

Communication & Language:

Supporting your child's development with augmentative communication strategies

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MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MAY 17, 2013



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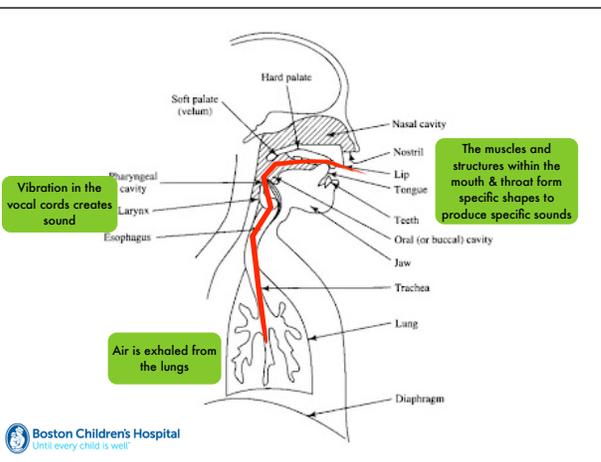
- Evaluation & treatment for children and adults with communication and access challenges.
- Team of 6 speech-language pathologists and 2 occupational therapists.
- Augmentative Communication Program & Autism Language Program

Augmentative
Communication
Program



What is speech?

- Speech is the physical process of sound production.
- It involves the lungs, vocal cords, muscles of the mouth, and the brain.
- Speech sound production requires the cooperation of all systems, in a precise way.



Why does my child have difficulty speaking?

- Producing speech is a complex process
- Involves multiple systems
- Any disruption in these systems can delay or prevent the production of speech
- Range of developmental stages



What is language?

- Language is the way that sounds words are structured and combined to communicate.
- Language can be spoken, written, signed, or produced with augmentative communication strategies.

More on language...

- Receptive: Listening and understanding a message
- Expressive: Producing a message



Language discrepancy

- Many children with speech and language challenges have **better receptive language skills than expressive** language skills; i.e., they can understand more than they can produce.

Typical language development

- Sound play and babbling
- Transitions to proto-words and words, 12-18 months
- Word combinations and morphological structures (e.g., plural, past tense), 18-24 months
- Sentences with more complex structure

Early Communication

- Pre-intentional
- Gradually shaped into intentional communication by caregivers responses
- Responsivity & frequent speech models play a big part in children's language development

Communication

- Communication is the combination of multiple modes of communication (e.g., speech, facial expression) to convey wants, share ideas, comment, question, and gain information.



Total Communication

- Teaching and supporting all available modes of communication (speech, signs, pictures, communication devices).
- Providing your child with the most opportunities to communicate in every possible situation

Purposes of communication

- greet (hello)
- part (bye, see you later)
- redirect/ change (another, different)
- existence (that, look, there)
- affirm (yes, I agree)
- disappearance (away, all gone)
- possession (mine, yours, his)
- nonexistence (not, none)
- comment (like, silly, good, bad)
- describe (tall, fast, cold)
- rejection/negation (stop, no)
- request assistance, information, object, action
- direct (go, get, try, come, help)

What we know

- **Children learn best:**
 - * During routines
 - * When information is provided to multiple senses
 - * With repetition
 - * When shown how to do it
 - * With responsive partners



Manual Signs



Manual Signs

- Signs have a hand shape, location, and movement
- Types of sign language



Manual Signs

- Offer visual support for language
- Increase processing time
- Portable, ready to use

Manual Signs

- Reduce frustration
- Improve communication
- Facilitate speech

Enhanced gestures

- What if my child has difficulty making the signs correctly?
- Shape gestures that your child is already producing into meaningful, re-usable sign
- Keep communication partners informed

How to begin

- Select signs to teach your child based on your common routines, high frequency words, and personally relevant words.
- Set realistic goals
- Take videos, pictures, write them down



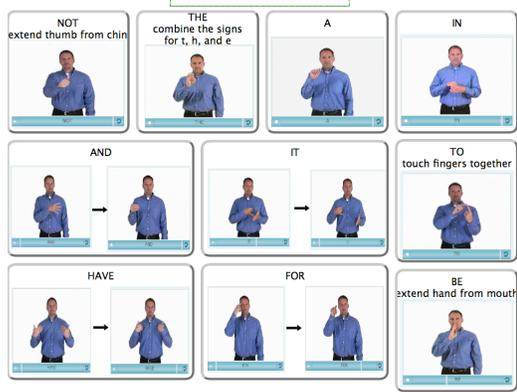
Teaching signs

- Produce signs for targeted words as you speak
- Draw your child's attention to you as you form the signs
- Move your child's hands to model the targeted signs
- REPETITION, ROUTINES

Routines

- Why is it beneficial to teach and reinforce signs during routines?
- Routines remove the demand of learning a new task and allow the child to focus only on the communication strategy.
- Routines by definition, occur frequently and predictably, offering many opportunities to practice.

SIGNS for "LITTLE WORDS"



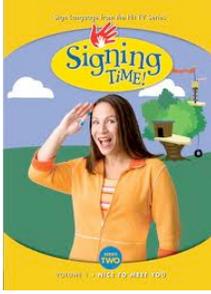
Sign resources

- www.signingsavvy.com



Sign resources

- **Signing Times DVD series**



Sign resources

- <http://www.babysignlanguage.com>

- **Apps**



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Picture Communication Strategies

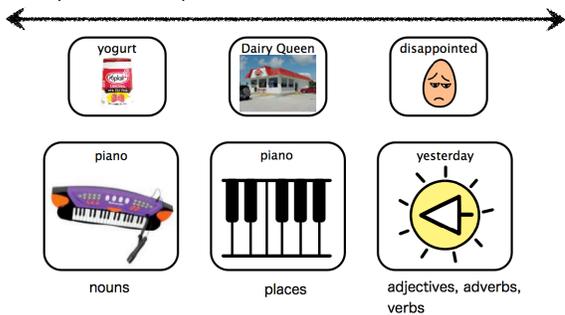


What?

- Visual representation of language
- Variety of formats and ways to implement
- Can include photographs, line drawings, or symbols
- Varying degrees of “transparency”

Photographs vs. Symbols

Most clearly resembles the object Most abstract

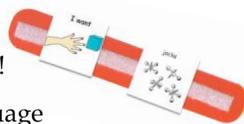


PECS

- PECS = Picture Exchange Communication System
- Does not = 
- Popular system with 6 defined stages
- System benefits and caveats

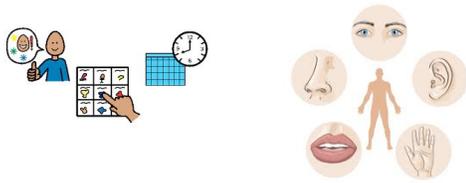
What?

- Not just making choices!
- Remember typical language development, variety of “functions” for communicating
- Variety of sentence types



Why?

- Picture communication supports offer an additional mode of input--visual



What we know

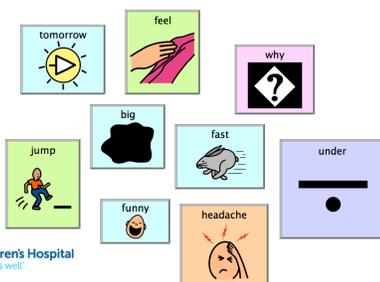
- **Children learn best:**
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Why?

- They are easily interpreted by communication partners

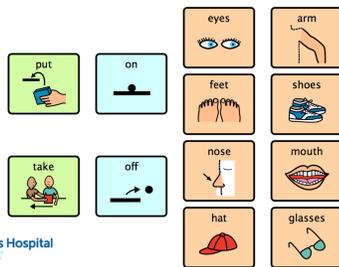
Why?

- They can represent a broad range of objects, concepts, and ideas



Expanding language

- Topic displays: Combining pictures to form short sentences



Color-coding

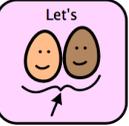
- Color-coding by parts of speech helps children locate symbols faster and can promote sentence building.
- Any color-coding scheme is acceptable, must be consistent
- Fitzgerald Key: Nouns- orange, verbs- green, people/pronouns- yellow, adjectives- blue, social vocabulary- pink

Topic displays at home

- Select a few parts of the daily routine to expand upon
- Use displays when you speak and encourage your child to use displays to communicate



Bath time

Let's 	sing 	loud 
again 	Wheels on the Bus 	quiet 
Twinkle Twinkle 	Itsy Bitsy 	fast 

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Using pictures in the environment





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age I want help mine
not I up that go happ
st w I u again eat
me I me like
le I every come
go I I make it off
now re I e thing where
big busy o I feed in
make out a I who
down good I who
and who fun I who
after am be I ry I
fast fun have I ry I
need talk and I rator

Core Vocabulary

age I want help mine
not I up that go happ
st w I u again eat
me I me like
le I every come
go I I make it off
now re I e thing where
big busy o I feed in
make out a I who
down good I who
and who fun I who
after am be I ry I
fast fun have I ry I
need talk and I rator

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The AAC dilemma...

- “How can I possibly include **all** the words he’ll need?”
- “How do I know what vocabulary to teach?”
- “We never seem to have the **right words** available.”

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Core Vocabulary

- 80-85% of what we say is communicated with only 200 basic words.
- We call this set of words core vocabulary. They are consistent across topic, place, and cognitive ability.
- Examples: *you, that, go, here, what, look, my, eat, put, up, down, take, in, out, help, some, more, want, yes, no, help, finished, again, different, these, away*

Core vocabulary

“What is the priority in an AAC vocabulary? A small set of consistent and highly predictable core words that occur frequently, and compose 80% of our messages? Or a very large, unpredictable and inconsistent set of fringe words that compose only 20% of our messages? Core words provide the basic architecture of our messages, and fringe words provide the customized detail.”

From <http://www.aaclanguage.com/other/core-vocabulary>

So why teach core?

- Common words, used often by all
- Can be used flexibly
- When we learn core, focus can shift to learning new information/content
- Ability to talk about a range of topics with a small set of words

How should we choose what pictures to teach and use first?

- Important to guide decisions for vocabulary based on BOTH immediate needs and life-long language skills.
- Teaching words that can be used repeatedly in many situations offers the best “communicative power”
- Plan for growth

Common Communication Board



Common "art" board



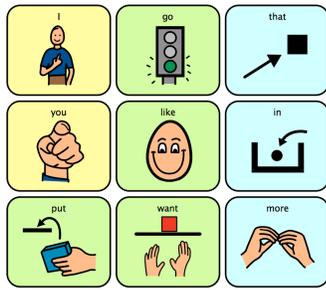
What's the problem?

- Difficult to combine symbols to create sentences
- Only lends to labeling or requesting
- Heavy use of nouns, lacks other parts of speech

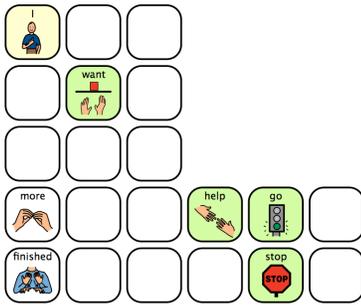
Opportunities

- Typically developing kids speak in 3-4 word sentences with word endings before the age of 3...we need to give kids who use augmentative communication the same **OPPORTUNITY**.

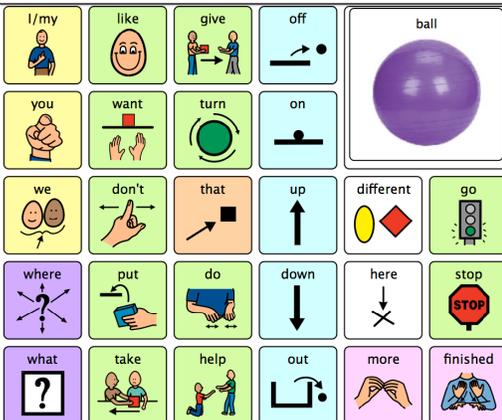
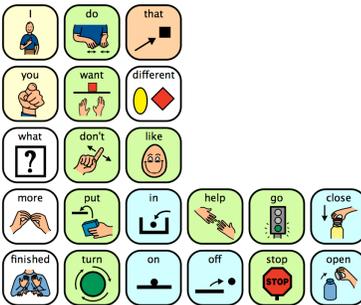
Basic core board



Core language



Core language



Let me tell you a story...

Narrative development

- Crucial skills for social and language development
- Can be a challenging skills for children with speech and language difficulties
- NOT in the here & now

Typical narrative language development

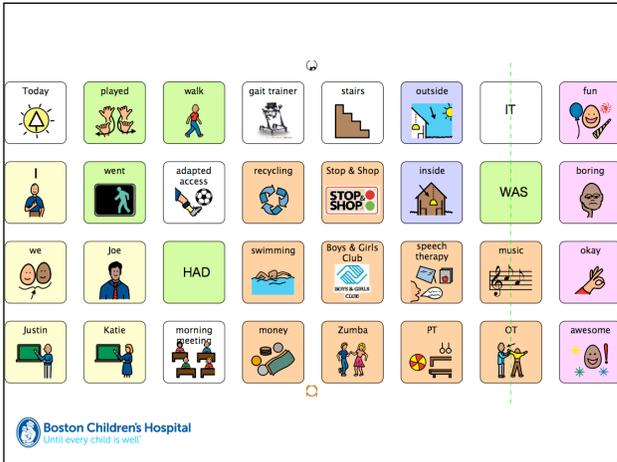
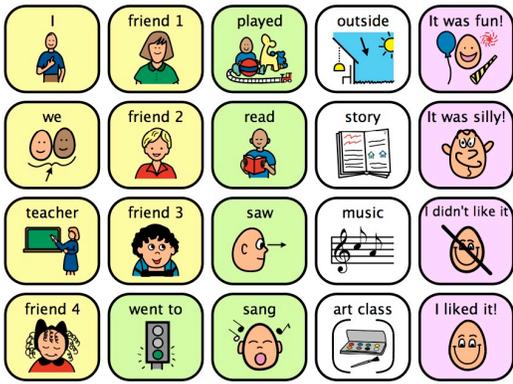
- Beginning around 2 years of age, children share “heaps” of information
- By 3 years, children begin to sequence events together.
- Include person, place, and event

Narrative development

- How does your child tell you what he did at school?



TODAY AT SCHOOL...



A photo speaks 1000 words



Supporting Receptive Language & Behavior

First/Then displays

FIRST	THEN
eat your dinner 	play outside 

First/Then displays

First	Then
nap 	

play outside  snack  read a book 

Consequence boards

- Concretely illustrate the consequence of a desired or non-desired behavior

If I...

stay in my seat 	listen 	talk when it is my turn 
--	---	--

Then I earn:

Consequence boards

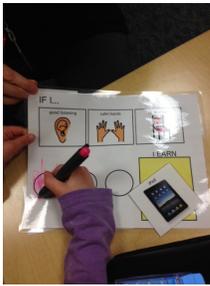
IF I... 	THEN I LOSE... 
--	---

Token systems

for _____ Token Chart



3 😊 =



Self-advocacy board

Shift the focus to the "solution"



I NEED...



Visual timer

- Offers a concrete, visual representation of an abstract concept
- Offers control



RESOURCES: picture communication sources

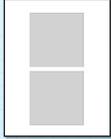
VISUALS ENGINE

Create Visual Supports for your child

Select a template



1 image/page



2 images/page



4 images/page

Let's get started

The visuals engine will help you build visual supports and sequences for your child.

Steps:

1. Select the template with the size of picture you want.
2. Select a picture to put in the template.
3. Type in the title you will use for that picture.
4. Repeat for more pictures.

Now you are ready to print and use!

- <http://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/>

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Additional resources

- www.google.com/images
- www.picsearch.com
- www.do2learn.com
- www.lessonpix.com

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Communication Partner Skills

What we know

- **Children learn best:**
 - * During routines
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 - * When shown how to do it
 - * With responsive partners

Supporting communication

- Caregivers and educational team members' skills in supporting AAC are directly related to better communication outcomes.
- That is, the support we provide matters!

Supporting communication

- Slow down
- Children with language difficulties benefit from increased (not decreased!) time to process spoken information



Supporting communication

- Balance conversation turns
- Wait
- Allow the child time and opportunity to respond



Supporting communication

- Create opportunities
- Avoid anticipating your child's EVERY need (this isn't always contradictory to being a good parent...)
- "When less is more" (Snow)

Supporting communication

- Limit yes/no questions
- Comment
- Ask open ended questions



Supporting communication

- Show (model, aided language input)
- Aided language modeling: "Learners get to see/hear the language that they are expected to use which makes it more likely they will 'talk' back in the language that is spoken to them."

From www.praacticalaac.org, Carol Zangari

AAC BOOT CAMP
Getting AAC Users COMMUNICATING
regardless of AAC system used (no tech, low tech, high tech) or skill level...

⊘ DON'T do this.....	👤 DO this.....
● DON'T expect a user to know how to communicate w/o direct models & instruction	✓ MODEL MODEL MODEL model expected communication behaviors BEFORE expecting to see those behaviors from the user
● DON'T do ALL the talking	✓ PRESUME COMPETENCE
● DON'T overprompt	✓ FOLLOW prompt hierarchy
● DON'T teach ONLY requesting	✓ TEACH language functions including directing, commenting, requesting assistance, etc...
● DON'T re-prompt too quickly	✓ WAIT 10-20 sec. (w/an expectant look) before re-prompting! <i>Count in your head!!! 1-2-3</i>
● DON'T provide ONLY nouns	✓ PROVIDE CORE WORDS including verbs & describing words (in addition to nouns)
● DON'T focus on vocabulary that won't be functional/used tomorrow	✓ COLOR CODE parts of speech
● DON'T remove the device	✓ KEEP icon placement constant (keep repeated icons in the same location on each page/screen)
● DON'T move symbols	✓ ALLOW user time to explore and learn the system
● DON'T stop all "babbling" (excluding adult speaking)	✓ MAKE AAC available at all times
● DON'T keep the AAC system in their desk, cubbie, or backpack	✓ PROVIDE Aided Language Input
● DON'T expect sentences right away	✓ ASK open-ended questions

Resource developed by
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Keeping team members informed

- “Communication Passport

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Keeping team members informed

- Share medical information
- Use AAC tools and strategies during medical appointments
- Using Drop Box to share pictures, files

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“If necessity is the mother of invention, then expectation is the mother of success.”

Susan McCloskey, Pennsylvania Technology Center
(From, Shawn Malcomson “Implementation Strategies for AAC: How to Get Kids Really Talking”

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Remember...

- Set expectations high
- Provide frequent opportunities
- Plan for growth
- Model
- Motivation is key

A few of my favorite resources...

Facebook Groups

- PrAACtical AAC
- Boston Children's Hospital
- Federation for Children with Special Needs
- Easter Seals MA
- Augmentative Communication Program
- Down Syndrome Program

facebook

Blogs

- www.prAACticalaac.org
- <http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/blog/>
- www.chapelhillsnippets.blogspot.org
- www.teachinglearnerswithmultipleneeds.blogspot.com



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