

PARTNER TEACHING STRATEGIES: *ENGINEERING THE ENVIRONMENT*

~examples of strategies to prepare the environment for AAC success~

The concept of *Engineering the Environment* comes from the work of Carol Goossens', Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Sharon Sapp Crain, M.S., CCC-SLP and Pamela S. Elder, M.A., CCC-SLP.¹ The authors recommend that attention be directed to the environment in which AAC users live to facilitate communication competency. According to Elder & Goossens' (1994), "These environments should be engineered to:

- Expect augmented speakers to communicate,
- Provide frequent opportunities to communicate,
- Facilitate interactive communication, and
- Respond to communication attempts by augmented speakers."²

The authors provide a systematic approach to getting students to communicate in meaningful environments.

- Identify and prioritize communication activities throughout the day.
- Develop message sets for each activity.
- Place communication boards/displays in the environment where they will be used and are appropriate for the AAC user.
- Provide visual supports in the environment where communication will occur for individuals who use AAC devices.



Provide opportunities for a variety of communicative functions in multiple contexts, e.g., request actions, protest, solicit attention, greet, tell information, ask questions, and comment.

¹ Goossens', C., Crain, S., & Elder, P. (1992) *Engineering the Preschool Environment for Interactive, Symbolic Communication*. Birmingham, AL: Southeast Augmentative Communication Conference Publications.

² Elder, P. & Goossens', C. (1994). *Engineering Training Environments for Interactive Augmentative Communication: Strategies for Adolescents and Adults who are Moderately/Severely Developmentally Delayed*. Birmingham, AL: Southeast Augmentative Communication Conference Publications.

³ Augmentative Resources. (n.d.) *Communication/Visual Aid Aprons*. [photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.augresources.com/vindex.html?cat9.htm> Printed with permission.

⁴ Teaching Channel. (n.d.). *Visual Cues*. [photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/visual-cues-in-the-classroom> Printed with permission

