

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.

October Communication Functions

For the month of October, 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 (Items/Activities/Information/Wants&Needs) Core Words to Model: Want, Need: Want that, need more | Picking a song to sing during circle time. Choosing a classmate to tell the weather calendar. Place some toys out of reach so they have to ask you to get the toy. Have them request what color of crayons they want. |
| | Protesting/Denying/Rejecting: (Items/Activities) Give undesired activities or items and model words like “stop” “no” “all done”. Core Words to Model: No, not that, stop | Have them request what color of crayons they want, and give them a different color. Have them pick a book to read, then give them anything other than a book. Have them select a video to watch, and play a different tone. |
| Week Three | Describing/Labeling: Describing includes labeling things we see or explaining objects, wants, desires, and more. Describing items can assist with making requests and comments more specific. Core Quantity Words: “some,” “many,” “few,” “a lot” Core Location Words: “on,” “in,” “under,” “beside” Core Size Words: “big,” “small,” “tiny,” “large” | Go on a scavenger hunt and label and describe items that you find. Descriptive Games: Play descriptive games such as “I Spy” or “20 Questions” where the individual must provide detailed descriptions to help others guess what they are thinking of. Video Clips: Show short video clips and ask the individual to describe the actions, characters, and emotions. Daily Routine: Have the individual describe their daily routine, from waking up in the morning to going to bed at night, including activities, objects, and feelings associated with each part of the day. Take a Walk: Take walks and ask them to describe the things they observe in their surroundings, such as plants, animals, or people. |
| | Asking and Answering Questions: (Getting & Giving Information): Asking questions includes use of the five “wh” questions: “who, what, where, when,” and “why.” We also use “how, can do, are you,” as well as “yes/no” in order to ask and respond. We ask and respond to questions to share our thoughts and ideas. Core Words to Model: What, Where, Why, Who: Where Toy/ Who is, Like, Hate, Love, Good, Bad | Have them ask a friend to play a game together. Read books and ask and answer questions about the pictures or text. Show the child how to ask and/or answer questions while reading the story. Guessing Games: Play guessing games where one person thinks of an object or concept, and the other asks yes/no questions to guess what it is. Show and Tell: Allow each child to bring in an item from home and take turns asking and answering questions about their chosen object. This promotes both asking and answering questions. Simon Says: Play a modified version of Simon Says where Simon (the leader) gives instructions that require children to ask questions to clarify before following the command. For instance, “Simon says touch something that’s round.” |
| Week Four | | |