

Helping children with word finding difficulties

What is a word finding difficulty?

Some children have problems remembering words. The child might know the word but:

- uses a word that's similar - 'table' for 'chair'
- uses a word that sounds nearly the same - 'scatcrow' for 'scarecrow'
- mixes up words like 'rusik for radio' - a mix of 'radio' and 'music'
- stops talking to try and remember the word
- talks around the word - 'my dad's got one, in the shed, to cut' (saw)
- gets frustrated if they can't remember the word they need
- uses 'empty words' like 'doing the sand' for 'digging the sand', 'putting it in the thing' instead of 'posting the letter in the letter box'
- takes time to understand or respond. The child needs more time to recognise the word you've said

Children with word finding problems need activities and strategies to help them remember or describe the word. They may need more time to learn new vocabulary being learned in school and at home.

What helps:

- Giving your child time to think and remember the word
- Repeat words regularly to help your child remember them
- Encourage your child to talk about the word
- Play describing games to help with new words
- Give clues or choices to help remember the word
- Teach words in sentences rather than on their own
- Introduce words in pairs or groups

You can watch our [vocabulary video](#) on our channel which demonstrates some of the activities that you will find on the following page.

Activities to help word finding

Category sorting

- Sort pictures or objects into two different groups, for example food and animals.
- Help your child to know why things go together e.g. it is an animal/ it is a food.
- Add more groups as the child gets better at sorting
- Early groups can be food, animals, furniture, vehicles, places, clothes, toys,
- You can then sort into smaller groups such as:
 - Animals you find in the farm, jungle, water
 - Vehicles that go in the air, the water, the land
 - Things that go in air, sea, land
 - Food that is healthy and not healthy

There are some pictures in this pack to practise sorting activities

Describing words - what it's like

- Put objects on a table - describe one for your child to find.
- For example: 'fish' - 'it is wet/smelly/scaly/ slippery'
- The game is easier if the objects are very different e.g. fish, bucket, book.
- The game is harder if the objects are similar e.g. fish, frog, shark.
- Hide objects in a bag or box so your child can't see to make the game harder

Describing words - what it does

- Play the game above. This time talk about what the object does (its function).
- For example – 'it cuts'. It could be a knife, scissors or a saw. Your child finds the answer as you give more clues. 'you use it at school', 'you use it to cut paper' = scissors. You can swap the game around so your child can give you clues.

Things that go together

Use pictures or objects. Match things that go together, e.g. knife and fork. Help your child to think about why they go together e.g. 'you use them at dinner'.

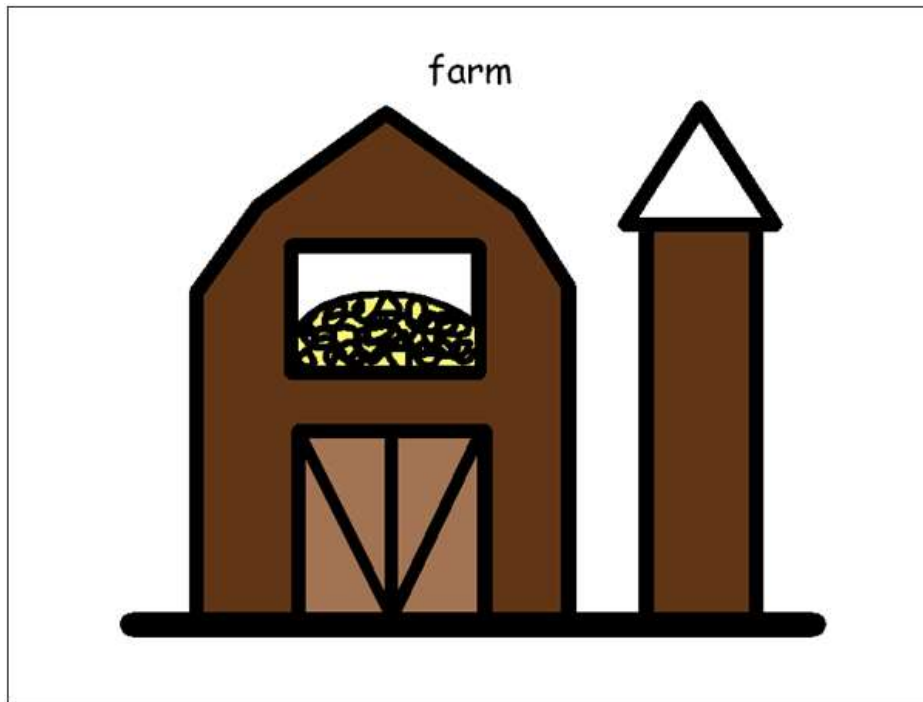
Think of as many...

- Play this with groups of children
- Choose a category e.g. colours, hot or cold drinks, things you eat/drink/drive etc.
- Encourage the children to think of as many things in the category as they can. Give them 2 minutes. See who has the most. If the child finds this very hard, ask them to name a few. E.g. e.g. think of 3 fruits/ 3 things that fly / 3 things cut

Odd One Out

Use 4-5 pictures or objects. Ask your child which is the odd one out. Can they say why? e.g. apple banana lemonade pear = lemonade is a drink.

Animal boards

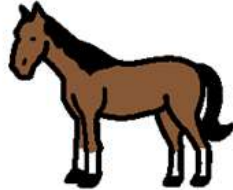


Animals

cow



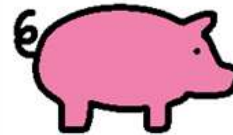
horse



sheep



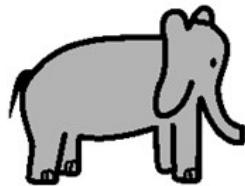
pig



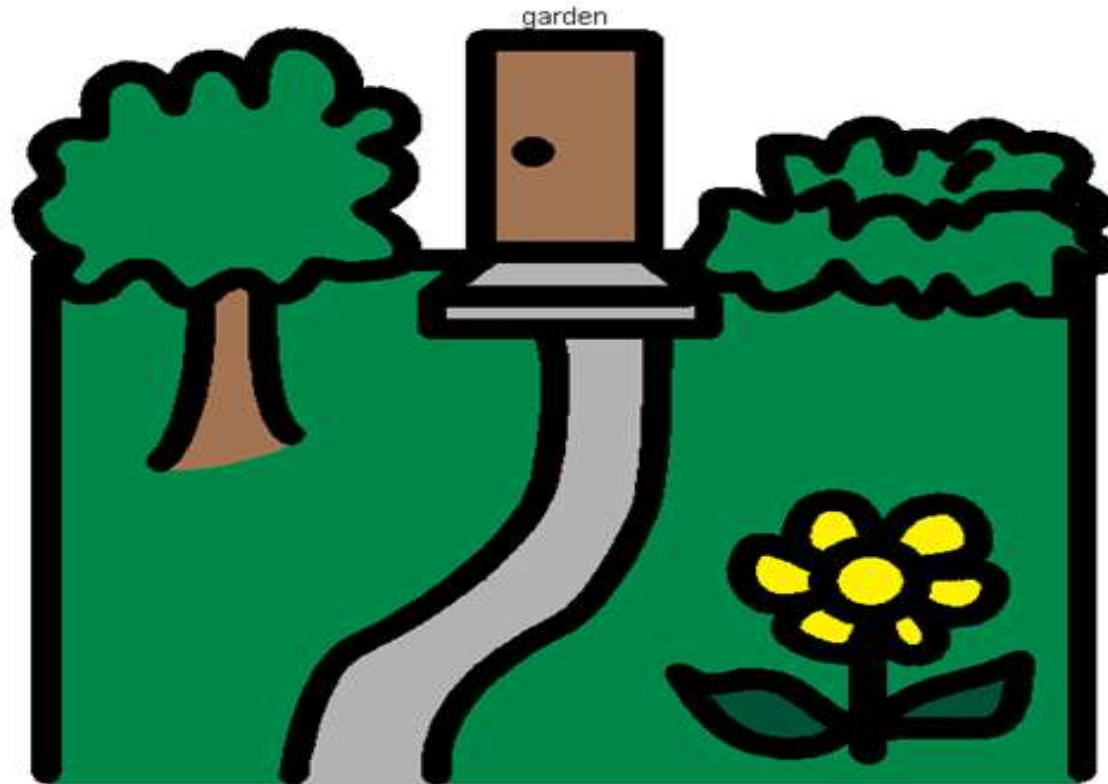
dog



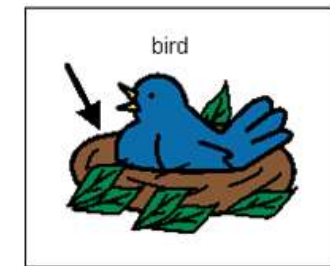
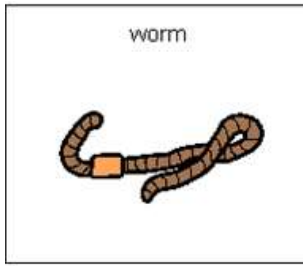
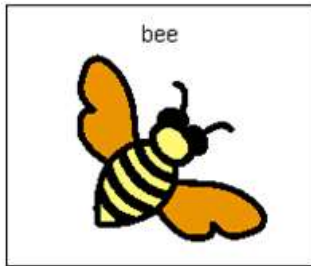
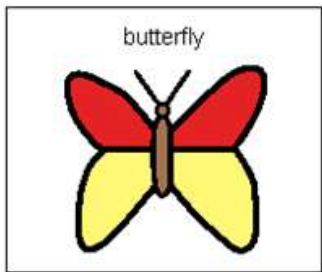
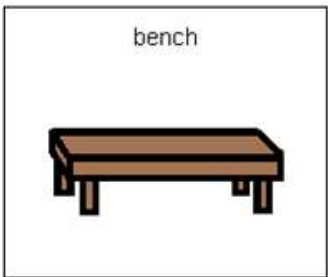
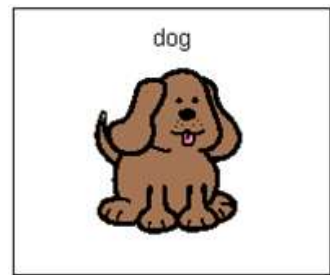
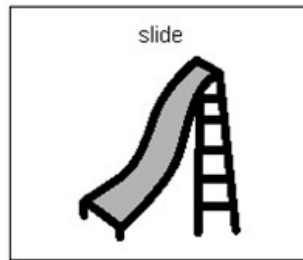
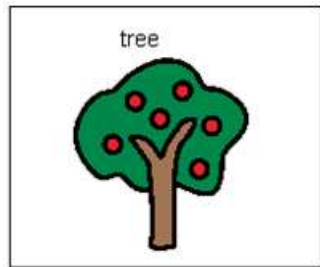
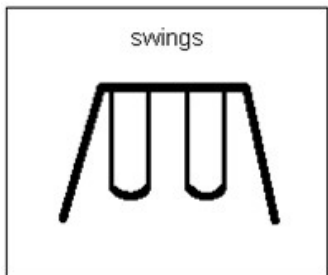
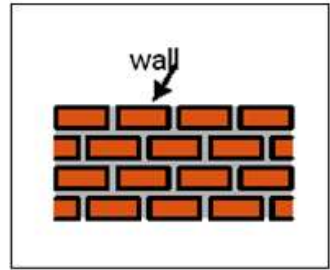
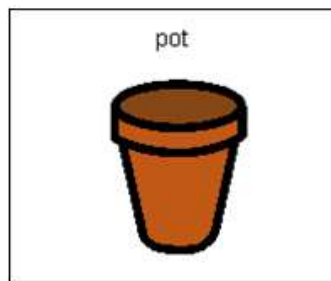
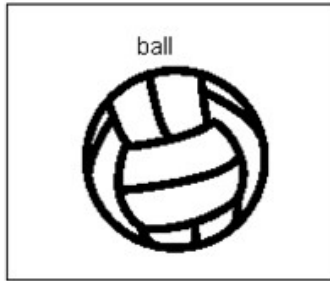
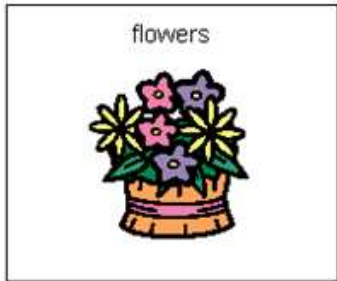
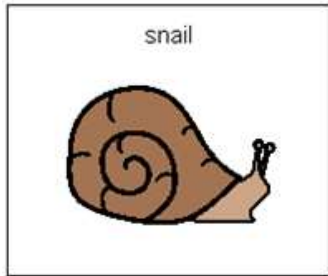
cat



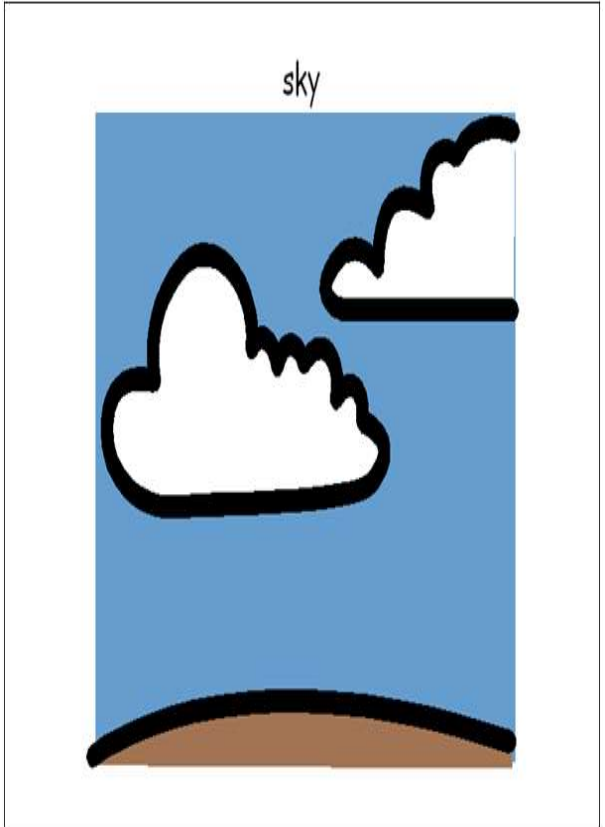
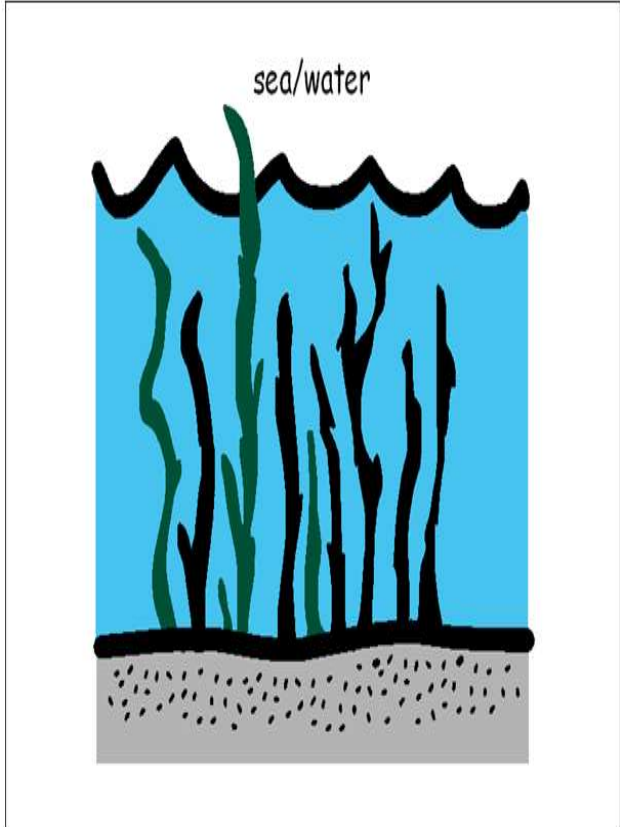
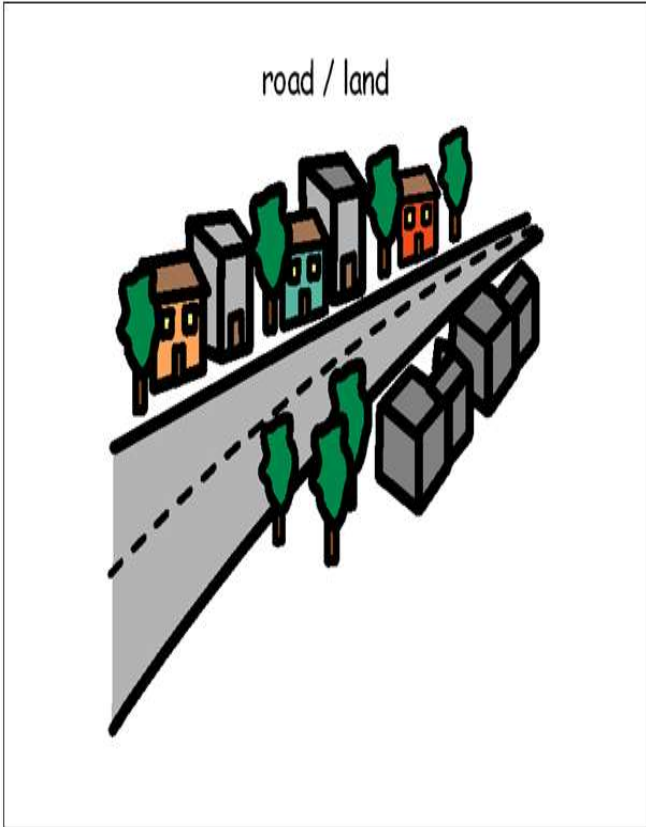
Garden board



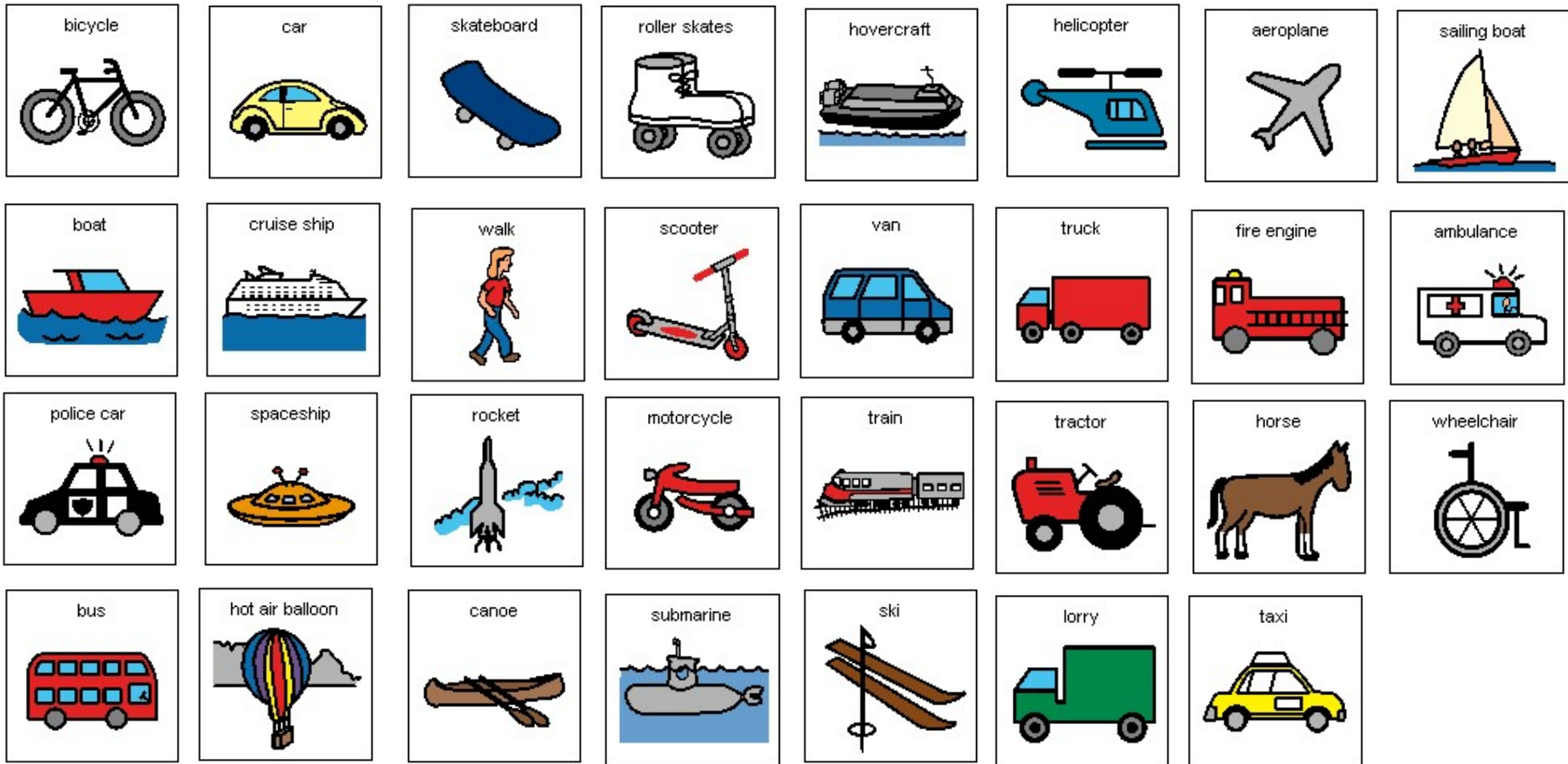
Garden



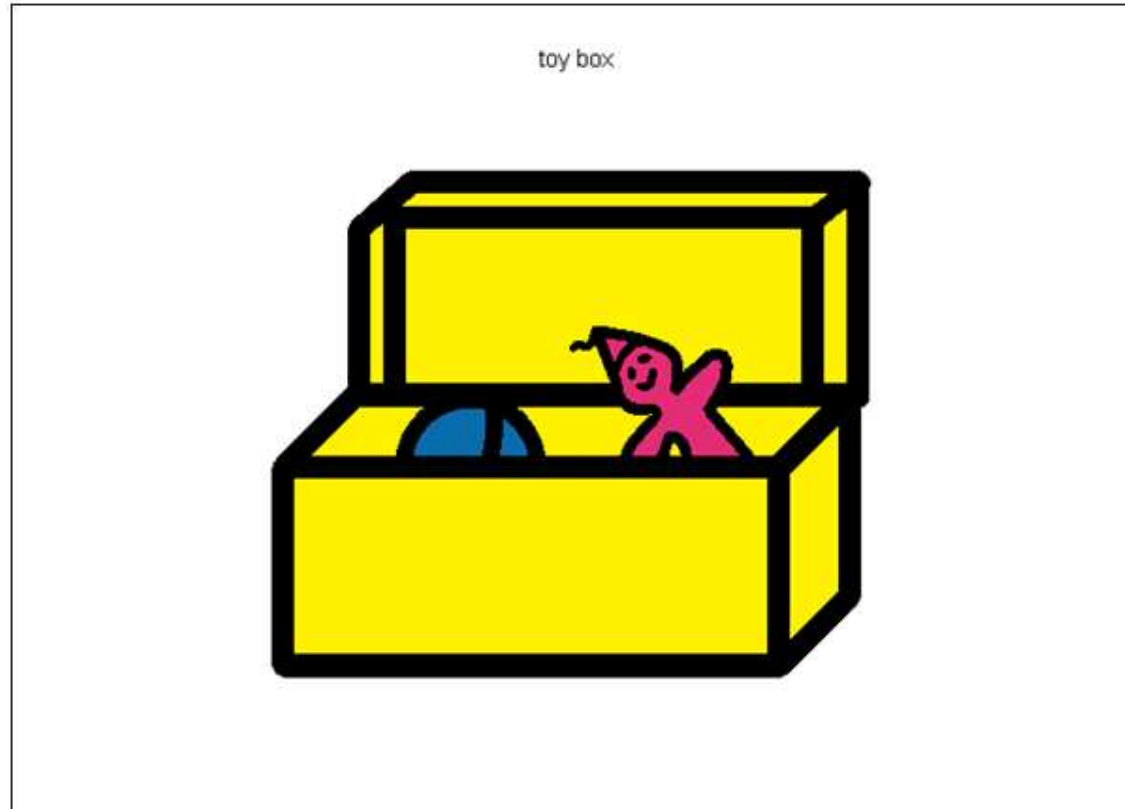
Transport boards



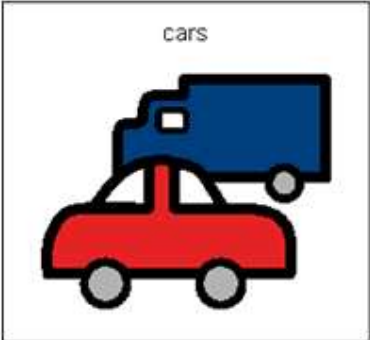
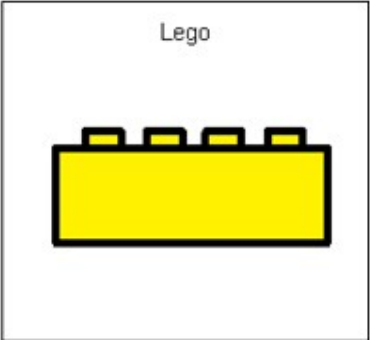
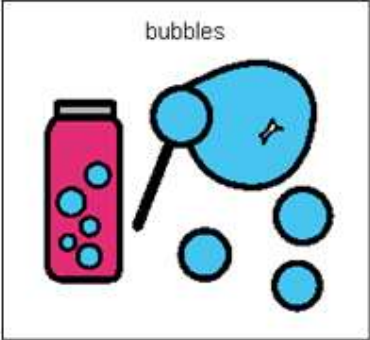
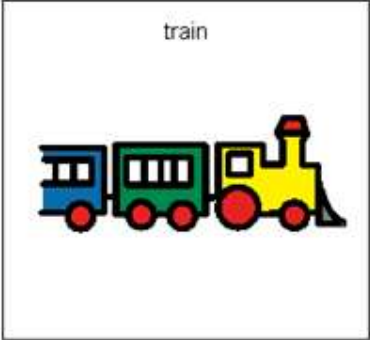
Transport



Toys Board



Toys



Food board



Food

