



# **PROMOTING COMMUNICATION**

**STRATEGIES TO USE AT HOME**

# HOW DOES YOUR YOUNG PERSON COMMUNICATE - MEANS

## WHAT DOES YOUR CHILD USE

- Non-verbal behaviours
- Vocalisations
- Single words
- Learnt phrases
- Sentences
- Makaton signs
- Symbols (PECS/Communication boards or books)
- Voice output communication aids

## CONSIDER

- Do you know what your child's main means of expressing themselves is?
- Does your child use the same methods of communication at home and school?
- Is your child able to access their means of communication easily at home and school?
- Do you have access to the resources you need to make AAC work in your home?

# WHAT DO THEY COMMUNICATE FOR - REASONS

- **Requesting**
  - Telling others what we want
  - Making choices
  - Telling others when we need help
  - Controlling our environment.
- **Social Connection**
  - Meeting emotional needs
  - Gaining attention
  - Greeting people.
  - Telling jokes.
  - Sharing feelings.
  - Starting a conversation
  - Forming friendships and closeness with others
  - Building relationships and making them stronger.
- **Rejecting or Protesting**
  - Escaping from a situation or a demand.
  - Saying “No”
  - Avoiding something we don’t want or like.
- **Sharing Information & Opinions**
  - Early forms are naming and labeling
  - Answering questions
  - Telling about what happened
  - Sharing information that others need
  - Giving directions to others
  - Commenting
  - Noticing

# WHEN CAN THEY COMMUNICATE? – THE OPPORTUNITIES

- Your child needs opportunities to communicate with others in order to develop their communication skills.
- It is important that adults give children time to respond to and to initiate interaction.
- Where possible, try to ensure that others, such as siblings or close peers, do not communicate for the child.
- Peers may often interpret what a child wants, for example, they may approach the adult to say, 'He wants a drink', which then means that the child's opportunity to communicate has been taken away.
- Children need access to adults and peers who understand their method of communication and will respond at the correct level.
- Creating motivating opportunities for your child to communicate will increase their reasons to communicate, and offer the chance to practice, more practice = more attempts = more chance of success

# PLAY AND COMMUNICATION

[PLAY & COMMUNICATION: It's not about the toys! - YouTube](#)



# USING MEANS, REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN EVERY DAY COMMUNICATION

- **Situation:** The adult has blown some bubbles and has then waited to give the child a chance to respond.
- **Means:** The child usually communicates by reaching for the object he wants but with encouragement he can also give brief eye-contact and vocalise.
- **Reason:** The child wants more bubbles
- **Opportunities:** The child reaches for the bubbles but the adult holds them out of reach and waits a little longer for eye-contact. As soon as the child attempts to communicate by giving eye-contact and vocalising, the adult responds by modelling 'bubbles' and blows the bubbles.

# USING BUBBLES TO TEACH WORDS AND SOUNDS

[BUBBLES for SPEECH and LANGUAGE development - YouTube](#)



# USING MEANS, REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN EVERY DAY COMMUNICATION

- **Situation:** Adult and child have gone outside together and the child is choosing what to play on first.
- **Means:** The child communicates verbally with single words and learnt phrases.
- **Reason:** The child has spotted a favourite activity, the slide, and wants to share her intention to go on it.
- **Opportunity:** The adult is bent down at the child's level, watching her and giving her a chance to communicate. The child points to the slide and says 'up'. The adult prompts a little more language by saying, "Up the.....?" and the child says "slide". If the adult had said, "Do you want to go on the slide first and then go on the swing?" this sentence would have been too long and the child may not have understood it. Later, the adult uses the child's play to model more two word phrases, 'Up (the) steps!' as the child climbs, and "Whee! Down (the) slide!" as the child slides down.



# OUTSIDE ATTENTION BUILDERS...THE STICK!

[Toddler attention ideas: playing with sticks - YouTube](#)



# USING MEANS, REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN EVERY DAY COMMUNICATION

- **Situation:** The adult has placed the milk on the table but purposefully not given the child a straw.
- **Means:** The child can communicate non-verbally by pointing and is starting to use a few single words.
- **Reason:** The child is thirsty and she has got her milk but not a straw.
- **Opportunity:** The adult waits for the child to initiate interaction. The child points at her milk and the adult then gives the child a choice: 'Do you want a straw or a plate?', showing the objects. The child points to the straw and the adult gives her the straw, modelling the next step by emphasising the single word 'Straw, you need a straw'. The child is not expected to repeat the word at this stage.

# MAKING SNACK TIME COMMUNICATION FRIENDLY

[How to turn snack time into speech and language practice - YouTube](#)



# GETTING CREATIVE

- **Offer alternatives** – show them a favourite object and something they don't like to create increased reasons and opportunities for them to communicate their preference
- **Choice making** – throughout the day create opportunities for your child to make a choice e.g. between snack items (this can use real objects or photos/symbols)
- **Offering things they don't want (to get 'no')** – this helps your child develop their ability to refuse, e.g. at snack-time offer them a carrot rather than crisps

# OFFERING CHOICES TO BUILD LANGUAGE

[How to use choices to get your child talking - YouTube](#)



# GETTING CREATIVE

- **Place items in see through containers** – encourages your child to engage with you and ask for help in some way
- **Waiting before offering help** – use toys that your child will need help to use e.g. bubbles, balloons, wind up toys. Wait for your child to bring the toy to you and request help.
- **Place items out of reach** – this is to motivate them to communicate with you to get what they want rather than just taking it.

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION

[Weekend Words - Creating opportunities for communication - part one - YouTube](#)



# GETTING CREATIVE

- **Withhold 1 item** – during daily routines e.g. teeth brushing, getting dressed retain one item such as sock/toothbrush. Then they have a reason to request the missing item.
- **Bit by bit**– during motivating activities offer small amounts at a time to encourage repeated requests for more.
- **Do the unexpected/make mistakes** – don't be afraid to be 'silly' and use things in the wrong manner, what does you young person say/do, e.g. try putting gloves on your feet and shoes on hands to go outside



# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION

[Weekend Words - Creating opportunities for communication - part two - YouTube](#)



# GETTING CREATIVE

- **Hide an item** – this gives your child a reason to ask for them
- **Keep quiet** – instead of asking your child what they want, when they lead you somewhere or give you something, wait and give them time to communicate
- **Playing games** – ready steady go and people games are great for developing attention and a range of early communication skills e.g. requesting more, saying stop, showing likes/dislikes

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION

[Weekend Words - Creating opportunities for communication - part three - YouTube](#)



# HELP AVAILABLE

- If you need additional help or support to develop your young person's communication at home please contact your class teacher or myself:
  - Shelley Soni (Speech and Language Therapist)
- Good luck 😊