

Supporting Understanding about Covid-19

Communication supports for children and adults with complex communication needs during the COVID-19 pandemic

By [Kelsey Mandak](#) on April 8, 2020



If you care for someone with complex communication needs who has **difficulty understanding spoken communication**, here are some pointers and resources:

- Use **short sentences** to explain the situation. Speak slowly.
- Use **familiar vocabulary**. Relate information to familiar experiences. Use concrete terms.
- Show **pictures** to assist with understanding. For example, show a photo of an ambulance or a medical worker in protective gear as you explain what happens when people go to the hospital
- Use **gestures or demonstrate** instructions as you speak. For example, [demonstrate washing hands](#), staying at least 6 feet away from people, wearing a mask
- Write down **key words** as you speak to support understanding.
- Provide a **visual schedule** of the steps that will occur

- **Use a social story** to explain what will happen
For example, use pictures and photos to tell a story of what will happen when the individual goes for a COVID-19 test
- **Repeat information regularly** as required to support understanding and learning.