**HOW-TO: Modelling on the Talker**

Modelling is THE key to a child learning to use their talker to communicate. What do we mean by that? How do we do it? And why does it work?

The terms *aided language input*, *aided language stimulation*, and *aided language modelling* all mean the same thing—use the talker yourself to represent a simplified version of what you are saying. If you were to say “I want a turn, please” you might model “want…turn.” The value of this is at least three-fold: 1) the child sees the talker is accepted and valued in the environment, 2) the child sees how to use the talker to say the word/s, and 3) the child learns that communicating “want…turn” has the effect of getting a turn. That is so powerful!

Here are some tips and tricks:

1. Choose a very small number of common, powerful, motivating words to learn and model as much as you can. Pre-thinking and planning reduces the stress on you of having to find the word on-the-fly when you are in the middle of an interaction.
2. Make modelling very efficient—just weave it into the interaction but don’t dwell on it.
3. Avoid questioning/testing/quizzing your child. The purpose of modelling is exposure and nothing more. When we model, we do not have the expectation that they are learning in order to demonstrate their attention and learning.
4. It’s important to only model messages that a) your child might conceivably need to produce (content and language sophistication), and b) that are not going to be messages that are negatively received by the child.
5. Have fun with it 😊 Choose positive or dramatic responses to be modelling, i.e. “awesome” or “uh oh!” or “gross!”—whatever your child responds well to.

**Q&A**

**What if my child doesn’t pay attention when I model?**

*That is ok—not a problem at all. They are HEARING the word/s, witnessing you accepting and using the talker, and learning that using the talker to communicate causes wanted outcomes.*

**What if my child wants to hold/use the talker themself? I can’t model!**

*There are several things you can try: 1) reposition the talker between you so you both can press the word buttons, 2) try to be as fast as possible in modelling a single word on the home page, and then shift the focus back to your shared experience, 3) try a my-turn-your-turn structure in an activity that supports this, 4) try modelling by hovering rather than pressing the word button, 5) produce paper versions of the word/s you are wanting to model—use them instead, 6) have a second talker for you to model on (sometimes this needs to be only a short period of time). It can be worthwhile asking them if you can push a word button. Sometimes they just want to be asked. (Of course, if they say no, we need to respect that and find another way.)*

**What do I model?**

*Anything relevant and motivating. Keep it simple! Single words are fine as is modelling one single word again and again throughout the day.*