

# This week's communication focus...

## Commenting and Expressing Opinions: "I like this", "I don't like this" and "I think it's..."

"A child who uses speech will independently select the words she wishes to use from the vast array of words she hears/sees used every day.

A child who uses AAC will independently select the words she wishes to use from the vocabulary other people have chosen to model and, for aided symbols, made available for her to use." (Porter & Kirkland, 1995, p.93-94)

- Just as children learning to speak must be immersed in a language rich environment, children learning to use augmentative forms of communication must see constant models of their systems being used by those around them across the day, in all contexts. Modelling aided language is one of the key strategies that you must adopt to enable your child to become a competent communicator with any AAC system, including their PODD communication book.
- Your child's PODD communication book allows them to comment, give their opinion and express their emotions. One of the ways they can do this is by learning to use the 'I like this' and 'I don't like this' OR 'I think it's' branch starters (depending on which of these have been included in your child's PODD book).

"Language acquisition is driven by the desire to communicate – aided language needs to be used for genuine communicative purposes" (Porter, 2007, p.66)

- You can model 'I like this', 'I don't like this' and 'I think it's' in such a variety of contexts. You can comment on something your child or another family member has done, a toy they are playing with, food you are eating, something that has happened or is going to happen, something you see at the park, something you see on TV...
- Try to think of situations when you could say the following and really focus on using these opportunities, as well as others, throughout the week:
  - "I like this – it's clever", or "I think it's clever"
  - "I like this – it's funny", or "I think it's funny"
  - "I like this – (turn the page) – it's beautiful", or "I think it's – (like words) beautiful"
  - "I don't like this – it's noisy", or "I think it's (turn the page) noisy"
  - "I don't like this – it's cheeky", or "I think it's (turn the page) cheeky"
- If your child has a PODD book with 'categories', you can even try expanding your message, eg. "I think it's clever – go to categories – actions – walking".
- Remember to add other opinion words to the lists if words you want to model aren't in your child's book.

Porter, G. (2007). *Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display Communication Books: Introductory Workshop*. Melb: Cerebral Palsy Education Centre.

Porter, G. & Kirkland, J. (1995). *Integrating Augmentative and Alternative Communication into Group Programs: Utilising the Principles of Conductive Education*. Melb: Spastic Society of Victoria.