

**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Clinic**  
**Dr. Melanie Fried-Oken, director**  
**Professor, Neurology & Pediatrics, BME & ENT**  
[friedm@ohsu.edu](mailto:friedm@ohsu.edu)

**Asking Yes-No Questions For Reliable, Consistent Responses**

1. Keep the questions short in length. For example, "Are you thirsty?" or "Is this too high?" rather than "Are you thirsty for a drink now?" or "Do you want me to raise or lower your bed?"
2. Keep the questions direct and meaningful. For example, "Is the room too hot?" rather than "Are you uncomfortable in your room?"
3. Vary the questions so that some require a *yes* response and some require a *no* response.
4. Check the individual's reliability by asking the same question again and by re-wording the question (sometimes re-word the question requiring the opposite response).
5. Slow down your rate of speaking.
6. Emphasize the key words in the questions. For example, "Are you hungry?"
7. Allow a 15 to 30 second period between yes-no questions to allow the individual to prepare for the next, both mentally and physically. Count to 10 in your head before repeating or rephrasing the question.
8. Discontinue questions for 2 - 5 minutes if the individual begins to perseverate or to respond with the same answer over and over. For example, the individual responds *yes* to all questions.
9. Vary the questions with self-talk, which is a slow, meaningful description from you about the things are happening daily.
10. Contact your speech and language pathologist if you have specific questions or concerns at the following phone number\_\_\_\_\_.