Communication at Home

ABA family worksheet | Connect during everyday routines.

For families supporting children, teens, or adults. Adapt examples to the person's interests, communication preferences, home language, and daily life.

Start with how your family member communicates

Notice speech, signs, gestures, pointing, pictures, writing, vocalizations, and AAC. AAC means augmentative and alternative communication, such as a picture board or speech-generating device. Respond to the message across these forms.

Ways my family member communicates now

Things they enjoy talking about or doing with others

Choose one useful message

Practice requesting, sharing an opinion, commenting, asking a question, refusing, or asking for help. Choose a message that gives the person more say in their day.

Examples Help me • Stop • More music • I like that • Something hurts • My turn

Our message / communication goal

What it may look or sound like, including AAC, signs, or gestures

Keep communication tools within reach and available throughout the day. Use the languages your family is comfortable with.

Make a home practice plan

Use a familiar routine and a message the person wants to share.

Connect, model, pause, respond

Connect. Join an activity the person enjoys. Notice what they are attending to and comment on it.

Model. Show a short message in a way they can access. If they use AAC, point to relevant symbols while speaking, with guidance from their communication team.

Pause. Give time to process and respond. Watch for gestures, sounds, signs, words, or AAC selections.

Respond. Acknowledge the message and respond naturally. If they request help, help. If they say stop, pause and check what they need.

Try it in an everyday moment

Music Model “more” or “different” between songs.
Getting dressed Offer two available clothing options and accept their choice.
Shared play Comment “That is funny!” and leave room for their response.
Chores Model “help” when a task becomes difficult.

Our routine and a natural moment for communication

Message we can model / tools we will keep available

How we will respond to the message

Accept clear messages without requiring repetition in another form. Keep AAC accessible. Meet basic needs promptly and keep practice comfortable. If distress occurs, pause and help.

Work with a speech-language pathologist and, when involved, the BCBA to coordinate communication goals and supports.

Notice connection & progress

Record a few everyday moments. Reuse this page as needed.

Message / routine we are practicing

Date	Routine / message	How they communicated	Our response / support

Reflect together

What messages did we notice? What helped us understand each other?

What would the person like to share or practice next?

Notice spontaneous messages, new communication partners, and clearer ways to ask for help or refuse. Include the person's feedback when choosing the next goal.

Family resources
ASHA: Tips for Parents and Caregivers | ASHA: AAC
General educational resource. Individualize with the learner and their care team.