

Teaching Communication – Have Fun First!

Children learn the most when they are relaxed, engaged, and having fun. Our first step is to play in a way that is fun, engaging, and supportive.

Step 1: Let's Play

- Let them pick the toy or activity.
 - It's ok if they only want to play with one item.
- When possible, get down to their level
- Play their way.
 - Copy what they are doing and wait for them to let you know what they want to do next.
 - It's ok if they are playing with a toy in a different way than what we expect.
- Avoid giving instructions or teaching in this moment

Watch for signs that they are having fun - smiling, staying in the activity, wanting to play with you.

Step 2: MODEL the words they might want to say.

Our first step is to teach with NO expectation or demand for communication

- Model all forms of communication – words, gestures, pointing, signs, communication board
- Model and wait. They might communicate or keep playing.
- Celebrate any way they communicate
- Keep the fun going

Tips

- Have your AAC out and ready so you can model throughout the day.
- You may also want to spend 10 minutes a day focusing on building the interaction and modeling on the AAC.
 - Try to pick a time when they are calm and ready to play
- Remove all distractions
- Your goal is to have fun together and create a fun interaction
- Once step 1 is achieved, start modeling all forms of communication