Teaching AAC:
More with Core

Facilitated by: Elisabeth Christe, Emilie Brown-Tesolin, Kaori Ohashi, Susan Waite, Kerstin Blazina, Carol Jazzar & Andrea Prupas

English Montreal School Board

With contributions and content from: Helene Packman, COE ASD, LBPSB (developed for Teaching AAC 2016-2018)

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

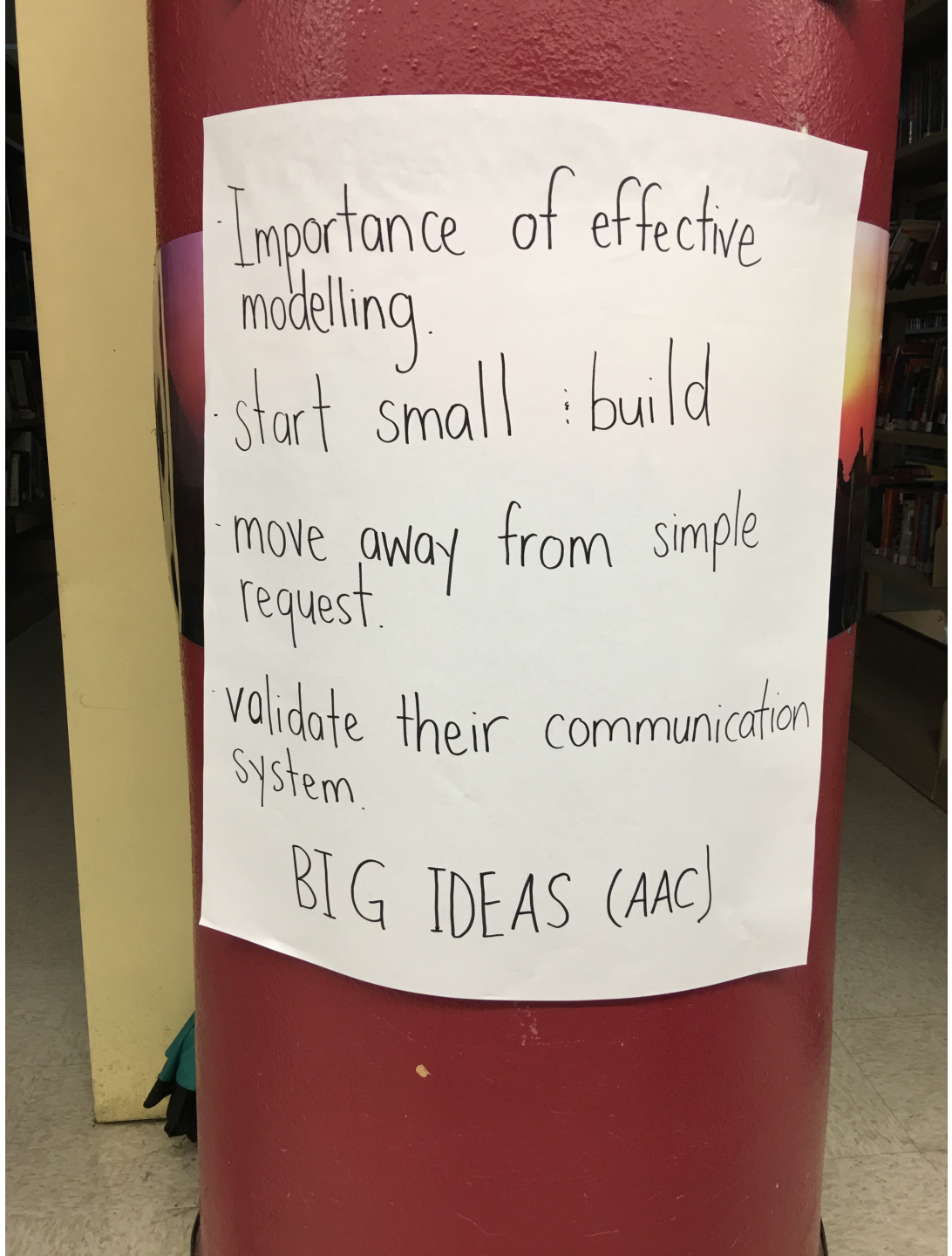
Big Ideas (AAc)

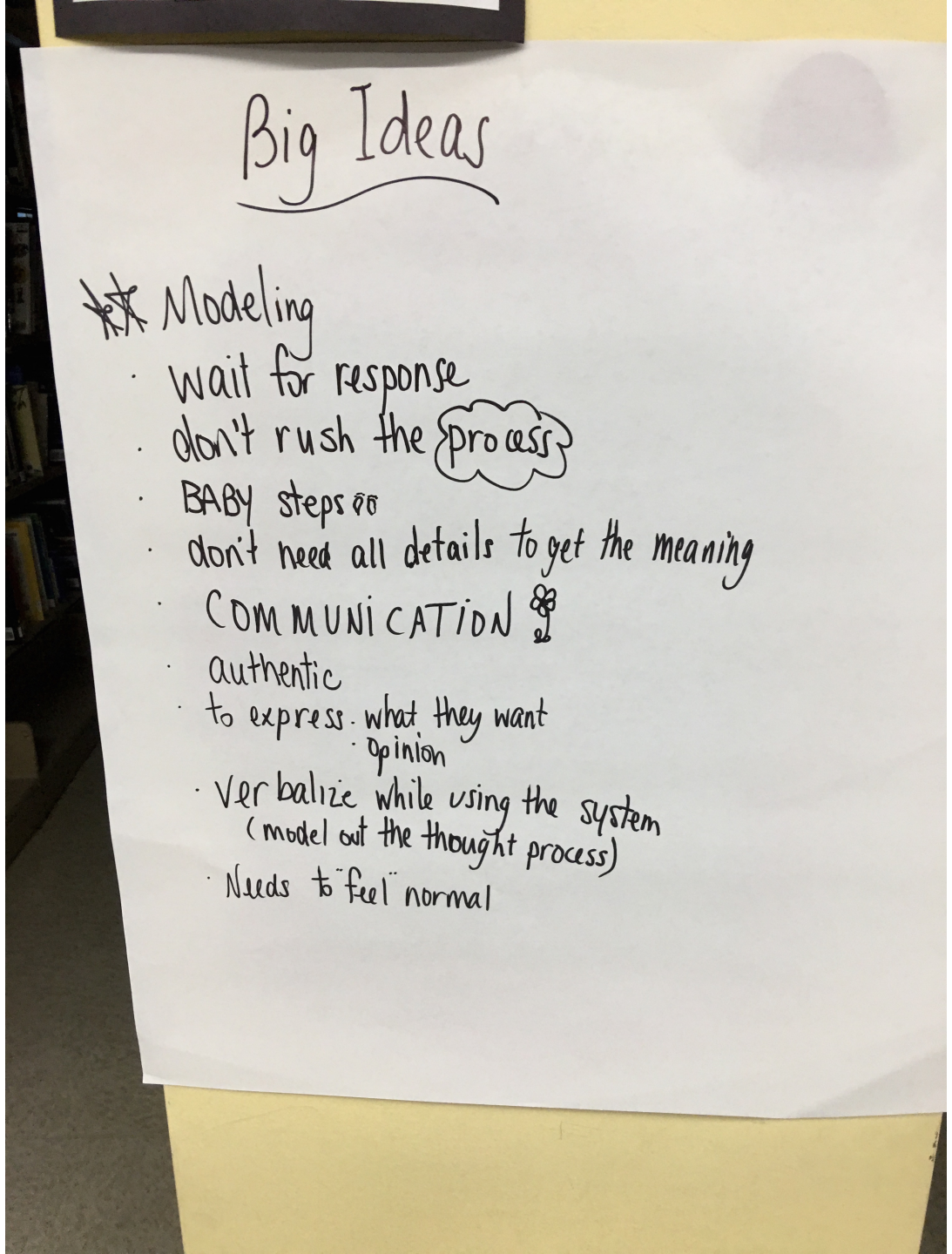
1. modelling
   - ↳ Teacher needs to be more confident
   - ↳ It is ok to make mistakes (look for symbols).
   - ↳ we need to give students time to learn
   - ↳ start small → Not all symbols at once
   - ↳ model / point to core symbols only not all fringe vocabulary

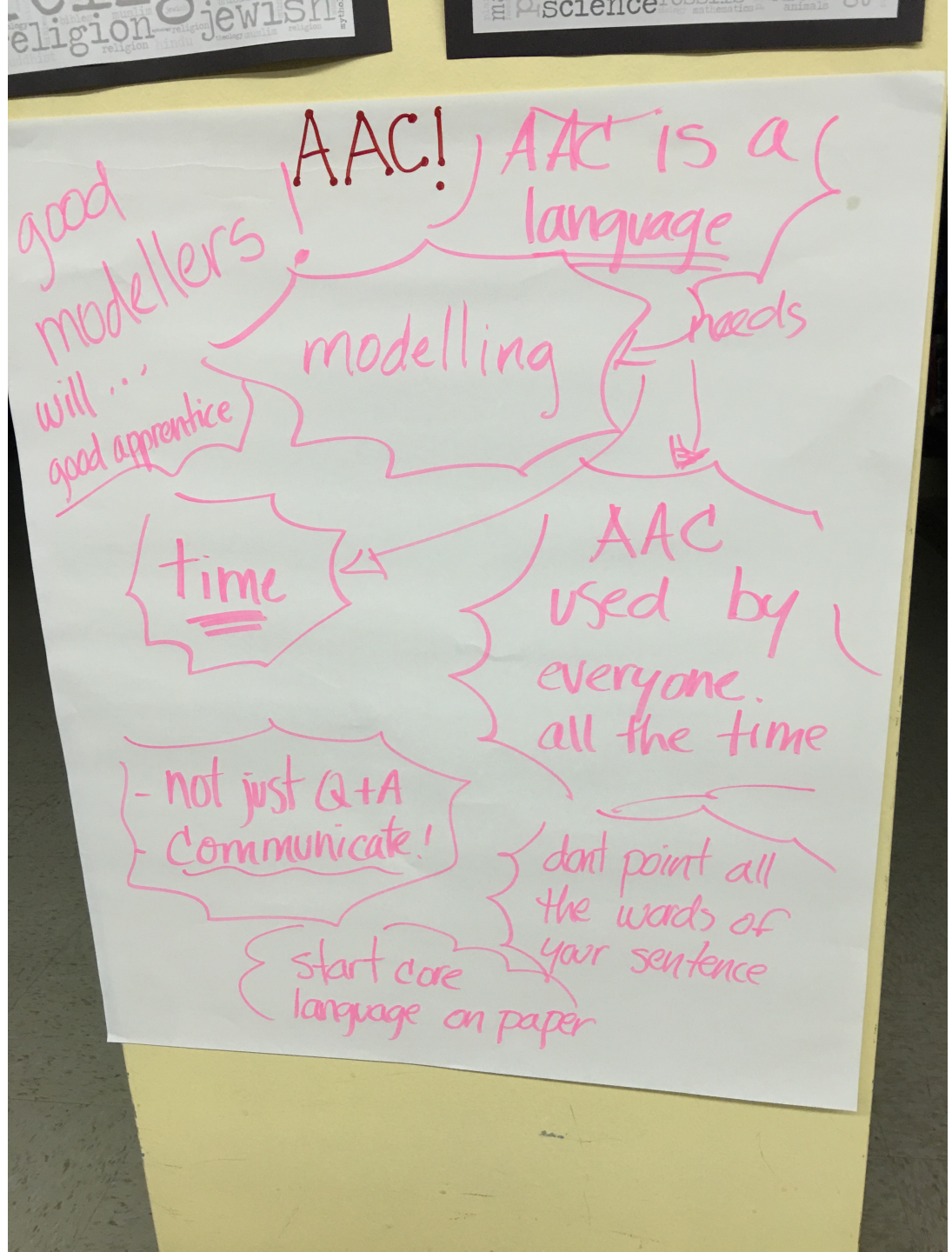
2. Communication is more than just answering

3. Give opportunity for children to use core symbols during regular daily activities. (morning routine, snack ... etc).

- DO NOT give up!!! Watch videos / blogs . . .


- Importance of effective modelling.
- start small : build
- move away from simple request.
- validate their communication system.
BIG IDEAS (AAC)


Big Ideas
Modeling
wait for response
don't rush the process
BABY steps
don't need all details to get the meaning
COMMUNICATION
authentic
to express. what they want
opinion
Verbalize while using the system
(model out the thought process)
Needs to "feel" normal

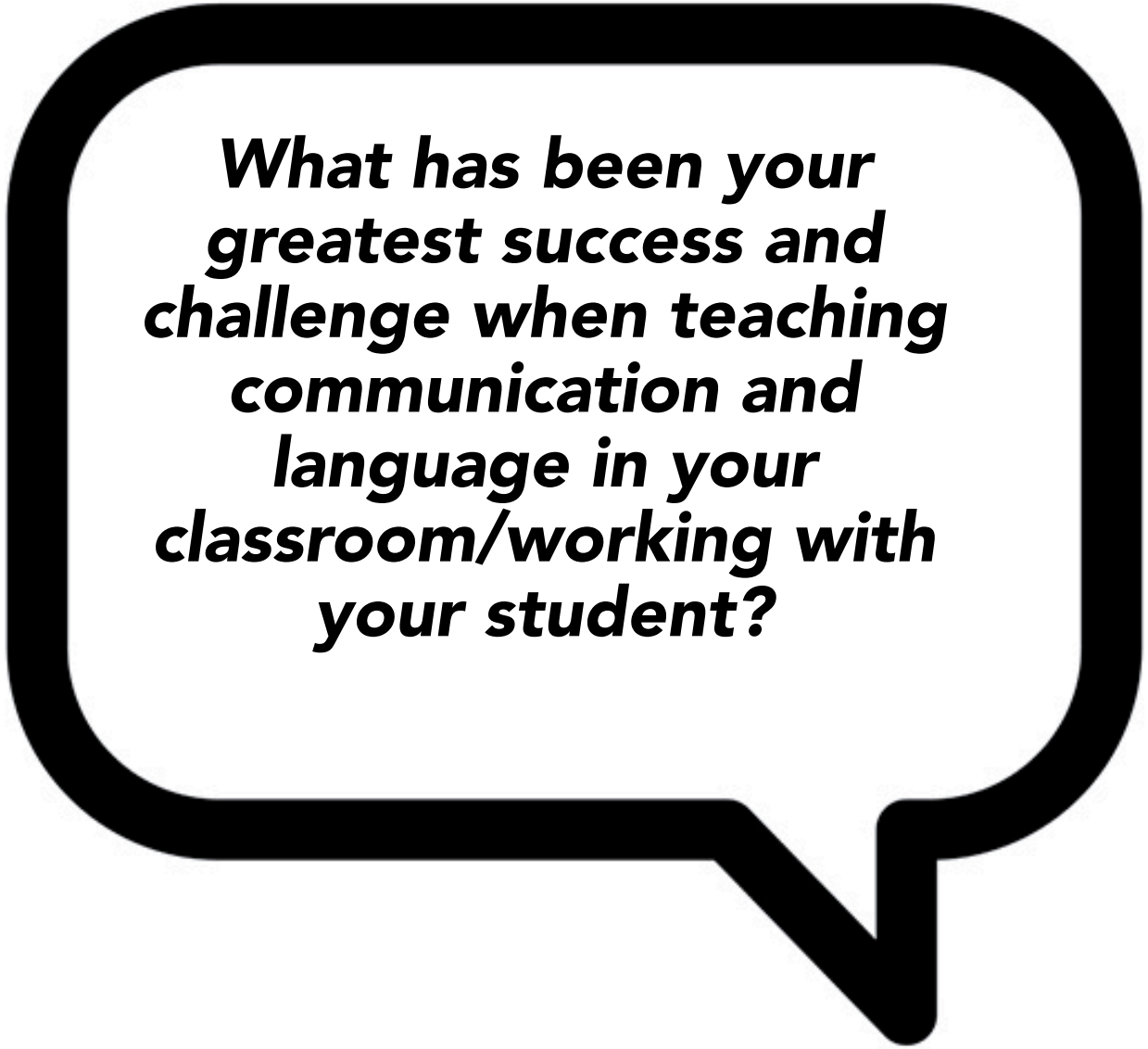

AAC!
good modellers will ...
good apprentice
modelling
AAC is a language
needs
time
AAC used by everyone all the time
- not just Q+A Communicate!
start core language on paper
don't point all the words of your sentence

"DO THE BEST YOU
CAN UNTIL YOU
KNOW BETTER. THEN
WHEN YOU KNOW
BETTER, DO BETTER."
– MAYA ANGELOU
fabQuote.co

QC Teaching AAC website

https://sites.google.com/site/teachaac/

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB



© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Today's learning goals

- To develop a shared understanding of what is communication (ASD)
- To understand AAC and the role of core vocabulary in learning language
- To understand and practice instructional strategies using core vocabulary
- To develop classroom activities that emphasize core vocabulary

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

What is Communication?

"the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express or *exchange* information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to *someone else*."

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

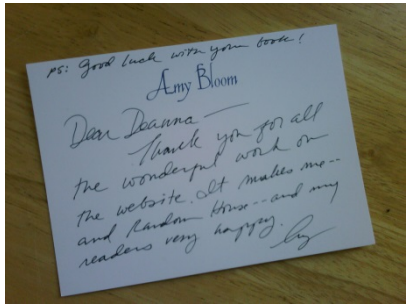
© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Communication

Body Language

Pictures

Gestures



Writing

Facial expressions

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Communication

Behaviour

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

What is AAC?

- *A*ugmentative and *A*lternative *C*ommunication

- **AAC** is a set of tools and strategies that an individual uses to solve everyday communication challenges.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

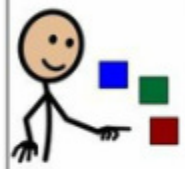
How are you using AAC in your everyday instructional/therapeutic practice?

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Communication Bill of Rights

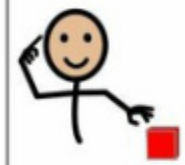
I have the right:

to be given real choices



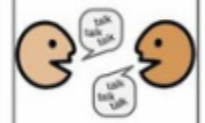
to say no, refuse and reject choices

to ask for what I want

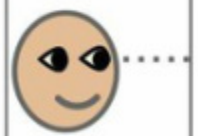


to share my feelings

to be heard and responded to (even if the answer is no)



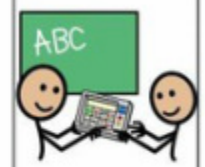
to ask for and get attention and interaction



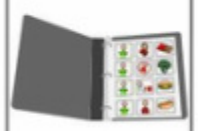
to have and use my speech system all the time

ask and know about my schedule and world

to be taught how to communicate

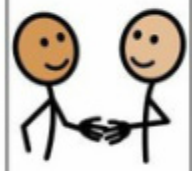


to have my speech system in working order and to have a back up

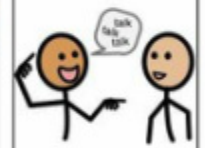


to be a full and equal member of my community

to be treated with respect and dignity



to be spoken with, not about



to be communicated with in a sensitive manner

From the National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities. (1992). for meeting the communication needs of persons with severe disabilities. Asha, 34(Suppl. 7), 2–3. adapted by K. A

Who is a candidate?

- Individuals are candidates for AAC if they are not able to express wants, needs, ideas, thoughts, questions, fears, and pain to whoever they want, whenever they want.

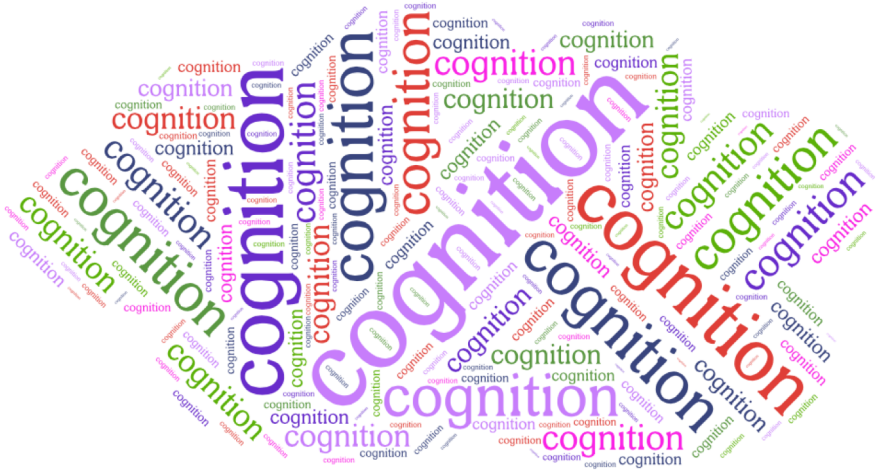
- ie. we can't demand pre-requisite skills!

(Speak for Yourself AAC, 2014)

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Cognition Myth

“His/her cognitive skills are too low to learn to use AAC. The individual has the cognitive skills of a 9-month-old. That system is for ‘higher functioning’ kids.”



© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Behavior Myth

“We have to get his/her behaviors under control and then we can consider communication.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Enough Verbal Speech Myth

“He/she has enough verbal speech and can say sentences so the individual doesn’t need AAC”

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

*Presume competence

- **All** learners CAN improve and learn communication and language….
- So we model more robust language and we find supports and strategies to make learning happen.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Communication

Pre-intentional

Intentional

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Intentional Communication

Develops around 8-10 months

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

What is Language?

"A system of words or signs that people use to express thoughts and feelings to each other."

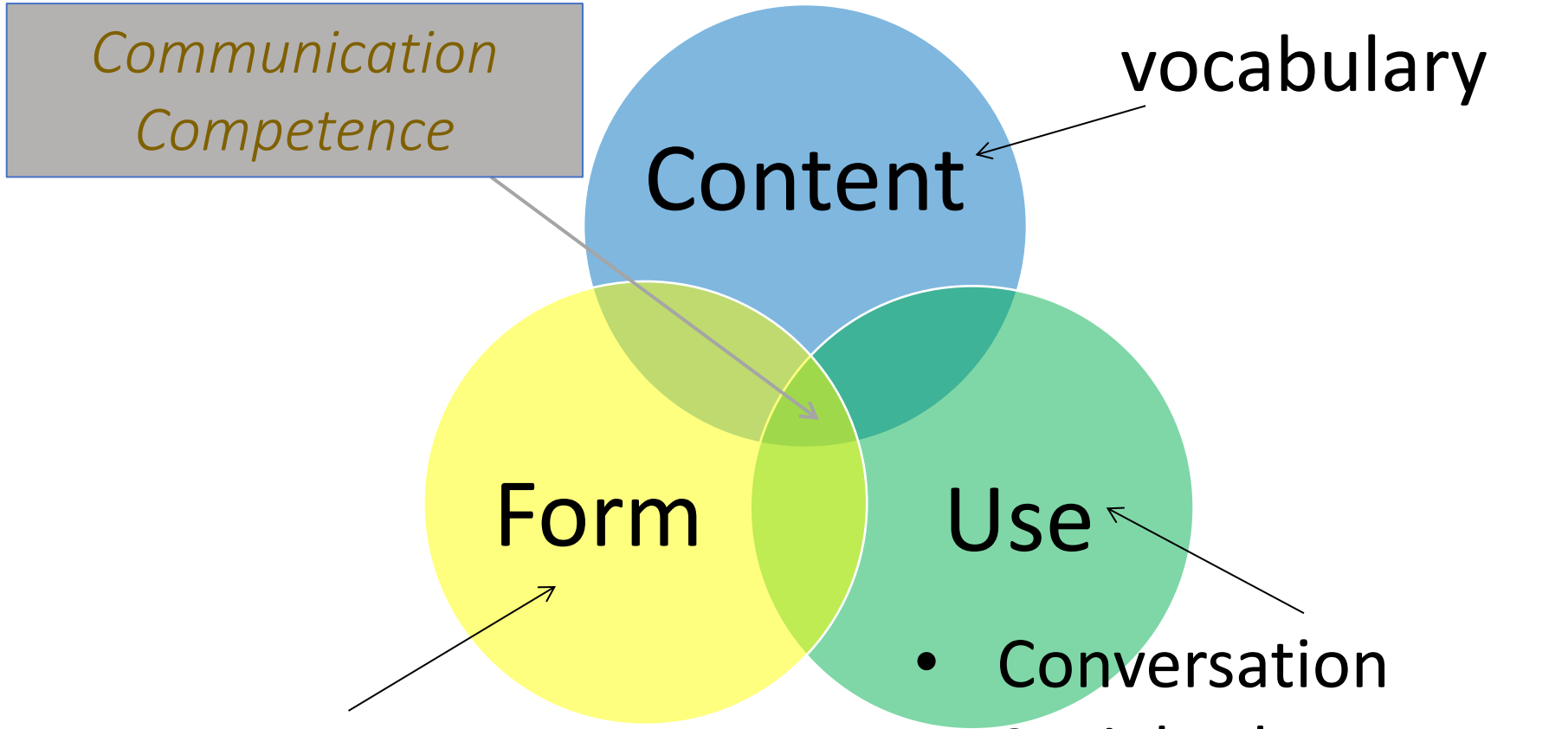
Merriam-Webster

Every language has a set of rules that govern the CONTENT, FORM and USE of that language

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Language

Communication Competence



vocabulary

The structure of the language

- Conversation
- Social rules
- Matching language to the situation

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Content (Expressive)

Neurotypical Pattern of Development

- First words appear at about 12 months
- Rapid growth in vocabulary (1000 words by 3 years old)
- Quick to generalize the meaning of words to a variety of objects and actions.

ASD Pattern of Development

- First words are delayed
- When words develop a string of words may function as a “single word.”
- Difficulty generalizing words
- Echoic Speech may be present

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Form (Expressive)

Neurotypical Pattern of Development

- Early word combinations appear when the child has about 50 words.
- Language is generative
- Children begin to learn grammatical morphemes

ASD Pattern of Development

- Groups of words function as “single words”
- Tendency towards echolalia (immediate or delayed)
- May appear grammatically sophisticated.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Use (Expressive)

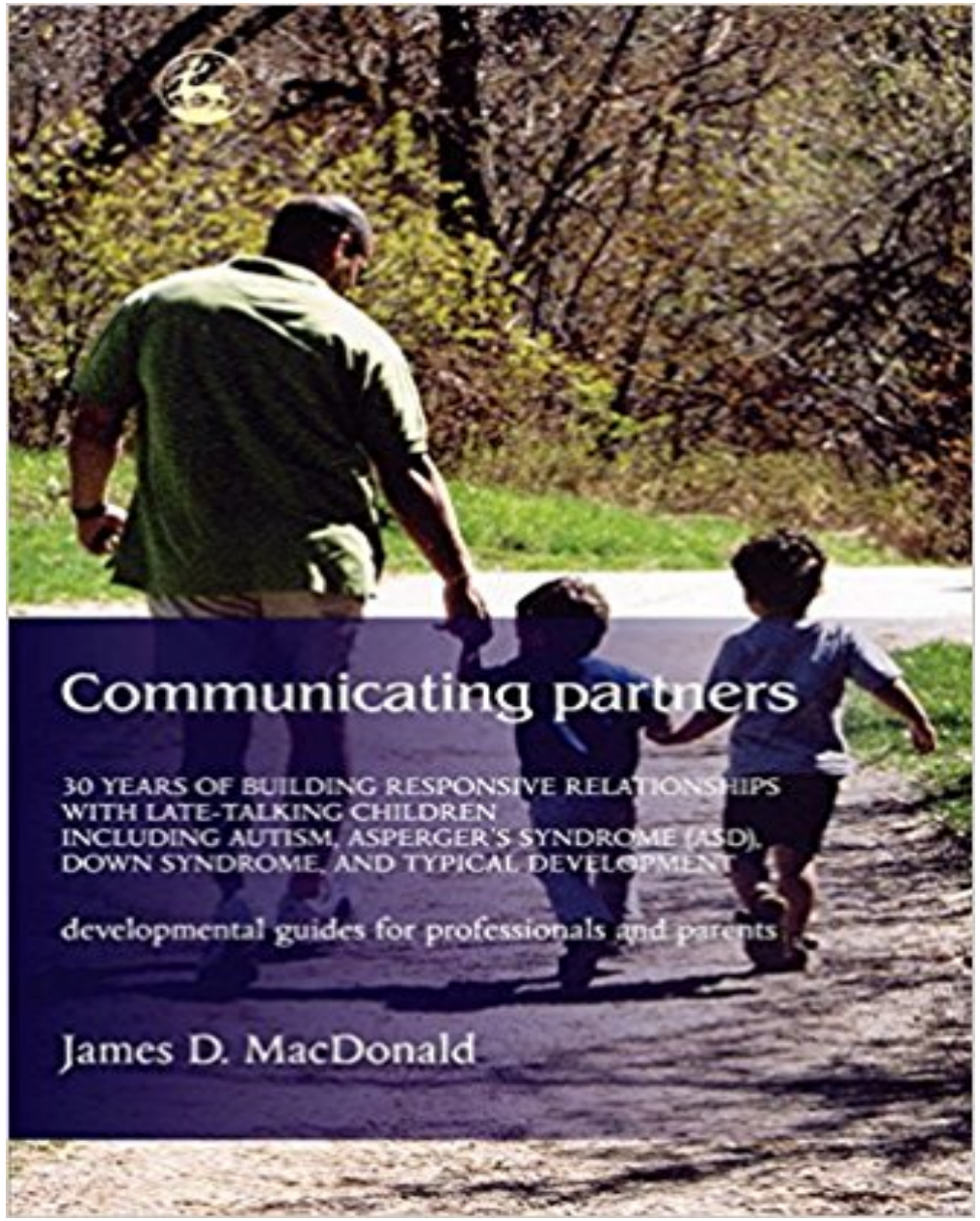
Neurotypical Pattern of Development

- Intentional communication begins at about 8 months of age before the onset of words
- Functions of communication develop simultaneously
- Language use is generalized to relevant objects and events very quickly
- Children adjust their language based on the audience

ASD Pattern of Development

- Lack of attention to people begins to appear at 6-8 months
- Limited functions of language use
- Language use may remain specific to situational contexts
- Difficulty adjusting language based on the context

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB



MacDonald, J.D. (2004) *Communicating partners*: *30 years of building responsive relationships with late-talking children, including autism, Asperger's Syndrome (ASD), Down Syndrome, and typical development.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

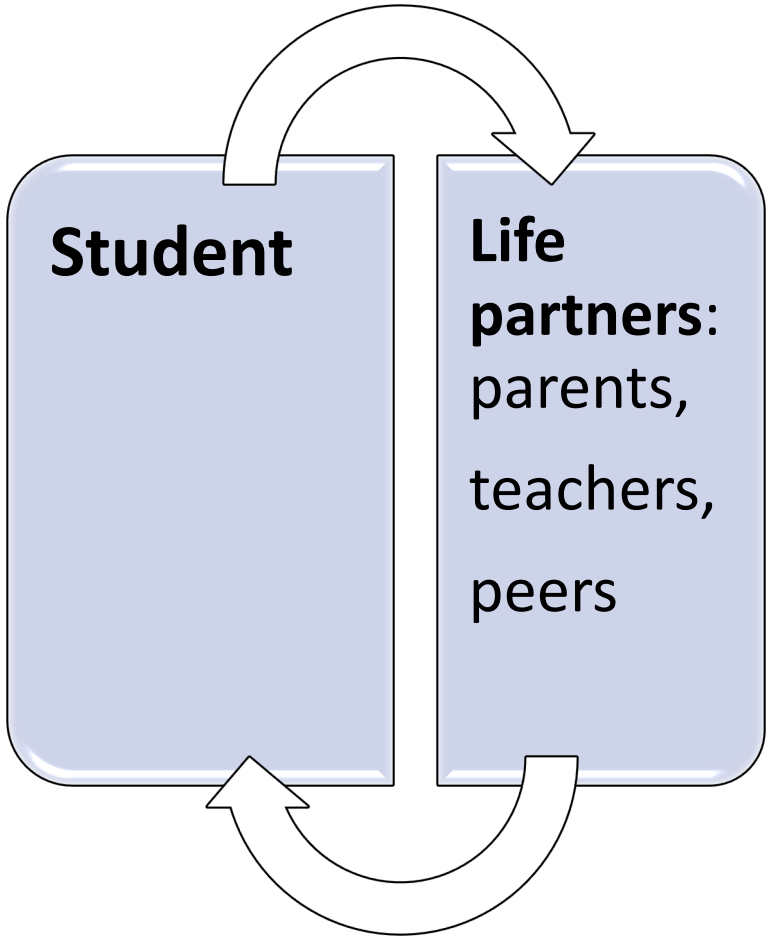
Implementing Core as "Communicating Partners"

Two major questions:

1. "What do children…need to do to become social and communicative in daily life?"

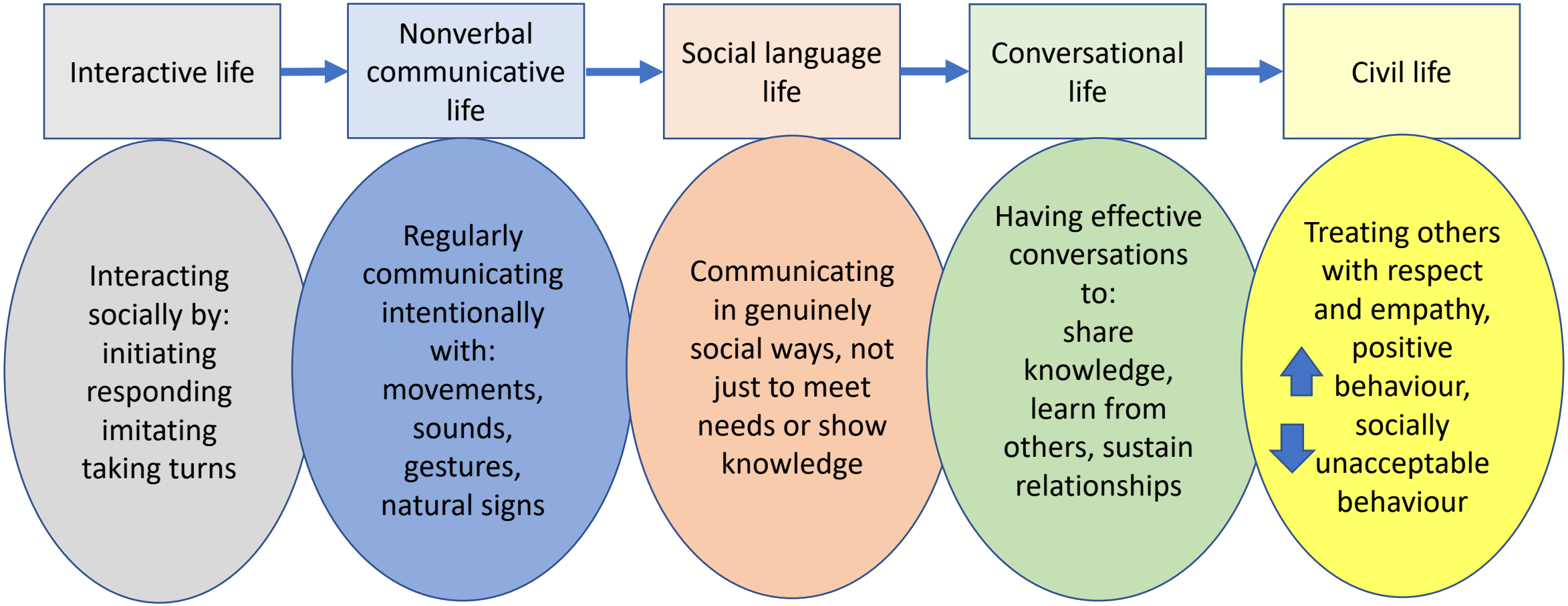
2. "How can their daily life partners (you!) interact with them to help them become more social and communicative?"

“Communication development is a social process that requires active participation….



….in daily routines.”
(+ other activities)

Five “lives” ➡ social & communicative potential



5 basic strategies in each stage

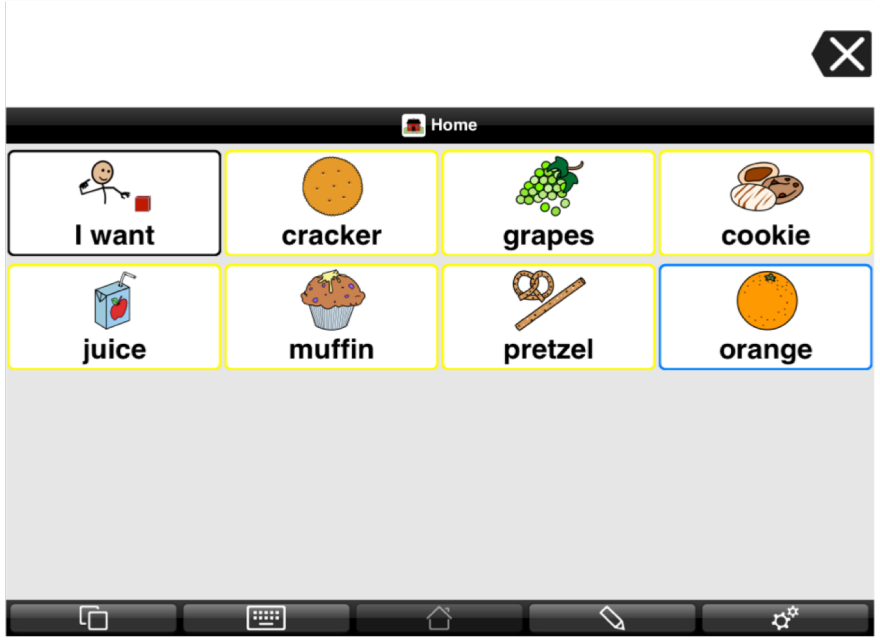
1. **Be balanced and reciprocal**
   - Take turns
2. **Be matched**
   - Match your expectations with what the student can do
3. **Be responsive (versus directive)**
   - Respond to student **as if** he/she were communicating
   - Then wait…..
4. **Share control** (follow 50% of the time/take the lead 50% of the time)
   - Limit directions & command to <20% of your behaviours
   - Limit questions to <20% of your talk
5. **Be playful**
   - Be animated
   - Be flexible and relaxed
   - Show that you are genuinely enjoying the interaction

Interaction: The bottom line

“Communicating Partners focuses on helping you help your child [student] do more of what he is doing now but to do it in social interactions.”

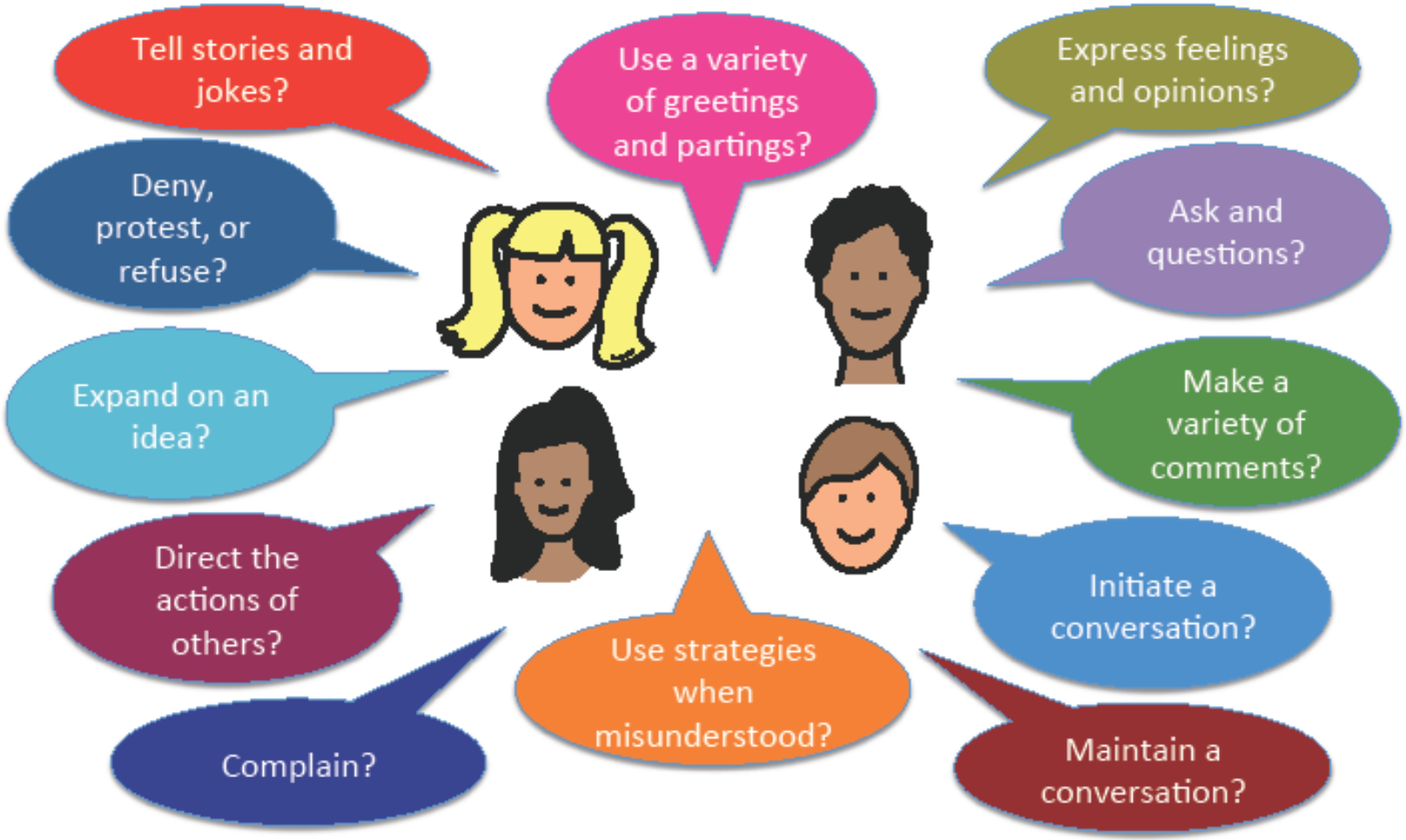
Communication is…

- More than requests!



© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

"Sure, I can request, but can I…?"



AAC users need access to COLORFUL language!

©2016 Speaking of Speech.com, Inc.

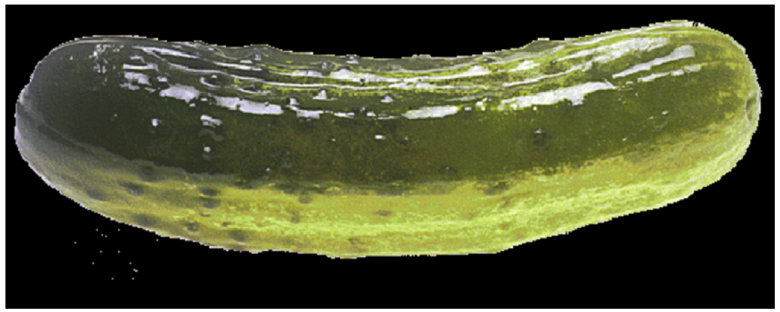
© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

What is core vs. fringe vocabulary ?

- Core vocabulary is a small set of simple words that are used frequently and across contexts.

(Cross, Baker, Klotz & Badman, 1997)

- Fringe vocabulary



© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

All words are not created equal

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Generative language is based on core words

- 80% of what we say throughout a day comes from a small bank of 400-500 CORE words

- 20% of what we say comes from a bank of thousands of FRINGE words

Vanderheiden & Kelso (1987)

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Core contains all parts of speech

Nouns

"ball" "cookie"

Verbs

"open" "go" "take"

Adverbs

"here" "away"

Adjectives

"gone"

"big" "happy"

Pronouns

"I" "you" "It"

Prepositions

"down" "off" "out"

Questions

"what" "who"

Interjections

"uh oh"

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Core words

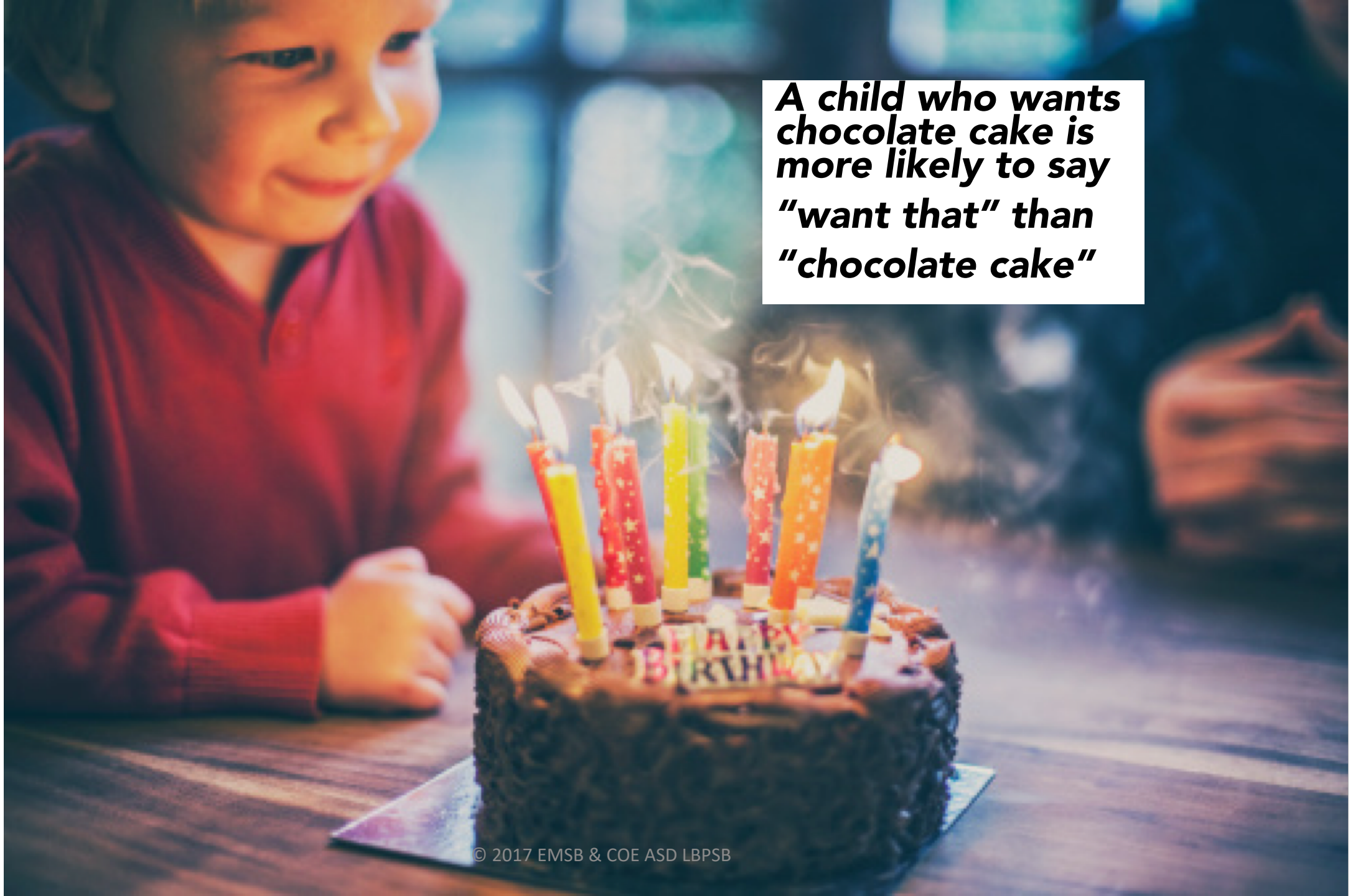
- The words we have in common
- “Bang for your buck” words
- We can use and teach them in many situations

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Let’s try it

- Turn to a partner.
- Ask them a question that they can answer in a few sentences.
- Write the sentences down and count the core words in the sentence.
- How many words were core? How many words were fringe?

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB



© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Core vocabulary and AAC

- Core vocabulary has not typically been the central focus of many or most AAC systems.

- Why do you think this is?

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Core vocabulary and AAC

- Core words are difficult to represent in pictures.

- Core contains fewer **picture producers** (fewer than 10%)

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

What are picture producers?

“Car” vs. “do”

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Here & There

This And That

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

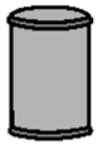
Transparent vs. opaque symbols

- Most core vocabulary is represented through abstract symbols that range from transparent (i.e., makes sense after it is explained) to opaque (i.e., doesn't have any resemblance to the word or concept)

- This makes the need for effective teaching all the more important.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Literacy produces the illusion of transparency

can 	cane	cap
cape	hat	hate
mad	made	man

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

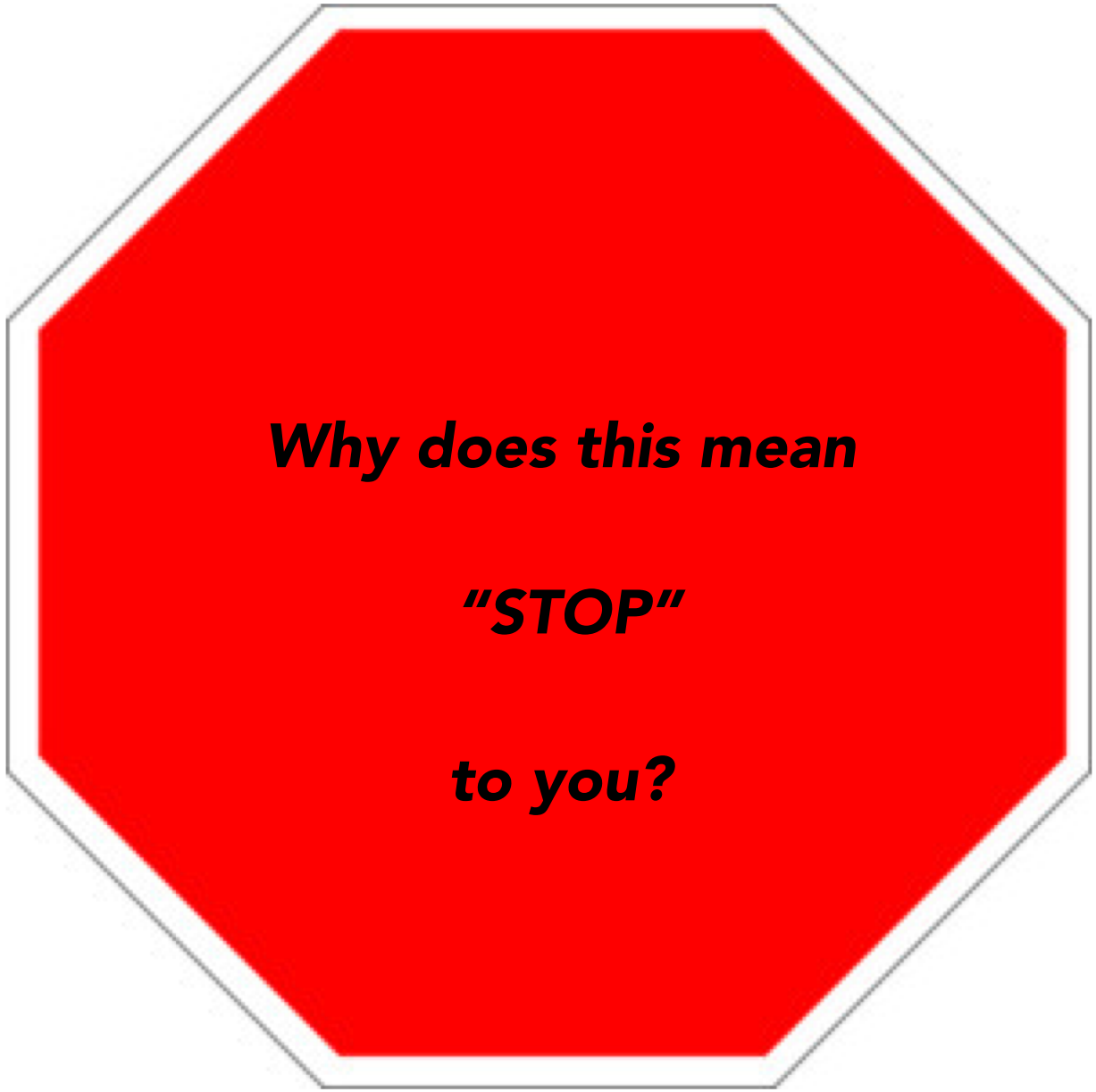
© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Can I have a drink?

I like to drink with a straw in a can.

I like lemonade and strawberry milkshake

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB



© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

What is a motor plan?

- The ability to come up with an idea or movement;
- Plan how to complete that idea or movement and;
- Execute that idea or movement.

(NCLD.org)

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Automaticity and motor planning

- Automaticity is the ability to do something without thinking about it

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Motor planning and AAC

How hard would it be to type if this was your keyboard at home?

And this was your keyboard at school?

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

AAC and motor planning

- Words should stay in the same location, so speed and **automaticity** can develop.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Let’s try it

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Remember…

- Single words are flexible. We can combine them in many different ways to say new and different things.

- Phrases are quick, but less flexible.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Teaching AAC

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

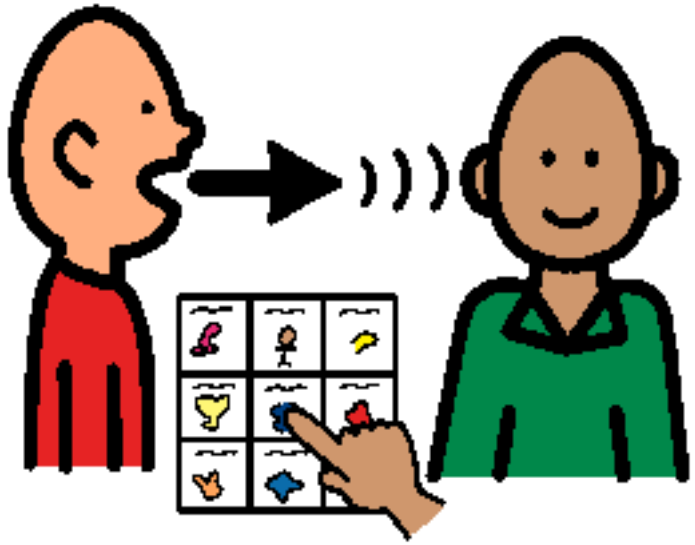
≠

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

AAC teaching strategy

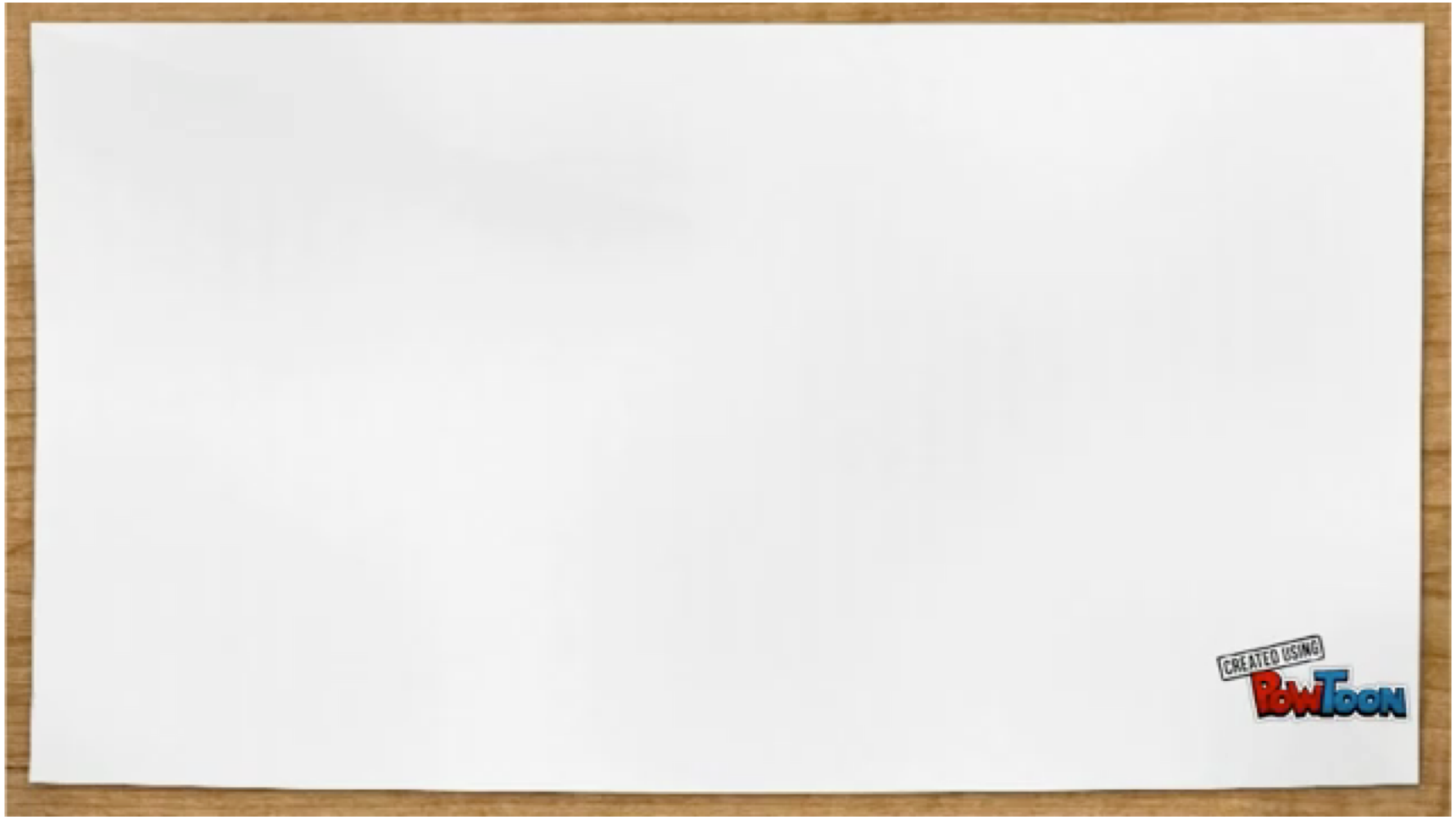
Aided language input

Adult modeling using the core vocabulary board



(Goossens, Crain & Elder)

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB



© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

please

Use my talker when speaking to me. It helps me understand and learn vocabulary.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Why use aided language as a strategy?

- Students need models to learn a language
- Modeling is highly visual
- Implemented in situations that are in natural contexts
- High level of interest in activity
- The core vocabulary board becomes a tool for both expressive and receptive language
- We experience what it is like for the student
- It forces us to slow down!

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

How do I begin with ALI?

- Use your own finger to point.
- You (partner) are saying what YOU want to say. You are not talking FOR the student.
- Do not ask the student to repeat what you say with the Core Board. He/she will if he/she wishes.

(Adapted from Dynavox, Partner Assisted Input, 2011)

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Guidelines for ALI

- If you can’t find a word/message, just say it out loud without the Core Board.

- Practice before beginning with the student.

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

“We need to lay a solid foundation and that takes time. We all love to get immediate results, but the more realistic scenario is slow and steady gains.”

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Let’s try it

- With your speech and language pathologist and colleagues from your school, try modeling ALI using the board and materials provided. Pick a core word to focus on.
- Switch roles (teacher and student).

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Feedback

- What are some things you notice about using ALI to teach these activities?

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Putting core into practice in your classroom

Your choice:

Activity-Based Core or Word of the Week?

https://sites.google.com/site/teachaac/lesson-plans

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Core for literacy: “LIKE”

- Make a list of things you “like” and “don’t like”
- Talk about what part of the story you “liked”
- Create a book of “activities we like”
- Predictable chart writing: “I like…” or “I don’t like…”

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

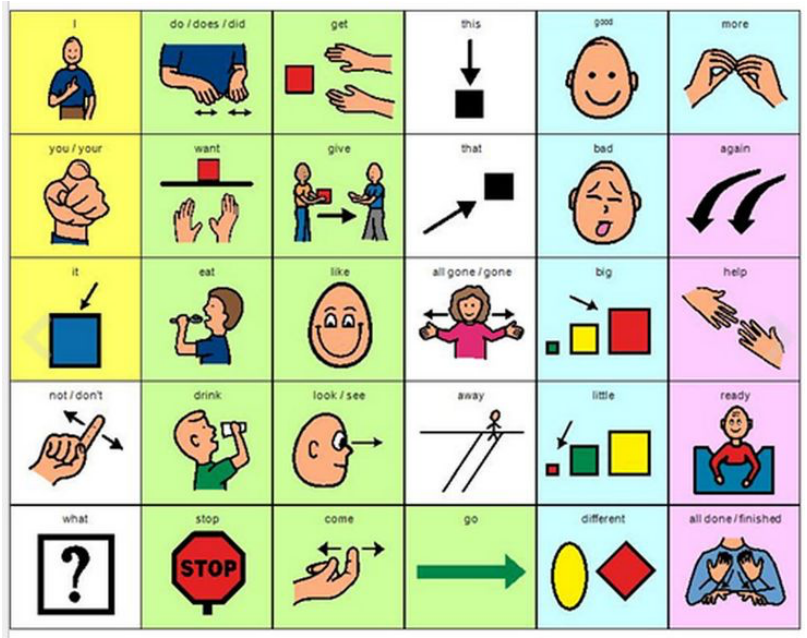
Let’s try it

- Select your model of curriculum integration: activity-based or word of the week?
- Write down a short script for the activity (in the back of your package).
- Try your lesson!

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Keep these ideas in mind…

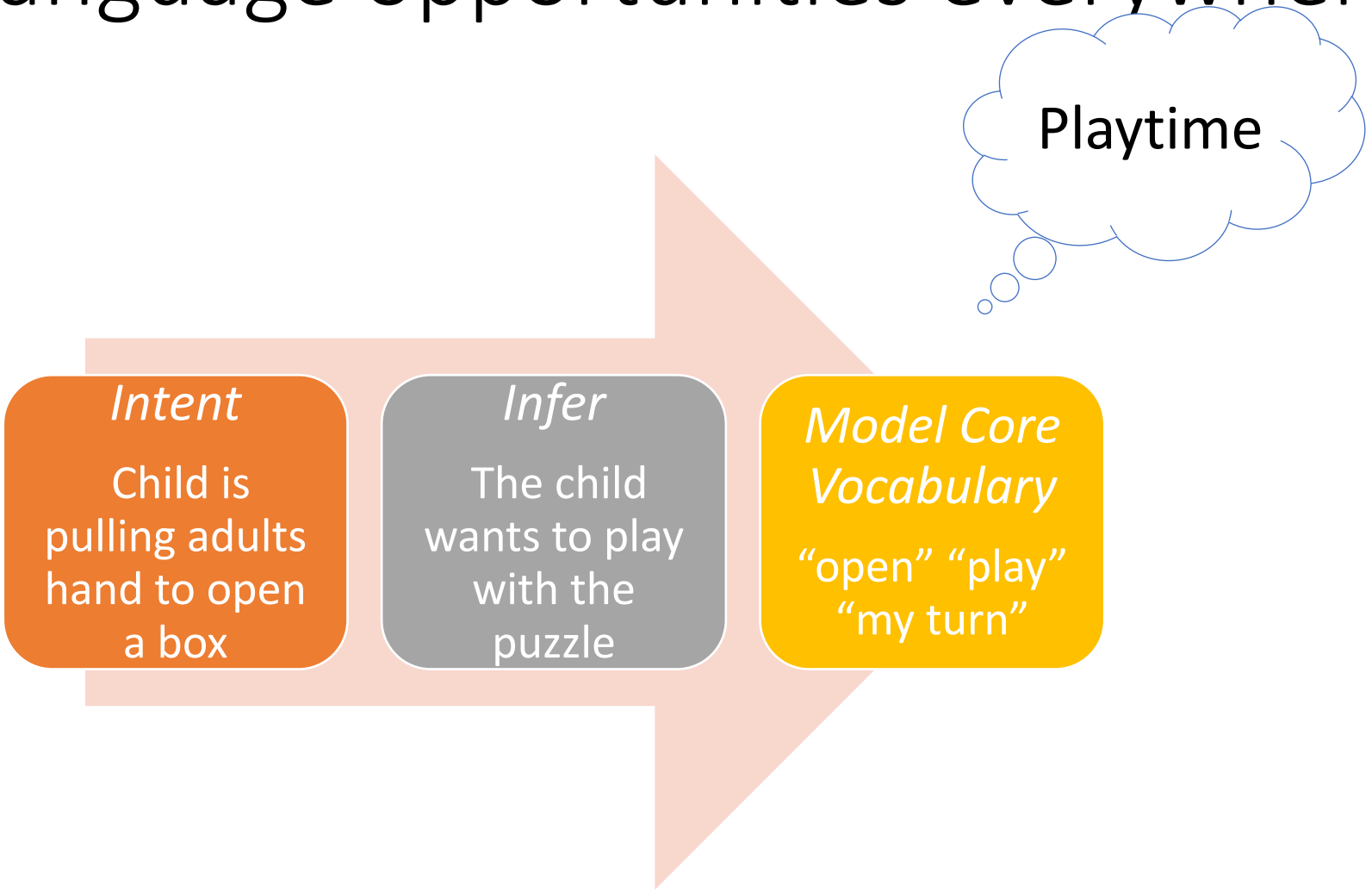
"Talk AAC, and keep talking!"



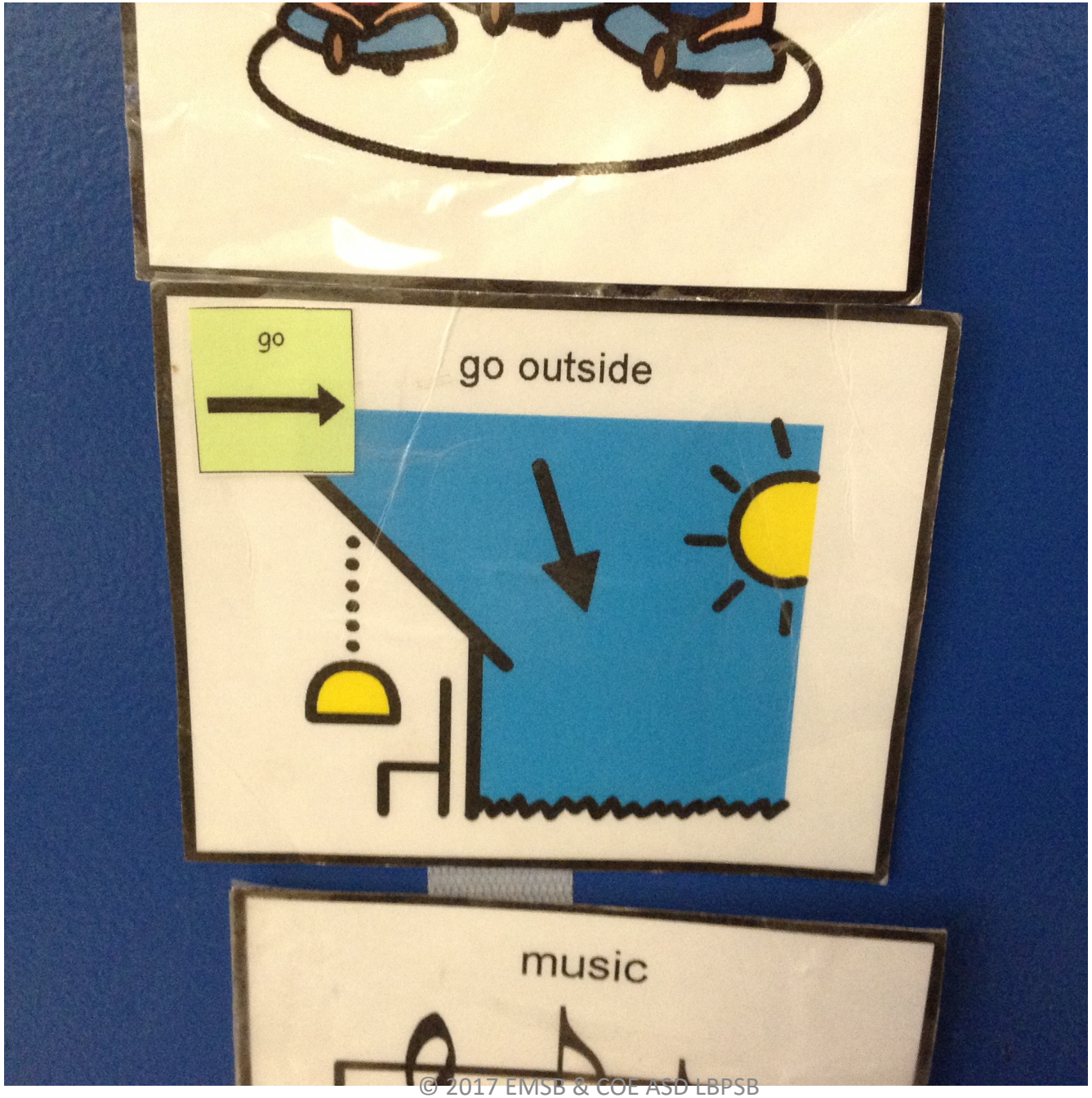
© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

KEEP
CALM
AND
WAIT
Expectantly.

Look for language opportunities everywhere!



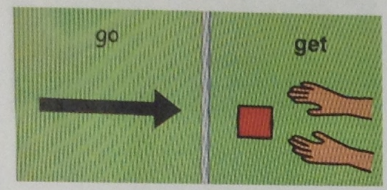
© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB



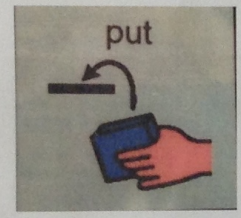
© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Make a Bouncy Ball Experiment!

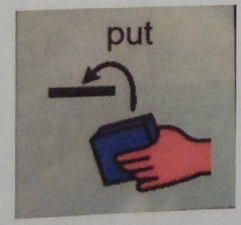
1. Go get glue, tablespoon and 1 cup.

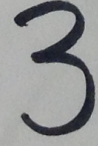


2. Pour 1 tablespoon of glue into the cup.



3. Add 3 drops of food colouring into the cup.





Word of the Week
good
good
good morning
good job
good
We say goodbye at 2:30 each school day.
They did a good job in Special Olympics.
What is good to eat in the cafeteria?

Where will you begin?

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

Just because I can't talk
doesn't mean that I
have nothing to say
@Speechexpert

Resources to begin

A Few Good Words: Using Core Vocabulary to Support Non-Verbal Students

http://www.asha.org/Publications/leader/2009/090414/f090414c.htm

Strategy of the month: Aided Language Input

http://praacticalaac.org/strategy/656/

Using Aided Language Input to Build Communication Opportunities

http://praacticalaac.org/strategy/using-aided-language-input-to-build-communication-opportunities/

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB

© 2017 EMSB & COE ASD LBPSB