he had done. He was working on the story to be written using text, symbols and pictures when we returned!

When we returned home, getting the last pictures developed and writing the story completed Mike's notebook. Now Mike has a scrapbook that continues to be a communication tool and it was a useful, portable, expandable tool on the trip.



Additional information on how we use symbols, pictures and technology for communication is available at <http://www.mycommlink.info>

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