

TRANSCRIPT: About Emma

Emma has quite a specific set of disabilities, so she has no speech but communicates quite well by gesture and some Makaton signing. She has well over a hundred signs, many of which she's made up herself and her coordination isn't great, so you really have to get to know her to understand the signs. She will communicate by gesture or leading you to something that she wants. And most, I think, importantly, she utterly relies on your body language and your facial expression to gauge a situation and she will mirror your behaviour, so if you're happy, she's happy, if you get angry, she'll get angry with you.

I think she's quite high functioning for the syndrome but she does have a severe learning disability and behavioural problems.

She's a very fun loving girl. She's very loving and she has very much a slapstick sort of sense of humour, so lots of things are very funny to her. She can become very frustrated and angry also and that's usually a communication problem when she's trying to express herself or she wants something that she can't have because, although she's 18, really she's functioning around two to three, so she's a very big toddler, in effect.