**Communication Dictionary Level VII**

Communication Dictionary Individuals who are beginning in Level VII typically have around 50 words. **A Communication Dictionary is appropriate for those symbols that are not readily understood by partners**. Individuals who use idiosyncratic or adapted signs or those who use tangible or abstract symbols that partners may not understand. Example: a piece of leather that is the symbol for time for the bus.

• Individuals in Level VII may have multiple communication modes (spoken words, manual signs, written words, brailled words, 2-D and 3-D abstract symbols).

• Dictionary allows all partners (adults and peers) to understand intent, respond appropriately, and creates a template for language expansion.

• Dictionary makes transitions to new environments and people easier.

• Dictionary contains the individual’s “words” (words, signs, written/brailled words, 2-D and 3-D symbols) and their communicative intents.

• Dictionary format is selected for ease of use by the individual and may be in a binder, key chain, portable container, etc.

• If a dictionary is needed, it must be maintained and shared as the individual’s vocabulary increases.

**Steps for Building Dictionary for an Individual:**

**1**. Identify a list of the 2- or 3- dimensional symbols, spoken words, signs, written word, brailled words, etc. that the individual combines to represent a specific activity, event, or person, but is not readily understood by all partners.

2. Check with other partners to ensure the list is comprehensive.

3. Collect these items and/or clarify intent of the individual’s use of a word or sign.

4. Determine how dictionary will be portable and accessible to the individual. Depending on the size of the individual’s vocabulary, multiple “dictionaries”, environmentally specific may be needed. (Note: Multiple dictionaries may require duplicate vocabulary.)

5. Label each of the items to ensure understanding of their representations by all partners.

6. Stress to all partners the importance of consistent, immediate responding.

7. Ensure the individual’s dictionary(ies) is readily available to all communication partners.

8. This is a transitional step. Phase out dictionary as individual moves toward increased language proficiency.