A Context for Communication

**Play and Engage**

**Why?**
- Children learn best when they are engaged and interacting with a communication partner.
- Children are more likely to be engaged and learn language while doing activities they enjoy.
- When the adult plays with the child at his or her level, the adult optimizes the opportunity for communication to occur.

**How?**
- Be at your child’s eye level and do whatever your child is doing.
- Follow your child’s lead, avoiding directions and letting your child lead the play.
- Avoid questions and let your child initiate the communication.
- Choose toys that are interesting and engaging and put toys away that aren’t being used.
- If you don’t want your child to do something, give him or her another option.

**When?**
- Whenever possible; At least once a day for at least 15 minutes of concentrated and individualized adult-child time.

**Notice and Respond**

**Why?**
- Noticing and responding to all communication teaches your child that their communication is important to you.
- By acknowledging all communication and communicative attempts you reinforce your child for communicating.
- The more your child communicates the more practice they receive and the easier communication becomes.

**How?**
- Notice and respond every time your child communicates.
- Respond by talking about what your child is doing.
- Language is most meaningful when it’s related to what your child is doing OR in response to what your child is communicating.

**When?**
- As much as possible; in all contexts throughout the day.

**Take Turns**

**Why?**
- Taking turns allows your child more opportunities to communicate.
- More opportunities = more practice = growth in communication skills.
- Taking turns teaches your child how to have a conversation.
- Waiting signals to the child that it is his or her turn to communicate.

**How?**
- Take turns communicating with your child and wait for your child to communicate.
- Play a game of “communication catch”
  - Your child communicates; You respond (and wait)
  - Your child communicates; You respond (and wait)
- Only say something after your child communicates.

**When?**
- As much as possible; in all contexts throughout the day
Prompting Flow Chart: Choice Prompt

Hold up two objects and wait {car or truck}

Child requests saying a target "car"
- Give the choice: "car or truck"
  - Child says the target "car"
  - Child says the target "car"
  - Expand and give object/action "drive car"
  - Repeat the prompt "car" and give object/action

Child requests but doesn't say a target {points to car}
- Give the choice: "car or truck"
  - Child doesn't say a target {vocalizes}
  - Say "car"
    - Child says the target "car"
    - Child says the target "car"
  - Repeat the prompt "car" and give object/action

Child doesn't request
- Abandon the prompt, since the child isn't interested and don't give either object
Prompting Flow Chart: Open Prompt

Wait for request or use TD strategy to elicit request

Child requests saying a target “car”
- Open Prompt: “Tell me what you want”
  - Child says the target “car”
  - Child doesn’t say a target {vocalizes}
    - Say “say ‘car’”
      - Child says the target “car”
      - Child doesn’t say a target {vocalizes}
        - Say “say ‘car’”
          - Child says the target “car”
          - Child doesn’t say a target {vocalizes}
            - Expand and give object/action “drive car”

Child requests but doesn’t say a target {vocalizes}
- Child doesn’t request
  - Repeat the prompt “car” and give object/action
  - Abandon the prompt, since the child isn’t interested and don’t give the car
## Modeling Language

### Why Do We Model Language?
- Children learn language through modeling.
- Contingent modeling that is in response to the child’s communication is the most powerful form of modeling.
- Simplifying language to match the child’s language targets helps him/her learn language more quickly.

### Language Goals
- Increase the rate at which the child communicates.
- Increase the diversity of communication.
- Increase the child’s independence.
  - Increase spontaneous communication.
  - Decrease the dependence on adult cues.

### When to Model Language?
- After your child communicates (expanding)
  - Respond with a language target
- When you are doing the same action or have the same object as your child.
  - Child: {drives car}
  - Adult: {drives car} car
- While taking communication turns.

### What Language to Model?
- We pick targets based on the language the child is already using and what he/she should learn next.
- How does the child communicate now?
  - Gestures, vocalizations
  - Single words
  - 2 words
  - 3 words
  - 4 words

### Using the Child’s Targets
- 50% of what you say should be one of the child’s targets:
  1. ____________________________ 2. ____________________________
  2. ____________________________ 3. ____________________________
- 50% should be slightly higher than the child's targets
  - 1-2 words above his/her level
  - All words should be teaching words (nouns, verbs, modifiers)
Learning Language Through Play

Why Do We Teach Play?
- Linking words with engaging activities maximize opportunities for teaching language.
- Choosing toys at the child’s play level help keep the child engaged.
- Expanding play activities and objects allows us to use model and teach more language.

Play Goals
- Extend the time your child plays with a toy
  - More time = more opportunities for language learning
- Expand the different play actions your child does with the same toy.
  - More actions = more opportunities for language learning
- Expand the types of toys your child uses
  - More toys = more opportunities for language learning

When to Model New Play?
- When your child is doing the same action with the same object multiple times.
- When your child is doing an undesired action with the toy (e.g., eating play-doh, hitting the baby, mouthing pretend food).

How to Model New Play Actions?
- Continue to follow your child’s lead.
- Do what your child does and try to add a different action or object.
- Set a new toy object in sight or model a new action and WAIT and see if your child shows interest.
- If your child shows interest, model a new play action with the object.
- As always, follow your child’s lead and if he/she is not interested, try again later with a different object or action.
Prompting Language

What is a Prompt?

- An adult prompt is a signal to the child to do or say something.
- There are four types of prompts, with different levels of adult support:
  - **Time delay** (waiting for 5 seconds)
    - An _overt_ nonverbal cue for the child to use language
    - The adult uses an expectant look and waits for the child to verbalize before performing the expected action or giving the child a desired object.
    - This offers the least language support.
  - **Open prompt** (e.g., “what do you want?” “tell me what you want.”)
    - The adult gives an open prompt (i.e., no single correct answer).
    - This offers a little more support by verbally cueing the child to verbalize his or her requests.
  - **Choice prompt** (e.g., “dog eats or dog drinks?”)
    - The adult uses a choice prompt that has no single correct answer
    - This offers even more support by including the answer in the question.
  - **SAY prompt**: “say ______”.
    - The parent tells the child exactly what to say “say ______”
    - This offers the most adult support as it tells the child exactly what to say.

What to Prompt?

- Your child’s communication targets:
  - Target 1: noun (e.g., cat)
  - Target 2: verb (e.g., eat)
  - Target 3: protoverb (e.g., in)
  - Target 4: request (e.g., help, again)

Why Prompt Language?

- Gives children an opportunity to practice language targets during a highly motivating context.
- Gives the child functional practice and reinforcement for communication.
Prompting Language

**How to Prompt Language?**

- Wait for your child to request OR use time delay strategy to elicit a request.
- Choice Prompt: Adult uses TD choice making strategy to set up the request
  - Use the choice TD strategy (hold up 2 items).
  - Wait for the child to respond (if no response, abandon the prompt since the child isn’t interested, but don’t give either object)
  - If the child does not use a target, say “_____ or ______”
  - If the child still doesn’t say the target, give model (“say”) up to 2 times if the child doesn’t use a target.
- Open Prompt: Child requests or adult uses another TD strategy (other than choice) to set up the request.
  - Wait for the request or use an TD strategy (all but choice) to get a request
  - Say “Tell me what you want?” or “What do you want?”
  - Wait for the child to respond or wait 5 seconds if no response.
  - If the child does not use a target, say “say _____”
  - Give model (“say”) up to 2 times if the child doesn’t use a target
- Stop prompting after your child says exactly what you wanted him to say.
- Give your child enough time to respond (5 seconds) before giving another prompt.
- Prompting episodes should always result in the child receiving the object or action.
- After your child has said what you wanted OR you have given two model prompts
  - Expand if he has said the target
  - Repeat if he has not said the target

**When to prompt language?**

- Only when the child is requesting and not using a target.
- Only as one of the many tools (not the only tool) of Enhanced Milieu Teaching.
- No more than three times per minute 15 minute session
  - Too many demands may cause the child to become frustrated.
### Why Learn EMT?

- EMT is an evidence-based intervention with 20 years of research.
- EMT is a naturalistic, conversation-based intervention that uses child interests and initiations as opportunities to model and prompt language in everyday contexts.
- EMT can be used throughout the day as part of your everyday life.

### What is EMT?

- EMT is a set of language tools to help you facilitate your child’s communication growth.
- **Setting up an Interactive Context**: enhancing opportunities for communication.
  - Connecting with your child during play
  - Managing challenging behavior
- **Responsive Interaction**: Responding to your child’s communication.
  - Noticing and responding to child communication
  - Taking and balancing verbal turns with your child
  - Mirroring your child’s actions and mapping language onto these actions
- **Modeling and Expanding Play**: modeling and expanding play.
  - Modeling new play actions
  - Using new play objects
- **Modeling Communication Targets**: modeling child communication targets.
  - Using language that teaches (target talk)
  - Expanding your child’s utterances (expansions)
- **Time Delay Strategies**: using non-verbal tasks to elicit communication.
- **Milieu Teaching Procedures**: prompting your child’s communication targets and providing functional reinforcement.
  - Recognizing when your child’s requesting
  - Following a prompting procedure at your child’s target communication level
Expanding Communication

What is an expansion?
- Expansion: adding more words to your child’s communication.
- The most powerful expansion includes one of your child’s communication targets.

Why expand communication?
- Expansions immediately connect the child’s communication to additional new communication.
- The more your child hears and practices language that is more complex, the better his/her language skills become.
- When you give your child a little more language than he/she gives you, he/she hears more about the topic in which he/she is interested.
- Expansions help your child learn new vocabulary and talk in more complex sentences.

How to expand communication?
- **Gestures:** by imitating the gesture or taking/touching the object while labeling the word, you are increasing the saliency of the word and making it more likely that your child will learn this new word.
  - **Point/reach:**
    - Child: {points to/reaches for ball}.
    - Adult: {points to/reaches for ball} ball.
  - **Show**
    - Child: {holds up block}.
    - Adult: {points to block} block.
  - **Give**
    - Child: {gives adult car to drive}.
    - Adult: {takes the car} car.
- **Vocalizations:** by replacing the vocalization with the word you want your child to say and by imitating his action or pointing to an object you are increasing the saliency of the word and making it more likely that your child will learn this new word.
  - Child: {says “ah” and is walking the cow}.
  - Adult: {walks the cow} walk.
- **Words:** by adding words to your child’s words you connect a new word to a word your child already knows, which increases the saliency of the new word and makes it more likely that your child will learn this new word.
  - Child: car.
  - Adult: drive car.
Time Delay Strategies

What are Time Delay (TD) Strategies?

- Non-verbal strategies that encourage your child to communicate with you.
  - **Inadequate Portions**: providing small or inadequate portions of preferred materials.
  - **Assistance**: creating situations in which the child needs the adult’s help.
  - **Waiting with Routine**: setting up a routine in which the child expects certain actions and then waiting before doing the expected action again.
  - **Waiting with Cue**: using associated objects (e.g., shoe to foot) and then waiting before completing the expected action.
  - **Choice Making**: holding up two objects and waiting for the child to communicate about which item he/she wants.

Why Use TD Strategies?

- Provides the child with more opportunities to practice communicating.
  - Increases the child’s rate of communication
- Provides the adult with more opportunities to teach new language by
  - Responding
  - Expanding the child’s communication

How to Use TD Strategies?

- Set up the opportunity to encourage your child to communicate by using an environmental arrangement strategy.
- Wait until your child communicates (gestures, vocalizes, says a word).
- Expand this communication with a target.

When to Use TD Strategies?

- Use TD Strategies when the child is not communicating frequently (e.g., less than 2 times per minute).
- Some strategies work better than others for different children.
  - Use the ones that work best for the child.
  - Avoid TD strategies that frustrate the child.
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<th>Child Behavior Required to Access Active Ingredient</th>
<th>Modifications</th>
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<td>• Engages with objects, partners</td>
<td>Teach play, Use person engaged activity to reinforce social engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow child’s lead in play and activity</td>
<td>• Engages with objects, • Participates in activity</td>
<td>Teach play Provide more motivating materials, choices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respond to child communication</td>
<td>• Communicates verbally or nonverbally</td>
<td>Modify mode Train partners to recognize communication, Target simple rate increases first</td>
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<td>Model language in context</td>
<td>• Engages with objects in play or activity • Imitates • Learns from observation • Engages with partners</td>
<td>Teach imitation skills Modify modeling to fit speech or mode characteristics</td>
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<td>Expand child communication</td>
<td>• Communicates pre linguistically (gesture) or linguistically • Mode is intelligible to partner • Imitates or learns from observation • Engages with partners</td>
<td>Teach prelinguistic skills (point, show, give) Increase intelligibility Make mode more transparent to partner</td>
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<td>Use time delay to prompt requests or initiations</td>
<td>• Engages with partners • Interested in objects, • Has preferences • Learns to make choices</td>
<td>Modify time delay (lessen production demand) until child regularly responds Choose highly preferred objects</td>
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<td>Use Milieu teaching prompts to promote practice</td>
<td>• Has mode for production • Responds to prompts (in least to most sequence) • Imitates • Engages with partners • Learns from practice embedded in interactions</td>
<td>Teach responding to prompts and least to most support sequence, Increase reinforcement for responding</td>
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Kaiser 2017, CRE-CL Conference 2017
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