

Mands

Practical kit for teaching
VB-MAPP skills to **autistic**
children



Table of Contents

- Mand 1M: Requesting by Pointing to Items of Interest
- Mand 2M: Requesting Items or Activities Without Prompts
- Mand 3M: Generalizing Requests Across People, Settings, and Reinforcers
- Mand 4M: Initiating Spontaneous Requests Without Verbal Support
- Mand 5M: Expanding the Variety of Mands Across Contexts
- Mand 6M: Requesting Missing Items During Functional Activities
- Mand 7M: Requesting Actions From Others to Complete Tasks
- Mand 8M: Requesting Using Two or More Different Words
- Mand 9M: Increasing Frequency and Variety of Spontaneous Mands
- Mand 10M: Initiating Spontaneous Requests for Untaught Items
- Mand 11M: Asking Questions to Obtain Information (What, Who, Where, Which)
- Mand 12M: Requesting to Stop Activities or Remove Aversive Stimuli
- Mand 13M: Requesting Using Adjectives, Prepositions, and Adverbs
- Mand 14M: Giving Verbal Directions and Instructions in Social Activities
- Mand 15M: Requesting Attention Before Initiating Communication

Mand 1M: Requesting by Pointing to Items of Interest

Mastery Criterion	The learner must acquire the ability to use pointing as an initial form of requesting desired items or activities. If pointing is not yet functional, teaching this gesture becomes an essential prerequisite for communication.
Program Goal	Establish pointing as a basic communication strategy, serving as a bridge to future verbal requests and promoting greater independence in social interactions.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	An item or activity of interest is visible but out of the learner's direct reach.
Target Behavior	Clearly pointing to the item or producing an approximation (sound/word) that indicates intent to obtain it.

Materials and Teaching Procedure

Materials Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toy car with lights• Transparent cup with juice• Simple puzzle with colorful pieces• Illustrated children's book• Action figure	Teaching Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present the item in view without giving immediate access• Wait for signs of interest from the learner• Model the pointing gesture if necessary and reinforce correct responses• Vary the situations (e.g., item near/far, on a table, inside a clear box)
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Implementation Steps

Initial Modeling <p>Guide the child's finger extension physically</p>
Fading Physical Prompts <p>Gradually reduce hand-over-hand guidance toward independence</p>
Pointing to Raised Items <p>Hold the object up and wait for a response</p>
Choice Between Items <p>Present preferred and neutral items, then two preferred items</p>
Pointing to Distant Objects <p>Items placed on shelves, tables, or in different locations</p>

Mand 2M: Requesting Items or Activities Without Prompts

Mastery Criterion	The learner must independently request desired items or activities without adult questions or direct prompting.
Program Goal	Promote communicative autonomy by ensuring the child can express needs spontaneously in various situations.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The therapist presents an object or activity of interest, visible but not immediately available.
Target Behavior	Independently producing the corresponding word, sign, or alternative communication for the desired item.

Materials Needed

- Remote-control car
- Cup with colorful juice
- Illustrated storybook
- Box of modeling clay
- New puzzle

Teaching Procedure

- Arrange materials so they are visible but inaccessible
- Wait a few seconds for the learner to initiate a request
- If no response, provide a minimal cue such as "Tell me what you want"
- If still no response, model the word and reinforce attempts
- Always reinforce spontaneous requests more strongly than prompted ones



Teaching Steps



Echoic Responses

Learner repeats therapist's model



Shape Approximations

Work toward clear pronunciation



Fade Prompts

Gradually reduce echoic prompts

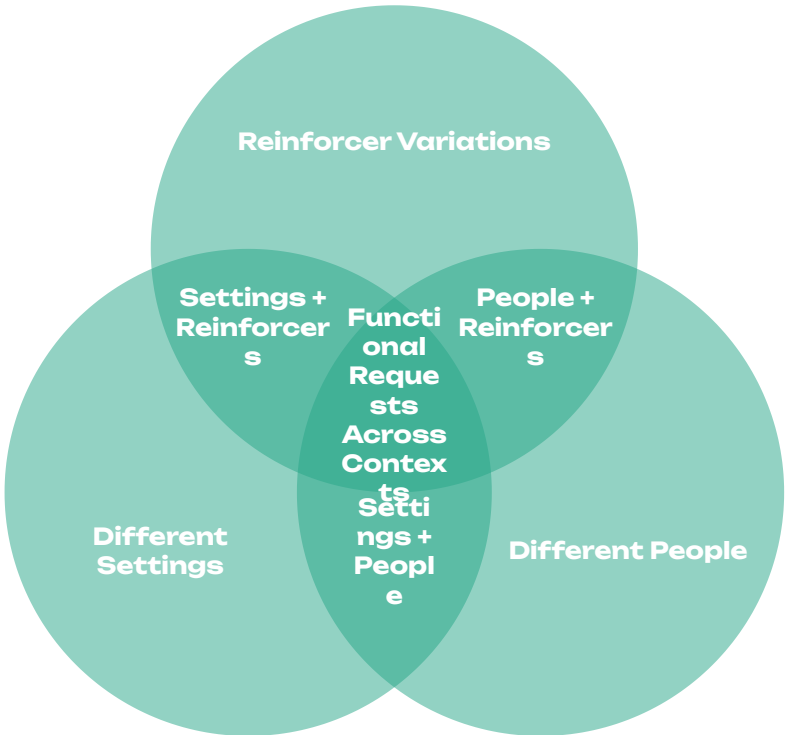


Generalize

Introduce new requests across contexts

Mand 3M: Generalizing Requests Across Contexts

Mastery Criterion	The learner must request items or actions across different locations, with various people, and for variations of the same reinforcer.
Program Goal	Ensure communication is functional in any environment and with any communication partner, preventing skills from being restricted to one context or person.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	Items of interest are presented in different settings, in varied forms, or by different people.
Target Behavior	Spontaneously requesting desired items or actions regardless of setting or communication partner.



Materials and Implementation

Materials Needed

- Cars of different sizes/models
- Cups of various colors
- Storybooks on different themes
- Different types of building toys
- Simple games with adapted rules

Teaching Procedure

- Alternate training environments (therapy room, playground, kitchen, park)
- Rotate communication partners (therapist, peer, caregiver)
- Present variations of the same item or activity
- Reinforce appropriate requests in each new context

Teaching Steps

- Request variations of a single item category
- Request across different environments
- Request from different people to ensure independence

Reinforcement should be immediate, with stronger reinforcement (longer access, enthusiastic praise) provided when requests are spontaneous in a new setting or with a new partner.

Mand 4M: Initiating Spontaneous Requests Without Verbal Support

Mastery Criterion	The learner must independently initiate requests without relying on adult prompts or verbal cues.
Program Goal	Foster communication independence, allowing the child to express needs naturally in daily situations.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	Items of interest are placed in view but out of reach.
Target Behavior	Requesting verbally, through signs, or alternative communication without prompts.

Materials and Teaching Strategies

Materials Needed

- Lift-the-flap picture book
- Transparent cup with colorful juice
- Car with flashing lights
- Box of building blocks
- Doll with changeable clothes

Teaching Procedure

- Display items visibly without immediate access
- Wait up to 5 seconds for a spontaneous request
- If none occurs, provide minimal support such as a partial word prompt
- Gradually fade all supports until independence

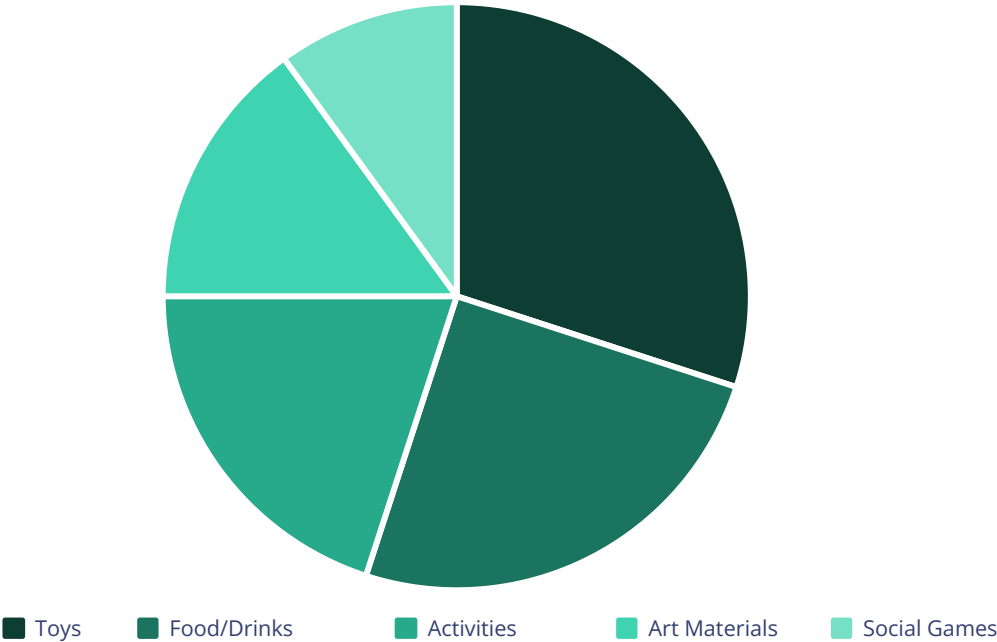
Implementation Steps



☐ Spontaneous requests should receive stronger reinforcement (longer access, enthusiastic praise) than prompted requests to encourage independence.

Mand 5M: Expanding the Variety of Mands Across Contexts

Mastery Criterion	The learner must independently request a wider variety of items and activities without relying on verbal prompts.
Program Goal	Expand the communicative repertoire, ensuring the child has more tools to express needs and interests.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult presents different motivating items or situations without immediate access.
Target Behavior	Spontaneously producing varied mands (words, signs, pictures) across categories of items and actions.



The chart shows a recommended distribution of request categories to ensure variety in mand training. Toys and food/drinks typically form the foundation, while gradually expanding to include activities, materials, and social interactions.

Materials and Teaching Approach

1

Materials Needed

- Colorful puzzle
- Water bottle with straw
- Interactive book with textures
- Spinning top with string
- Noise-making toy

2

Teaching Procedure

- Present a variety of items visibly without immediate access
- Wait up to 5 seconds for a spontaneous request
- If no request occurs, provide a model or minimal prompt and fade
- Gradually introduce new items to encourage diversity in requests

3


Teaching Steps

- Request objects of immediate interest
- Request actions related to activities (e.g., "open bottle")
- Expand repertoire to include toys, foods, art materials, social activities
- Generalize across different settings and partners

Mand 6M: Requesting Missing Items During Functional Activities


Mastery Criterion	The learner must identify when a necessary object is unavailable and request it in order to complete the activity.
Program Goal	Promote independence in functional communication by teaching the learner to notice missing materials and request what is needed to finish tasks.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult intentionally sets up the environment by removing an essential item from an activity.
Target Behavior	Requesting the missing item verbally, through signs, or with another communication system.

Materials and Implementation



Materials Needed

- Paper without a pencil for drawing
- Cup without a straw or lid
- Toy car missing a wheel
- Pencil case without an eraser
- Electronic toy without batteries inserted



Teaching Procedure

- Begin an activity where a key item is missing
- Wait a few seconds for the learner to request it
- If no request occurs, provide a minimal prompt such as, "What's missing?"
- If still no response, give the full verbal model and encourage repetition
- Fade prompts gradually until independent requests occur


Teaching Steps and Prompting Strategies

Teaching Steps

- Create clear absence scenarios (e.g., give a book without a bookmark)
- Encourage spontaneous requests
- Use visual or verbal prompts only if needed
- Systematically fade supports
- Vary contexts (home, school, clinic) to promote generalization

Prompting Strategies

- Minimal verbal cue: "Something's missing?"
- Visual: point to the empty space (e.g., cup without straw)
- Echoic: model the missing item's name for repetition

 Avoid creating absences that lead to intense frustration. Start with less essential items, then progress to more important ones as the learner understands the process.

Mand 7M: Requesting Actions From Others to Complete Activities

Mastery Criterion	The learner must learn to request another person's action needed to complete a desired activity.
Program Goal	Teach the child to seek help from others, fostering functional communication and social participation.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The environment is structured so that the learner depends on an adult or peer's action to reach the goal.
Target Behavior	Producing requests such as "open," "pull," "turn on," "hold," etc., through speech or alternative communication.

Materials Needed

- Pencil case closed with a tight zipper
- Stuck window that needs to be opened
- Heavy backpack that must be lifted
- Large box that needs to be pushed
- Water bottle with a screwed-on lid

Teaching Procedure

- Provide situations where external help is necessary
- Wait a few seconds for the learner to request action
- If no request occurs, use a minimal prompt: "What do you need me to do?"
- If still no response, model the word or gesture
- Fade prompts until independent requests occur



Teaching Steps



Simple Action Requests

Start with "open backpack" or similar basic requests



Varied Actions

Expand to pull, lift, hold, push, etc.




Different Contexts

Practice across classroom, clinic, playground



Different People

Generalize with teacher, peer, caregiver

 This skill strengthens the understanding that communication is not only for requesting objects, but also for engaging others in cooperative actions.

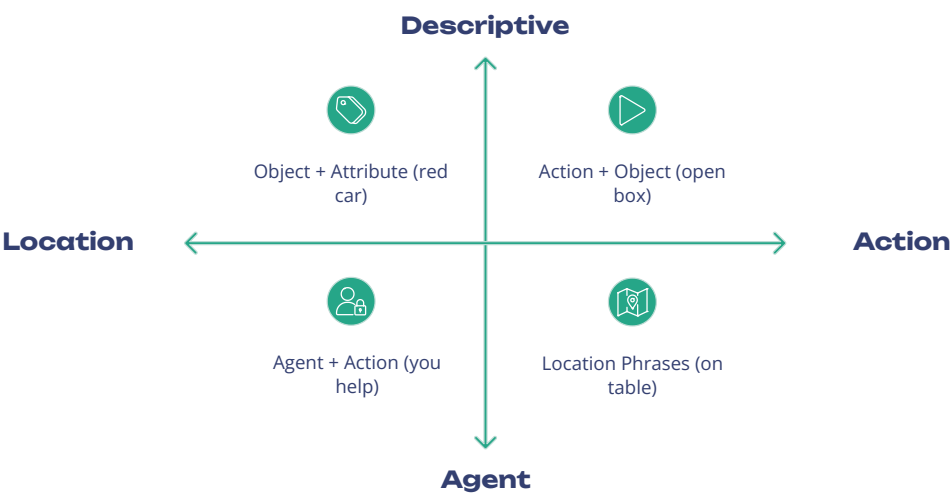
Mand 8M: Requesting Using Two or More Words

Mastery Criterion	The learner must request items or actions using phrases of two or more words, moving beyond single-word expressions.
Program Goal	Increase language complexity, supporting the development of more functional and elaborated phrases.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult presents a motivating item or situation, waiting for the learner to produce a more complete request.
Target Behavior	Producing requests with word combinations, such as "blue cup," "open window," "want big book."

Materials and Teaching Approach

Materials Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cups in different colorsLarge book and small bookToy car that must be turned onBox with a lid to openToy that lights up	Teaching Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none">If the learner uses a single word (e.g., "cup"), model the expanded form ("blue cup")Reinforce requests with two or more words more stronglyCreate situations where multiword requests are necessary to differentiate itemsGradually fade prompts until independence
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Word Combination Types



Teaching Steps

Simple Two-Word Combinations	Varied Combinations
Teach basic attribute + noun phrases (e.g., "red cup")	Encourage diverse phrases with objects, colors, and actions
1	3
Functional Attribute Requests Introduce action + object phrases (e.g., "open box")	Generalization Practice across settings and with different communication partners

Mand 9M: Increasing Frequency and Variety of Spontaneous Mands

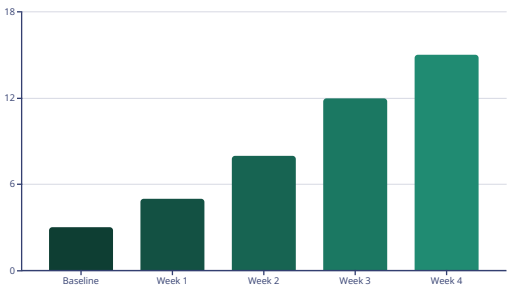
Mastery Criterion	The learner must produce a variety of spontaneous requests during interactions without relying on prompts or direct instructions.
Program Goal	Stimulate frequency and diversity of requests, promoting communicative independence and a broader functional repertoire.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The environment is arranged with multiple motivating items and activities, visible but not immediately accessible.
Target Behavior	Producing varied, spontaneous requests covering categories of objects, actions, and activities.

Materials Needed

- Colorful modeling clay
- Picture book with sound effects
- Light-up toy
- Interactive play mat
- Small trampoline

Teaching Procedure

- Arrange the environment with multiple opportunities for requests
- Keep items visible but out of reach
- Record the number and variety of spontaneous requests
- If requests are infrequent, increase motivation or add reinforcers



Expected progress in variety of spontaneous mands over a 4-week training period

Teaching Steps and Strategies

Teaching Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide varied items to encourage diverse requests• Create situations where requests are needed to complete activities• Monitor for excessive repetition and introduce new materials• Generalize in natural contexts (home, school, clinic)	Prompting Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental: keep items visible but not accessible• Visual: display items in an engaging way• Planned delay: wait before providing support
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Mand 10M: Spontaneous Requests for Untaught Items

Mastery Criterion	The learner must produce spontaneous requests for objects, actions, or situations that have not been directly taught.
Program Goal	Encourage natural language expansion, demonstrating that the child can use communication independently with novel stimuli.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult introduces new items or situations during routines without prior instruction.
Target Behavior	Spontaneously requesting access to unfamiliar items or experiences.

Materials and Teaching Approach

Materials Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none">Surprise box with different objectsNewly introduced card gameColorful LED bottleNew picture book with vivid imagesToy with unique music	Teaching Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regularly present new materialsWait a few seconds for spontaneous requestsReinforce any new attempts, even with unclear speechRecord new requests for progress tracking	Teaching Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduce novel objects naturally within routinesReinforce any new request immediatelyGradually add new contexts (different settings, new people)Ensure new requests occur consistently in sessions
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Tracking Novel Requests

Date	Novel Item	Request Form	Context
Week 1	LED spinner	"Spinner" (approximation)	Free play
Week 1	Bubble machine	"Bubbles"	Outdoor time
Week 2	New book	"Read book"	Library corner
Week 2	Magnetic blocks	"Blocks"	Center time
Week 3	Musical instrument	"Music" + pointing	Music activity

✔ This skill reflects advancement in autonomous communication. Continuously encourage curiosity by adding novel materials that promote spontaneous requests without structured teaching.

Mand 11M: Requesting Information

Mastery Criterion	The learner must be able to spontaneously ask questions to obtain relevant information across contexts.
Program Goal	Teach the child to use language for seeking knowledge, understanding situations, and engaging in richer social interactions.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult sets up situations where information is missing or altered, creating the need to ask.
Target Behavior	Producing functional questions such as "What is that?", "Who has it?", "Where did it go?", "Which one do you want?".

Question Types and Teaching Scenarios

1 What is that? Show an unusual item (e.g., magnifying glass) Present a novel object without explanation Introduce a tool with an unclear purpose	2 Where did it go? Hide a toy in a drawer or box Move a familiar item to an unexpected location Remove an object when the learner isn't looking
3 Who has it? Hand an item to another person without telling the learner Have a peer hold a needed material Reference someone who has information the learner needs	4 Which one? Present two similar items (e.g., books with similar covers) Offer a choice without indicating preference Create a situation requiring clarification between options


Materials and Teaching Procedure

Materials Needed

- Photos of unfamiliar people
- Objects hidden in boxes or bags
- Items placed in unusual spots
- Two similar options requiring a choice
- Unexpected changes in the environment

Teaching Procedure

- Create scenarios that spark the learner's curiosity
- Wait up to 5 seconds for a spontaneous question
- If none occurs, model the appropriate question and encourage repetition
- Systematically fade supports until independent use

 This training broadens communicative function, showing that language is also for understanding the environment—not only for requesting objects.

Mand 12M: Requesting to Stop Activities or Remove Aversive Stimuli

Mastery Criterion	The learner must learn to appropriately request that an undesired activity or uncomfortable stimulus be stopped in various contexts.
Program Goal	Provide a functional communication alternative to avoid problem behaviors in aversive situations, supporting self-regulation and appropriate social interaction.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult presents a mildly aversive but safe activity or stimulus.
Target Behavior	Producing functional refusal phrases such as "No," "No, thank you," or "Please stop."

Materials Needed

- Slightly unattractive toy
- Non-preferred food item
- Sound at slightly loud volume
- Light directed toward the face
- Motor activity that is not currently preferred

Teaching Procedure

- Create mild, planned discomfort scenarios
- Wait a few seconds for the learner to request a stop
- If none occurs, model the phrase ("Please stop")
- Fade prompts until spontaneous production



Teaching Steps

Short Refusals

Start with basic phrases like "No" and "Stop"


Polite Refusal Phrases

Expand to "No, thank you" and "Please stop"

Context Generalization

Practice during mealtime, tasks, and social interactions

Refusal Communication Options

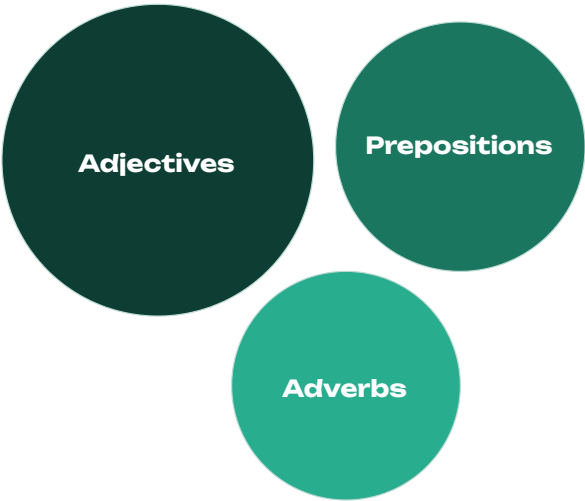
 Verbal Refusal Teaching phrases like "No," "Stop," "All done," "No more," and "I don't want"	 Visual Support Using cards or symbols that indicate "stop," "break," or "finished" for learners with limited verbal skills	 Gestural Communication Teaching appropriate gestures like head shaking, stop hand signal, or pushing away gently
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⚠️ Begin with low-intensity scenarios to avoid escalation. The goal is to build an acceptable way to say "no" without resorting to problem behavior.

Mand 13M: Requesting Using Adjectives, Prepositions, and Adverbs

Mastery Criterion	The learner must expand requests by adding more specific descriptions such as attributes, location, or manner.
Program Goal	Increase precision in language, allowing clearer and more functional communication.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult presents two or more similar items differing in color, size, texture, location, or condition.
Target Behavior	Producing requests with added details, such as "heavy cup," "book on top," "walk slower."

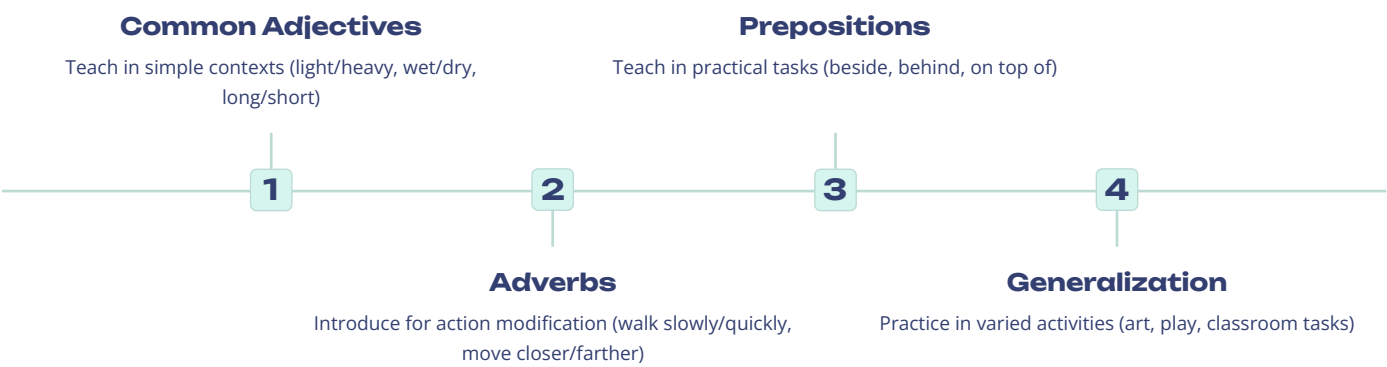
Language Modifiers in Mand Training



Materials and Teaching Approach

Materials Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cups of different sizesPieces of rough and smooth fabricWet and dry toysNearby and distant objectsBlocks placed beside or behind another object	Teaching Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up scenarios where added descriptions are requiredIf the learner only says "cup," model an expanded form ("small cup")Reinforce detailed requests more stronglyGradually vary attributes and contexts to expand repertoire
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Teaching Steps



Mand 14M: Giving Verbal Directions and Instructions in Social Activities

Mastery Criterion	The learner must be able to provide clear verbal instructions to guide another person in a task or activity.
Program Goal	Teach the child to take an active role in cooperative interactions, developing clarity and confidence in communication.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult creates a situation where the learner must explain how to perform a step or task.
Target Behavior	Producing instructions such as "Put it here," "Take the blue block," "Open the lid first."

Materials and Teaching Approach

Materials Needed

- Paper-folding guided by voice (e.g., making a paper airplane)
- Building toy with varied pieces
- Play sandwich to assemble in sequence
- Board game requiring move directions
- Painting activity with specific steps

Teaching Procedure

- Alternate roles so the adult follows the learner's instructions
- Begin with modeled short instructions
- Gradually fade supports until independent direction-giving
- Reinforce each clear, functional instruction

Instruction Types and Examples

Simple Directions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Put block here"• "Draw circle"• "Open box"	Sequential Instructions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "First fold paper, then turn over"• "Put red block, then blue block"• "Open lid, then pour water"
Game Directions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Roll dice, move three spaces"• "Pick card, follow instructions"• "Your turn, spin spinner"	Social Activity Instructions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Let's play tag, you run"• "Hold hands, make circle"• "Pass ball to me"


Teaching Steps

Simple Instructions with Support <p>Teach basic phrases paired with gestures or visual cards</p>	Multi-Step Activities <p>Expand to giving instructions for assembling sequences</p>
Varied Instruction Types <p>Encourage different types of directions across tasks</p>	Real-Life Applications <p>Generalize to group games, school tasks, and social contexts</p>

Mand 15M: Requesting Attention Before Communicating


Mastery Criterion	The learner must learn to gain the listener's attention before starting a request, story, or comment.
Program Goal	Ensure communication is effective by teaching the child to secure the listener's attention first.
Discriminative Stimulus (SD)	The adult pretends to be distracted while the learner wants to communicate.
Target Behavior	Producing attention-getting phrases such as "Can you listen for a moment?", "Look at me, please," or "I have something to tell you."

Materials and Teaching Approach



Materials Needed


- Short stories to retell
- Quick videos with engaging scenes
- Attention-getting phrase cards
- Simulated social situations (e.g., showing a drawing)



Teaching Procedure

- Explain to the learner why attention is important before speaking
- Provide activities where the learner must report something, while pretending to be distracted
- If no attention-getting phrase occurs, model one ("Say: Look at me")
- Fade prompts until spontaneous behavior emerges

Attention-Getting Phrases




Basic Phrases

"Excuse me," "Look, please," "Hi there"



Listening Requests

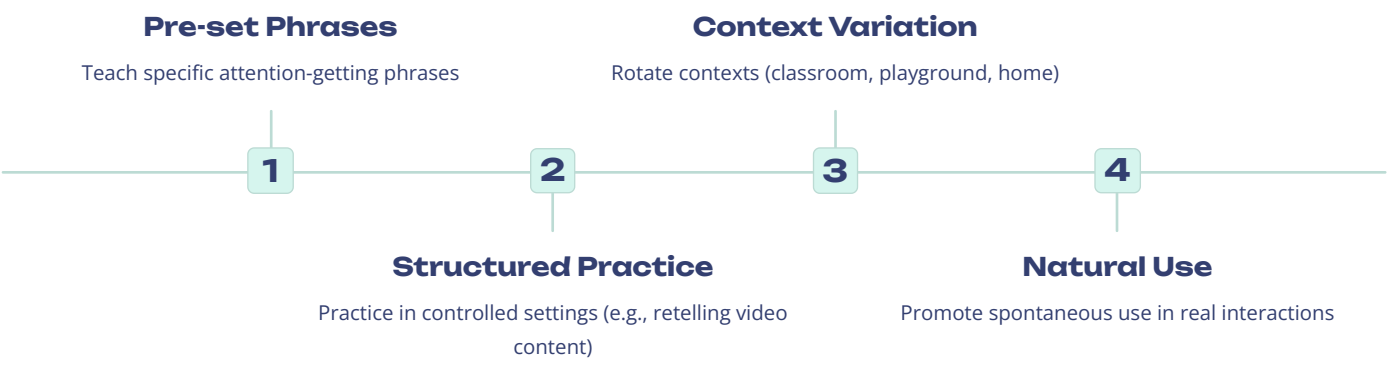
"Can you listen?" "I need to tell you something," "Listen for a moment"




Name Usage

"Ms. Smith?" "Mom, look," "John, can I show you?"

Teaching Steps



 This skill helps the learner engage more effectively in social interactions, ensuring communication is noticed and valued.

Implementing Mand Training: Key Considerations

Area	Considerations
Motivation	Ensure items used are truly motivating by conducting regular preference assessments. Motivation is the foundation of successful mand training.
Prompt Fading	Systematically reduce prompts to prevent prompt dependency. Move from physical to gestural to verbal prompts, then to natural cues.
Reinforcement	Provide immediate, natural reinforcement. The requested item itself should be the primary reinforcer.
Data Collection	Track frequency, independence, and variety of mands to monitor progress and adjust teaching strategies.

Creating Opportunities for Mand Training

Contrived Opportunities

Deliberately arrange the environment to create communication opportunities:

- Place preferred items in sight but out of reach
- Give incomplete materials for activities
- Create situations requiring assistance

Natural Opportunities


Capitalize on situations that naturally arise:

- Mealtime requests for food or utensils
- Playground requests for turns or equipment
- Classroom requests for materials or help

Interrupted Chains

Pause during familiar routines to create request opportunities:

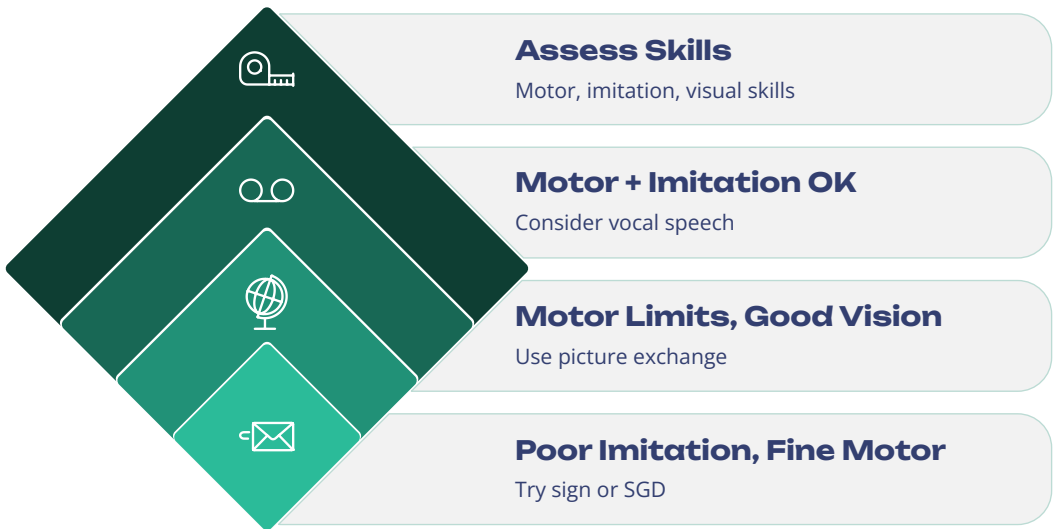
- Stop during a familiar song or game
- Pause before completing a preferred activity
- Hold back the final piece of a puzzle

 The most effective mand training occurs throughout the day in natural contexts, not just during structured teaching sessions.

Mand Training Across Communication Modalities

Communication System	Implementation Considerations
Vocal Speech	Shape approximations toward clear articulation. Accept and reinforce attempts while gradually increasing expectations for clarity.
Sign Language	Pair signs with spoken words. Use hand-over-hand guidance initially, then fade physical prompts. Ensure consistency across communication partners.
Picture Exchange	Begin with physically exchanging pictures for desired items. Gradually increase distance, introduce discrimination between pictures, and expand to sentence strips.
Speech-Generating Devices	Start with high-interest items on the device. Teach navigation between pages and categories. Ensure device is always available and vocabulary is relevant.

Selecting the Appropriate Communication System



Consistency Across Communication Partners



Team Training

Ensure all communication partners (teachers, therapists, family members) understand and use the same prompting and reinforcement strategies.



Communication Profiles

Create a document detailing the learner's current mand repertoire, prompting needs, and reinforcement strategies to share with all partners.



Video Modeling

Record successful mand training sessions to use as training tools for new communication partners and to maintain consistency.

Troubleshooting Common Challenges in Mand Training

Challenge	Potential Solutions
Limited Motivation	Conduct thorough preference assessments. Rotate items to prevent satiation. Pair new items with established reinforcers. Create motivating operations by limiting access outside of teaching.
Prompt Dependency	Use a systematic prompt fading schedule. Implement time delay before prompting. Reinforce independent requests more strongly than prompted ones.
Lack of Generalization	Train across multiple settings, with various people, and with different examples of the same item. Use naturally occurring opportunities throughout the day.
Challenging Behaviors	Teach appropriate mands as replacements for problem behaviors. Reinforce communication attempts immediately. Ensure the environment is set up for success.

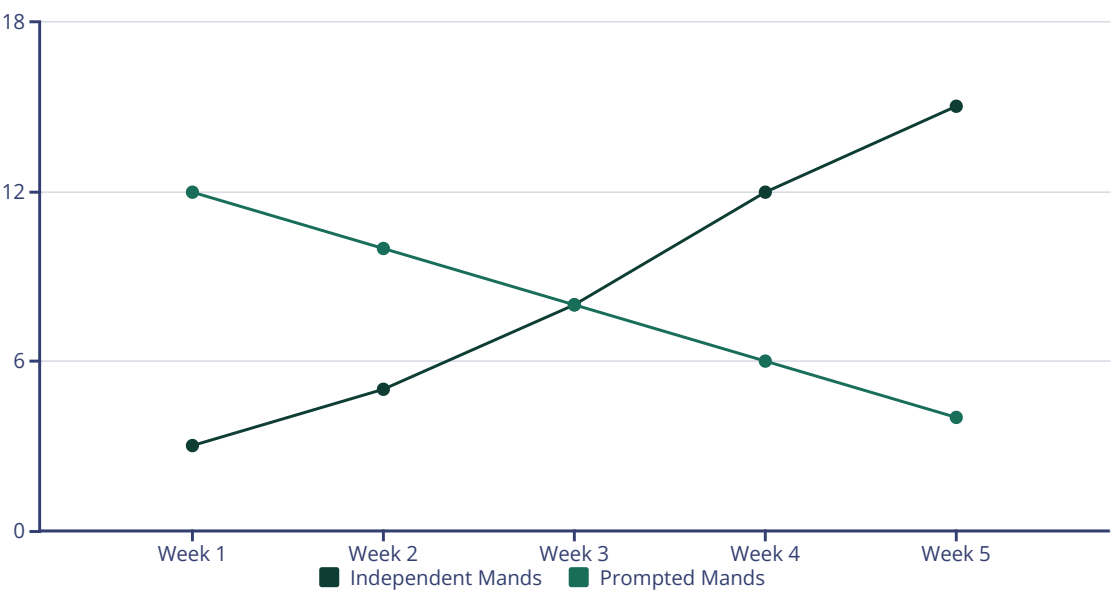
Addressing Specific Mand Training Challenges

<p>Echoic Dependency</p> <p>Challenge: Learner only requests after hearing the word modeled</p> <p>Solution: Implement time delay before providing the model. Gradually increase the delay. Use environmental arrangements that strongly suggest the item without naming it.</p>	<p>Limited Spontaneity</p> <p>Challenge: Learner only requests when directly asked "What do you want?"</p> <p>Solution: Fade the verbal SD by using less direct questions, then nonverbal cues. Create highly motivating situations where the need to request is clear.</p>	<p>Restricted Interests</p> <p>Challenge: Learner only requests a very limited set of items</p> <p>Solution: Pair new items with established reinforcers. Limit access to preferred items to create motivation for alternatives. Introduce variations of preferred items.</p>
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⚠ When challenges persist despite intervention, consider reassessing the learner's current skills and motivation, and adjust your teaching approach accordingly.

Data Collection and Progress Monitoring in Mand Training

Data Type	Collection Method	Purpose
Frequency	Count total number of mands per session or time period	Track overall communication rate
Independence	Record prompt level needed for each mand	Monitor progress toward unprompted requesting
Variety	List different mands used in each session	Ensure diverse communication repertoire
Spontaneity	Note if mand was initiated by learner or prompted by adult question	Track development of self-initiated communication



This chart shows the expected progression from prompted to independent mands over a 5-week training period. As training progresses, independent mands should increase while prompted mands decrease.

Data Collection Tools



Structured Data Sheets

Formal recording forms with columns for date, setting, mand type, prompt level, and reinforcer effectiveness. Best for detailed analysis and progress reports.



Tally Counters

Simple mechanical or app-based counters to track frequency of mands throughout the day. Ideal for measuring overall communication rate in natural settings.



Digital Applications

Specialized apps that allow quick recording of communication attempts and automatically generate progress graphs. Useful for sharing data across team members.

Mand Training in Natural Environments

Environment	Mand Opportunities	Implementation Strategies
Home	Mealtime, bath time, play, bedtime routines	Arrange preferred items visibly but out of reach. Create situations where help is needed. Pause during familiar routines.
School	Circle time, centers, recess, transitions	Distribute materials incompletely. Create classroom jobs requiring interaction. Structure peer activities to encourage requesting.
Community	Stores, restaurants, playgrounds, libraries	Pre-teach relevant vocabulary. Create structured opportunities (e.g., ordering food). Use visual supports as needed.

Strategies for Natural Environment Teaching

Environmental Arrangement

Strategically organize the environment to create communication opportunities:

- Place preferred items in visible but inaccessible locations
- Provide some but not all materials needed for an activity
- Create situations where assistance is required

Expectant Waiting

Use nonverbal cues to create opportunities for spontaneous requesting:

- Establish eye contact and wait expectantly
- Pause during familiar routines or songs
- Hold an item without immediately giving it

Sabotage

Create mild problems that require communication to resolve:

- Give a container that's difficult to open
- Provide the wrong tool for a task
- Intentionally forget a necessary item

✔ Natural environment teaching leads to better generalization and maintenance of mand skills compared to teaching only in structured settings.

Parent Training for Mand Implementation

Training Component	Implementation Strategies
Understanding Mand Function	Explain the purpose and importance of mand training. Clarify how mands differ from other communication types. Demonstrate how effective manding reduces frustration.
Creating Opportunities	Teach parents to identify and create natural requesting situations. Demonstrate environmental arrangement techniques. Practice interrupting chains and expectant waiting.
Prompting Effectively	Model appropriate prompt levels. Teach systematic prompt fading. Practice waiting before prompting to allow for spontaneous attempts.
Reinforcing Consistently	Explain the importance of immediate reinforcement. Demonstrate how to reinforce approximations while shaping toward the target. Practice differential reinforcement.

Parent Training Process



Supporting Materials for Parents



Written Guides

Simple, jargon-free handouts explaining key concepts and strategies. Include visual examples and step-by-step instructions for creating opportunities.



Video Models

Short video demonstrations of effective mand teaching techniques. Include examples of creating opportunities, prompting, and reinforcing in natural contexts.



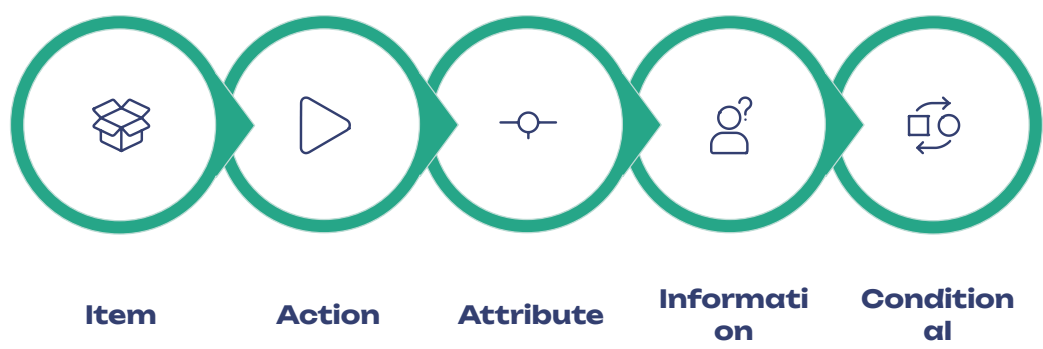
Data Collection Tools

Simplified tracking sheets for parents to monitor progress at home. Focus on key metrics like frequency of spontaneous requests and new words/phrases used.

Mand Training for Advanced Language Learners

Advanced Mand Type	Teaching Strategies	Example Scenarios
Mands for Information	Create knowledge gaps. Model question forms. Reinforce with relevant information.	Hide objects and teach "Where is it?" Show novel items to prompt "What is that?" Change routines to prompt "Why?"
Mands for Actions	Create situations requiring others' help. Teach specific action verbs. Expand from single words to phrases.	Present containers that need opening. Set up activities requiring assistance. Create situations where items need repair.
Conditional Mands	Teach "if/then" relationships. Model negotiation language. Create choice situations.	Teach "Can I have ___ if I ___?" Create situations for "First __, then __" requests. Practice "I'll ___ if you ___" exchanges.

Complex Mand Functions



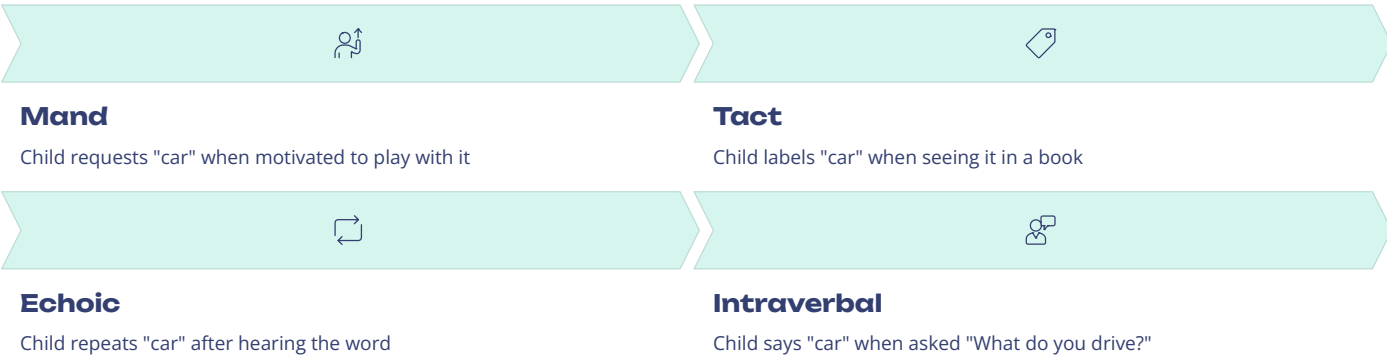
Teaching Advanced Mands for Information

<div>1</div> <div>What Questions Scenario: Present novel or unusual objects Teaching: Model "What is that?" when curiosity is evident Reinforcement: Provide the name and information about the object</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Where Questions Scenario: Hide familiar objects or change their typical location Teaching: Model "Where is my ___?" when searching behavior occurs Reinforcement: Provide location information and help find the item</div>
<div>3</div> <div>Who Questions Scenario: Have someone unexpected possess a desired item Teaching: Model "Who has my ___?" when the learner notices it's missing Reinforcement: Identify the person and facilitate obtaining the item</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Why Questions Scenario: Create unexpected changes or novel situations Teaching: Model "Why did you do that?" or "Why is this happening?" Reinforcement: Provide explanations that satisfy curiosity</div>

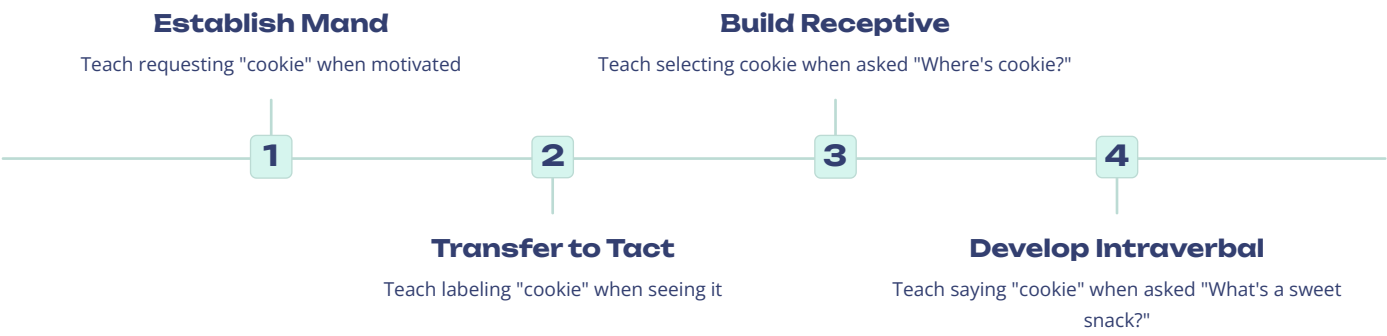
Integrating Mand Training with Other Verbal Operants

Verbal Operant	Relationship to Mands	Integration Strategies
Tact (Labeling)	Mands request; tacts label. The same word can function as both depending on motivation.	Teach mands first, then transfer to tacts. Practice shifting between functions based on context.
Echoic (Repeating)	Echoics can be used to prompt mands initially, but should be faded to promote spontaneity.	Use echoic-to-mand transfer procedures. Gradually increase delay between model and expected response.
Intraverbal (Answering)	Intraverbals respond to others' verbal behavior, while mands are initiated based on motivation.	Teach question-answering after establishing strong mand repertoire. Create situations where both skills are needed.

Transfer Procedures Between Verbal Operants



Sample Integrated Teaching Sequence



Natural Environment Integration

Mealtime Example

Mand: Child requests "more juice"

Tact: Adult asks "What are you drinking?"

Receptive: Adult says "Show me your cup"

Intraverbal: Adult asks "What do you like to drink?"

Play Example

Mand: Child requests "push swing"

Tact: Adult asks "What are you playing on?"

Receptive: Adult says "Point to the swing"

Intraverbal: Adult asks "What do we play on at the park?"

Art Example

Mand: Child requests "blue crayon"

Tact: Adult asks "What color is this?"

Receptive: Adult says "Give me the blue one"

Intraverbal: Adult asks "What color is the sky?"

While it's important to target multiple verbal operants, maintaining a strong focus on mand training ensures communication remains functional and motivated.

Mand Training for Learners with Complex Communication Needs

Challenge	Adaptations	Considerations
Motor Limitations	Use eye gaze, head nods, or switches. Adapt signs to match physical abilities. Consider technology solutions with accessible interfaces.	Focus on consistency of response rather than form. Ensure responses are recognizable to all communication partners.
Visual Impairments	Emphasize tactile and auditory cues. Use objects of reference instead of pictures. Consider auditory scanning for device users.	Provide extra time for exploration of materials. Create clear tactile distinctions between choices.
Hearing Impairments	Emphasize visual supports and sign language. Ensure good lighting and positioning for visual attention. Use vibrotactile cues when appropriate.	Ensure all communication partners are trained in the chosen visual communication system. Maintain consistent signs/symbols across environments.

Adapting Mand Training for Different Needs

Sensory Adaptations

- Provide multisensory cues (visual, tactile, auditory)
- Adjust environmental stimulation to optimal levels
- Consider sensory preferences in reinforcer selection
- Use high-contrast materials for visual attention

Motor Adaptations

- Position materials for optimal access
- Use stabilizing supports (arm troughs, weighted materials)
- Adapt response requirements to match abilities
- Consider alternative access methods (switches, eye gaze)

Cognitive Adaptations

- Break skills into smaller, achievable steps
- Use concrete, meaningful reinforcers
- Provide additional processing time
- Use consistent, simple language

Technology Solutions for Complex Communication Needs



Eye-Gaze Technology

Systems that track eye movement to select items on a screen. Ideal for individuals with limited physical movement but good visual tracking skills.



Switch Access

Devices activated by pressing, touching, or moving a switch. Can be adapted for various motor abilities and positioned anywhere on the body where movement is possible.



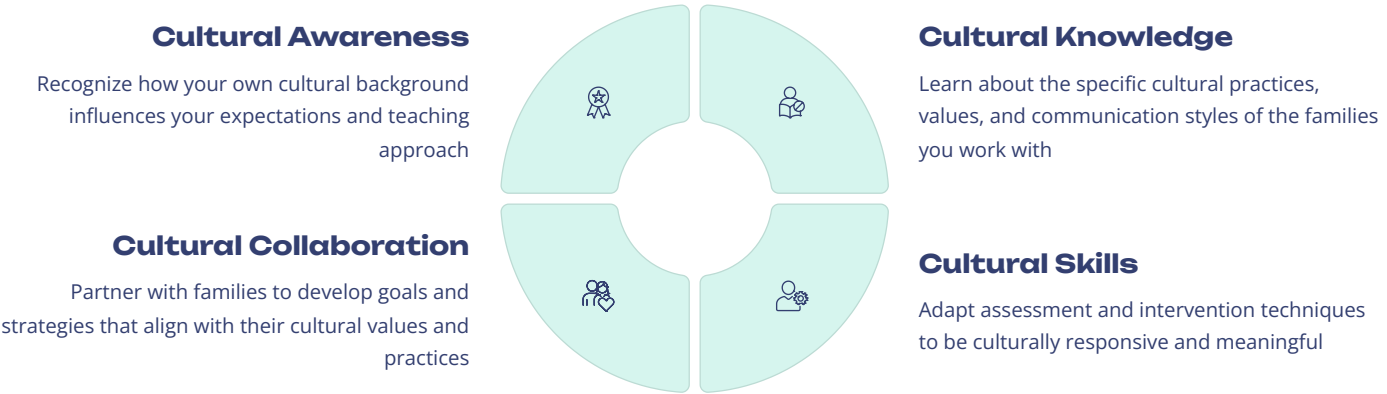
Communication Apps

Software that turns tablets and smartphones into communication devices. Highly customizable for different cognitive and sensory needs, with options for text, symbols, and photographs.

Cultural Considerations in Mand Training

Cultural Factor	Implications for Mand Training	Adaptations
Family Communication Styles	Some cultures may value listening over speaking, or group needs over individual expression.	Discuss family expectations. Balance teaching functional communication with respecting cultural norms. Identify culturally appropriate requesting contexts.
Language Differences	Families may speak a different language at home than is used in therapy or school.	Teach mands in both languages when possible. Provide bilingual visual supports. Ensure consistency in key vocabulary across languages.
Reinforcer Preferences	Food, toy, and activity preferences may vary significantly across cultures.	Conduct culturally sensitive preference assessments. Include familiar items from home. Consult with family about appropriate reinforcers.

Building Cultural Competence



Culturally Responsive Mand Training Strategies

Family Interviews

Conduct detailed interviews about:

- Communication expectations at home
- Typical requesting contexts in the family
- Cultural views on child communication
- Important vocabulary in home language

Bilingual Support

Implement strategies such as:

- Teaching key mands in both languages
- Creating visual supports with dual-language labels
- Recording models in home language for consistency
- Involving bilingual staff or interpreters when available

Culturally Relevant Materials

Incorporate into teaching:

- Foods and snacks familiar to the family
- Toys and games from the child's cultural background
- Pictures representing diverse families and settings
- Stories and songs from the home culture

❑ Cultural responsiveness is not about stereotyping but about individualizing your approach based on each family's unique cultural identity and preferences.

Mand Training for Adolescents and Adults

Consideration	Adaptations
Age-Appropriate Materials	Use reinforcers and activities that match chronological age rather than developmental level. Consider interests typical of peers. Avoid childish materials and language.
Functional Contexts	Focus on requests relevant to daily living, vocational settings, and community participation. Teach mands needed for independence and social inclusion.
Privacy and Dignity	Conduct sessions in settings that respect the individual's privacy. Be mindful of how prompting and reinforcement might appear to others. Avoid unnecessary attention.
Future Planning	Consider long-term communication needs in various adult settings. Teach mands that will be relevant across potential living and working environments.

Age-Appropriate Mand Contexts

Vocational Settings

- Requesting job materials and tools
- Asking for assistance with tasks
- Requesting breaks or schedule information
- Communicating problems or completion

Community Environments

- Ordering at restaurants or stores
- Requesting directions or assistance
- Asking about prices or availability
- Communicating in transportation settings

Independent Living

- Requesting household items or repairs
- Communicating preferences for activities
- Asking for help with daily living tasks
- Expressing health needs or concerns

Teaching Strategies for Older Learners

Community-Based Instruction

Teach mands in actual community settings where they will be used. Practice ordering in real restaurants, requesting assistance in stores, and asking questions in public transportation.

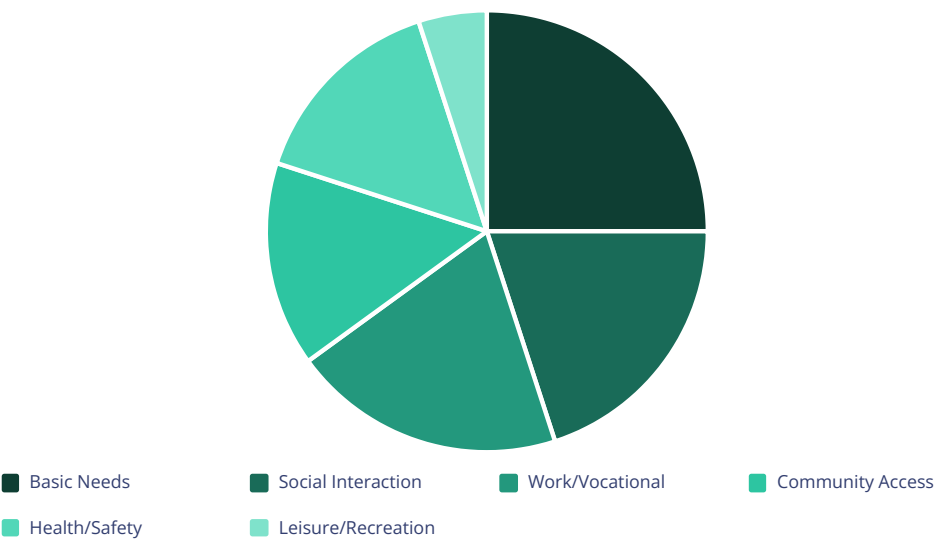
Video Modeling

Use video models of age-appropriate peers demonstrating effective requesting in various settings. Review and discuss the models before practicing in real situations.

Role Play

Create simulated environments to practice complex social requesting scenarios. Gradually increase the realism and complexity of the role-play situations.

Functional Communication Categories for Adults



The chart shows recommended priority levels for different communication categories when developing mand training programs for adolescents and adults.

Evaluating Mand Training Effectiveness

Evaluation Area	Measurement Approach	Success Indicators
Skill Acquisition	Direct observation data on frequency, independence, and variety of mands	Increasing trend in spontaneous mands. Decreasing need for prompts. Expanding repertoire of different mands.
Functional Outcomes	Interviews with caregivers. Observations in natural settings. Quality of life measures.	Improved ability to get needs met. Reduced frustration. Increased participation in activities. Enhanced independence.
Generalization	Probes across settings, people, and stimuli not directly taught	Successful requesting with novel communication partners. Effective manding in new environments. Requesting variations of taught items.
Problem Behavior	Frequency counts of challenging behaviors. ABC analysis to identify function.	Decreasing trend in behaviors that previously served a requesting function. Increasing use of appropriate mands instead.

Comprehensive Evaluation Process



Measuring Functional Outcomes



Effective evaluation looks beyond simple skill acquisition to measure meaningful changes in quality of life and functional independence.

Ethical Considerations in Mand Training

Ethical Area	Considerations	Best Practices
Dignity and Respect	Ensuring teaching procedures maintain the learner's dignity. Considering age-appropriate materials and interactions.	Use respectful language and tone. Avoid infantilizing older learners. Conduct sessions in appropriate settings. Consider how procedures appear to observers.
Autonomy	Balancing teaching goals with respecting the learner's right to choose. Considering when to honor refusals.	Teach refusal mands explicitly. Honor communication attempts even when inconvenient. Build choice-making into programs. Respect genuine disinterest.
Motivating Operations	Creating motivation without undue deprivation. Ensuring reinforcers are ethically managed.	Use brief, natural delays rather than extended deprivation. Create motivation through engagement rather than restriction. Ensure access to basic needs is never contingent.

Ethical Framework for Mand Training



Balancing Teaching and Autonomy

Creating Motivation Ethically

- Use brief, natural delays rather than extended deprivation
- Create interest through novelty and engagement
- Rotate reinforcers to maintain motivation without restriction
- Ensure basic needs are always met regardless of communication

Respecting Communication Attempts

- Honor all forms of communication, even if not the target form
- Acknowledge approximations while shaping toward clarity
- Respond to alternative communication when the target is too difficult
- Recognize when a learner is communicating discomfort or disinterest

Balancing Structure and Choice

- Build choice-making opportunities into structured teaching
- Allow learner to select from among appropriate reinforcers
- Provide options for session activities when possible
- Respect genuine refusals while encouraging participation

⊗ Always consider whether your teaching procedures would be acceptable if applied to a person without disabilities. If not, reconsider your approach.

Future Directions in Mand Training Research and Practice

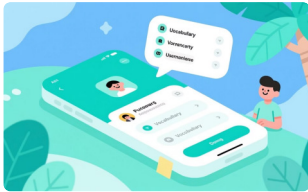
Research Area	Current Questions	Potential Applications
Technology Integration	How can emerging technologies enhance mand training? What features make digital supports most effective?	AI-powered communication apps that adapt to user patterns. Virtual reality environments for practicing social mands. Remote coaching systems for parents.
Neurodiversity Perspectives	How can mand training honor neurodivergent communication styles? What adaptations best support authentic communication?	Programs that balance functional communication with respect for natural communication patterns. Approaches that incorporate special interests as meaningful contexts.
Long-term Outcomes	What are the lasting effects of early mand training? How do different approaches impact quality of life over time?	Longitudinal studies tracking communication development from early intervention through adulthood. Quality of life measures as primary outcome indicators.

Emerging Technologies in Mand Training



Augmented Reality

AR systems that overlay communication prompts and reinforcement in natural environments. Potential to provide in-the-moment support without disrupting natural interactions.



Artificial Intelligence

Communication systems that learn from user patterns and adapt vocabulary and interface. Potential to predict communication needs and suggest new mands based on context.



Telehealth Platforms

Specialized platforms for remote coaching and monitoring of mand training. Potential to increase access to expert support and enable real-time data sharing across environments.

Evolving Perspectives in Communication Intervention

Neurodiversity-Affirming Approaches

Emerging research is exploring how to balance effective communication teaching with respect for neurodivergent communication styles. This includes:

- Honoring alternative forms of communication
- Incorporating special interests meaningfully
- Recognizing the communicative intent in non-traditional behaviors
- Measuring success beyond normative communication patterns

Participatory Research Models

Including autistic individuals and those with communication differences in research design and evaluation:

- Consulting with communication aid users on intervention design
- Incorporating feedback from individuals who have experienced mand training
- Developing outcome measures that reflect user priorities
- Balancing clinical expertise with lived experience perspectives

✔ The future of mand training lies in approaches that combine evidence-based practices with technological innovation, while respecting individual differences and incorporating diverse perspectives on communication.