Person Centred Planning

autism education trust

Person Centred Planning

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Person Centred Planning

Introduction

Person Centred Planning (PCP) refers to the process of life planning for an individual.

The individual is consulted and their views and aspirations inform decision- making. The principles of inclusion are incorporated to ensure the person is not isolated from society. Instead of being a medical model where the individual may passively receive services and where their impairments may be viewed as a problem leading to exclusion from the community, PCP is more of a social model where the individual is encouraged to be proactive in ensuring equality and inclusion into the community. Until this is achieved, this social model views that it is society who is disabling the individual and society that should be responsible for making alterations to facilitate the individual's inclusion in the community. In practical terms, PCP involves careful planning for an individual that takes into account their strengths, preferences, areas of difficulty and related support strategies/ systems at each stage of their education and at transition points.

Legal requirements

Person Centred Planning (PCP) is included in Every Child Matters, The Disability Discrimination Act (amended 2005) and the Human Rights Act (1998). In 2001 the UK government published a white paper "Valuing people: a new strategy for learning disability in the 21st century" which led to all local authorities implementing PCP, following four key principles: rights, choice, independence and inclusion.

Who is this toolkit for?

This PCP toolkit aims to inform parents and professionals who work with young people between the ages of 4 and 19 who are on the autism spectrum. The general information about PCP is applied to the specific issues faced by individuals on the autism spectrum, and is adapted to be relevant for young people throughout the different stages of education.

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Section 1: The 5 key features of Person Centred Planning

- The individual is at the centre of the planning process (plans are made according to their needs)
- Family, friends, carers are included as partners in the planning process
- Planning reflects what is important to the individual now and for the future, and takes into consideration the support they require
- The plan helps the individual to be included in a community, and supports the community to include them.
- The plan is ongoing in putting into action what the individual wants for their life. It is reviewed and amended as necessary.

Section 2: The tools of Person Centred Planning

Details of specific tools used in PCP are detailed below. The most effective tool should be selected in the PCP process according to the age, ability, communication skills and needs of the individual concerned.

Tool	Explanation	Example
MAPS **Making Action Plans**	These are illustrated/ graphic plans that depict a person's history and aspirations for the future. MAPS focuses on gathering information about an individual to inform planning; it starts with their "journey so far".	• Links to MAPS examples (Appendix 1) • Link to http://www.circlesnetwork.org.uk/ • Link to http://www.inclusion.com/maps.html
PATHS **Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope**	Like MAPS, PATHS is an illustrative/ graphic plan. PATHS starts with where a person would like to be in the future, then works backwards step by step to the present in order to highlight what steps and support are necessary to achieve the desired outcome.	• Links to PATHS example (Appendix 2) • Link to http://www.inclusion.com/path.html

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Circles of Support	*This is sometimes also known as a circle of friends but should not be confused with a strategy of the same name set up to include individuals in friendship groups at school.* A Circle of Support is a group of people who help an individual to make choices and accomplish goals. The circle includes people who know and care about the individual, i.e. family, friends, service providers, teachers. It may be useful to include photos and roles of the people who make up the circle.	• Links to Circles of Support example (Appendix 3)
Personal Futures Planning	This is a plan which begins with the individual's current situation and focuses on changes to be made for the future. It is an effective way of mapping how a person may be included into a community, highlighting changes that may need to be made within the community to facilitate this inclusion	
Essential Lifestyle Planning	This is a very detailed plan effective for individuals with complex support needs. It usually includes a health action plan as well. It should highlight the roles of different services involved.	

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Section 3: Person Centred Planning for young people on the autism spectrum

Why is PCP important for young people on the autism spectrum?

As PCP is based around the individual it is ideal for people who are on the autism spectrum as their needs, preferences and support requirements are often very specific to each individual. Instead of starting the process of planning for an individual with a pre-existing 'formula', which would be applied to the person, PCP starts with the person and builds an individual 'formula' or process around them. It is not about trying to fit an individual into a predetermined structure.

The Triad of Impairments and other characteristics of autism mean that individuals on the autism spectrum are often unable to make informed choices, communicate their desires, plan for the future and advocate for themselves. The PCP for these individuals must take into consideration all aspects of autism, including addressing sensory needs, allowing time spent on special interests (where appropriate), and avoiding situations that cause unnecessary distress. It must include support that will help to develop social understanding, develop and incorporate effective communication, and encourage and assist the person to become more flexible. Some may require more support in one area while having real strengths in others, which should be utilised to their potential.

Due to the impairment of imagination, most people with autism have difficulty understanding abstract concepts such as 'growing up', 'in the future', 'when you're an adult', as they have no actual experience of these concepts. PCP is about making these concepts more concrete and real to the individual so that they can better understand them. The process of 'growing up' and moving from one stage to another can be illustrated to support the individual's understanding by using photos of them at different ages, and corresponding lists of skills they mastered at each age. This could be presented as an individual's 'timeline'.

People with autism may have a very literal interpretation of these concepts, so when we discuss an individual being 'independent' this may be frightening if they interpret it as meaning they will be out on their own with no support or unable to ask for help. If their only experience is of school, it may be difficult for them to envision the next stage/ adult life. Careful planning for this by the PCP group can help to reduce the individual's anxiety about the future.

In order for the focus individual to indicate real choices as they move from one stage to another, they must be taught how to make choices from a young age. PCP for very young children should involve them learning to indicate simple choices throughout the day. This is a skill that will need to be taught explicitly for children with autism. Through understanding how to make real choices the individual is enabled to meaningfully contribute to the planning of their future.

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Who should be involved?

In the PCP process the following people should be included:

- The focus person
- The individual's parents or carers
- A professional team involved with the individual which may include some of the following: teachers, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, CAMHS representatives, social workers, previous staff who have worked with the individual in the past/ previous setting, a representative from the Local Authority

It is vital that at least some of the people involved have a sound understanding of autism and how it affects the focus person

The PCP group may need to be flexible, and meet where and when it is necessary, i.e. in the family home or classroom after school hours. The frequency of meetings will vary depending on individual circumstances, current issues and the amount of support required

Advocating for those who require assistance with communication:

An impairment of communication (or more specifically, social communication) is one of the prime characteristics of autism. All people who have a diagnosis of autism have difficulties with social communication to varying degrees. Some may not have any verbal language and use signing and pictures to communicate. Their communication may be very limited and related only to having basic needs met. Others may have echolalia, where they repeat phrases and it may be difficult for them to generate language or use it functionally. Some people may find it difficult to use language to effectively express their feelings or desires. People at the more able end of the spectrum may be very articulate and have a vast vocabulary, while finding it difficult to interpret non- verbal communication such as facial expression, tone of voice and body language. They may have a literal understanding of language and be confused by metaphors and sarcasm. It will be important for those involved in PCP for an individual to carefully consider how they will most effectively communicate with the focus person, and how they will enable the person to express their opinions and desires. For many individuals with autism discussions about the future might be too abstract for them to really understand. Their contributions may be concrete and based very much in their present experience.

For most individuals, presenting information and choices visually will support their understanding. Even very high functioning individuals will benefit from having abstract concepts presented in an organised fashion where they can refer back to it (whereas when only using verbal communication, ideas and options may be 'lost' over time). Depending on the individual, actual objects that meaningfully represent activities/ options being discussed, e.g. photos, symbols or written lists, may be used.

It will be necessary to support children with autism from a very early age to make choices. They will need to be taught to indicate their choices (using which ever means of communication is meaningful i.e. signing, pointing, symbols, photos, words), and this should be woven incidentally into activities

throughout the day, e.g choosing art materials, choosing sandwich toppings, choosing leisure activities etc. PCP should start early on in this way and this foundation can be built on as the individual grows up so that choice making is meaningful, and so that the individual is able to advocate decisions in their own lives.

Autism- friendly resources and adaptations:

Most of the adaptations required for people with autism are related to the impairment of communication. The following are some resources and equipment that enable the focus individual to communicate with others and vice versa. These resources will need to be used in other contexts too, and should be familiar to the individual, rather than just brought out and used at PCP meetings!

- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) – this is a system where the individual exchanges picture symbols with a communication partner (the 'listener') to indicate their needs/ choices, make requests and comments.
  http://www.pecs.org.uk/

- Dynamyte- an electronic device that works in a similar way to PECS. The individual builds sentences by clicking on symbols on the machine and the machine reads the sentence out loud.

- Signing- some young people with autism are taught to communicate using sign language. If this is the individual's method of communication it is vital that at least some of the PCP team are able to communicate using signing, and able to interpret for other members of the team.

- Photos or objects of reference- these may be used to represent real objects or activities. The individual uses photos or objects to indicate their choices.

- Talking mats- these can be used with symbols or photos. A topic is displayed on the mat (e.g. favourite food) and the individual places related photos or symbols on the mat. It may be useful to have two mats ('favourite food', and 'food I don't like') so that the individual meaningfully sorts symbols or photos between the two mats. Using talking mats is a skill that should be developed from an early age as some children take a while to meaningfully differentiate and correctly indicate their likes and dislikes.
  http://www.mayer-johnson.com/

  http://www.widgit.com/

- Video can be a useful tool, where the individual and support team make a video of favourite activities, areas of strength, examples of successful interaction and engagement in tasks (which may also depict the level of support the individual requires to function successfully).

Accommodating autism- specific issues and characteristics:

Due to the impairment of imagination, people with autism would better be able to make choices if they had real experiences to refer to rather than just talking about options. For example, if asked

about which leisure activity they would prefer, horse riding or swimming, they may make a more meaningful choice if they had actually experienced both activities.

The impairment of social understanding also needs to be recognised. The individual may need support in order to behave and engage appropriately in different social situations. Social stories explain situations and give the individual cues as to how to interact or what the expected behaviour may be (e.g. Carol Gray *My Social Stories Book*). Social interaction may be the source of anxiety for many people with autism. Part of the PCP process should include considering the individual's response to different social situations, their level of social intent, and compatibility with their potential peer group.

People with autism may present with idiosyncratic or challenging behaviour. There are many reasons for this, including communication difficulties, anxiety, frustration, lack of social understanding, sensory issues, desire to develop routines and rituals, and many other factors. Behaviour management plans that include positive proactive strategies (which address known triggers) and pre-planned consistent reactive strategies should be part of the PCP process if the individual does present with unusual or challenging behaviours. Behaviour should be considered at each stage of the PCP process and support structures put in place so that inappropriate behaviour does not inhibit a person's options to live a fulfilled life.

The PCP process should include developing a profile of the individual which lists their likes and dislikes, special interests, triggers for anxiety or behaviours, sensory issues, communication systems, motivators, and behaviour management strategies (if necessary). This profile can be amended from time to time and can be made accessible to those working with the individual at each stage.

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Section 4: Person Centred Planning at key transition points

It will be of value to consider how parents may be included and supported at each stage.

Stage		
Using IEPs to complement PCP	IEPs should address the individual's difficulties related to the triad of impairments, or other characteristics of autism, i.e. they should have one objective which addresses communication, one which addresses social understanding, and one which addresses the impairment of imagination (or flexibility of thought). *Example: Sam to differentiate between 4 symbols and exchange them accordingly for desired items during snack time; Sam to use a 'my turn' symbol to take 5 turns with a peer during a structured turn-taking game; Sam to select a leisure activity from a choice of 4 photos.* The individual should be involved according to their understanding, knowing what their targets are and what they need to do to achieve them. The child will need reinforcement and motivation to achieve targets that are challenging, and may decide themselves how they would like their progress to be monitored. The individual should be included in the annual review process where they can select work to show, or photos and video footage of their achievements. An individual with a higher level of understanding should be consulted as part of the planning process as to what targets they feel would be beneficial to work on. They may list their goals, which can then be broken down into achievable small steps, or targets that work towards the goal.	
Nursery/Foundation into primary school	At this stage the most important focus of PCP should be to establish choice making skills in a variety of settings. Communication systems should also be developed so that the child has a means of communicating their choices. These will be important foundations upon which future meaningful PCP participation can be facilitated.	
Primary into Secondary	At this stage pupils may be represented on the school council, or may represent their peers. This is an opportunity for them to have their ideas considered by a group of people. They may begin to attend review meetings and contribute by compiling a record of achievement. They should continue to have many different opportunities to advocate for themselves and make	

	choices and decisions in different situations. The decisions surrounding which secondary school would be appropriate will be an important focus of the PCP team, and there may be a need for more frequent meetings at this time. As they move from Primary to Secondary school the transition process will need to be carefully planned for (see Arfur Moe www.autismtoolkit.com/downloads.htm). Transition should include planned visits to the new school and a comprehensive handover between selected staff members from both schools. At this time a pupil profile is a very valuable tool to ensure useful knowledge about the pupil is shared. At transition points, it may be identified that the individual needs more support until they have settled into the new setting.
Secondary to post-16 placement	At secondary school pupils should be part of the process of deciding which subjects they would like to study. They should be supported to evaluate their own work and identify where they may need more support. The process of discussing life beyond school will inform goal setting. At this time the pupil should help to set small targets towards their goals. The PCP team will need to focus on options for post-16 placement, or support the individual to decide on other suitable alternatives. There should also be a focus on life skills as the individual may become more independent. Again the transition from secondary school will need to be carefully planned, and the individual's views considered during the PCP process.
College and beyond	The individual should be involved with decisions regarding College courses (based on goals for their life beyond college/ school). A major focus for the PCP team at this point will be living arrangements and adult life. This concept may be abstract for some students and they may require visits to different potential settings. Their choices may include favoured activities and goals which will inform future placement i.e. do they want to live with others? Will they be employed? Do they need support with life skills or are they able to live independently? It may be more specific: one young man stated that he wanted a garden and animals at his new accommodation.

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Section 5: Getting Started: A practical framework for planning

Once it has been established that an individual is able to make choices and communicate these to another person, they should be involved, at an appropriate level, in decision making. This should happen in a range of settings and situations so that they are able to generalise this skill and be included meaningfully in the PCP process. From a young age it is valuable for the individual to build up a profile of themselves (which may be used alongside the profile that professionals build up, as previously described). This may take the form of a book "all about me", compilation of photos, or videos. It may include likes and dislikes, support that is useful, information about their communication, their strengths and areas where they need support. It may include information about their anxieties and situations they find difficult to manage. Motivators and calming strategies may also be included.

Alongside this profile it may be useful to select one of the PCP tools listed in section 2 above, and begin to develop a map or path in a visual format that will assist the individual to understand the concept of growing up, moving on, developing new skills. It can also help them to understand that things will change and develop in the future as illustrated from their past.

From an early age the individual should be included at an appropriate level at PCP meetings. This will enable them to be a part of the process, be familiar with the setting, and over time to develop a more active role. Initially their involvement might be showing an example of a successful work task or a photo of them doing a favoured activity. They may prepare a talking mat with a facilitator, stating their likes and dislikes. As they grow up they should become more involved with decisions where options are presented to them at an appropriate level. Their profile may be used to indicate long term interests that might inform subject or career choices. At transition points an age-appropriate toolkit such as Arfur Moe's (www.autismtoolkit.com/downloads.htm) should be developed. The team will need to look at the individual's profile of strengths and support needs, academic abilities and level of 'autism support' needed for transition to the correct placement. At different stages different tools may be used. For example PATHS might be useful for an individual about to leave school. They may state they would like to get a job in a garden centre and live in town with a group of people their own age. PATHS enables the group to plan backwards from the end goal and assess what skills and experiences are necessary for the end goal to be achieved. This will help the individual to make college choices, where the skills they need for that job are taught, and for important life skills to be developed in order for successful living arrangements to be achieved.

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Section 6: Good Practice Examples

Practitioners are welcomed and encouraged to add their own examples of good practice to this section. Each of the following ideas can be adjusted and presented according to the individual's level of understanding and method of communication.

Example		
	Ben has a diagnosis of autism and attends an autism- specific school but accesses some lessons in the local grammar school. He wants to achieve a degree in Maths, Science or ICT. He also wants to live independently once he leaves university where he hopes to live in student accommodation. His PCP team have worked with Ben to develop a plan that will help him achieve his goals: - He has an academic plan which focuses on the academic small steps that need to be achieved in preparation for university. This includes GCSE choices, working to an exam plan, organising homework and other deadlines, accessing help with studies. - His social plan will also help him achieve the goal of independent living. This includes practising shopping and travelling alone, cooking, washing and cleaning, managing a weekly budget, instigating social dialogue, developing tolerance of new people and crowds, making phone calls, problem solving situations that don't go to plan, occupying his free time constructively. - The social and academic plan will inform IEP targets, and although Ben is only currently in year 9, he should be able to achieve his end goal because the small steps can be currently addressed.	
	Adrian's transition planning has started for him moving on from his residential post-16 placement in a SEN school. Using a talking mat 18 year old Adrian was able to communicate what he feels is working well in his life, and what is not. With the help of a staff member facilitating he was able to communicate the following at a PCP meeting:	

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	- What is working well: seeing family and friends at the residential post- 16 placement, youth club, cooking, gardening, drama, music, going out for meals, shopping, gym. - What is not working: have to leave Post-16 placement in July, where will I live, swimming, bike riding, not enough evening outings. - He used pictures and symbols to communicate that he wants to live with friends with staff support, he wants to live close to his family in Kent, he would like a job in the music business, he would like to continue with youth club and go out to movies and restaurants in the evening, he would like to use public transport especially trains. - He listed the people and support systems important to him i.e. his family, named members of staff and peers, as well as specific routines, special interests, schedules and his medication bracelet. Staff worked with him to develop a desired timetable for an average week once he had moved on from his current placement. - As well as scheduling in favoured activities such as gardening, cooking, youth club and going out for a meal, the timetable also included routine chores such as housework and shopping. The PCP team also worked out a budget, taking into consideration the level of support Adrian requires from trained staff members.
	One school has developed a framework to help students contribute to review meetings. It includes the following: What I like about school Things at school I would like to change How I have changed in the past year at school and at home What I am good at doing What I have problems with at school/ home Things I want to learn to do next year Things people could do to help me

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	A PCP workbook might enable an individual to compile a useful document over time. It may include photos, drawings, written text or symbols depending on the individual's understanding. It could be divided into the following sections: All about me: including how I communicate; things I like to do; things I like about myself; strengths and things I need help with; food and drink I like/ don't like; what possessions are important to me; things I like to do; what makes me feel happy/ sad/ angry/ worried; what others like about me; important people in my life Leisure: how I like to spend my time; things I don't like to do; my favourite weekend would be; my worst weekend would be Learning: what I would like to learn more about; what I enjoy at school; what I dislike at school; what progress I have made at school; things I need help with at school; what helps me work well Advocacy: things I can do on my own; things I need help with; things I would like to change in my life; people who can help me make changes Support: This section should include lists or pictures of the people in the PCP team/ "circle of support" Working: ideas for work experience; choosing college courses; choices and options for after school Living: where I would like to live; who I would like to live with; what things are important to me where I live Wish list: my hopes and dreams for the future

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Section 7: Useful Links

- NAS website which provides useful information about autism, including PCP: www.autism.org.uk

- Care services website which includes information about PCP: http://www.valuingpeoplenow.dh.gov.uk/

- Useful website which provides up-to-date information about inclusion , and offers strategies to support successful inclusion, including PCP and examples to the tools (PATH, MAP etc): www.inclusive-solutions.com

- Edmonds, G. Person- centred approaches to autistic spectrum conditions

- Faherty, C. Asperger's….. What does it mean to me? A work book explaning self awareness and life lessons to the child or youth with high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome.

- Practical strategies for achieving successful transition for pupils with ASD: http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspublications.nsf/591f7dda55aad72a80256c670041a50d/c12dd2236e0694d380256ec3003b9a5a/$FILE/Breaking%20Down%20Barriers.pdf

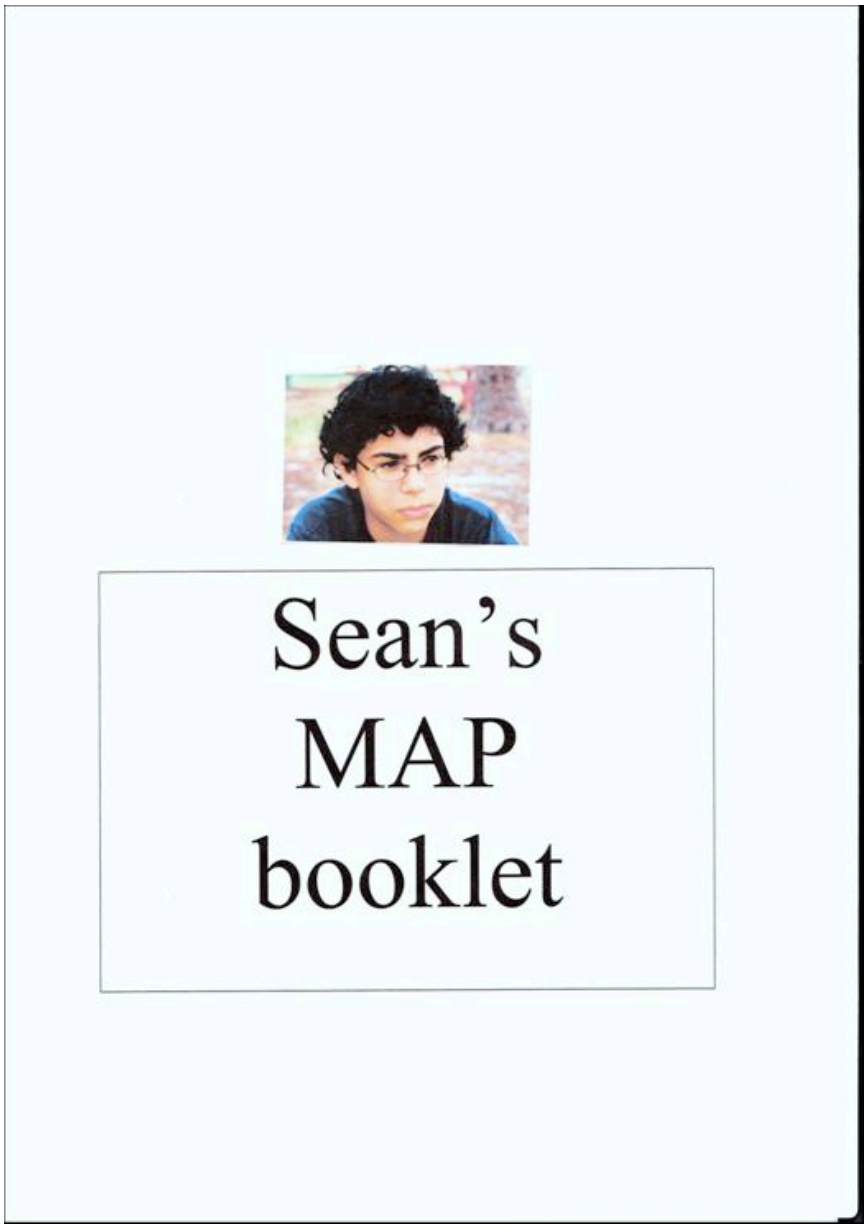
- Information on transition for pupils with ASD: http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Transition+for+students+with+Autism+and+Asperger+syndrome?opendocument

- Transition support and information: http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/ahdc/a0067498/transition-support

- A transition guide for services: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00776-2007

- Short cut to the NAS's page on transition and other Education issues: http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/education/transition-issues-in-education.aspx

APPENDIX 1: MAPS EXAMPLE



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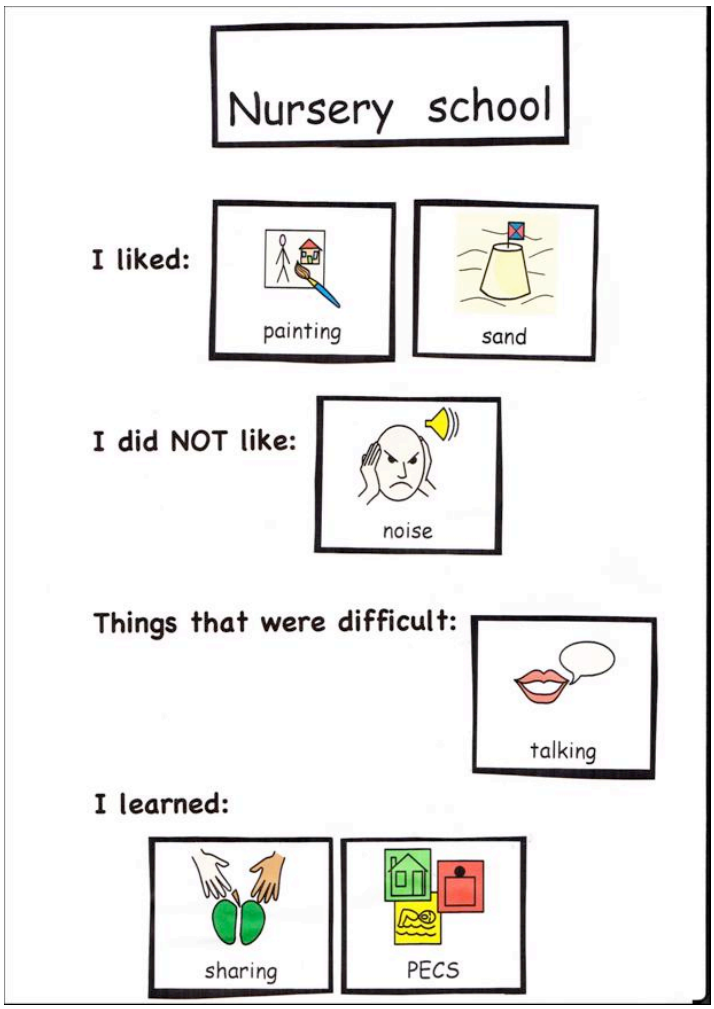

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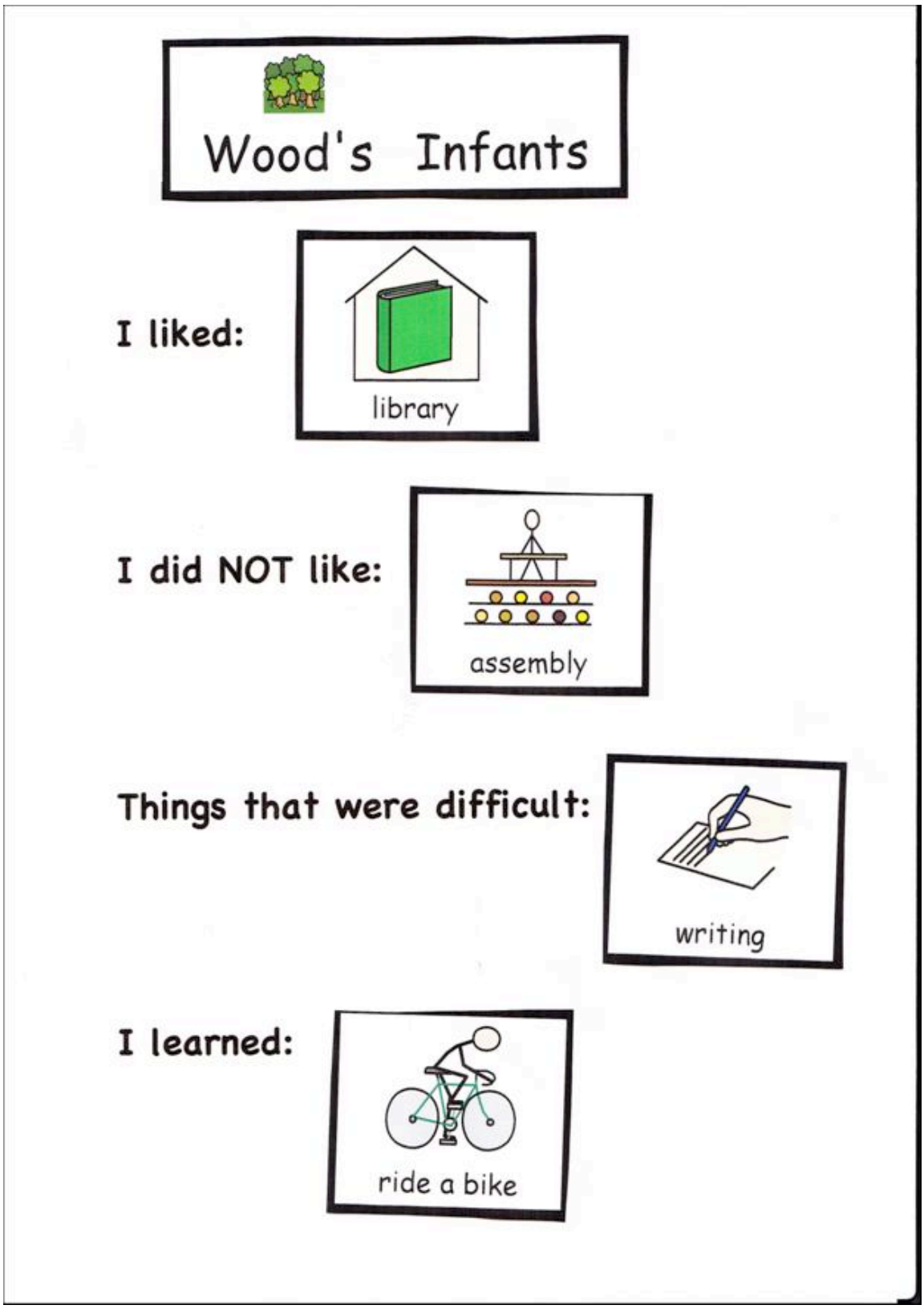

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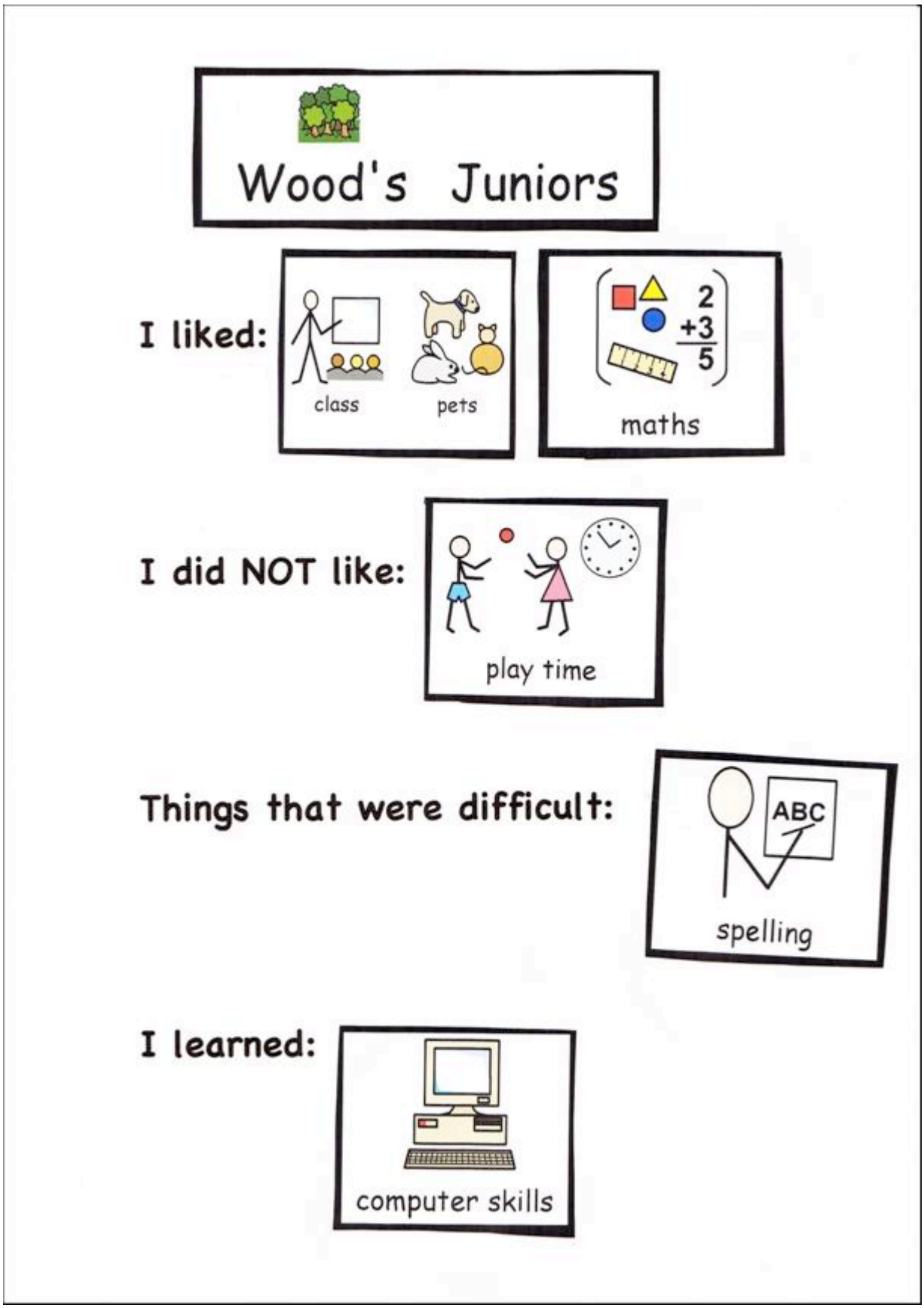

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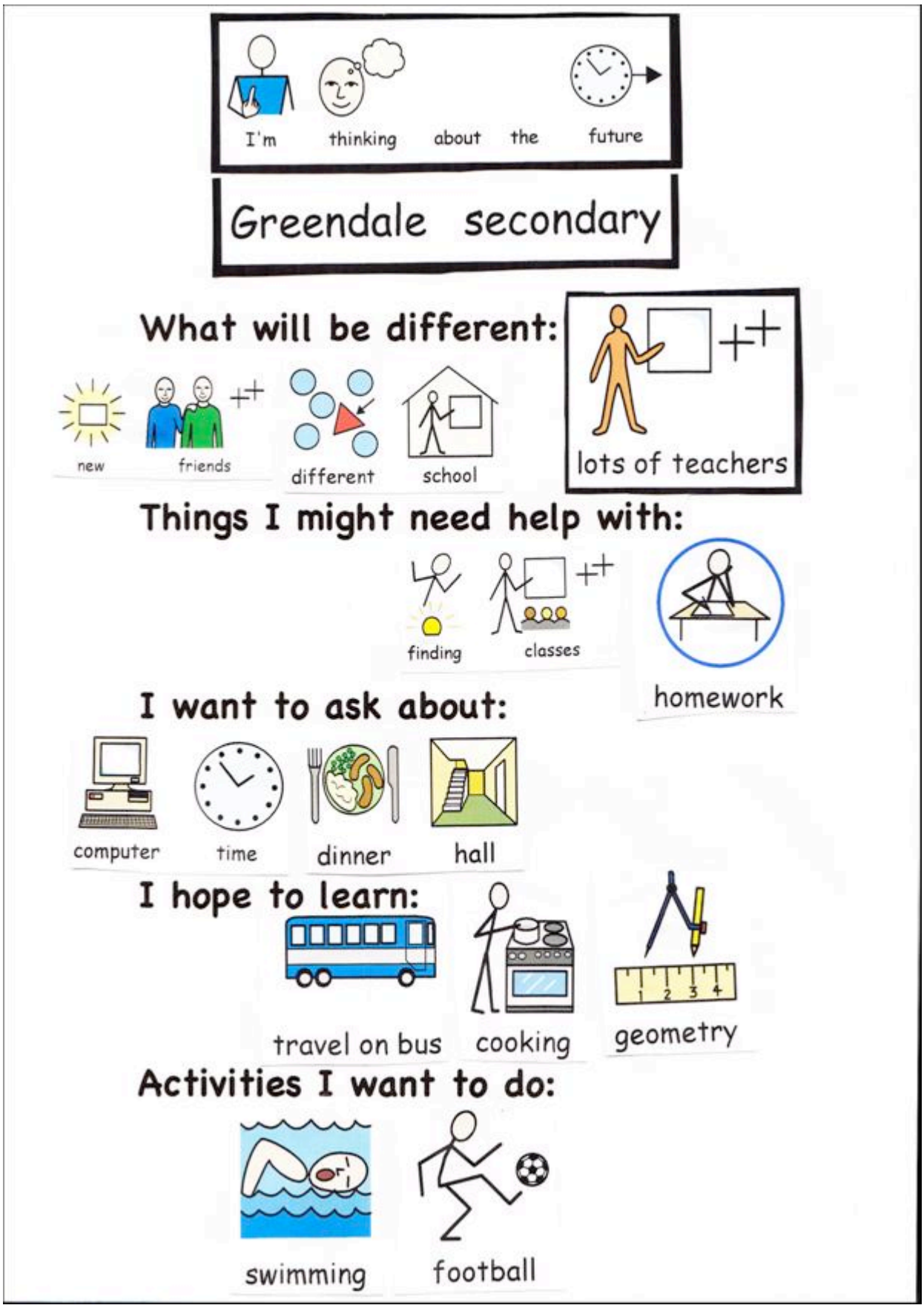

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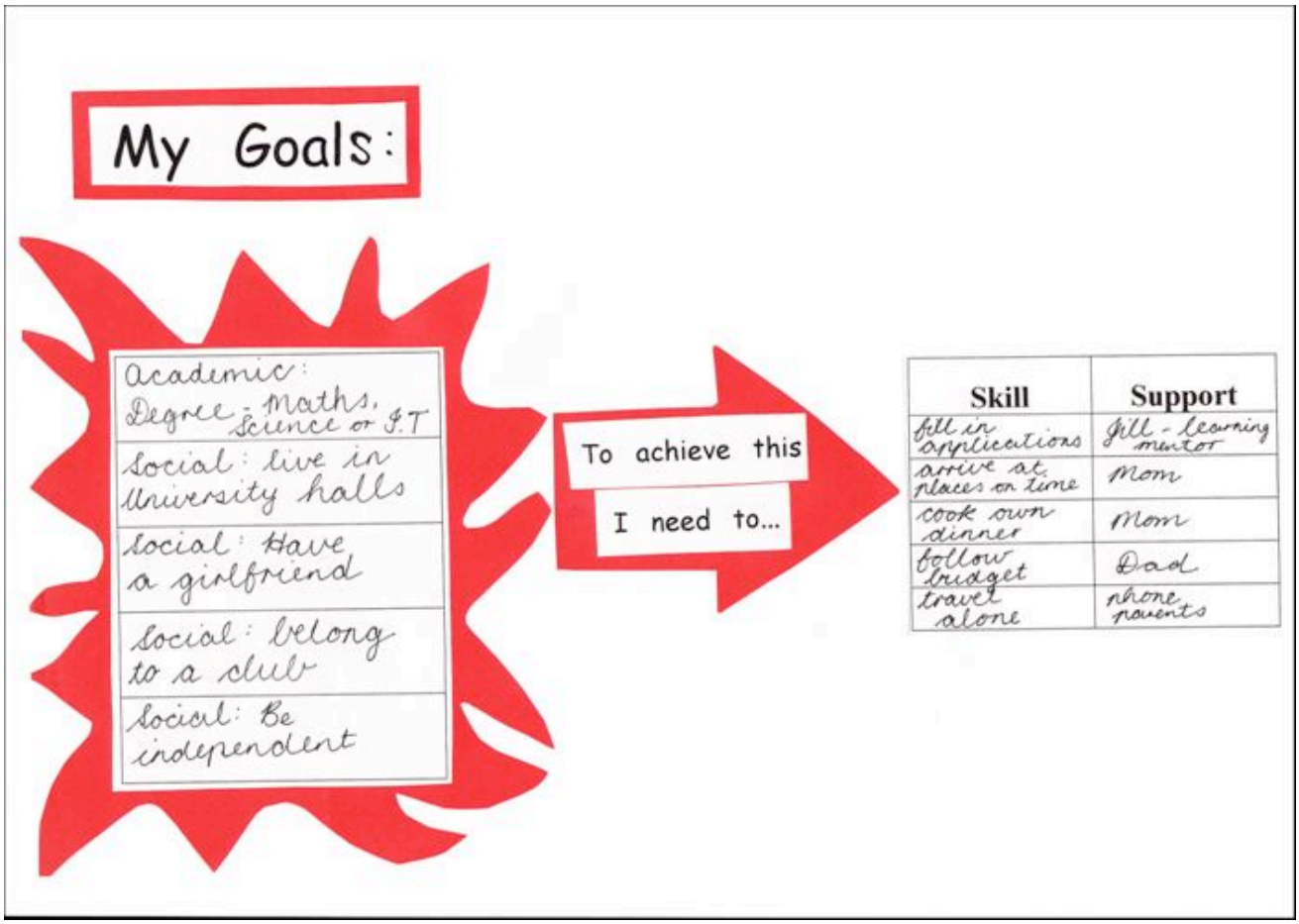
APPENDIX 2 PATH EXAMPLE



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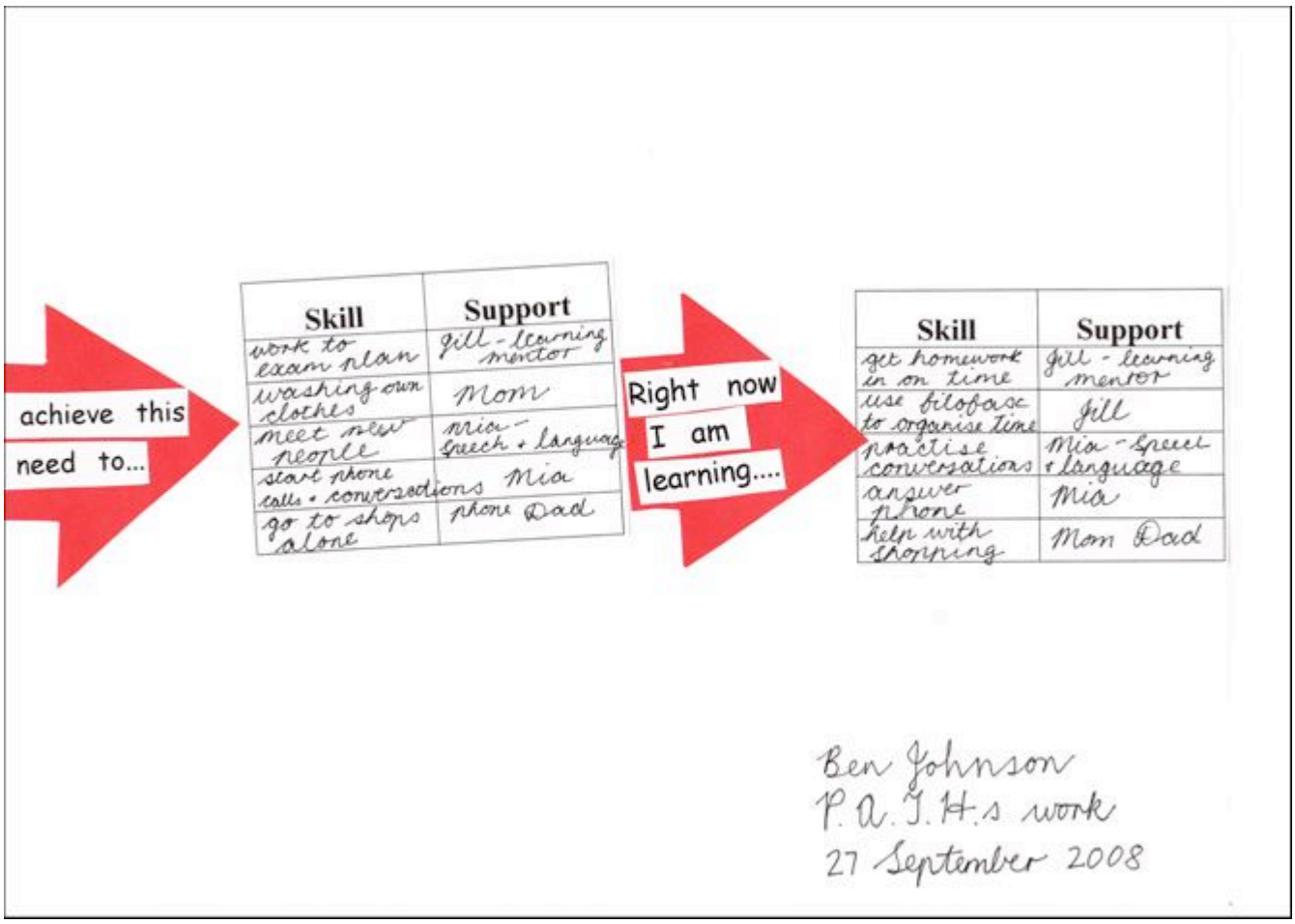
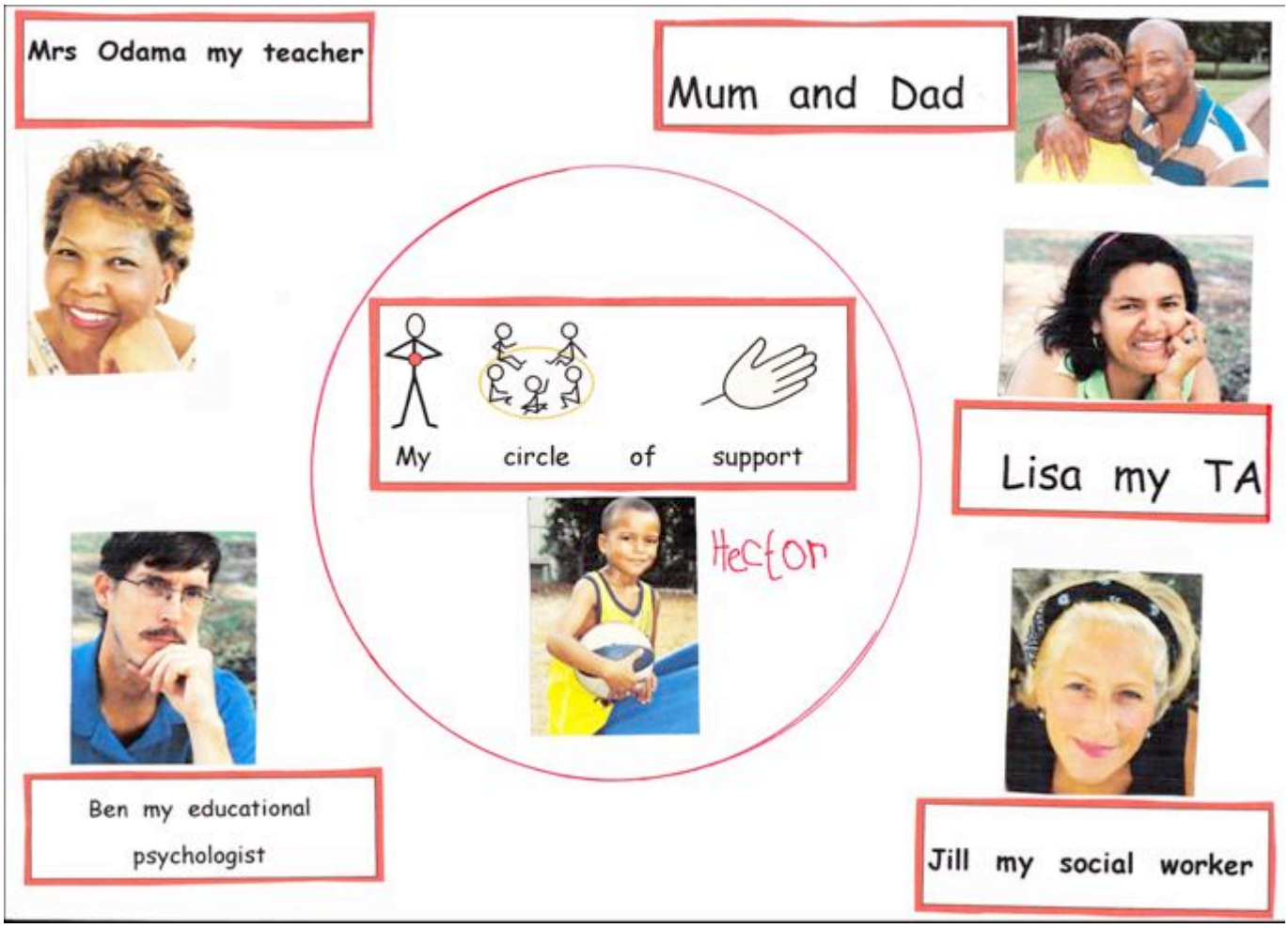
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