

Is there anything we can do?

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 THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tamaki Makaurau

15 year old involved with the Youth Court

- Vocabulary gaps
- Long, complex information presented orally
- Explaining information in detail
- Talking his way out of trouble
- Education feels too hard

"I'm just a bit thick"

Social Worker: Is there anything we can do to help?

What could help

What are his interests and strengths?

Who can help?

What are the

- language demands in his life?
- language skills he needs?

What are the language demands in his life?

Home/care
Education
Court

Interventions e.g. youth mentor, counselling

Adapt them to make them 'communication friendly'

Bail conditions

Tools for time/appointments

FGC plan

Identify difficult vocabulary

Expectations/rules

abstract, complicated wordy stuff

CLEAR
SIMPLE
CONCRETE
VISUAL

Adults need to know how to....

- Spot language difficulties
- Adapt their language
 - Free (no equipment needed) but not easy!
- Change their processes to make them communication friendly

1 page 'communication passport'

Look out for

- Agreeing, nodding
- Talking a lot
- Staying quiet
- “Dunno” “All good”
- ‘Stage fright’
- Humour
- Watching others
- Changing the subject
- Fidgeting

These might be signs that talking, listening and understanding have become difficult



What are the language skills he needs?

- Vocabulary
- Negotiating, explaining and reasoning, making and keeping friends, dealing with emotions/empathy, making good decisions
- Understanding education and growing literacy
- Knowing how to get help

Teach him what he needs and the ways around the gaps



What about his siblings?

Early, preventative interventions

ORAL LANGUAGE IS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR IN LIFE



Professional training

Clinical assessment and intervention services

Communication Assistants in legal contexts

Creating ‘communication friendly’ environments



What you do and how you communicate can **HELP**

- They will **engage** and want to **participate**
- They will **understand more** and are **less likely to kick off**
- You will spend **less time** managing behaviour
- Education or any other intervention will be more **successful**


