



Owen is 9 years old and loves cuddles with his Mum and Dad, trips to the Zoo and playing with his favourite toy fox. Owen has dystonic quadriplegic cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and a significant visual impairment. He does not use speech to communicate and those familiar to him interpret his body language and vocalisations to make guesses about how he is feeling or what he wants.

Owen's parents want him to be able to achieve his full communicative potential and with the support of Owen's case manager they enlisted ATtherapy to help support the development of Owen's communication skills. Owen has received support from ATtherapy since September 2019 and as a result is now fully supported both at home and in school by a team of family, support staff and therapists who are all confident and knowledgeable in developing Owen's communication and access skills. He receives weekly sessions of support alongside a programme designed to be carried out on a daily basis by his support team. Owen is at an early stage of his communication development and previously had no formal supports to develop his skills within his home environment. He now accesses a range of equipment and aids to help his understanding of the world around him and to provide him with the opportunity to have some control of his environment. His support team have been trained in on-body signing – a sign system in which actions are made on the person's body to help convey a message, for example, that they are about to be hoisted upwards. A set of objects of reference have also been put in place to support Owen's understanding of his day, which includes a set of personalised, tactile objects and large, high

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contrast symbols, used to indicate a transition to a new activity/location such as going for a drive or having a shower.

Owen and his family have been introduced to switch access which is something he had only previously tried in school. A new point of access was found for Owen which had not previously been explored, and was a more consistent way of accessing the switch than his hand (which he had previously been using in school with the support of his teaching staff).

Owen now uses his head to access a switch for a range of experiences such as turning on sensory toys, playing cause and effect games on his iPad and activating household equipment such as a hairdryer to take part in everyday activities. He is currently working towards increasing the consistency of his switch access with different communication partners. Other fun activities that have been introduced to Owen and include sensory stories, which have given him and his team the opportunity to be creative and have fun together, using sensory props to support storytelling and interaction.

A communication passport has been designed for Owen to ensure that anybody new to him or his team is able to quickly learn key facts about him and his communication, including the best ways to communicate with him and things to avoid.

Owen continues to receive support from ATtherapy to ensure that he is able to communicate his choices, be an active participant in activities set up by his family and support team and have the opportunity to reach his communicative potential. His family and team also continue to receive ongoing support to ensure that they feel confident and competent in learning and using skills they have previously never experienced.

Owen is a very special person who we at ATtherapy feel extremely proud and lucky to support!