



# Today's plan

- What is a caring community?
- How does communication foster the growth of a caring community?
- What can each of us do to support children's communication in service of this goal?
- What is language modeling?
- What roles do core vocabulary and conversational matching play?
- How do we get started?



# What is a caring community?

- Each community member is known and valued
- At the heart of creating a caring community is connection.
- At the heart of connection is communication.

# (A little bit about SLPs)

- SLPs support *communication* – how ideas get exchanged between people
  - We focus on:
    - **Speech**
    - **Language**
    - **Social use of language**

# Communication happens in many ways!


- texting/emailing
- gesturing
- facial expressions
- body orientation







Many folks use alternative or augmentative communication (AAC) systems to support their communication.

- Sign language
- Core word board with picture symbols
- Voice output device or communication app





Our students are learning how to communicate and interact to form important connections within their communities.

- They are learning how to express themselves using a variety of modalities
  - They are learning how to understand the messages others convey to them
  - And they're learning about how interactions work
    - social conventions
    - friendship skills
    - tone of voice & unspoken communication
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# Communication in the classroom

Children learn about communication from every single interaction they have. Communication happens all day, every day.

So, it's important for their community membership that we **all** participate in supporting children's communication development.



# What is language modeling?

- Children learn through observation and imitation. They watch and listen to events or conversations that catch their attention. Then, they copy.
- We can be thoughtful and intentional about the way we behave and express ourselves, so that the language kids **see and hear** is language they can **attend to** and **use**.
- Careful, intentional use of language is called **language modeling**.



What is this?  
A red plastic ball!



This language is related to the activity, but isn't easy to use in other situations.

Down it goes!



Down it goes!



Down it goes!



This language is related to the activity, and it can also be used in many new situations.

# Autonomous communication

Our goal is to support children in developing “autonomous communication.” This means being able to say:

- Whatever they want to say
- Whenever they want to say it
- However they want to and are able to say it
- To whom they want to say it

--Gayle Tatenhove

# What can **we** do to support "autonomous communication?"

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- First, try to figure out what children might want/need to say.
- **Watch** children investigate and play (as long as it's safe, try to make room for their plans)
  - What captures their attention?
  - What do they think is funny?
  - What area do they gravitate to in the classroom?
- **Join in** so you're sharing attention to the same topic / materials.
- **Wonder** – what might this child want to say?
- **Model** a word or a phrase that matches.
- **Pause**, leave space, open up the airwaves.

# OFFER

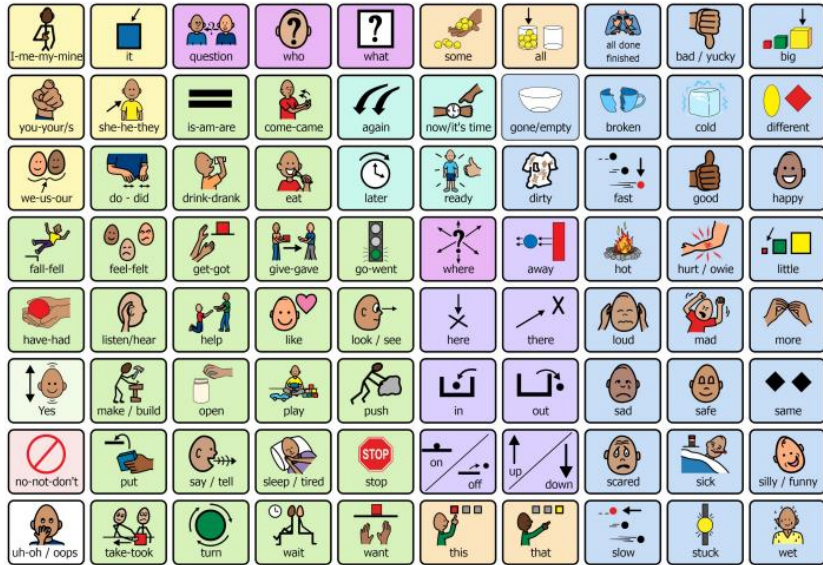
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Language modeling can be thought of as making a suggestion, or an offering

- **O** = Optional
- **F** = From the child's perspective
- **F** = Functions (comments, exclamations, protests, questions, requests)
- **E** = Easy to reuse
- **R** = Relevant to the experience

(from Connections Speech Pathology)

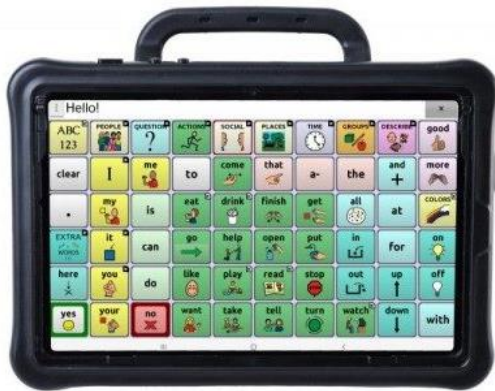
EEU Core Word



# Core vocabulary

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- When children are learning their first words, **core vocabulary** is useful to them.
- **Core vocabulary...**
  - is frequently used in day-to-day conversation
  - is used across all situations and activities
  - is pretty consistent across different communities and languages
  - comes from different word categories (pronouns, verbs, descriptive words, etc.)





## Core Vocabulary

- **Pronouns:** *I, you, they*
- **Verbs:** *go, eat, do*
- **Descriptive words:** *dirty, broken*
- **Place/location words:** *in, on, up*
- **Grammatical words:** *more, all done, this*



## Not Core Vocabulary

- *Gym, library*
- *Chicken nuggets*
- *Excavator, X-wing*
- *Sparkly*
- *Skating*
- *Bluey*

# Conversation "matching"

- We can “match” kids in conversation to catch their attention and support back-and-forth interactions.
  - Match a child's complexity



Child says...

Whoa!

We need to go at escape velocity to get through the stratosphere!

Adult says...

Uuuuuuup!

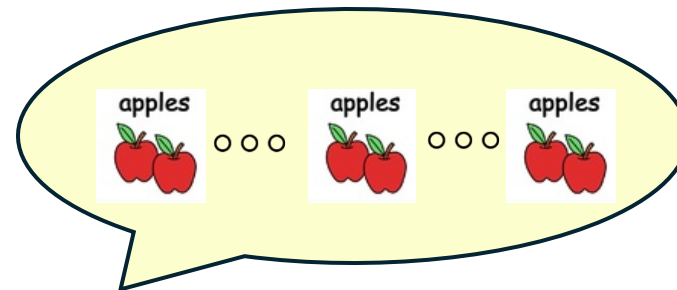
Ensure your safety harness is in place. Activate the heat shields when we reach maximum velocity!

# Conversation "matching"

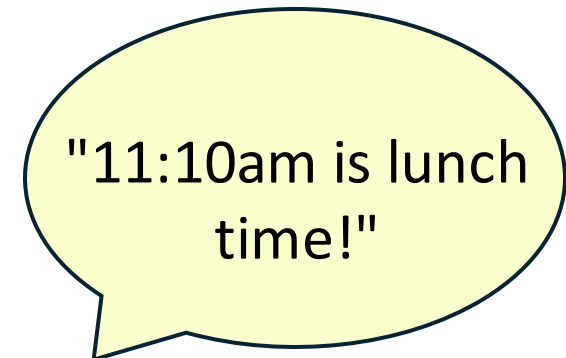
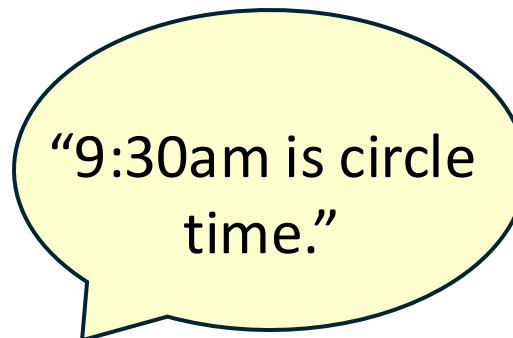
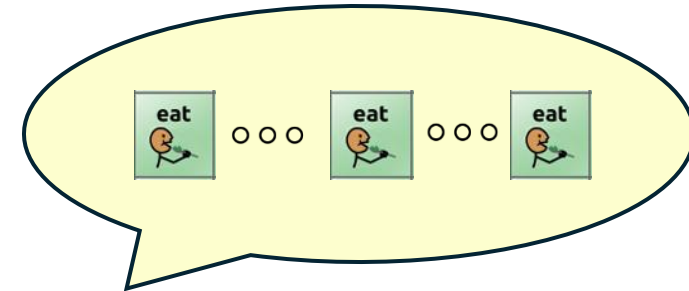
- We can “match” kids in conversation to catch their attention and support back-and-forth interactions.
  - Match a child's complexity
  - Match a child's style



Child says...

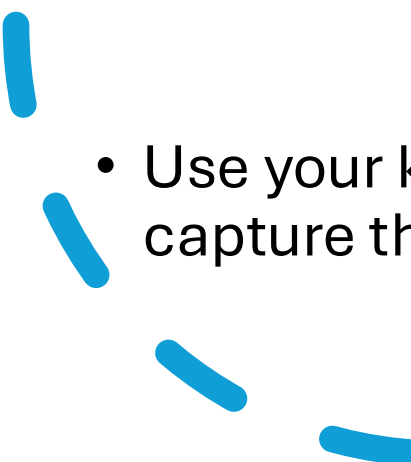


Adult says...

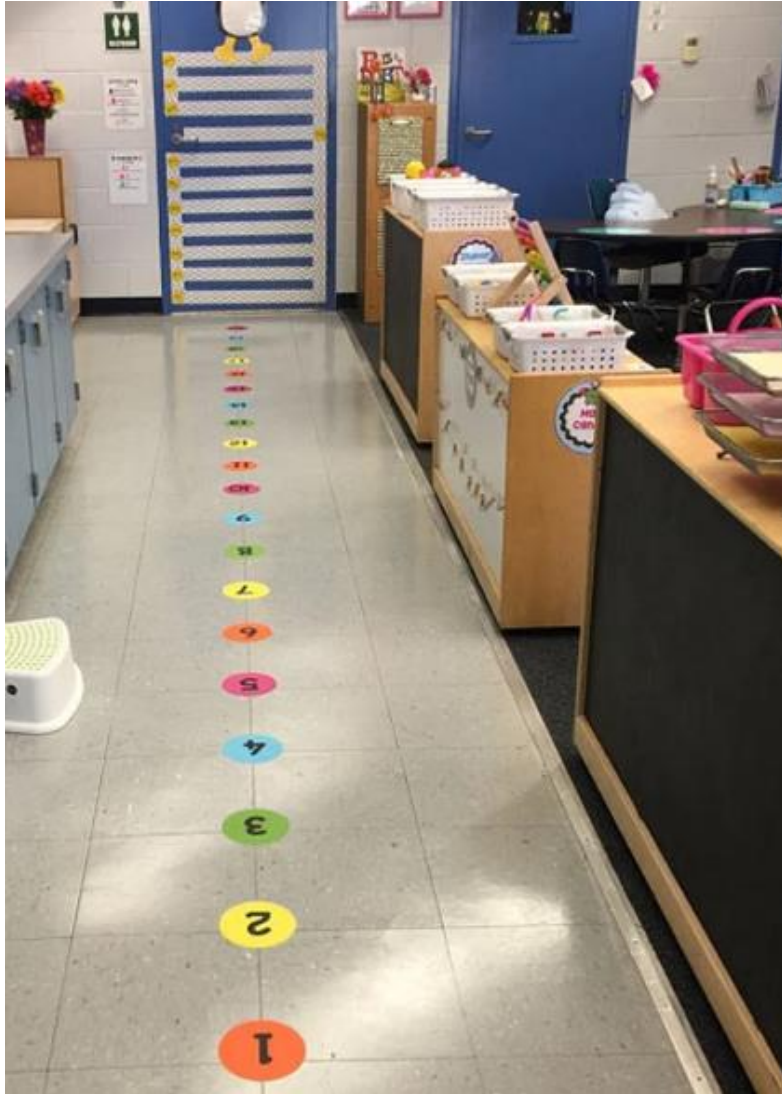




# Communities share information

- In a caring community, we share information in varied ways, so that everyone in our community can **attend to**, **access** and **understand** it.
  - Spoken words are one tool; we have others, too.
    - Pictures, photos, picture symbols, visual schedules, demonstrations, environmental cues
  - Use your knowledge of your students to communicate in ways that will capture their attention and support learning.
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In addition to spoken words, we can use visuals, real objects, or demonstrations to communicate messages like, “Line up to go to gym – one behind the other,” “First, snack; then bathroom” or “Wash your hands.”



Communities  
share  
information

# Let's Practice: Modeling Language in Play!

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## Steps to Modeling Language:

- 1) Watch
- 2) Join In
- 3) Wonder
- 4) Model
- 5) Pause

**Follow Up Discussion Question:** What are some ways you could join in/expand play *without* changing the child's play?

# Language Modeling Practice

- Children in your classroom are playing with play dough. Below are four descriptions of different ways that kids are playing. Read each description and consider:
  - How would you join this child in play?
  - What language might you model?

## Here's how the child's playing:

- Rolling the play dough, then pulling it out to stretch it

**Word/Phrase ideas:** roll, poke, make, pull, stretch, look/see, long, short, thick, same, feel, texture words (squishy, soft), can/do/am, like, broken, color words, “that is stretched out”, “oops it broke”

## Here's how the child's playing:

- Making numbers, letters, and shapes with the dough

**Word/Phrase ideas:** make, roll, cut, shape names, color words, big/little, long/short, look/see, same/different, more, want, put, like, here, there, on, where, “that’s a big circle”, “I made a #2”, “we can put it there”

## Here's how the child's playing:

- Making cookies and pretending to eat them

**Word/Phrase ideas:** roll, cut, make, eat, like, don’t like, same/different, big/little, cook, more, happy, put on, in, take out, give, share, feel, taste, want, yummy, hot, wait, “making little cookies”, “cookies taste yummy!”, “put cookies in”, “cookies are ready”

## Here's how the child's playing:

- Cutting the dough into smaller and smaller pieces

**Word/Phrase ideas:** cut, small/little, big, break/broken, all done, put, on, in, a lot, give, get, again, more, different, make/made, look, feel, “pull off”, “I wonder \_\_\_”, “let’s make more”, “oh-no it broke”

# What's next

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Comments and questions are welcome  
anytime!

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Explore AAC (augmentative/alternative  
communication) devices on the table

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Keep track of your observations as you get to  
know your students

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Contact Mary at [maass@uw.edu](mailto:maass@uw.edu) to arrange  
coaching during the month of September

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Connect with the SLP on your team  
throughout the year!