

## Opportunities to Communicate

### **- Place items out of reach**

Place items that the child is motivated by, out of their reach. The Child will then have to communicate with someone to get what he wants.

### **- Place items in containers / jars**

Place items the child is motivated by in containers and jars so the child has to engage with you and ask for your help before they can get what they wants.

### **- Hard to operate toys / Waiting before offering help**

If the child is having difficulty using a toy by themselves (such as blowing bubbles/balloons, winding up toys / spinners, using pop-up toys/music etc.) try pausing before helping them. Pause and wait to create a reason and opportunity for the child to communicate that they need your assistance. Avoid showing the child or teaching the child to operate these types of toys by themselves or they will no longer have a reason to communicate with you.

### **- All but one**

During daily routines such as getting dressed, try giving the child the clothes they need to get dressed but retain an item like a sock or a shoe so they have a reason and an opportunity to request for the missing item from you.

### **- Bit by bit**

During activities you know the child enjoys e.g. snack or playing with trains, give them some of the item whilst retaining the rest yourself, then wait for the child to ask for more instead of giving them all the items at once. You can do this numerous times and create many opportunities for the child to ask for more.

### **- Offer items that the child doesn't want (for 'no')**

To encourage the child to communicate 'no' appropriately, offer them things that you know they do not like. You could do this at snack time (e.g. when you know he wants a banana offer brussell sprouts), or ask if they want a book, offer one that you know they do not like.

### **- Do something out of routine or unexpected**

Get creative and do unexpected things which are out the ordinary. For example put another child's coat on the child before going outside. This will provide a reason and an opportunity for the child to comment about 'silly' things.

### **- Hide an item**

Hide items you think the child will want / need to create reasons and opportunities for them to ask for your help to find them.

### **- Keep quiet**

Instead of asking the child what they want when they lead you to something or places an item in your hand, stand and say nothing to create reasons and opportunities for them to communicate. If the child is really motivated they will indicate that they want something and then you can respond.

- **Offer something different**

If the child always likes to look at the same book / play with the same car you could offer something different to create increased reasons and opportunities for them to communicate.

- **Creative 'stupidity' (e.g. make mistakes on purpose)**

You might like to pretend that you don't know something, or make a mistake 'accidentally' (but you are actually intentionally doing something to get a reaction). This will encourage the child to communicate with you more by either requesting what they want, commenting that you haven't done something correctly or by telling you how to do it. For example, you could pretend to put the child's shoes on and wait for their reaction. You could try to unlock the door with a pencil and leave the keys in your other hand so that they can tell you what you have done wrong and then what you need to do.