

EXPANDING COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS BEYOND REQUESTS

Your child has mastered requesting.. what's next?

Requesting is often the 1st skill first skill AAC users learn because it's motivating and functional – but communication is so much more than asking for things. To teach **robust language development**, we need to model and teach a wide range of communication functions.

Expand Communicative Functions

Don't forget to teach your child how to use their AAC system for:

- Commenting
- Answering questions
- Asking questions
- Refusing/protesting
- Greeting/interaction
- Expressing Emotions
- Providing personal information

Build Language Structure

Start introducing more complexity once single-word or simple requests, it's time to support **more advanced language**:

- **Expand utterance length**
 - model short phrases
 - use expansions/extensions
 - use carrier phrases
- **Model grammatical markers**
 - plurals, pronouns, prepositions

Tips to Support Progress

- **Model without expectation** – continue using aided language stimulation in real routines
- **Avoid over-prompting** or over-testing
- **Use open-ended prompts** – avoid only asking “What do you want?”
- **Focus on fun**, functional communication – Games, routines, shared activities
- Keep the system **robust** and **ready**!

Refer to Developmental Norms

- Think of AAC language growth as similar to typical speech & language development.
- Use milestones to plan language goals that support not just functional communication, but the development of rich, expressive language.