

# Life Without Speech

## Communication Activity

the centre for  
**cerebral palsy**  
celebrating potential, creating possibilities

### Instructions for Teachers

- ✿ Break students into small groups of four. Explain that some people with CP cannot speak because the message their brain sends to their muscles does not work properly. They can still think and understand just like you. Sometimes people who cannot speak need 'helpers' to get their message across. A Communication Board is a kind of 'helper' (hold up a Communication Board). The students will now get to experience what it's like to not be able to speak.

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- ✿ Give each student in the group one phrase to communicate (see Activity sheet "Phrases to Communicate"). Tell the students to keep their phrase a secret from their group. Younger students and students who have difficulty reading may require some adult assistance with this activity.

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- ✿ Each student takes a turn to express their phrase to the group just like charades. They must not speak. They may use body language and facial expression or communicate using any other way they can think of.

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- ✿ The students in the group must guess what phrase the student is trying to communicate. The group is allowed one guess each. Keep the phrase a secret if they cannot correctly guess what it is.

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- ✿ Now provide each group with a "Communication Board".

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- ✿ The students must take turns this time using the Communication Board to express their phrase to their group. They must not speak. They may point to pictures on the Communication Board, use body language and facial expression or communicate using any other way they can think of.

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- ✿ The students in the group must guess what phrase the student is trying to communicate. It should be very easy with the Communication Board.

Many people with cerebral palsy are unable to walk or need assistance when walking. In this case, wheelchairs and walkers allow for mobility. When cerebral palsy affects speech, communication boards such as the one used in this activity are just one of the many communication aids that can help people who can't communicate verbally to express their needs and wants, improve quality of life and give them greater independence.



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### Phrases to Communicate

**Can I play with you?**



**Can I please order a pie?**



**What's your favourite T.V. show?**



**Do you like playing football?**

