

PODD

Here's a comprehensive overview of PODD (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display)—a powerful and versatile augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) system used in special schools to support students with complex communication needs.

What is PODD?

PODD stands for Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display. It is an AAC system developed by Gayle Porter, an Australian speech-language pathologist, specifically designed to support students with complex communication needs, including those with:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Cerebral palsy
- Global developmental delay
- Intellectual disabilities
- Multiple disabilities or physical challenges

PODD enables non-speaking or minimally verbal students to communicate for a variety of reasons (not just requesting) and is based on the principle that all individuals are communicators and deserve access to a robust communication system.

Key Features of PODD

Feature	Description
Pragmatic Organisation	Vocabulary is arranged according to intent/purpose (e.g., greeting, requesting, commenting) rather than category alone
Dynamic Display	Pages are linked through turn-taking, navigation, and context cues (e.g., "I'm telling you something" leads to a new page of comments)
Customisable	PODD books can be tailored to suit students' age, physical access needs, language level, and visual abilities
Access Options	Can be used via pointing, eye gaze, partner-assisted scanning, or speech-generating devices (e.g., PODD on Compass software or iPad with Grid/PODD page sets)
Robust Vocabulary	Includes a wide range of core and fringe words to support rich language development

Why Use PODD in a Special School?

PODD is designed to enable:

- Autonomous communication (student controls what they say)
- Communication across all functions: requesting, protesting, commenting, questioning, social interaction
- High expectations for communication competence
- Inclusion in the curriculum and social life of the school
- Adaptation for diverse physical and cognitive profiles

Classroom Examples

Scenario	PODD Use
Morning greeting	Student uses PODD to say, "Good morning" and ask, "What are we doing today?"
Sensory play	Uses PODD to say, "I like it," "More water," "It feels squishy"
Transition time	Expresses "I'm not ready," "Can I have more time?"
Literacy session	Comments: "That's funny," "I know this," "My turn"
Behaviour support	Communicates "I don't like that," "I need help," "I feel angry" to avoid escalation

Teacher Implementation Tips

1. Model, model, model!

Use Aided Language Stimulation (ALS): Talk *with* PODD by pointing to symbols while speaking
Adults should use PODD daily, even before the student does

2. Embed communication opportunities

Use PODD in real contexts: mealtimes, group activities, transitions, playground, excursions

3. Collaborate with SLPs

Work closely with speech-language pathologists to:

Choose the right PODD format (book vs. high-tech)

Identify priority vocabulary

Train staff on consistent use

4. Support access

Ensure PODD is within reach, vision, or eye gaze range

Use partner-assisted scanning when needed

5. Expect communication

Provide wait time and show the student that their voice matters

Common PODD Formats

Format	Best For
PODD Communication Book (Direct Access)	Students who can point or gesture
PODD with Eye Gaze Frame	Students using eye gaze with support from a partner
PODD + Voice Output Device	Students using iPads or speech devices (e.g., PODD in Compass, Grid 3, TD Snap)
Partner-Assisted Scanning PODD	Students with limited motor and visual skills—adult scans options aloud

Benefits for Students

- Reduces frustration from communication breakdowns
- Increases independence and participation
- Supports cognitive, language, and social development
- Encourages peer interaction and belonging

Professional Resources

Official PODD Website: www.podd.com.au

Gayle Porter Training Materials via CPEC (Cerebral Palsy Education Centre)

Books: *Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display Communication Books* (Porter, 2007)



PODD

PRAGMATIC ORGANISATION DYNAMIC DISPLAY

Pragmatic Organisation

Vocabulary is arranged by intent/purpose (e.g. requesting, commenting)

Customisable

Book can be tailored to suit the individual's needs

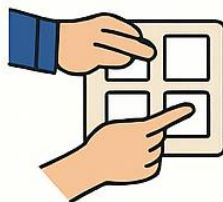
Access Options



Pointing



Eye Gaze



Partner-Assisted Scanning



Voice Output Device

Robust Vocabulary

Includes both core and fringe words