

Tip Sheet:

Modifying the Physical Environment

Why modify the environment?

Modifying the environment can help decrease undesired behaviours (i.e. breaking items) and increase desired behaviours (i.e. requesting items).

For Example:



Put breakable items away/out of reach



Move furniture to make space for relaxing or activities of choice



Change the seating arrangement at the dinner table or in the van



Have multiple activities available to prevent boredom, this is where offering choice and using visuals can be helpful



Put highly desired items out of reach/sight to promote requesting and functional communication, be sure to provide the item immediately following the request to reward the appropriate use of words

When to Modify the Environment:

- The individual is engaging in destructive behaviours – put breakable items away/out of reach
- Individuals are bothering each other during dinner – move them further away from each other during dinner time
- Individuals are engaging in distracting behaviours in the van - move them forward or backward
- You want the individual to ask for items/activities – put highly desired items out of reach and show the individual how to request them