**HOW-TO: Daily Routines as Communication Learning Opportunities**

Both at school and at home, we have routines that we do every day, and within each of these routines lays a lot of embedded language. When we have a predictable set of actions and expectations in a routine, we have a wonderful structure to support the growth of language. How do we grow language within routines?

* Start with being aware of language within the routine. Take the time to notice words you use, words others use, and the words that maybe aren’t being used yet.
* Choose one or two messages that would make sense as natural contributions for the child—what are they participating in, what are they anticipating, what aspects inspire their reactions? Use these observations as jumping off points to put words to the child’s comments, exclamations, and opinions.
* Use their expectation of your participation to encourage them to prompt you. Do you always put the toothpaste on the toothbrush? Then this time just pause briefly and make eye contact to see if they indicate that your action is needed. If they do not yet have certain steps they anticipate that you will do, make that your first job—give them a structure to notice.
* Include a bit of humour. “Forget” to take off the toothpaste lid before trying to squirt some toothpaste onto their brush. They will likely indicate that there is a problem in some way… Give them the words they need! “Uh oh!” or “Wait!”
* Label the items needed in the routine. Start by naturally, briefly modelling the labels as the two of you gather what is needed. Later, once they know the labels and how to say them using their talker, they can to tell you what is needed.
* Remember to label actions, describing words and concepts related to the routine as well as the nouns.
* Interpret their behaviours and reactions, put words to them and, once the interpretation is confirmed, model the simplified message on the talker.
* Once their communication using the talker is embedded within the routine, replace yourself with someone else and encourage the same communication with the new partner.