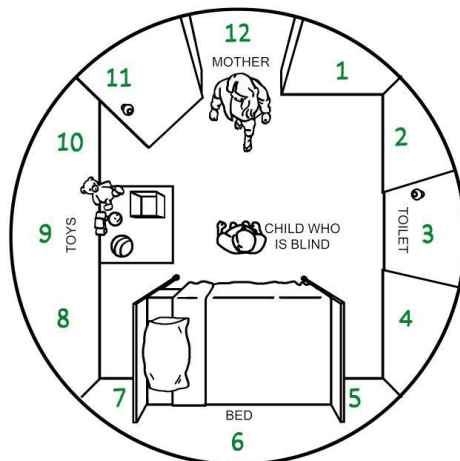




UNICEF, Disability Section, 2019

## Tips on communicating with Children and adolescents with disability

- When possible, talk to and get information directly from the child or adolescent with a disability, and not only from their caregivers.
- Be patient. Do not make assumptions. Confirm that you understand what the child has expressed.
- Where required, identify community members who can facilitate communication with children with disabilities (such as sign language interpreters, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, inclusive education or special education teachers, other caregivers of children with disabilities, or speech therapists).
- Children and adolescents with hearing disabilities (deaf or hard of hearing) often use sign language. If the child or caregiver does not know sign language, use body language, visual aids or key words, and speak slowly and clearly.
- For children and adolescents with visual disabilities (blind or low vision):
  - Describe surroundings and introduce people present. Use the 'clock method' to help older children and adolescents locate people and items (for example, 'the toilet is at 3 o'clock' if directly to their right, or 'the toys are between 8 and 10 o'clock' if they are on the left).



- Ask permission if offering to guide or touch the child or his or her assistive devices, such as wheelchairs or white canes.
- If the child or adolescent has difficulty communicating or understanding messages (such as children with intellectual disabilities), consider the following:
  - Use clear verbal communication and simple language avoiding difficult expressions, and subtleties like irony or sarcasm.
  - Use objects that represent different activities to support the child's or adolescent's understanding and ability to anticipate what will come next and help build routine.

- Ask children to repeat instructions back to you. Repeat as many times as necessary, in different ways and check their understanding. Allow time for actions (reading, writing, and speaking).
- Support children and adolescents in developing a book, a board, or cards with pictures or drawings related to daily activities, feelings and items (like utensils, favourite games or whether they are feeling hot or cold).



These tips are an excerpt from [UNICEF's Guidance: Including children with disabilities in humanitarian action 2018](#).

For more detailed information on communicating with children with different disabilities, please refer to Pages 33-38 of the UNICEF disability participation guidance: [Take us seriously - Engaging children with disabilities in decisions affecting their lives](#).

Additional resources: [UNICEF Inclusive Communications Module – video training](#)

[Communicating with Children](#), resource pack, UNICEF, 2012