

- ***Fade Your Support Over Time***

Although you want to start practicing this complex skill with a good amount of support in the beginning, it is important that we have a plan to help them respond more independently early on, in the learning process.

It's helpful to make a short mental or written list of the ways you want to teach and show your child the meaning of "Yes/ No" questions and what they can do to respond. Another form of support is to model the spoken answer using spoken words and/ or pictured words on an AAC board. Start out using as much of these supports as needed for your child to answer accurately and once you feel confident that they are getting the hang of it, try to practice with less support, and then less, until they are doing it all on their own.

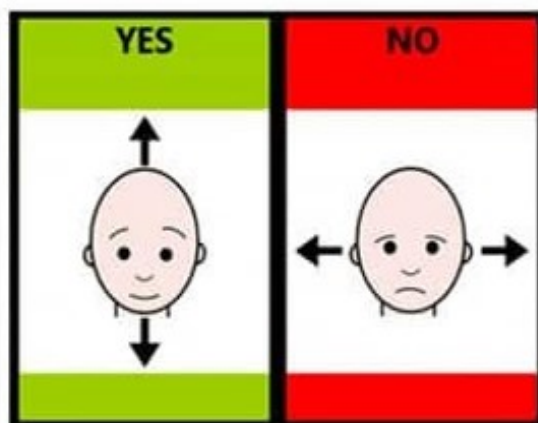
- ***Keep on Teaching through Feedback***

If your child answers incorrectly, such as by saying "No" when they mean "Yes", respond accordingly. Emphasize the meaning of their answer so they can see where they went wrong. Be sure to end on a successful, positive note with each practice. (Even if that means giving more support than you think your child needs or has needed in previous practice sessions). Model Yes/ No questions throughout the day so that your child can see/ hear this language by others in their world. This will help them learn through observation alongside their own direct practice time.

Children benefit from learning new skills using the principle of "repetition with variety". This means that you'll have to give your children frequent opportunities to practice the skills of answering Yes/ No questions and that you'll want some of that practice to be repetitive and other opportunities to be new. You can add variety to practice by changing the questions you ask, offering more complex questions over time and changing the structure of your questions to help your child gain flexible understanding. Once your child gets the hang of these simple Yes/ No questions with your support, increase the frequency of your practice and encourage more independence.

- ***Use Visual Support for "Yes" and "No"***

Many children benefit from visual support to help them understand questions and to know which words to use to respond to those questions. When you ask your child a Yes/ No question, consider using gestures like pointing or showing items while you ask. This helps your child understand what you are asking about. Using a body movement like a head nod or thumbs up for Yes and a head shake or thumbs down for No is also important to offer your child information on what the answer to the question should be. These visual support gestures are hints that can be faded over time, once your child learns to respond consistently on their own.



Then prompt the sentence again, "Is this a dog?." If the child doesn't say "YES", prompt the child to say "YES".

Make sure to do this activity over multiple sessions, depending on the child until he starts responding with a "YES"...Now comes the tricky part. Now you need to find out "Do they understand Yes/ No?", or have you taught him to over-generalize "YES"? So next, take the same set of items and ask him a "NO" question. Model the statement, "Is this a horse?" and prompt "NO, It's not a horse; it's a dog". Go through this activity over multiple sessions, depending on the child's capability to respond appropriately.



- ***Mixed Questions***

Once you have gone through teaching the question form for Yes/ No, start mixing it up. This lets you know if the child understands Yes/ No for information. Now that your child is answering these basic Yes/ No questions, you can start asking other Yes/No questions throughout the day.

- ***Asking More Questions - Basic Wants and Needs***

Before moving on to this step, make sure your child can answer "Do you want ___?" with either "YES" or "NO" depending on if she actually wants it (make sure she's not just saying yes to everything). Once your child can do that, try using other questions about her basic wants and needs. You can ask questions like "Can I have...?", "Do you need help?", "Are you ready?", etc.

- ***Generalization of "YES" and "NO"***

"Yes/ No" can become a rote response like "want," "please," or "thank you." It can lose its meaning if we are not careful while teaching our kids. The most important step of any skill is being able to generalize it. If a child can only use a skill in a specific contrived setting, it won't be helpful to her in her everyday life. After they have mastered "YES" and "NO" with preferred items, teach it using novel items.

- ***"YES"/ "NO" regarding information***

When teaching Yes/ No regarding information, it sounds challenging in which you may use a system of prompts. One of the issues is that our children aren't always used to the Yes/ No sentence format. They may have been taught to label or to give the function, but they might not have learnt the form for a Yes/ No as a response to information. So we need to teach them the sentence form for information.

First, start with ten items that you know that they know! It's crucial that the child understands the item. We aren't teaching them that the dog is the dog; they should already know this. Then you may go through each item individually and ask, "Is this a dog?", "Yes, it is a dog."

Once you've practiced helping her say "NO", try to get her to answer without your help. If she still says "YES", say "YES, YES paper" and hand her the uninteresting object. She will probably be confused because that wasn't really what she wanted. When she discards it or hands it back to you, say "oh! NO, NO paper" and switch back to offering the preferred object.

Food is another great way to work on this. Try having two donuts. One can have sprinkles and one can have broccoli. Offer the one with broccoli first. Try different combinations to help the child understand when he says "NO", he does not have to access or play with the thing he does not want.

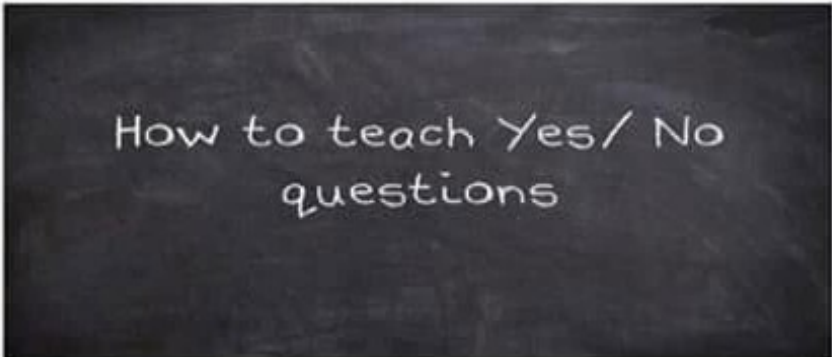


If the item reinforces, he may be saying "YES" because he knows that this is the correct response. It may be more of a rote answer. Likewise, you can do multiple trials with a "YES" item until the child responds with a verbal utterance (verbal approximation) or a picture choice of "YES". Some children may pick this up in a few trials, and some may need many attempts. Be sure to do this with a wide variety of items. We must make sure to generalize the word "YES" across all activities and environments.



- ***Then move to "NO"***

Once you feel that the child understands the concept of "YES", meaning that they want and get an item, you may introduce a non-reinforcing item such as a piece of paper or so. Therefore, you can introduce "NO" with "a piece of paper" or item that you know the child does not want. You would use the same question form, "NO... Do you want the paper?" or "Do you want the paper, NO?" If you were to say, "Do you want the paper?" and the child responded YES, you would give him the paper. It is important to know that the child is asking for what he wants!



How to teach Yes/ No questions

Here are some activities that can help you teach your child how to answer yes no questions. Make sure that your child is really good at each step before you move on to the next one. This may take some time to teach and practice but it will completely be worth your time!

- ***Start with "YES"***

This is a great place to start because you can use reinforcing items to teach this. That will help your child catch on faster. When teaching "Yes/ No" in response to a question like, "Do you want a cookie?" you may follow a structured manner in order to help the child achieve the expected target in a smooth manner. Using a highly reinforcing item, ask the child if he would like a cookie, including YES in the model. For example, "Do you want a cookie, YES?" or you could say, "YES?... Do you want a cookie?". We are prompting the correct answer. This is a form of errorless teaching.

Another way that you can work on this is when your child shows you that he wants it (by reaching for it or repeating the word), model "YES" for your child to imitate. You can do this by having him say the word "YES" or by nodding his head up and down. As your child gets better at this, try just nodding your head to remind him instead of saying the word "YES" for him to imitate each time.

Always make sure that you know the type of "Yes/ No" questions you are tackling with. We should be clear about what type of "Yes/ No" questions we are considering when working on "Yes/ No" questions!



YES



NO

1. Preference Based "Yes/ No"

These are questions that ask you to confirm or reject something being offered using "Yes/ No". "Do you want cookies?" (Yes or No). Begin by asking your child, "Do you want ___?" while offering an item. Model "Yes" if they show interest or take the item. Model "No" if they refuse it, or take it but appear dissatisfied. The best tools for this task are items that are highly motivating for the child to say "Yes" or "No".

2. Fact-Based "Yes/ No"

These are questions that ask you to confirm or reject a statement about something. It could be the identity of something, "Is this a banana?" or the condition of something "Are you cold?" This task gets more complex when more vocabulary and concepts are added. Concepts of time, for example, are difficult for some children to understand. The question "Did you eat a cookie before breakfast?" requires the child to understand "before" and "after" which can be tricky. Begin with concrete objects when introducing this task, "Is this a cookie?"

Though it might seem as though your child communicates "No" all the time (maybe the protests, maybe she runs away, he might sign "all done"), teaching children with language impairments to express the words, "Yes" and "No" can be a challenge in speech therapy most of the times. These two simple words can carry a conversation. By being able to answer these questions a child can describe preferences, answer questions and clearly express their wants and needs. It is an important part of development and often challenging in the toddler years when everything seems like a "Nooo!" Being able to accurately answer "Yes" and "No" questions can reduce communications frustration for children with language disorders, specifically Autism, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy or Developmental delays.

"Yes/ No" questions are a common target for speech therapy sessions because once a child can answer "Yes/ No" questions, you will be able to get more information to find out what they are trying to communicate. This can be incredibly helpful to reduce frustration caused when your child is trying to tell you something, but can't be understood.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF "YES"/ "NO" QUESTIONS

There are many different types of "Yes/ No" questions and knowing the difference between them is essential for teaching.

When you take a goal to work on "Yes/ No" questions, make sure to have an idea that it is a "Yes/ No" question regarding a request or "Yes/ No" to gather information. These are two different skills. Children may be able to emphatically say "YES", they want a cookie or "NO", they don't want peas, but what if you ask them a "Yes/ No" question regarding information. Is this a cookie yummy? Can the child answer an informational question with a "Yes" or "No"?

It also acts a major role in the safety of a child. For instance, if a child ever gets lost, being able to answer "Yes" and "No" questions can help get the child reunited with his parents or caregiver. If a child being touched with a wrong intention, being able to answer "Yes" and "No" questions can help to get to know whether it's a good touch or a bad touch. Likewise, being able to answer "Yes/ No" questions lead to a huge path for better communication and information gathering.

ANSWERING "YES" OR "NO" QUESTIONS AS A GOAL IN SPEECH THERAPY



IMPORTANCE OF ANSWERING "YES" OR "NO" QUESTIONS



This sounds to be easy going and simple as much as throwing a ball. But it's not at all simple and easy. How many times a day do we respond to or ask a "Yes/ No" question? Just imagine...Since we use this so much, it would seem like a simple thing to teach, but it's not at all easy.

Teaching a child to say "Yes" and "No" is an important skill for safety and communication. Once a child can say "Yes" and "No," they can better communicate their wants and needs. This can help them gain access to items or activities without getting frustrated.