

How I Do It...

Teaching Yes & No

Teaching yes/no question responses is not about comprehension! So often I hear that a learner doesn't understand the concept of yes/no. If they haven't established a reliable means of response, how do we know that?

Learners need a reliable way to indicate yes/no before they can answer questions. Kids who communicate through speech learn yes/no words and/or movements. They try them out. Sometimes their use matches their intent, sometimes not. Adults give them feedback and they adjust over time. We need to give individuals with complex communication needs the same time and feedback to figure it out.!

Here's how I approach it:

- Explicit motor practice for head nods. We practice the movements together.
- Lots of verbal referencing when we notice the learner moving their head (e.g., I see you moving your head up and down. Looks like a yes!).
- Lots of modeling of head nods with verbal referencing (e.g., I'm moving my head from side to side, I'm saying no!)
- Lots of "failure free" opportunities to practice head nods (HINT: Not to answer yes/no questions!)

