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.

January Communication Functions

For the month of January, 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	**Requesting:** (Attention / Permission) **Core Words to Model:** Look, Listen, Me, Here, Can, I, Have, Use, Go	**Look at Me Activity:** Place an interesting item or toy on your head. Model the sentence "Look at me" and encourage the student to use the words to request your attention. **Sound Makers:** Provide the student with various sound-making objects. Teach them to say "Listen" or "Listen to me" before they make a sound to get your attention.
Week Two	**Negotiation:** (People/ Items/ Activites) **Core Words to Model:** want, more, less, another, instead, also, if, can, maybe, but, either, or	**Playtime Extension: Activity:** When playtime is almost over, children can negotiate for a few more minutes of play. Example phrases: "Can we play a little longer?", "Maybe five more minutes?", "I wish we had more time." **Musical Shares Activity:** Play musical instruments or musical toys. Children negotiate who gets to play which instrument and for how long. Example phrases: "I want the drum now.", "Can I try the whistle next?", "Let's play the xylophone together."
Week Three	**Stating Opinions:** (People/ Items/ Activites) **Core Words to Model:** like, don't, prefer, love, hate, feel, think, wish, best, worst, good, bad	**Storybook Choices Activity:** Show children two or three storybooks. Ask them which one they'd like to hear and why. Example phrases: "I want the bunny story because bunnies are funny.", "The bear book looks exciting!" **Pet Pals Activity:** Show pictures of various animals and pets. Ask each child which one they would want as a pet and why. Example phrases: "I want a cat because they're cuddly.", "Dogs are the best because they can fetch."
Week Four	**Confirming / Denying** **Core Words to Model:** Yes, No, Right, Wrong, True, False	**True or False Tray:** Place objects on a tray (e.g., apple, toy car, spoon). Make statements like "This is an orange" (while pointing to the apple). The child should respond with "wrong" or "right." **Opposite Objects:** Place a heavy and a light object in a bag. First, let the child hold the light object through the bag and ask, "Is this heavy?" aiming for the child to deny with "no." Repeat with the heavy object.