

# Declarative Language:

## A Happier Alternative to Questions and Directives

Declarative language refers to **making observations and suggestions**, and drawing attention to things in one's environment. This kind of language allows us to share an experience while **taking the pressure off the child to respond in a particular way**.

### What are the benefits?

- ✓ It encourages independence
- ✓ It decreases prompt dependency
- ✓ It allows us to model language for GLPs
- ✓ It reduces performance-based stress
- ✓ It provides space for connection
- ✓ It increases spontaneity

### Transitioning from Questions/Directives to Declaratives...

#### Why we should:

Ultimately, declarative statements are important because they *first* allow for the child to notice things in their environment, and *then* gently provide them with **an invitation to act** while still giving them space to process and make their decision. So, *how do we do it?*

What do you want to eat?



***We have bananas and yogurt.  
I think I will have bananas.***

Pick up your backpack.



***I'm noticing your backpack on  
the floor.***



# Declarative Language Examples to **Model** or **Narrate** for Different Communicative Functions

**Modelling** refers to filling the environment with something that an individual might want to say, without placing pressure to say it. Eventually, models that resonate with the individual will likely be acquired naturally. This strategy works well for all children, but *especially for GLPs*.

**Narrating** refers to commenting on what we are noticing in the environment or within the child's internal states to draw awareness to the vocabulary accompanying these ideas. This strategy works well for all children, but *especially late talkers and children with PDA profiles*.

Communicative Function	Declarative Language Examples
Express desire and needs	<b>Model:</b> I want that one! / <b>Narrate:</b> You're reaching for that toy. Let's get it down!
Direct and motivate others	<b>Model:</b> Pick me up! / <b>Narrate:</b> I see you have the remote and need help turning the TV on.
Request continuation of activity	<b>Model:</b> Let's do it again! / <b>Narrate:</b> Oh no, the swing is slowing down! I can give you some more pushes.
Express joy	<b>Model:</b> I love playing outside. / <b>Narrate:</b> I hear you and your brother laughing, he is so funny.
Protest and self-advocate	<b>Model:</b> Help me! / <b>Narrate:</b> I notice you don't like when your sister is in your space. Let's move over here with your toy.
Indicate transitions	<b>Model:</b> Let's get outta here! / <b>Narrate:</b> The timer is up - it's time to leave.
Express feelings	<b>Model:</b> I feel butterflies in my tummy - I am so excited! / <b>Narrate:</b> I see you rubbing your eyes, you look tired.
Express sensory needs and preferences	<b>Model:</b> Let's jump on the trampoline! / <b>Narrate:</b> I wonder what I can squeeze. I'm looking for something squishy!
Exclamations and greetings	<b>Model:</b> Hi Grandma! Come play with us! / <b>Narrate:</b> I hear Grandma's car. It might be fun to surprise her at the door to say hello!