



# Language Functions and AAC

## TEACHING COMMENTING

**The right to make comments and share opinions.**

*Communication Bill of Rights - Right #6*



The ability to share our thoughts is powerful! We share comments as a way to connect with others. Sharing comments and opinions can help develop a sense of personal autonomy.

Early comments to teach:

- "I like", "I don't like", "I see...", "Look"
- describing words (e.g., "It feels / looks / smells / tastes / sounds...")

### HOW TO TEACH IT

- model making comments throughout the day
- model comments lots of times in many different contexts and in many different places
- have different communication partners model comments
- notice what has your AAC learner's attention and model a comment based on the focus of their attention
- model how to navigate their AAC to help them find the words they need to make a comment
- after you have modeled comments many, MANY, **MANY** times, start pausing to invite your AAC learner to try to use their AAC to comment

### TIPS

- KEEP IT FUN and STRESS-FREE ~ you want your AAC learner to keep a positive feeling about their AAC
- show genuine interest in your AAC learner's thoughts and opinions - intentionally ask them
- make it meaningful to your AAC learner - do something, have an experience, and then talk about it
- make comments during and after reading a story or watching a video together

## ⚠ REMINDERS ⚠

Your AAC learner communicates in many different ways. Be sure to honor **all** their communication. If they comment in another way (e.g., gestures), model it on their AAC and then respond.

Communication is not a test. Do not make your AAC learner comment more than once or in multiple ways.

AAC users often do not get as many opportunities to comment or share opinions. Conversations and interactions tend to move too fast. Untrained communication partners might not realize the need to adjust the pace to include your AAC learner. We need to help teach AAC users ways to claim their turn in conversations. And ways to remind communication partners to pause and wait.

Do not insist on them using a complete sentence.

Remember: there are many reasons we communicate (language functions).

Communication is about connecting and relationships. Keep it fun and simple. Focus on connecting and interacting with your AAC learner.

NWACS is the oldest and longest-running organization in the Pacific Northwest for the support of persons with complex communication needs. It is a non-profit, completely volunteer organization that was founded in the late 1970s. We focus on educating and raising awareness about augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Learn more: [www.nwacs.info](http://www.nwacs.info)