

SBH SCHOOL TIPS

VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH HYDROCEPHALUS

Students with hydrocephalus with/without language difficulties respond well to visual information. Visual supports provide students with more reliable understanding of information through looking to assist their listening.

Giving information in a visual form assists students by:

1. Auditory information (e.g. a verbal instruction) is short-lived and can be forgotten easily. Visual information (an instruction given in the form of a picture card) is more permanent. Visual information helps students to understand a message more easily as they do not have the cognitive load of holding or storing the auditory information in their minds and then unpacking and processing it. Additionally, the student can refer back to the visual and check the information in order to process it and act/respond accordingly.

2. It is easier for the student to stay focused on visual information than auditory information as it is more concrete.

3. Communication 'break downs' can lead to many challenges for students with hydrocephalus. Visual supports can support auditory (verbal) learning.

SBH QLD provides high quality client-led support to individuals, families, and carers by way of information, family support, therapy and teaching services. Our multidisciplinary team is ready to service the needs of our community - contact us on education@sbhqueensland.org.au

We have resource books and display templates that would assist you in the classroom for loan.



What can you implement in the classroom to support students with language difficulties to increase their understanding for class tasks?

Timetables, Calendars and Schedules: These are visual images (photos, symbols, line drawings or words) of the activity for the student to do within a set timeframe. The type of timetable or schedule should be matched to the student and their abilities/capacity. Individual or whole class timetables can help students to know what is happening next, as well as what they have to do/complete before they are able to move onto the next activity. These supports can decrease anxiety and the potential for errors and increase confidence within students.

Organisational Support: For older students, a regular weekly timetable or schedule can be used to help develop organisational skills. Colour coding each subject and having this colour on the timetable and equipment needed for that subject can be helpful.

Cue Cards: Simple cue cards (that include photos, symbol, pieces of objects, images, or words) that show what the student is required to do. This reduces the need for verbal reminders or prompts and can increase independence. Sometimes cue cards can be used at times of high stress or anxiety when verbal language is challenging to process or produce. A cue card could be used to remind a student to ask for help or take a break. Cue cards can also be used to prompt students of the next step or what to do.

What to do Stories: These are individualised stories prepared for a specific student. They are made for specific situations where a student may have difficulties processing information or knowing how to behave. They may vary in length and format. It could be a single photo with a story or several pages of written information with or without pictures. The story should clearly identify the situation. It should also give specific information about exactly what the child is to do and/or say. It is important that this tool is kept brief and simple. Story Boards are the most useful for changing behavior rather than developing specific social skills. Information presented in a story board must be simple and able to be processed by the student. It is important to be specific with your words. "Wait for a teacher" is not suitable as at times the student may not know what "wait" actually means. Do not make any assumptions about the child being able to follow directions such as "ignore", "ask for help", "share" with support from an adult. What-to-do stories can be made quickly. They are made by an adult with the student's input (e.g. drawing or choosing images), or by the student themselves.

