

USING A STEP-BY-STEP

Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe York
Augmentative Communication Consultation Services (ACCS)

WHAT IS A STEP-BY-STEP USED FOR?

- **Participation, inclusion, independence and fun!**
- To give children a way to participate in social routines just like their peers.
- To provide an introduction to social interaction and social turn taking.
- Provides a way to participate without having to differentiate between messages, it allows communication to be simplified for children at an early stage of language development

WHERE DO I START WITH THE STEP-BY-STEP?

- Initially the child will need support knowing when it is appropriate to use their message.
- To support initial use, present the device in front of the child to cue them that it is their turn to talk. Further prompting may be required- use hand-over-hand support only as a last resort.
- Respond appropriately to their message vs the act of hitting the button (e.g. If a child uses a device to say "turn the page" while reading a book, the communication partner's response should be "Ok" and turn the page. NOT "Good hitting your button!" Teach all communication partners to do the same.)
- Begin with something that will be highly motivating to the child- select a message that will make a difference!
- Try to keep the message consistent for a specific activity so the child knows what to expect (i.e. "Good night" is always the message presented at bedtime; "I'm here" is always available during attendance.)
- Begin with opportunities that are planned or predictable so the device can be presented and appropriate prompts can be provided.
- Even though the student may not understand the meaning of the words or phrases recorded, s/he can benefit from positive interaction resulting from activating his/her communication device.
- Provide frequent, high-interest opportunities throughout the day.

MESSAGES FOR USE AT HOME:

- "Good night Dad"
- "Thank you Mom"
- "Want to play with me?"
- "Can I play?"
- Repeated line in favourite book
- Initiating a social game "tickle me!", "chase me!"
- Turn taking in a game "My turn", "Your turn"

MESSAGES FOR USE AT SCHOOL:

- Attendance: "I'm here"
- Greetings: "Hello", "Good morning", "What's up?" (peers, staff or walks through the hall)
- Jokes
- Sharing news from home: "Guess what I did last night?....."
- Cheer team mates during an event.

MESSAGES TO AVOID:

1. "Yes", "No"
 - Responding to yes/no questions is complex
 - The child needs to understand the question and he/she needs to be able to differentiate between the two abstract concepts of "yes" and "no"
 - It is more effective to begin with messages that can result in a positive interaction without putting so much language demand on the child
2. Long messages that may be difficult for a communication partner to follow
3. A sequence of messages that requires specific responses from communication partners in order for the interaction to make sense.

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