

## ASSISTIVE COMMUNICATION CLINIC

### Activities to Help Augment your Child's Communication

1. Look at pictures and story books and read to your child. Encourage them to look at certain parts of pictures, and point to specific characters or objects, if able.
2. Provide two objects (i.e. food items, toys etc.) for your child to look at or to reach for to make a choice. Name each object. See Choice-Making handout for more information.
3. Cut out large coloured pictures from catalogues, sales flyers, magazines, etc., which represent objects or activities that the child might want to request.

Ideas for positioning pictures include:

- Glue to cardboard or posterboard squares
- Place in a photo album or scrapbook
- Secure on a table or wheelchair tray
- Place in a binder in clear sheet protectors

If the child is just starting to use pictures to communicate, place only one picture on a page, giving a choice of two. If the child is consistently successful at pointing, progress to smaller pictures and more pictures to a page.

4. Take large, clear coloured photographs of people, objects or activities that the child may want to request or talk about. Make sure that the background of the photos is as plain as possible and of a contrasting colour to the object. Present to the child as in #3 above.
5. Give the child verbal feedback to confirm their choice (i.e. "You picked the music").
6. Give the child what they have chosen, even if you are not sure that was what they picked. Encourage them to explore or play with the item, even briefly. This way they will learn that the request will be provided to them.

### Positioning for Augmentative Communication

1. Have your child sit with good head, trunk and foot support. This will allow for best eye contact, best vision of pictures, and best reaching and pointing to objects and pictures.
2. If sitting at a table, make sure the child's feet are flat on the floor and the chair is as close as possible to the table. Ideal table height is 1" to 2" above the child's waist height when they are sitting.

3. Generally, hold or place objects or pictures centered in front of the child. Hold them up in front of their face if they has difficulty looking down to a table.
4. If your child has a wheelchair, ensure they are positioned symmetrically back in the seat, and straps are fastened as needed (i.e. pelvic, chest, foot). Use the wheelchair tray if you have one to provide arm support and close positioning of objects and materials.
5. When presenting 2 or more objects or pictures for choice making, encourage the child to look at each option and then choose by returning their eyes to the desired choice, or reaching/pointing to their choice. Pointing may be easier if the objects or pictures are placed down on a table once they have been looked at.
6. When a child is able to point with a hand or a finger, encourage pointing with one hand at a time; preferably with a pointing finger of the dominant hand if this is established.