



# LEXICAL DIVERSITY AND AAC

Alaina Grissom - Think Tank Presentation

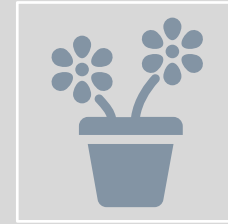
# Outline



WHAT DO WE  
KNOW?



WHAT AM I  
LEARNING?



WHERE COULD WE  
GO?

# What do we know?

- Language develops through a *relatively* patterned process for all individuals.
  - Transitions between pragmatics, semantics, syntax<sup>1</sup>
  - Illocutionary, Perlocutionary, Locutionary<sup>2</sup>
- Many of the interventions developed for users of AAC, specifically beginning communicators, have been based on several key principles.<sup>3-5</sup>
  - Shared social interactions
  - Attention, modeling, expansion
  - Zone of proximal development

# What do we know?

- Several strategies have been well-documented as supports to development for individuals who use AAC.
  - Encouraging joint attention<sup>6-7</sup>
  - Repeated social routines<sup>8</sup>
  - Embedding communication into the activity<sup>9-11</sup>
  - Augmented input (aided language modeling)<sup>12-14</sup>



# What else do we know?



- Lexical diversity is important for language development and can be reduced for AAC users.<sup>15</sup>
  - There is an overrepresentation of nouns on many communication devices.<sup>16-19</sup>
  - There is a fundamental difference in how interactions and socialization are shaped.<sup>20-25</sup>

\*Typical development includes a variety of word types.<sup>26</sup>



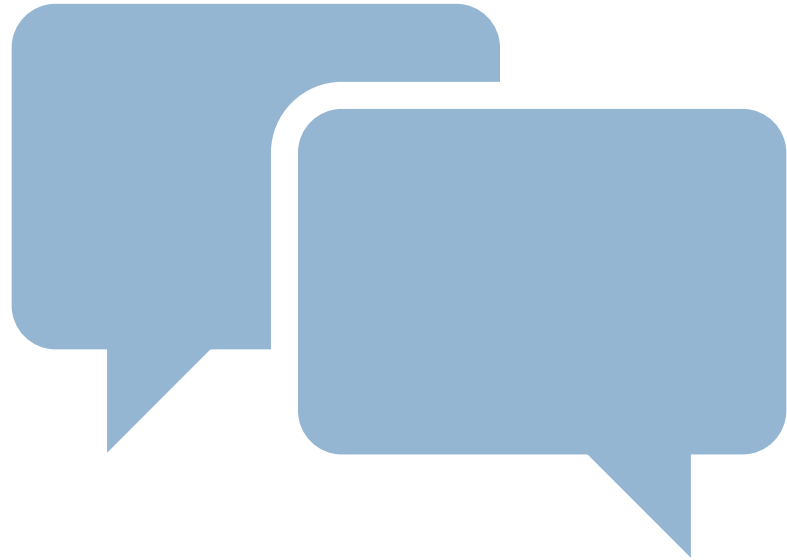
# What am I learning?

- Verbs represent a distinct word class with unique features.<sup>27-28</sup>
- Verbs are introduced using various cues, which also may vary via context.
  - Do caregivers differentiate their input when targeting different word forms?
  - It seems like they do!<sup>29-31</sup>

# Potential Clinical Implications

- Provide learners with access to 'elicit' parent input regardless of physical abilities.
- Further refine augmented input practices based on lexical targets.
- Create and/or focus on contexts that support and promote interactions that elicit input for a variety of lexical items.

# Questions for Discussion



- 1) What additional types or forms of input should we be observing and monitoring within communication interactions?
  - a. How can we use these observations to inform caregiver training moving forward?
  
- 2) What is the value in identifying specific contexts that may be more supportive of expanding lexical diversity, or specifically verbs?



Where could  
we go?

## Barriers and Potential Solutions

### 1. Representation

- VSDs/Video VSDs
- Animation<sup>32-34</sup>

### 2. Aspects of social interaction

- Incorporation of gestures into interactions
- Sequence/timing of cues
- Child initiations

How do we  
balance our  
focus of  
research  
between symbol  
representation  
and instruction?

- Does one barrier stand out to you?
- Are there other barriers?
- Am I missing other potential supports?
- What are your ideas or examples of practices you have used?

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