

## Language Functions and AAC – Teaching Requesting

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 AAC learner 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 AAC learner to try to use their AAC to make the request.

### Tips:

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

### Reminders:

- Your AAC learner communicates in many different ways. Be sure to honor all their communication. If they request 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 AAC learner request more than once or in multiple ways.
- Be sure to consider: do they 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.
- Focus on connecting and interacting with your child.

\*Adapted from [www.nwacs.com](http://www.nwacs.com)