

# Expanding Communication

## What is an expansion?

- Expansion: adding more words to your child's communication.
- The most powerful expansion includes one of your child's communication targets.

## Why expand communication?

- Expansions immediately connect the child's communication to additional new communication.
- The more your child hears and practices language that is more complex, the better his/her language skills become.
- When you give your child a little more language than he/she gives you, he/she hears more about the topic in which he/she is interested.
- Expansions help your child learn new vocabulary and talk in more complex sentences.

## How to expand communication?

- Gestures: by imitating the gesture or taking/touching the object while labeling the word, you are increasing the saliency of the word and making it more likely that your child will learn this new word.
  - Point/reach:
    - Child: {points to/reaches for ball}.
    - Adult: {points to/reaches for ball} ball.
  - Show
    - Child: {holds up block}.
    - Adult: {points to block} block.
  - Give
    - Child: {gives adult car to drive}.
    - Adult: {takes the car} car.
- Vocalizations: by replacing the vocalization with the word you want your child to say and by imitating his action or pointing to an object you are increasing the saliency of the word and making it more likely that your child will learn this new word.
  - Child: {says "ah" and is walking the cow}.
  - Adult: {walks the cow} walk.
- Words: by adding words to your child's words you connect a new word to a word your child already knows, which increases the saliency of the new word and makes it more likely that your child will learn this new word.
  - Child: car.
  - Adult: drive car.