



Language Functions and AAC

TEACHING REQUESTING

The right to request desired objects, actions, events, and people.



Communication Bill of Rights - Right #2

Being able to ask for - and get - what you want is powerful!

When teaching AAC learners how to request, we want to think about ALL kinds of requests:

- objects: specific toys, specific items of clothing, food items, specific books/videos, etc.
- actions: push, go, eat/drink, wash, get, read, open, etc.
- events: birthday/holiday, therapy, vacation, etc.
- people: parent, sibling, caregiver, teacher, therapist, etc.

HOW TO TEACH IT

- model a bunch of different requests throughout the day
- model a specific request lots of times in many different activities and in many different places
- have different communication partners model requests
- observe your child to figure out something they REALLY WANT, then model how to ask for it
- model how to navigate their AAC to help them find the words they need to make a request
- honor any request they make, even if you don't think they want it
 - model what they can say if it turns out they really don't want it (how to refuse, then fix their request)
- after you have modeled a certain request many, MANY, **MANY** times, start pausing to invite your child to try to use their AAC to make the request

TIPS

- KEEP IT FUN and STRESS-FREE ~ you want your child to keep a positive feeling about their AAC system
- take advantage of opportunities for your child to make requests to unfamiliar (or less familiar) people
 - help the interaction by cueing the communication partner to pause and wait

⚠ REMINDERS ⚠

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

Communication is not a test. Do not make your child request more than once or in multiple ways.

Be sure to consider: does your child really want it? Or do *you* want them to want it?

Do not only target requesting food items.

Do not insist on them using a complete sentence.

Do not get stuck on requesting! There are many reasons we communicate!

You will have plenty of authentic opportunities to work on requesting. Don't worry about manufacturing opportunities for the stuff you already know.

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

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