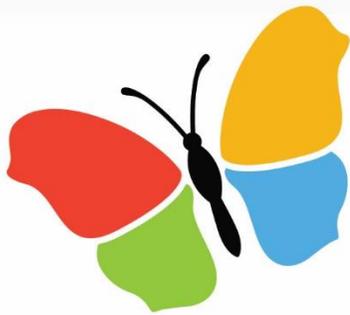


Facilitator's Guide



Take Flight

Empowering educators and
equipping learners with ASD to soar



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**The Emerging
Communicator**

Take Flight Facilitator's Guide

The Emerging Communicator

After viewing the video, **The Emerging Communicator**, complete the activities below. You may review the video as necessary to answer the questions and to complete the practice activities.

Activity 1: Reflection Questions

1. One area of challenge for some individuals with ASD involves “social-emotional reciprocity.” Explain what this means and give some examples.
2. A second area of challenge for some individuals with ASD involves “nonverbal communicative behaviors used for social interaction.” Explain what this means and give some examples.
3. The term “emerging communicator” is used in this video to describe the type of learner who may benefit from some of the strategies shared. What are some of the communication characteristics of a learner who might be described as an “emerging communicator”?
4. Why is it important to consult a Speech Language Pathologist when working with a learner with ASD who experiences communication difficulties?
5. Why is it important to focus on learner interest and motivation when helping emerging communicators begin to build communication skills?
6. What does the term “manding” mean?
7. Why is it important to consider **WHEN** the learner’s motivation for particular items or activities will be particularly strong?
8. What does it mean to “entice” the learner in the context of developing communication skills, and how can this be a valuable strategy?
9. How can we decide what communication response from a learner should be reinforced? Why might the accepted response change over time?
10. How many opportunities should an emerging learner have to make requests each day when building communication skills?



Activity 2: Practical Application

1. Capitalizing on learner motivation is key to encouraging requesting. You saw some examples of this strategy in the video. Thinking about a learner you know or work with, make a list of opportunities in which you could take advantage of the learner’s motivation to make requests in each of the following situations/settings:

- Classroom
- Playground
- Gym
- Lunch room / cafeteria

Motivating Item/Activity	Describe the Scenario for the Request

2. As mentioned in the video, and shown in the examples. It is sometimes helpful to increase motivation for a particular item or activity by “enticing” the learner and reminding them how much fun something is or how much they typically enjoy it. Enticing the learner by engaging with the preferred item or activity and showing how exciting or interesting it is, or starting to interact with an item, then stopping and waiting expectantly, may increase the learner’s motivation to request that item.

Thinking about a learner you know or work with, create 2 scenarios that you might use to entice the learner to increase their motivation to request a particular item or activity. Role play each of the scenarios with a partner or within your group.



Take Flight Facilitator's Guide – ANSWER KEY

1. Social-emotional reciprocity: the back and forth interaction that takes place in communication
 - Examples will vary

2. Nonverbal communicative behaviors: ways that people communicate that do not include the actual language they use, such as through gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, body posture, etc.
 - Examples will vary

3. Emerging communicator:
 - May not use any spoken language, or only occasionally use sounds or single words.
 - May not have an alternative or augmentative communication system such as pictures, signing or voice output technology, and therefore they may not have any functional way to communicate.
 - May not be able to tell others what they want or need, initiate or respond to a social interaction, label things in their environment, or make a comment.

4. Consulting a Speech Language Pathologist:
 - They have specific training and expertise in communication disorders and intervention.
 - They can assess communication skills, make recommendations about skills to address and how they can be taught.
 - They may also help identify appropriate modes of communication and any augmentative communication systems that may be beneficial.

5. Focus on learner interest and motivation:
 - It can be helpful to focus on teaching the learner to make requests for things they want, because this is the only type of communication that directly benefits the learner
 - Two essential components for teaching communication skills, are automatically built into the interaction

6. Manding = requesting



7. Considering **WHEN** the learner's motivation will be strong:

- If a learner has recently had access to the reinforcing item, they may not be as motivated to have it now
- Some routines and activities naturally lend themselves to needing items, and if the learner really enjoys those activities, motivation may be high
- Example, teaching/practicing requesting of items needed to go outside to play may be most successful when everyone in the class is getting ready to go outside for recess.
- Example, a learner who enjoys using the computer will probably be more motivated to request that activity at a time when they haven't had access to the computer for a while.

8. Enticing the learner:

- It may be possible and helpful to increase a learner's motivation for a particular item/activity by engaging with it ourselves and showing the learner how much fun it is or reminding them how much they enjoy it.
- Starting to interact with the item, then stopping and waiting expectantly, may increase the learner's motivation to request that item.

9. How can we decide what communication response from a learner should be reinforced? Why might the accepted response change over time?

- When starting to teach requesting, acceptable responses should be those that are clearly known to be easy for the learner so that the learner's communication attempts result in an immediate payoff and the requesting behaviour is strengthened.
- If the response the learner must make is too difficult or requires too much effort, they may not respond or may become frustrated and engage in challenging behaviour.
- At first, the acceptable request should be one that the learner can easily make, and every communicative attempt by the learner should result in the immediate delivery of the requested item every time.
- Over time, and as the learner's requesting becomes consistent, the expectations can be increased slowly and more complex requests can be required if the learner has the necessary skills.
- Over time it will also be important that the learner comes to understand that they can not necessarily have the requested item every time, but that is a task for the later teaching steps, not at the beginning.

10. How many opportunities to request each day?

- As many opportunities as possible should be embedded throughout the day.
- The more opportunities (more practice), the better.
- Communication skills do not come easily to emerging communicators with ASD, and the only way to build new skills to the point that they become fluent and last over time is to practice, practice, practice.



Activity 2: Practical Application

1. Answers and examples will vary.
2. Scenarios and role plays will vary; however, focus should be on:
 - How to entice the learner and to make the item/activity as interesting and engaging as possible to increase learner interest and motivation.
 - Interacting with the item in an engaging way, and then stopping and waiting expectantly for the learner to make a request.





The Autism in Education (AIE) Partnership is an inter-provincial collaboration of the Departments of Education & Early Childhood Development / Early Learning & Culture of the four Atlantic Provinces. Created as an initiative of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) in 2010, the AIE Partnership provides support to educational personnel working with students with ASD across the Atlantic region and facilitates the sharing of information and expertise among stakeholders. Priorities of the AIE Partnership include:

- Research to clarify and articulate standards of practice in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dissemination of information and current research on issues of concern among the four Atlantic Provinces
- Professional development and learning opportunities for educational staff, partner professionals, and families



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