PROVIDENCE
HEALTH · EDUCATION · THERAPY

Making Communication Meaningful When Supporting AAC Use

Providing aided language modeling during everyday activities in your child's natural environment is one of the best ways to support their use of AAC. Try some of the strategies below if your child is starting to attend to and interact more with their AAC system.

Create Real Reasons to Communicate

- The goal is not for your child to be 'tested' on where the pictures are.
- The goal is to create real reasons to communicate by looking for and setting up opportunities to show your child how to use their AAC.
- Create **communication temptations** by presenting motivating items bit by bit, putting items out of reach, or being silly and unexpected.
- Pause and wait expectantly for your child to initiate communication.

Embrace Mistakes

- It is okay to make mistakes when modelling on your child's AAC system.
- Mistakes provide a great opportunity to model what you child can do when they activate the wrong symbol.
- Talk through the process with your child when you are modeling.
- (e.g., "Oops! I meant to touch 'eat'! Let's clear it and go back to the home page" or 'oh look it is over here beside drink').

Attribute Meaning

- Even if you think it's a mistake or your child appears to randomly touch symbols, always acknowledge what they say and link that to their own experience/environment.
- Interpret what your child is trying to communicate (i.e., their gestures, sounds, non-verbal communication etc.).

Provide Support

- **Avoid** hand over hand prompting and telling your child what to point to.
- Offer choices (i.e. [more] or [all done])
- Provide a verbal prompt (i.e., 'What's next?') or encourage them to fill in the blanks ('we need to___(go)').
- Give a gestural prompt by pointing to or hovering over the picture symbol.

References: Hartmann, A.(2020). AssistiveWare; O'Neill, T., Light, J, Rope, L. (2018). Effects of Interventio that include Aided AAC input on the communicatio of individuals with Complex Communication Needs: A Meta- Analysis. J Speech Lang Hear Res. 61(7)