

# Checklist for Parents Implementing Natural Environment Teaching (NET) at Home

## Getting Started with NET

- Identify your child's interests and preferred activities to use as learning opportunities
- Create a list of daily routines where natural learning can take place (mealtimes, dressing, playtime, outings)
- Observe and note when your child is most engaged and communicative
- Establish a quiet, distraction-free space for focused learning when needed
- Ensure a balance between structured learning and child-led exploration

## Setting Goals for NET

- Define a few key skills to work on based on your child's strengths and needs
- Ensure goals are functional and meaningful (e.g., requesting, turn-taking, self-help skills)
- Break down complex skills into smaller, achievable steps
- Keep goals flexible and adjust based on progress and engagement
- Incorporate communication goals that align with your child's preferred communication method (verbal, AAC, sign language, etc.)

## Embedding Learning into Daily Routines

- Use snack or mealtime to practice requesting, labeling, and turn-taking
- Incorporate self-care routines (dressing, brushing teeth) to encourage independence and sequencing skills
- Embed language opportunities into play (e.g., narrate actions, encourage choices, model new words)
- Use community outings to teach functional skills like waiting, following directions, and navigating spaces
- Encourage problem-solving and decision-making through natural consequences and choices

## Encouraging Communication

- Follow your child's lead and model appropriate language
- Offer choices instead of asking yes/no questions ("Do you want apple or banana?")
- Wait and give your child time to process and respond

- Reinforce all attempts at communication, whether verbal, gestural, or using AAC
- Use visuals, gestures, or first-then boards to support understanding

### **Using Positive Reinforcement**

- Identify preferred rewards (praise, high-fives, playtime, favorite items)
- Reinforce effort and progress, not just the correct response
- Use natural reinforcement (e.g., if a child asks for a toy, give the toy rather than unrelated praise)
- Avoid overusing “good job” – be specific (“I love how you used your words to ask for help!”)
- Keep reinforcement immediate and consistent

### **Monitoring Progress & Adjusting Strategies**

- Track new skills and progress using a simple journal or checklist
- Celebrate small successes and build on them
- Adapt your approach if your child loses interest or becomes frustrated
- Consult with professionals (therapist, teacher, BCBA) for guidance and troubleshooting
- Stay patient and flexible—learning happens at your child's pace

### **Promoting Generalization of Skills**

- Practice skills in different settings (home, park, grocery store, playdates)
- Encourage interactions with different people to strengthen social skills
- Introduce slight variations in activities to help with adaptability
- Encourage problem-solving and independence in different environments
- Keep learning fun and stress-free to maintain motivation

