



IES Grant #
R324A160086

Supporting Your Child's Communication



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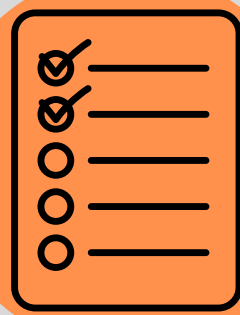
Barton Lab

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Some children don't have reliable ways to communicate what they want and need. These children may engage in challenging behavior because the way they are communicating isn't clear to others and causes them frustration. To reduce challenging behavior in these situations, you can teach them to communicate using signs, gestures, or words. You can also use visuals to help them communicate their wants and needs!

Learning to use gestures, signs, and words to communicate will require opportunities for the child to practice using these skills. Set up times when you can teach the child and practice giving the child what they ask for so that they can use the skill without your help in the future!

SETTING UP OPPORTUNITIES



Plan a situation that will motivate the child to use the sign, gesture, visual, or one-to two-word response.

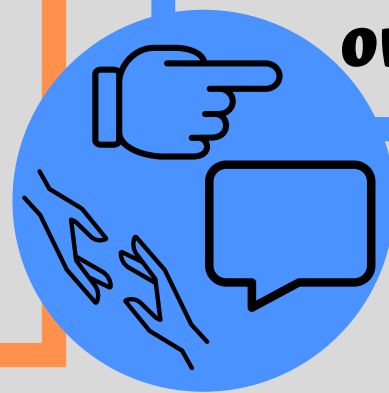
SAY SOMETHING to **CUE** the child to a change in the current routine or activity.

- For example, give the child only a small amount of a preferred snack and say, "You can ask for more if you want more."

PROVIDING SUPPORT: PROMPTS

Wait, and watch or listen for the child to use the skill.

- If the child does not use the skill independently, give a prompt. For example, say "more" or sign "more."



RESPONDING TO THE CHILD'S BEHAVIOR

If the child uses the sign, gesture, visual, or short response to communicate:

- Immediately give them what they want
- Provide positive descriptive feedback to increase the likelihood they will use their words again

If the child engages in challenging behavior

- Use the **NEW RESPONSE** strategies that match the function of the behavior



It is important to remember that some children need more support in communicating. You should initially reinforce all communication attempts as they start to learn their new skill—even if it isn't perfect yet.



See the next page for resources on teaching the child signs and gestures.





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Signs and Gestures

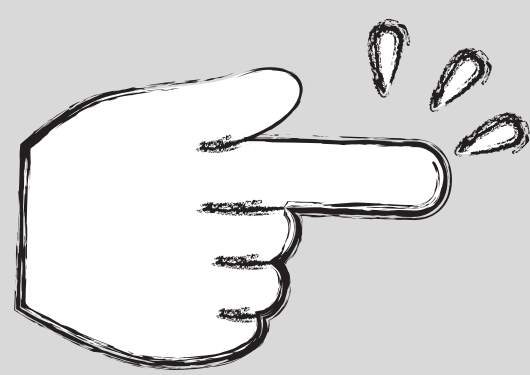


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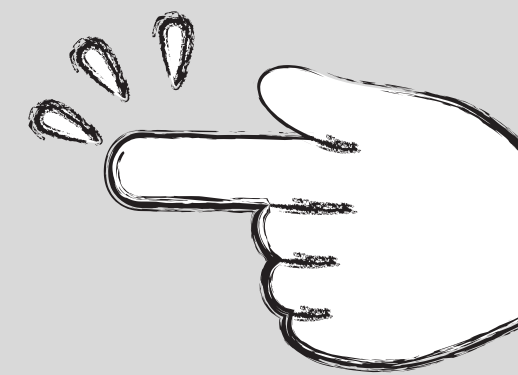
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If the child does not use many words to communicate, you can teach them signs and gestures to tell you what they want and need. Pair the signs and gestures with one- to two-word responses to help the child learn that the signs and gestures have the same meaning as the words!



Click on each word to view a video modeling how to do the sign



Attention

Help

More

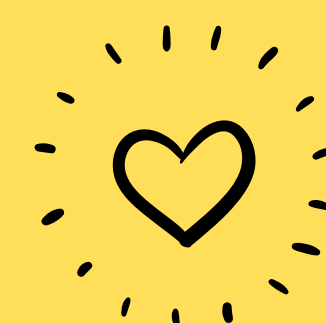
All done

Teaching the child to use signs and gestures to communicate can enhance their ability to use vocal communication.

Want



For more information on how to teach your child to use each specific skill, click [here](#). See the next page for information on using visuals to support communication.





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Visuals



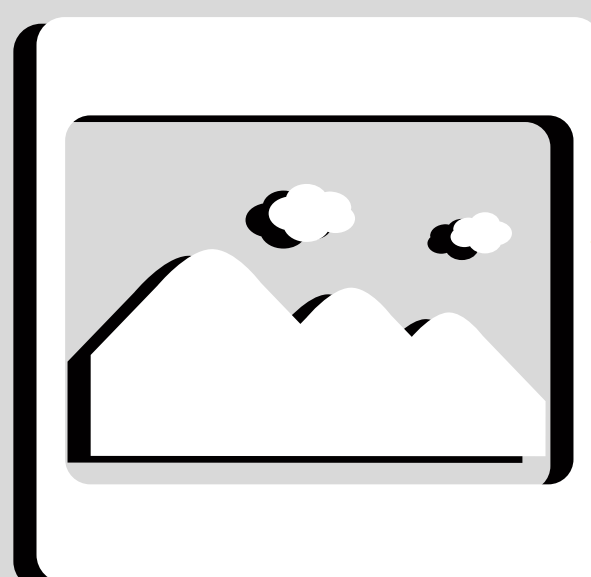
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You can also use visuals to help the child communicate. Visuals can be used to remind the child what behavior they can engage in to get their wants and needs met. Visuals can also be used in place of signs and gestures by teaching the child to point to a visual or hand you a visual of what they are trying to communicate.

For a visual to be effective, you will need to teach the child what the visual means.

Find IMAGES that represent the communication responses (ex: people playing to communicate "play")



PRINT the images and keep them around the house so the child can access them when needed

If the child engages in challenging behavior, provide a reminder that they can use the visuals to let you know what they need

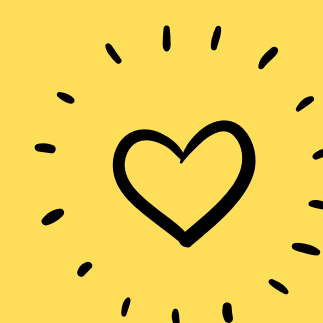
REFER to the visuals often. You can point to the visual and **REMINd the child what they can get by using it**

Pair the visuals with words to help the child learn that the visual represents the same thing as the words!

You asked for **HELP using your card! I can help you!**

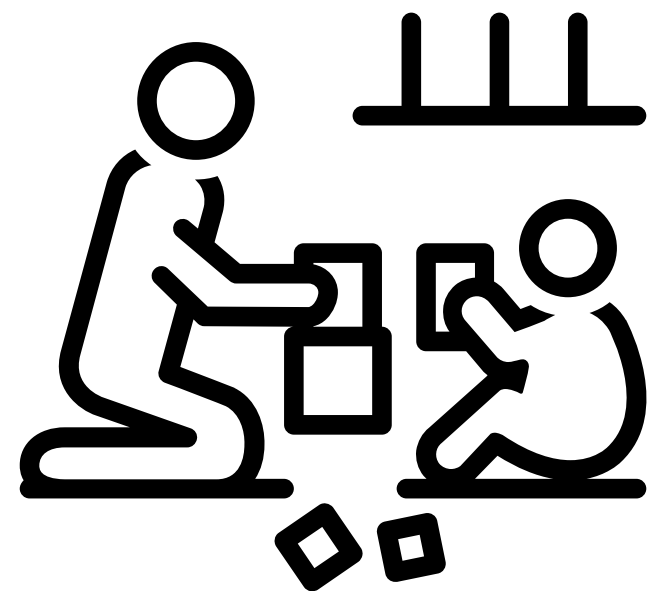
Remember you can point to "all done" to let me know when you're done with bath

See the next page for sample communication visuals you can print!





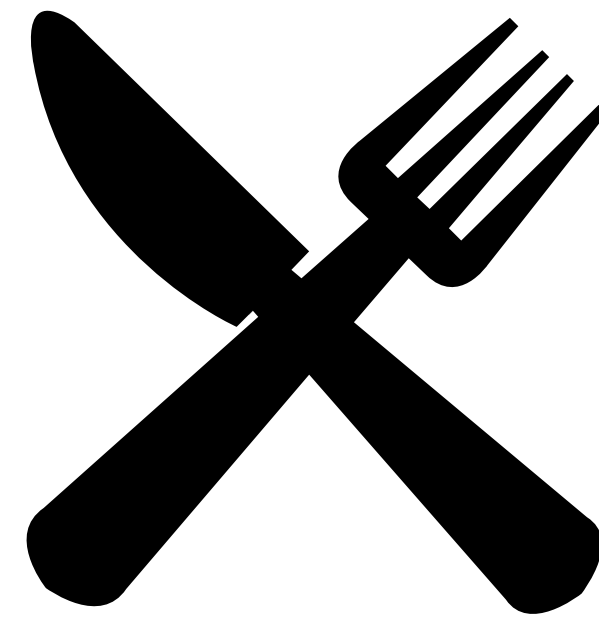
HELP



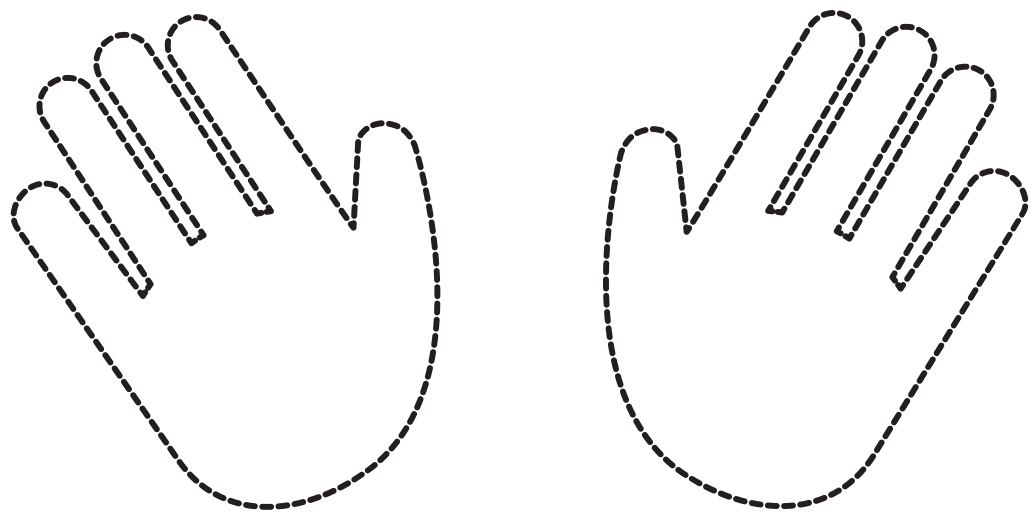
PLAY



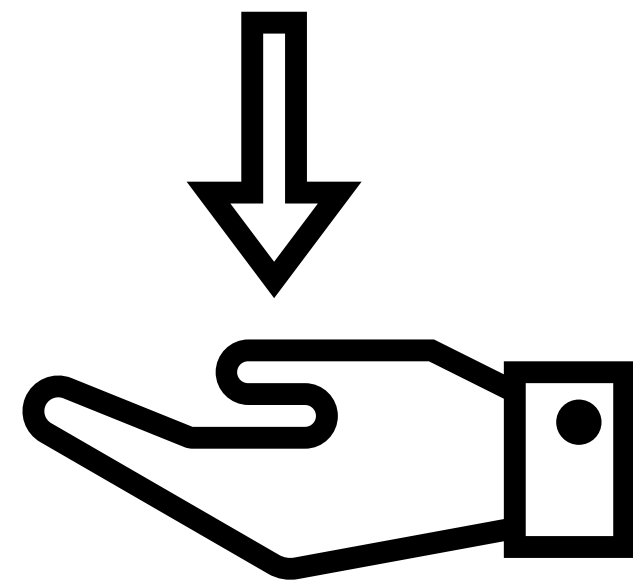
READ



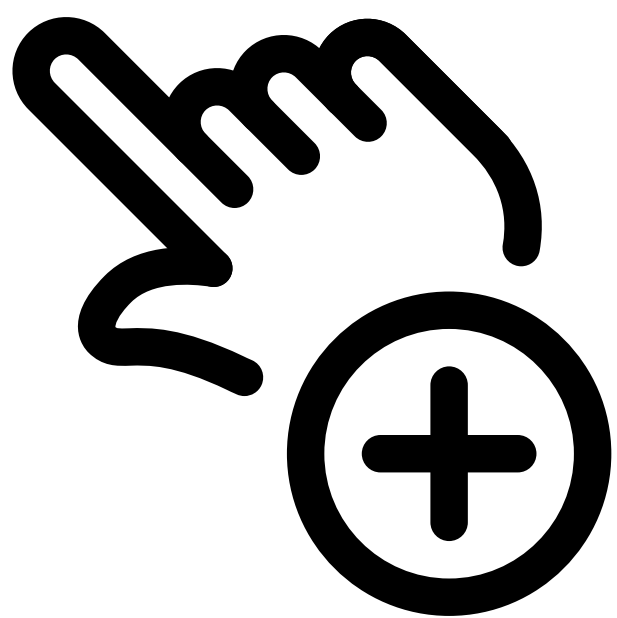
EAT/FOOD



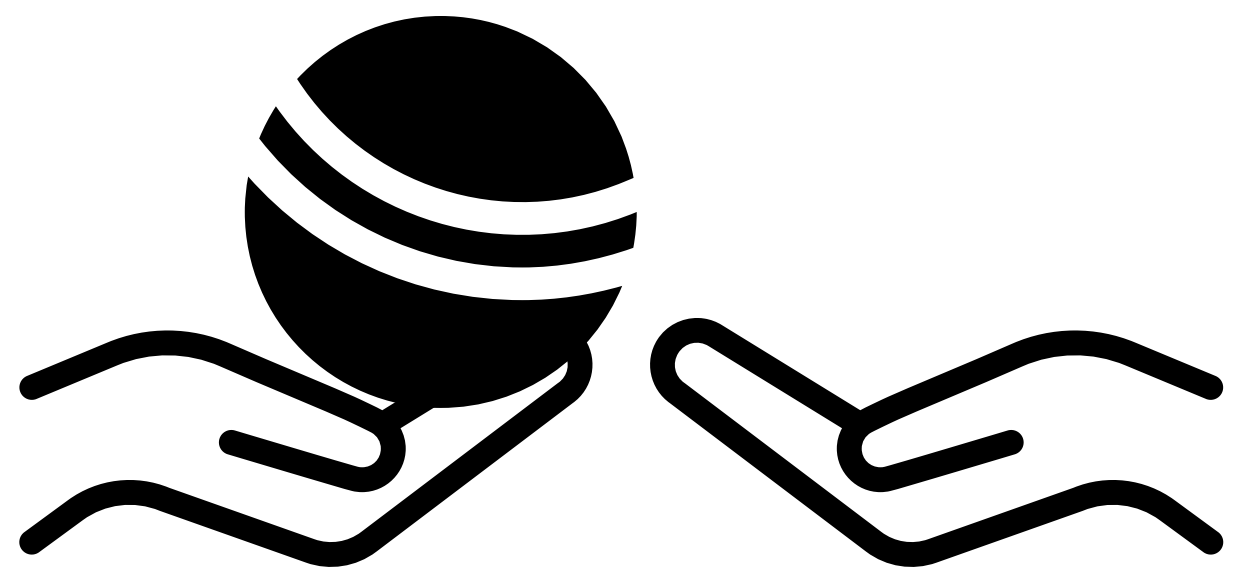
ALL DONE



WANT



MORE



TAKE TURNS