# Writing with Alternative Pencils
# Partner Assisted Scanning Tips for the Print Flip Chart

**IMPORTANT NOTE**: *Students DO NOT have to know letters or know how to use this pencil in order to write. They also DO NOT have to be consistent with making choices. Students learn about letters and writing BY writing. See the Flip Chart Guide for more detailed directions.*

### Partner Assisted Scanning

Students write with the flip chart using "partner assisted scanning." The partner slowly point to each item from left to right while stating the choices. Try not to ask a lot of questions. When the partner is pointing to what the student wants, they can indicate a choice or interest in a way that is the easiest. The partner immediately responds and writes the student's letter on the paper attached to the flip chart. It is essential that the student's writing remains in front of them the whole time. There are 2 ways to scan through the flip chart as follows:

- *See the Flip Chart Guide to decide which mode will be most appropriate for your student.*
- **Letter-by-Letter Mode:** Do NOT use the communication symbols—simply fold them back and point to each letter one at a time. After the student selects a letter—always resume scanning on the letter that they just chose. Go through the whole alphabet, letter by letter.
- **Page-by-Page Mode:** Use the communication symbols. This allows students to use the symbol "turn the page." When the student gets to the page they want, point to the individual letters one at a time. After the student selects a letter—always resume scanning on the letter that they just chose.

**Different Ways for Student to Indicate Choices**

- **Does Not Consistently Make Choices:** Be on the lookout for any movement or attention to any part of the activity. It might be an accidental slap, reach or fleeting eye gaze toward you or the pencil. Immediately attribute meaning to whatever they did and give them feedback on what you saw. For example, "Hey, I saw you look over here at this letter. It is an "h." We better write that down!!!"
- **Use Natural Gestures:** To make a choice, student can use a natural gesture when you are pointing to what they want, i.e. smiling, raising eyebrows, vocalizing, or lifting an arm. When possible, it is helpful to use 2 gestures—one that tells you to "go" on to the next item and a second gesture that tells you "that's what I want." Example: A frown to say "no, not that—go on to the next," and a smile for "yup—that's it!!."
- **Use 1 Switch:** On a single message device record: "that's it" or "I want that." The partner slowly points to the items and when pointing to what student wants, they activate the device. Using this method, the partner controls the speed and movement through the items. This can be tough for some students, as it requires them to react within a specific time. Using 2-switch partner assisted scanning may be easier and helpful in decreasing reaction time demands.
- **Use 2 Switches:** Use 2 single message devices. Program one as the "mover" with "go on," "next," or "move." Use the second device as the "picker," programmed with "that's it" or "I want that." Student uses their "mover" device to move partner through the choices and then uses "picker" device to pick their choice.

**Other Important Tips**

- MODEL, MODEL using this PENCIL with the student's gestures and switches
- Pause at least 10 seconds after questions/presentation of choices
- Attribute meaning to all attempts-non-intentional and intentional
- Do "think outlouds"
- Provide DAILY writing opportunities
- AVOID testing & known-answer questions
- Connect the print to things the student knows about
- Keep copies of students' written work & celebrate!

*GLUE THESE TIPS ON THE BACK OF THE FLIP CHART SO THAT EVERYONE CAN LEARN HOW TO USE IT!*