

# INCREASING REASONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATION

## Offer alternatives

If your child prefers to play with a restricted range of toys or look at the same book, you could offer them something different to create increased reasons and opportunities for them to communicate their preference.



## Place items out of reach

Place items that your child enjoys, out of their reach. This may initially seem a little unkind, especially if your child is used to taking whatever they want, whenever they want it. However, it will motivate them to communicate with you to get what they want.

## Choice making

Throughout the day, create opportunities for your child to make a choice (eg between two objects or photographs). By doing this you are creating communication opportunities for your child. When they make a choice, they are actively communicating with you, which is preferable to physically meeting their own needs.



## Place items in see-through sealed containers

Place items your child is motivated by in sealed, transparent tubs, jars or boxes so they have to engage with you and ask for your help in some way.

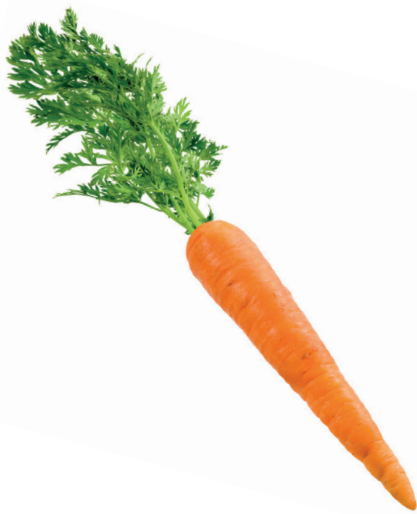
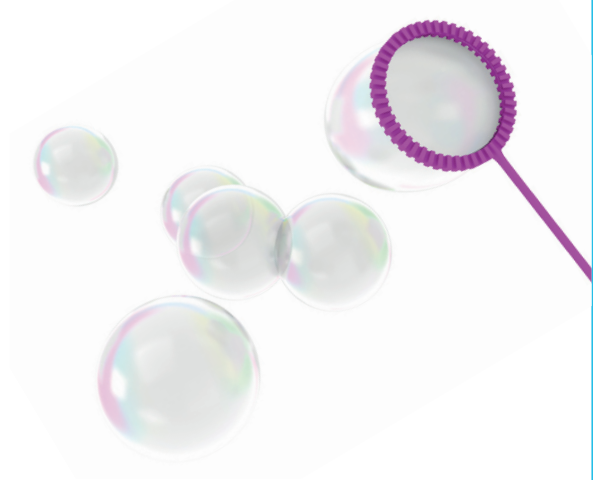
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### Waiting before offering help

Encourage your child to choose toys that they enjoy but find difficult to play with independently (such as blowing bubbles, balloons, wind-up toys or spinners). Wait for your child to bring the toy to you and request assistance before helping them. Until it is no longer appropriate, you could avoid showing them or teaching them how to work such toys by themselves, so that they continue to have a reason to communicate with you.



### Offer items that your child doesn't want (for 'no')

To encourage your child to communicate 'no' appropriately, offer them things that you know they do not like. You could do this at snack time (eg when you know they want a cake, offer them a carrot). If they want to watch a DVD, offer them one that you know they do not like to give them a reason to refuse.

### Withhold one item

During daily routines, such as getting dressed, teeth brushing or bathing, try giving your child the things they need, but retain one object, such as a sock or toothpaste. They then have a reason to request the missing item from you.



### Slowly, slowly

During activities you know your child enjoys, eg eating snacks, offer only a small amount at first, rather than the entire snack all at once. Wait for them to ask for more (verbally or non-verbally) and then slowly offer a little more each time so that they have to ask again. By doing this you are creating numerous opportunities for them to ask for more.

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### Do something unexpected

Be creative and do something unexpected. For example, when going outside, try putting your hat or shoes on your child. This will create an opportunity for your child to comment about 'silly' things.

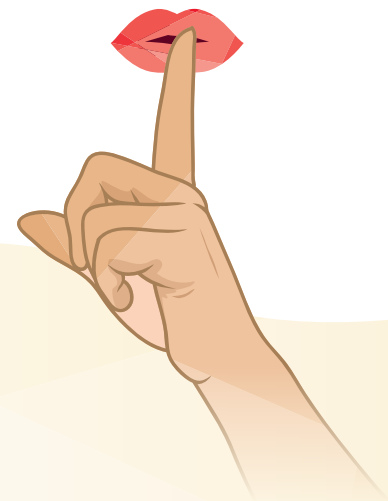


### Hide an item

Hide items you think your child will want or need to give them a reason to ask for your help to find them.

### Keep quiet

Instead of asking your child what they want, when they lead you to something, place an item in your hand or put your hand onto something, say nothing and this will create another opportunity for them to communicate. If they are really motivated they will indicate that they want something, and then you can respond.



### Creative mistakes

You might like to pretend that you don't know something, or make a mistake 'accidentally'. This will encourage your child to communicate with you more. They may request what they want, comment that you haven't done something correctly or enjoy telling you how to do it right! For example, you could pretend to put your child's shoes on and wait for their reaction. You could try to unlock the door with a pencil and leave the keys in your other hand so that they can tell you what you have done wrong and what you need to do to get it right.