# Communication Functions

There are various purposes for communication, which we term as communication functions. By recognizing these functions, we can employ vocabulary that enhances language and fosters profound communication. *In doing so, we broaden the horizons of an AAC user beyond mere decision-making.*

**Requesting: (Items / Activities / Information / Wants & Needs)**
Asking for what one needs or wants.
> Example: I want a drink of water.

**Protesting / Denying/Rejecting: (Items / Activities)**
Expressing the desire not to have something or to stop an action.
> Example: I don't want to color, or I don't want to clean my room.

**Describing / Labeling:**
Describing involves the act of identifying and elucidating the things we observe or expressing our desires and requirements. This can manifest in various activities, such as cataloging the items on our grocery shopping list or detailing the ingredients necessary for baking cookies. Through the practice of labeling and elucidating, we enhance our capacity to communicate effectively.

**Asking / Answering Questions (Getting & Giving Information):**
Responding to a question or statement.
> Example: When a teacher asks a student who uses AAC, "Did you have lunch today?", the student taps on the "Yes" icon on their AAC device.
> Making inquiries about the world around them (who, what, where why and how).
> Example: Where is the train? How do we make cookies? When can we watch a movie.

**Commenting / Social Interaction:**
Making an observation or giving an opinion about something. This entails furnishing information, occasionally simply for the purpose of social exchange, about a particular situation. Frequently, we employ this method to initiate social interaction or to impart an experience.
> Example: I like that song or That was funny.

**Expressing Feelings:**
Sharing how someone is feeling physically or emotionally.
> Example: My tummy hurts or I'm angry.

# February Communication Functions

For the month of February, focus on the below communication functions to help enhance communication abilities.

**Step One:** Decide what communication function you are looking to teach.

**Step Two:** Identify multiple opportunities throughout the day where you can practice modeling the communication function.

**Step Three:** Review the communication functions in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the communication function resource.

| | Communication Function to Practice | Activities |
|---|---|---|
| **Week One** | **Directing:** (To Start or to Stop)<br><br>**Core Words to Model:** Start, Stop, Go, No | **Red Light, Green Light Game:** Stand a distance away from the child. When you say "Green light" (or just "Go"), the child starts moving towards you. When you say "Red light" (or "Stop"), they must freeze. Use the AAC device, encouraging the child to tell you when to "go" or "stop."<br><br>**Build and Direct Activity:** Start by building a simple structure and narrating your actions. Use phrases like "I'm starting to build," "Now, I'm stopping to think," or "Should I put on more?" Then switch roles and let the child direct you. Encourage them to tell you when to start building, when to stop, or what to add using the AAC device to give directions. |
| **Week Two** | **Request Information:** (People/ Items/Activites)<br><br>**Core Words to Model:** Who, What, Where, Why, How, Which, Help | **Photo Album Exploration:** Using a collection of pictures to encourage questions about people, places, or events.<br>**Preparation:** Choose a photo album or collection with pictures of familiar people, places, or events.<br>**Exploration:** Sit with the child and slowly flip through the pictures. Pause on photos, especially those that might spark interest.<br>**Encouraging Questions:** When you pause on a photo, model questions like "Who is this?" "Where was this?" or "What is happening here?" Use the AAC system to model these questions and encourage the child to mimic or create their own inquiries.<br>**Answering and Expanding:** Answer the child's questions and provide additional information to expand the conversation. Encourage them to ask more detailed questions as they become more comfortable.<br><br>**Role Play:** Use role-playing scenarios to practice asking questions about people or objects.<br>**Choosing Roles:** Decide on a scenario with the child, such as playing house, running a store, or visiting a doctor. Assign roles accordingly.<br>**Setting the Scene:** Set up a space with necessary props and toys. Briefly explain the scenario and what kind of interactions might happen.<br>**Interactive Play:** Begin the role-play, modeling how to use the AAC device to ask questions relevant to the scenario. For instance, in a doctor's visit, the child might ask, "What's this?" when you show a toy stethoscope. In a store, they might ask, "How much?" or "What is that?"<br>**Guided Interaction:** Encourage the child to take the lead in the conversation, using their AAC system to ask questions. Answer their questions and gently guide them towards asking more or different questions as appropriate. |
| **Week Three** | **Tease/Joke**<br><br>**Core Words to Model:** Happy, Tell, I, Fun | **Joke Exchange:** Find a collection of simple, appropriate jokes. Model how to tell a joke using the AAC device, emphasizing the core words. For example, "I tell you funny!" After telling the joke, explain the punchline and why it's funny, helping the child understand humor. Encourage the child to choose and tell a joke using their AAC device. Assist them in selecting the words and delivering the punchline.<br><br>**Role-Playing with Toys:** To use toys or dolls to enact playful and humorous interactions. Gather a selection of toys, dolls, or action figures that the child enjoys. Create a playful scenario or skit using the toys, injecting humor and exaggerated actions. Model using the AAC device to give the toys dialogue or commentary, focusing on the core words. For example, making a toy say, "I am so happy!" or "This is fun!" Encourage the child to participate by choosing what the toys do next or using their AAC device to speak for the toys. |
| **Week Four** | **Labeling/ Describing:** (People/ Items/ Activites)<br><br>**Core Words to Model:** The, A, It | **Comparison and Contrast:** Provide two objects or concepts and ask individuals to describe the similarities and differences between them.<br><br>**Interactive Labeling Books:** Use interactive books with flaps or labels that can be lifted to reveal hidden objects or details. Ask individuals to label what's under each flap. |