

# COMMUNICATION BASICS CHECKLIST

## BETTER COMMUNICATORS MAKE BETTER AAC USERS

- ❖ Consistent Joint attention: you might have joint attention with something highly motivating like bubbles, but you need joint attention in lots of different activities. If you don't have someone's attention then are they really learning?
- ❖ Teach them to choose. Refer to podcast episode 20, [Get Ready](#), and the Simple Tools "Puzzle Pointing" video for ideas.
- ❖ After they can choose, teach them to plan—it's basically multistep choosing to meet a goal. For example, take pictures of the pieces needed for a simple Tinkertoy model. Only have two pieces in each picture to begin with, and scroll through the pictures as they choose and build.
- ❖ Turn-taking with eye contact. Refer to Simple Tools "ABC with You and Me" Simple Tools video for ideas.
- ❖ Accomplish something together, such as putting together toys that snap or fit together. You have one piece and the client has the other; you need to watch each other and work together to accomplish this.
- ❖ Sometimes you don't need words, silent eye contact communication is very powerful, and can be sophisticated. If they make extended eye contact with you, let the moment prolong as long as they maintain eye contact.
- ❖ Keep your activities simple, you can always increase complexity.
- ❖ Incorporate symbolic play! Language is also symbolic, and play is a child's gateway into higher cognitive reasoning.
- ❖ Always look at the whole child. Is this system the best one for them? Consider their vision, motor, cognitive, sensory, and emotional needs in addition to communication.