

Reducing Maladaptive Behaviors With AAC

Speech Language Pathologists and parents of individuals with maladaptive, or challenging, behaviors should focus on these communication functions when working to increase their child's functional communication and independent use of AAC.

- 1) Choice making** – Helping the individual make choices throughout their daily routine by modeling and showing options on the device to increase independence and communication opportunities.
- 2) Requesting** – Model how to request for help, food/drink, and favored activities so individuals use the device instead of previous communication strategies.
- 3) Protesting** – Being able to tell someone they do not like do not like something, or being able to say “stop” or “no,” will increase self- autonomy and independence. Model “no” in context or during games and songs!
- 4) Getting attention of communication partners** – Engaging in social interactions and getting the attention of others within their environment when they need to communicate a want or need will help increase functional social communication. Play peek-a-boo or hide and seek and take turns calling each other on the device!
- 5) Expressing Emotions** – Allowing individuals to tell us how they are feeling will decrease frustration. Sing songs about emotions and model emotions both in and out of context.

Implementation Tips:

- 1.) Model the appropriate communication function on the child's device.
- 2.) Acknowledge the child's message when they access a button on their device.
- 3.) Ensure needed vocabulary and messages are available for the individual to self-advocate.

Sources:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Challenging behavior as communication. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. from <https://www.asha.org/njc/challenging-behavior-as-communication/>

Walker, V., & Snell, M. (2013). Effects of augmentative and alternative communication on challenging behavior: A meta-analysis. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 29(2), 117–131. <https://doi.org/10.3109/07434618.2013.785020>

