



“HELP” COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE

PUBLIC SCHOOL 37: UDL TASK FORCE

The POWER of Communication

POWER

- Increasing communication results in:
 - ✓ decreased behaviors that interfere with progress and participation across all environments
 - ✓ increased independence
 - ✓ increased learning opportunities
 - ✓ increased positive interactive experiences

Step 1: Increase Exposure:

Ideas for creating opportunities:

- Give your children items that are closed or difficult to open/manipulate without assistance
- Do not meet their needs without creating opportunities for them to ask for help.
- Just hearing the words in their environment will enable them to begin to understand their meaning
- Keep items out of reach (but not if your child is a climber)
- Most importantly... *wait, wait, wait!* If we wait for children to ask for help or indicate help we are giving them the opportunity to practice being independent individuals!

WAIT FOR STUDENTS TO INITIATE

- “Yes/no” core vocabulary required a prompt (the question) and the students were “responders.”
- “Help” core vocabulary requires the students to INITIATE:
 - Step 1: Engage your child in activity that is difficult (e.g., hand them unopened water)
 - Step 2: Wait, wait, wait for an indication that they need assistance
 - Step 3: If they hand an item to you, then you can point to the help symbol and try to elicit a request for help.
 - Step 4: If needed, give a verbal prompt, “I need_____” to elicit the request for assistance.

Step 2: Cause and Effect:

- Place emphasis on the word and exaggerate the meaning so the word and the action it causes will stand out.
- Make the connection:
 - “When I cannot do something on my own, I ask for HELP!”
 - “We can ask teachers, mom or dad, and friends for help.”
 - “It is important to ask for help so we don’t make mistakes or have accidents.”
 - When I feel anxious or scared I ask for help.
 - “It is ok to ask for help!”

Step 3: Acknowledge all modes of communication at all times:

- Pay close attention to cues that are communicative.
- Remember that we are creating positive communicative interactions; if students indicate help, reinforce them with help, without having to ask for it multiple ways.
- During certain activities, students can be asked to up the ante (e.g., say it in a phrase or say it clearer); however, during naturalistic interactions, honor their communication in any form that is functional.

Step 4: Vary the Experience:

Need Based:

- Meals/Snacks
 - Cutting food; give food without utensils; opening chips, yogurt, etc.
- Drink
 - Give juice without straw; opening milk or bottle of water; give empty cup without juice
- Bathroom
 - WAIT for students to ask for help when reaching for soap; turning on water

Activities of Daily Living:

- Bath Time
 - Turning on the water, opening shampoo, reaching the body wash, getting in and out of tub
- Brushing Teeth
 - Getting toothpaste out of tube, opening mouthwash
- Bed Time
 - Putting on pajamas, making the bed
- Getting Dressed
 - Zipping coat, tying shoes, buttoning

Vocational Tasks/Chores:

- Laundry
 - Lifting laundry basket, opening washing machine, turning dryer on, folding clothes
- Setting the Table
 - Reaching plates
- Loading/Emptying Dishwasher
 - Opening dishwasher, rinsing dishes

Reading Books:

- Books to reinforce “HELP”
 - Help!: A Story of Friendship
 - Friends Help Each Other
 - Amelia Bedelia Helps Out
- Apply it to your child’s favorite books
 - Identify “help” throughout a story
 - Identify “helping” situations throughout a story
 - “Do you need help finding the page?”
 - Adapt any book: “Oh no, Clifford is stuck, he needs.....HELP!”

Social Interaction:

- During interactive communication routines that provide them with the opportunity to ask each other for help.
- Modify activities and games, incorporate “help” vocabulary
 - Help me finish the puzzle, Help us save the princess, Help me create a word in Scrabble

Leisure Activities

- iPad/Computer
 - Locked iPad, no battery
- Watching TV
 - Can’t hear/see, unable to reach remote control
- Any Preferred Activity
 - Going outside, playground
 - Weekend programs, OYM, Grace Programs
 - Swimming
 - Social Group

Step 5: Increase Complexity:

- Let’s write “HELP”
- Introduce vocabulary:
 - This is difficult
- Follow up with “what?”
 - What do you need help with?”
- Follow up with “who?”
 - Who helped you?
- Follow up with “why?”
 - Why did you need help? “Because it was…”
- Self-assessing
- Contractions:
 - I *can’t* do it... It *doesn’t* work... *It’s* broken

Universal Design of Learning:

- ✓ Are we increasing communication opportunities for our students?!
- ✓ Are we using symbols throughout the day?
- ✓ Are we acknowledging all forms of communication?
- ✓ Is your classroom immersed in the core vocabulary?
- ✓ Are we enthusiastic about learning?!