

MONTHLY VISUAL SUPPORT



March 2014

Providing Students Embedded Opportunities to Communicate

By: Peggy Lawrence, TASN - ATBS Technical Assistance Coordinator

Some children with ASD may have difficulty developing language skills and understanding what others say to them. They may also have difficulty communicating nonverbally, such as through hand gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions.

As educators, it is imperative to embed communication opportunities within daily activities, providing a vehicle which will allow the student to communicate and make choices multiple times, across environments and across people.

Here are some easy ways to increase communication opportunities in the classroom:

- Daily Questions
- Contrived opportunities with a missing item (give juice box without straw, paper without pencil, potato head without eyes, etc.)
- Snack and lunch (opportunities to communicate with others as well as being able to choose food items when a choice is available, i.e., white or chocolate milk? Ketchup or mustard?, etc.)
- Daily greetings
- Activity Communication Boards (for art, cooking, etc.)
- Board games

For some students, the communication opportunity may be as simple as choosing between a red marker or a blue marker, choosing between two books or choosing a preferred edible. Communication boards should be individualized for each student based upon their mode of communication, their needs and abilities.

All sample materials listed on the next page can be found on our website in the classroom materials folder, then search for the underlined title.

EMBEDDING COMMUNICATION OPPORTUNITIES DURING CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND ACTIVITIES

Supporting Communication in the Classroom

Student: _____ Activity: _____

Which forms of communication am I supporting in this activity?

☐ Picture ☐ Sign Language ☐ Verbal ☐ Technology

☐ Gestures/movement ☐ PECS ☐ Written ☐ Other (describe): _____

Will this form be understood by potential communication partners?
Yes/No/Some

Does the activity encourage the student to direct their communication to a person?
Yes/No/Sometimes

Is the student currently able to initiate communication using this form?
Yes/No/Sometimes

Do I need to preteach skills needed for this activity?
Yes/No

What supports do I need to bring to this activity?

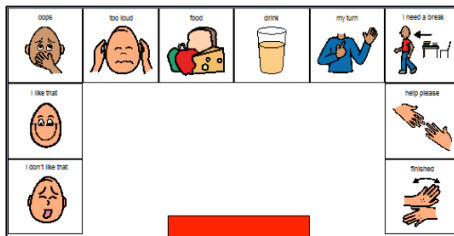
Are there opportunities and supports in place that allow the student to:

Request wants? Y/N Ask for help? Y/N Ask for a break? Y/N

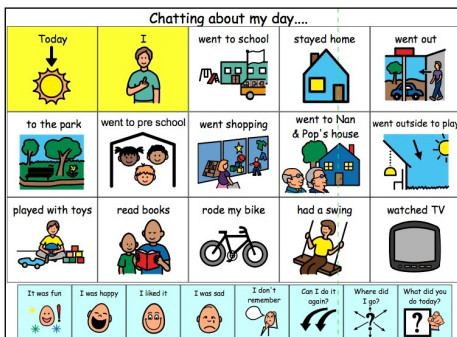
Comment or express opinions? Y/N Reject or Refuse? Y/N Appropriately gain attention? Y/N

If your answer is no, expect the student to use alternate behaviors in the place of appropriate communication.

Use the form “Supporting Communication in the Classroom”, as a framework when completing lesson plans to support communication in your classroom. This form was created by our very own, Lori Chambers, M.S. CCC/SLP.



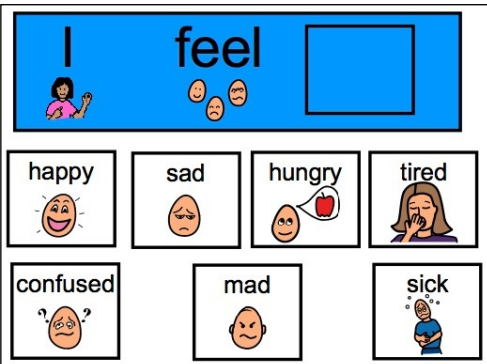
Communication Placemats are used during snack and lunch times to encourage communication with other students, provide requesting opportunities and to provide an opportunity to share an opinion. These placemats can be individualized for each student based upon their needs and abilities.



Chatting About my Day Board can be used by the teacher and parent to provide the student with an opportunity to share about activities that occurred within their day. Other boards might contain school subjects, activities, what the student ate for lunch, etc.



Game Communication Boards can be made for any game. It can include scripting, requesting and statements. This communication board was made for an Uno game. You can find this and other game communication boards on boardmakerachieve.com.



Feelings Communication Board can be used so students can check in and express their feelings.



This Art Activity communication board is used during art activities so students can request materials needed to complete the project, ask for help or indicate preferences.

Supporting Communication in the Classroom

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Activity: _____

Which forms of communication am I supporting in this activity?

☐ Picture ☐ Sign Language ☐ Verbal ☐ Technology _____

☐ Gestures/movement ☐ PECS ☐ Written ☐ Other (describe): _____

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by potential communication
partners?

Yes/ No/ Some

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communication to a
person?

Yes/ No/ Sometimes

Is the student currently able
to initiate communication
using this form?

Yes/ No/ Sometimes

Do I need to preteach
skills needed for this
activity?

Yes/No

What supports do I need to bring to this activity?



Are there opportunities and supports in place that allow the student to:

Request wants? Y/N

Ask for help? Y/N

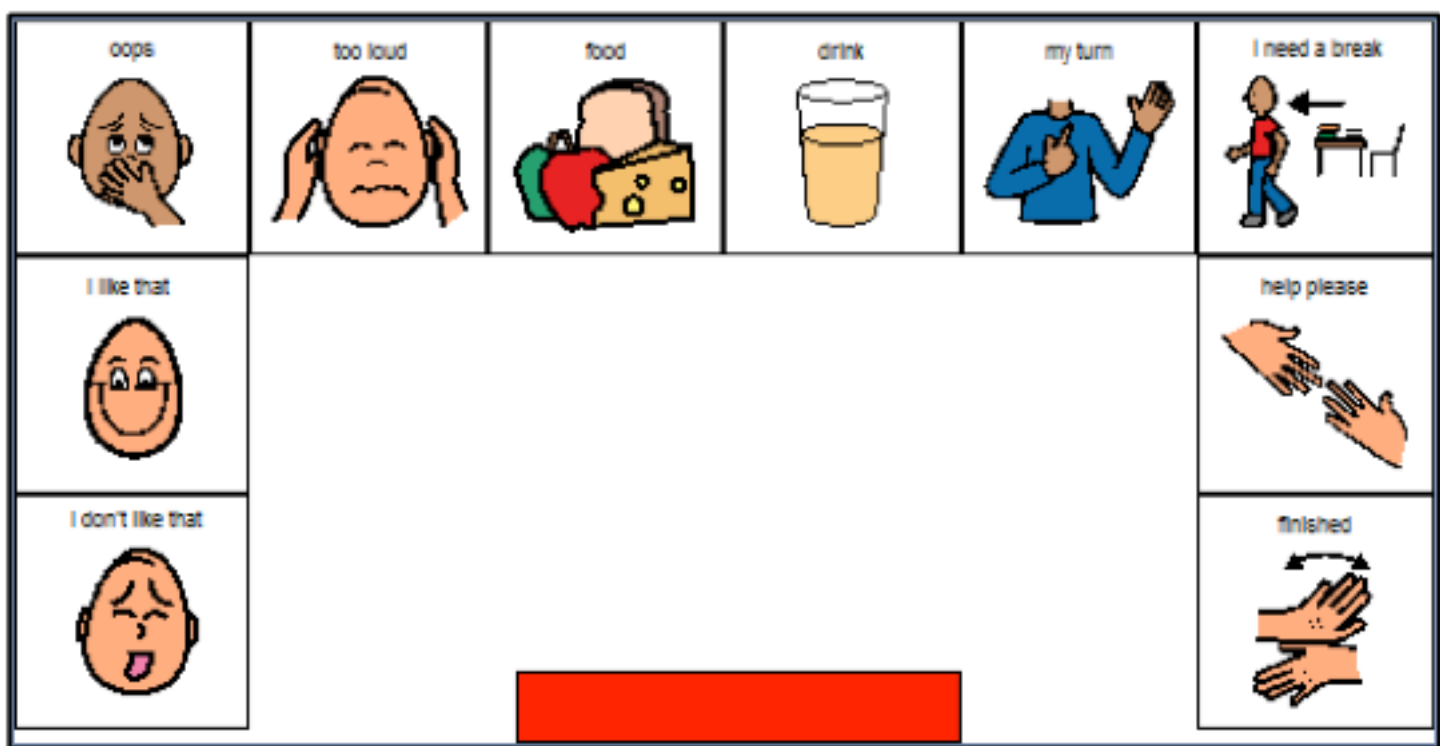
Ask for a break? Y/N

Comment or express opinions? Y/N



Reject or Refuse? Y/N

Appropriately gain attention? Y/N

If your answer is no, expect the student to use alternate behaviors in the place of appropriate communication.



Chatting about my day....

<p>Today</p> 	<p>I</p> 	<p>went to school</p> 	<p>stayed home</p> 	<p>went out</p> 			
<p>to the park</p> 	<p>went to pre school</p> 	<p>went shopping</p> 	<p>went to Nan & Pop's house</p> 	<p>went outside to play</p> 			
<p>played with toys</p> 	<p>read books</p> 	<p>rode my bike</p> 	<p>had a swing</p> 	<p>watched TV</p> 			
<p>It was fun</p> 	<p>I was happy</p> 	<p>I liked it</p> 	<p>I was sad</p> 	<p>I don't remember</p> 	<p>Can I do it again?</p> 	<p>Where did I go?</p> 	<p>What did you do today?</p> 

Art Choices

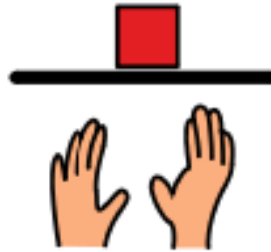
I, me, my



you, your



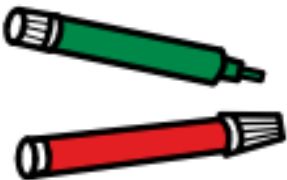
want



need



markers



paper



colored paper



crayons



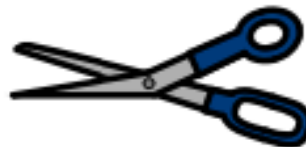
play dough



glue stick



scissors



colored pencils



like



looks good

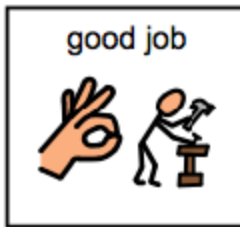
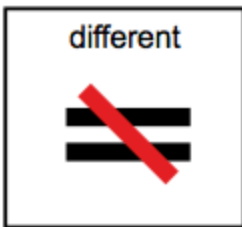
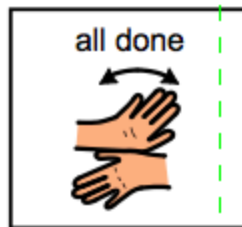
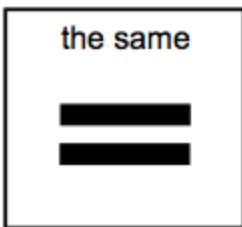
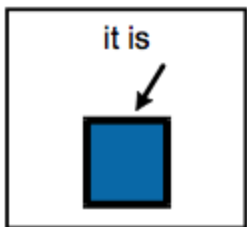
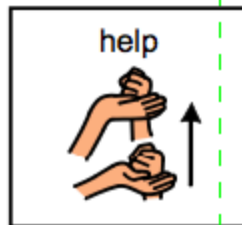
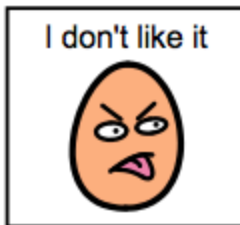
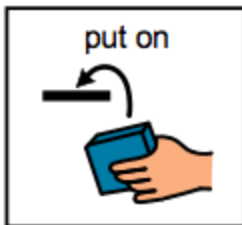
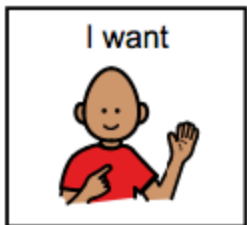
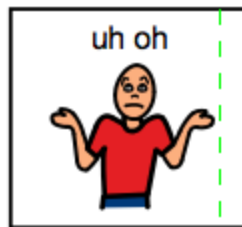
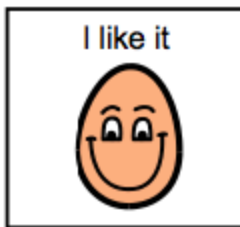
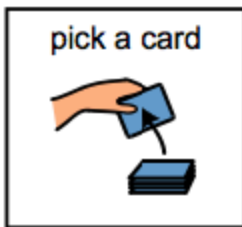
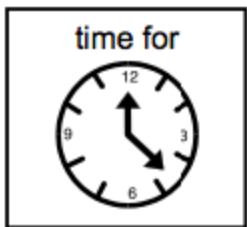


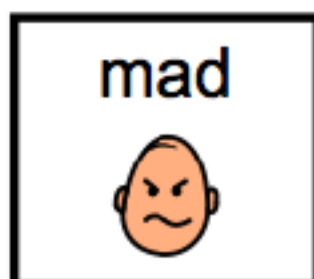
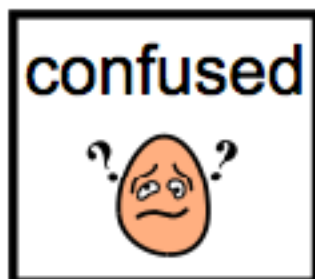
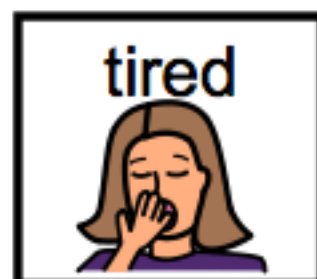
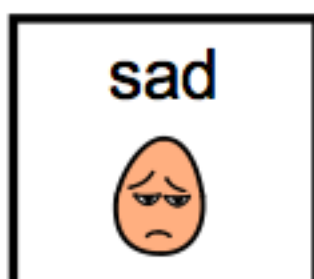
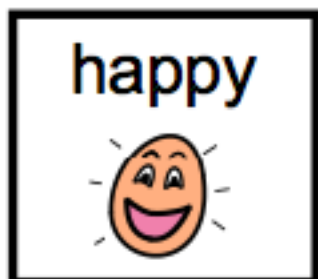
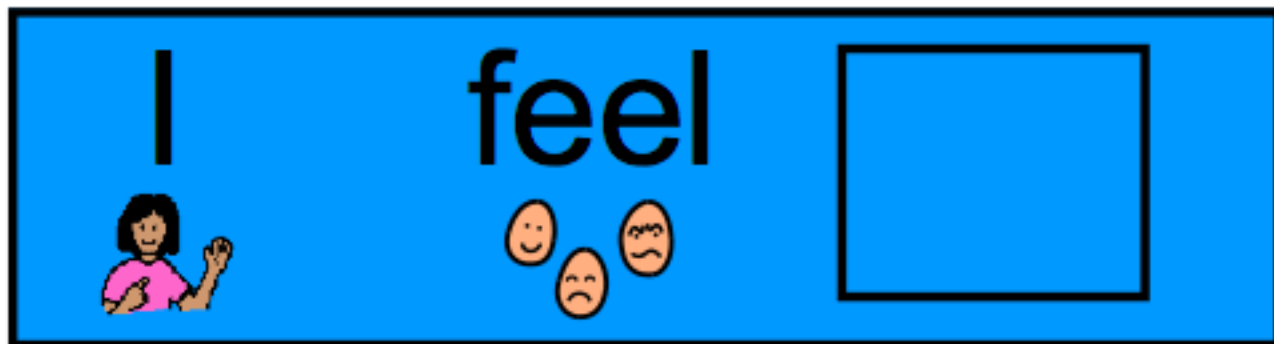
help



all done







Communication Placemats

The goal of the communication placemat is to encourage the use of communication instead of problem behavior and increase opportunities for interaction.

These communication supports should be:

1. Easily accessible
2. Used by both the student and teachers or peers during communication
3. Predictable- For example, if you determine that the best place to put the “break” icon is in the right hand corner for that particular student then that icon should always be placed in the right hand corner, even if the activity changes.
4. Rewarding for the student- Icons that are chosen should not only be what we think the student needs to communicate about but also what they may want to communicate about.

We have made a basic set of icons for each student. (You will not want to use all of them.) There will likely be modifications or additions that you want to make. The boardmaker file containing the icons is available for you if you need it.

Examples of modifications you may want to make after you get to know the students are:

- larger icons
- strong visual contrast in color of icons
- objects or TOBIs instead of pictures
- limiting number of icons used on the mat
- changing vocabulary used on the icon to a word the student already uses (i.e. they may say “chill out” instead of “break”)
- location of icons on the mat may be different depending on the students physical needs and field of vision



Student's color

❖ Important note- These placemats were made using the resources we had available and with the idea that we would be using them for multiple students over the years. There are many other materials, colors and patterns that can be used for making communication placemats. If you have a chance to make them for your own students don't be afraid to try your own ideas and use the materials that you have.

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