



# A Guide to Non-Electronic Communication Aids

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Assistive technology (AT) is a piece of equipment, device or system that provides people with practical solutions to everyday life activities. You can search our National Equipment Database [www.askned.com.au](http://www.askned.com.au) to view a range of products online.

## What are non-electronic communication aids?

Non-electronic communication aids are tools that can help someone express and understand language. They are one type of assistive technology called Augmentative and Alternative Communication – AAC for short.

Non-electronic communication aids may also be referred to as low-tech or paper-based communication aids. They may be laminated or made of durable, waterproof, tearproof paper.

There are many different forms of non-electronic communication aids from robust, multi-level communication books that can be used across the day in a range of different situations, to activity-based books created to be used in certain situations.

## How can they fit in your communication toolbox?

We are all multimodal communicators who use a range of ways (tools) to get our messages across to others. The concept of a communication toolbox is to build up and have access to lots of different ways to communicate to make sure we can say what we want, no matter what.

It is recommended that anyone with an electronic communication device has some form of non-electronic back up, that can be used along with the device, and as a temporary replacement if anything goes wrong with the device.

For example, if someone's device runs out of battery or is broken, a non-electronic aid can support communication and ensure they still have a

way to communicate during when the electronic device is out of action.

## What are PODD books?

Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) books are a range of multi-level, symbol-based communication books. Designed by Speech Pathologist Gayle Porter, there are a selection of non-electronic PODD templates available to support people with a wide variety of communication, language, sensory and physical access needs. In addition to books for direct touch access, alternative access options include visual scanning, eye gaze and coded access. Vocabulary can be customized to ensure words that are relevant to the person are available.

There are a range of non-electronic PODD templates available to support people at every stage of their communication journey. PODD books are available in both direct access and alternative access options, including visual scanning, eye gaze, and coded access.

Customising the vocabulary is an important step in building a PODD book. PODD books are developed with a pragmatic structure to allow efficient communication with the ability to add additional personal vocabulary relevant to the user.

## What non-electronic communication aids does Indigo offer?

Our team of Speech Pathologists and Allied Health Assistants can work with you to customise and develop a range of aids including:

### PODD Books

Communication books to meet a range of commu-

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communication and language needs, setup for direct touch or alternative access methods. Indigo can create customised PODD books. We have both direct access and alternative access templates available.

### **Multilevel communication books and flip books**

Provide customised core vocabulary and a range of fringe vocabulary to be used across a wide range of situations. These books can be customised to mirror an electronic communication system.

### **Activity based boards**

These boards contain words related to a specific activity to be used during that activity to provide quick access to communication.

### **Core vocabulary boards**

Provide access to frequently used words which can be used to communicate across a range of different situations. Core vocabulary pages with the same symbols and organisation as many electronic communication aids are available.

### **Communication Passports**

A small booklet with a personal introduction to the user with useful information surrounding their communication needs, interests, and hobbies.

### **Visual Schedules**

Provide visual cues for daily activities and can be used to support independence when completing tasks. Examples include school timetables, morning routines and recreational activities.

### **Alphabet boards**

Provide an option to spell out words using the alphabet and may include some whole words or phrases for quick access. These can be setup to meet a range of physical access needs.

### **Not sure what type of non-electronic communication aid is most suitable?**

Our Speech Pathologists are experienced in using a wide range of communication aids and can provide additional support to assist with making informed decisions.

### **Information and advice appointment**

This provides the opportunity to look at different options available and help identify which may have the features needed.

### **Ongoing support**

Additional support with assessment, trials of different systems and training can be tailored to your needs.

Indigo has a large range of equipment on display and products available to trial. Our experienced health professionals can provide strategies and advice on the right product for you. Please contact us using the details below for further information.

Did you know Indigo also offer a range of other services? Please ask us when you call, or visit [www.indigo.org.au](http://www.indigo.org.au).

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