



## Communication at Its Core:

Developing Communication Skills for Life

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Forsyth County Schools - Parent Summit  
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## Agenda:

Define and Identify Core Vocabulary

Define the Difference Between Speech, Language, and Communication

Discuss Use of AAC Tools to Develop Language and Communication Skills for Life

Discuss Benefits/Challenges and Strategies for Encouraging Communication

Highlight Activities and Ways to Target Communication at Home

## Communication Activity

Ask Your Non-Verbal Partner the Following:

- What are you doing this weekend?
- How is work going?
- What are you doing for Fall Break?
- How is your family?

## What is Core Vocabulary?

"Core vocabulary is a small set of simple words, in any language, that are used frequently and across contexts." (Cross, Baker, Klotz, and Badman, 1997)

Around 350 words account for approximately 80% of words actually spoken.

Core vocabulary is primarily made up of action words, pronouns, demonstratives (this, that), early adverbs (here, there), and indefinite nouns (thing, people, stuff, some).

The remaining 20% is made of "fringe" or extended vocabulary. It varies widely from person to person and is difficult to predict.

Baker, Bruce. "Picturing Language: A 'How-To' Workshop," 2012.

## Why is core vocabulary key?

Based on research, they are common words found to be consistent across ...

Clinical Populations  
 Activities  
 Places  
 Topics  
 Age Groups

## Core Vocabulary

The Core Vocabulary Lists ...

Derived from language samples collected during research studies: [www.minspeak.com/CoreVocabulary.php](http://www.minspeak.com/CoreVocabulary.php)

- Banajee list of 26 toddler core words\*
- Marvin list of 333 alphabetized preschool core words
- Balandin list of 347 core words used by adults
- Stuart list of 174 core words used by seniors
- Hill list of the top 100 core words used by fluent augmented communicators

From the above research studies, 250-350 words collected in the language samples accounted for approximately 75-80% of the words communicated. (\* accounted for 96%)

330 Most Frequently Occurring Preschool Words: The Marvin Sampling  
 Vocabulary-Listeners in Preschool Children  
 Effects of Context and Time-Sampling\*

a	back	dog	going	me	our	some	too	we're
about	blue	doing	gone	in	mean	ours	somebody	top
after	both	don't	good	in	mean	out	someone	toys
again	box	done	great	if	middle	over	something	trees
all	again	door	green	is	more	paint	try	what's
almost	bugs	down	girls	inside	in	room	people	trying
already	bug	click	isn't	is	money	pet	slip	turn
also	bug	duck	hair	isn't	more	name	start	turns
an	by	eat	hand	it	most	pick	swing	two
and	bye	eating	hands	it's	more	please	take	um
another	eat	else	has	jump	much	play	tell	up
and	came	even	has	jump	must	please	them	as
any	can	everybody	haven't	jumped	my	push	that	use
are	can't	everything	he	jumping	myself	put	that's	used
aren't	candy	face	he's	just	name	ready	the	very
around	car	fall	her	hand	name	really	the	wait
as	catch	had	head	know	named	red	them	want
at	cause	finger	hear	last	need	remember	then	wanted
away	chair	far	hello	let	never	ride	there	was
back	comes	five	help	let	new	right	there's	wasn't
bad	cookie	feed	here	let's	new	right	there's	watch
ball	corn	fly	hi	like	no	said	them	water
bathroom	could	fast	high	little	not	same	they're	you'll
be	couldn't	for	hill	long	of	saw	thing	we'll
been	cup	from	him	look	off	say	things	you
because	cut	found	his	lacking	oh	this	those	your
before	day	get	hold	lot	other	she	those	your
being	dis	gets	home	jump	ok	she's	three	your
bit	didn't	getting	horse	made	old	show	through	your
better	different	girl	hot	make	on	shut	through	your
big	do	girls	house	man	one	side	time	your
bird	does	give	how	nearly	only	said	to	your
birds	doctor	go	huh	they	open	so	today	your
bit	doesn't	goes	hum	maybe	or	still	together	your

Christina A. Marvin,  
David R. Sautman,  
Dorice Bligny  
AAC, Vol. 10, Dec., 1994

Baker, Bruce, "Picturing Language: A 'How-To' Workshop," 2012.

In the Course of Development the Banajee Core Vocabulary is Nested  
 Within the Marvin Sampling


about	back	dog	going	me	our	some	too	we're
after	blue	doing	gone	in	mean	ours	somebody	top
again	both	don't	good	in	mean	out	someone	toys
all	again	door	green	is	more	paint	try	what's
almost	bugs	down	girls	inside	in	room	people	trying
already	bug	click	isn't	is	money	pet	slip	turn
also	bug	duck	hair	isn't	more	name	start	turns
an	by	eat	hand	it	most	pick	swing	two
and	bye	eating	hands	it's	more	please	take	um
another	eat	else	has	jump	much	play	tell	up
and	came	even	has	jump	must	please	them	as
any	can	everybody	haven't	jumped	my	push	that	use
are	can't	everything	he	jumping	myself	put	that's	used
aren't	candy	face	he's	just	name	ready	the	very
around	car	fall	her	hand	name	really	the	wait
as	catch	had	head	know	named	red	them	want
at	cause	finger	hear	last	need	remember	then	wanted
away	chair	far	hello	let	never	ride	there	was
back	comes	five	help	let	new	right	there's	wasn't
bad	cookie	feed	here	let's	new	right	there's	watch
ball	corn	fly	hi	like	no	said	them	water
bathroom	could	fast	high	little	not	same	they're	you'll
be	couldn't	for	hill	long	of	saw	thing	we'll
been	cup	from	him	look	off	say	things	you
because	cut	found	his	lacking	oh	this	those	your
before	day	get	hold	lot	other	she	those	your
being	dis	gets	home	jump	ok	she's	three	your
bit	didn't	getting	horse	made	old	show	through	your
better	different	girl	hot	make	on	shut	through	your
big	do	girls	house	man	one	side	time	your
bird	does	give	how	nearly	only	said	to	your
birds	doctor	go	huh	they	open	so	today	your
bit	doesn't	goes	hum	maybe	or	still	together	your

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## Video

Typical 3-year old



## Tim (3 yr. 3 mo.)

- I put it on
- I gonna put it up here
- You do it
- Up there
- Gimme it
- I put it up there
- No, you don't put it there
- You have it
- because you put it up
- I did it
- I put it way up
- Where this go?
- This one a cow
- I can't go
- It go right here
- He's a horse
- Not here
- Quack a duck
- It fits
- I put it right here
- Where this one go?
- He goes here
- You do it
- Not there

Reference - 24 core for toddlers  
 Marvin - 330 preschool words

Baker & Sementelli, Closing the Gap, 2005.  
 Cassie Sementelli M.S., CCC-SLP and Michelle Bishop M.Ed collected language samples from five typically developing children at their school in San Francisco

## Speech, Communication, and Language

**Speech:** the "verbal" production of sounds accurately and in the right places in words.

**Language:** the way we communicate "meaning through words and pictures that are put together in a structured and predictable way" in different cultures.

**Communication:** The "sharing" of thoughts, ideas, and feelings. It is how we interact with others This includes other alternative ways of communicating (AAC).

- ## Why Do We Communicate?
- Requesting attention
  - Asking questions
  - Greeting others
  - Telling jokes
  - Protesting
  - Requesting actions
  - Making friends
  - Being polite
  - Requesting object
  - Making comments
  - Making choices
  - Sharing experiences

## Question ...

Are you using CORE VOCABULARY already in your speech at home?



## Answer ...

- \* You are already using core vocabulary with your children!
- \* However, when we look at helping children at home, we've focused on fringe vocabulary (nouns) vs core vocabulary.



- \* Altering the focus of your current communication interactions to highlight core vocabulary will support your child's ability to use communication words.

- \* Communication Words (aka Core Vocabulary)

## Why is there limited focus on core vocabulary?

Often difficult to represent by pictures

Example: put, get, like, want, have

Easier to target nouns. Families don't naturally think of highlighting communication words.

Example: dog, ball, house, bus

School curriculum is often highly focused on academic words.

Example: yellow, June, summer

Since many of our children with delays have limited verbal skills, we typically ask them "choice" questions or yes/no questions.

As a result, our children with delays have limited exposure and practice with natural expressions & communication words during fun interactions.

## Example: ON



How would you teach the word ON ?

## Example: ON

Primarily targeted as a "sight-word" for reading

Or ... as a location ("show me the ball is on the chair" or "tell me where the ball is")

However ... its most common uses, it is not used as a location concept

Turn on the TV.

It goes on and on, and never stops.

She has to leave on time.

He is on the ball.

I am on my way.

A very common "core" word, but we often do not directly expose our children to its various uses.

## Video:

The Power of Core Vocabulary – John

<https://youtu.be/QqfVAPuGzpl>



## What is AAC?

**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)** includes all forms of communication, outside of oral speech, that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas.

(ASHA website)

## Two Types of AAC

### Unaided Communication Systems:

... refers to methods of communication that do not involve a piece of additional equipment. This includes body language, gesture, sign, and vocalization.

### Aided Communication Systems:

... **Low tech AAC** may include anything that does not need a battery to function such as objects, photo books, and manual word boards with symbols or text.

... **Mid or high tech AAC** range from simple single message devices that speak when touched to sophisticated dynamic display speech generating devices.

<http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk>

## AAC Myth #1

**AAC Myth #1:** *Introduction and use of AAC will keep an individual from using his or her natural speech.*

*FALSE: AAC tends to have a positive effect on speech and has been recommended as a treatment method for development of speech. Gains in speech production are frequently seen following introduction of AAC.*

## AAC Myth #2

**AAC Myth #2:** *AAC should only be introduced as a last resort when all hope of natural speech is gone.*

*FALSE: Because no one can determine how speech will develop, speech therapy can take place in conjunction with AAC to provide a means to communicate. A child who is not able to communicate effectively is at great risk for cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral problems.*

## AAC Myth #3

**AAC Myth #3:** *A young child is not ready for AAC.*

*FALSE: There are no known cognitive or other prerequisites that are necessary for a child to use AAC.*

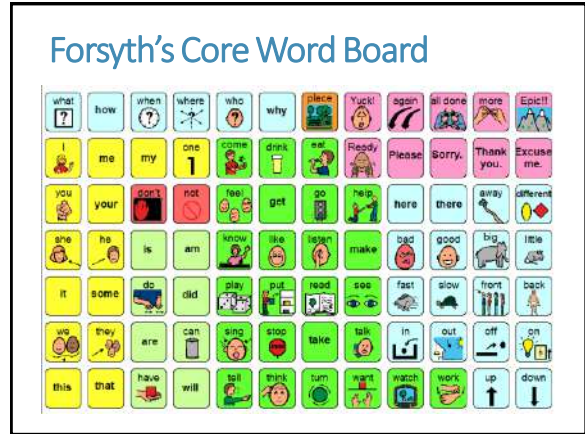
## AAC Myth #4

**AAC Myth #4:** *AAC makes the child look different.*


*FALSE: In the long run, the child is at greater risk of being judged as less socially and cognitively capable than their peers when they are unable to adequately express themselves.*

*Among young children, acceptance by others is not related to the type of AAC system used. (device vs. sign language vs. communication board)*

<http://aac.unl.edu/yaack/b2.html>



### Too Complicated?



TRUE or FALSE ... The more buttons (vocabulary) you have, the harder it is to use with the emerging communicator.

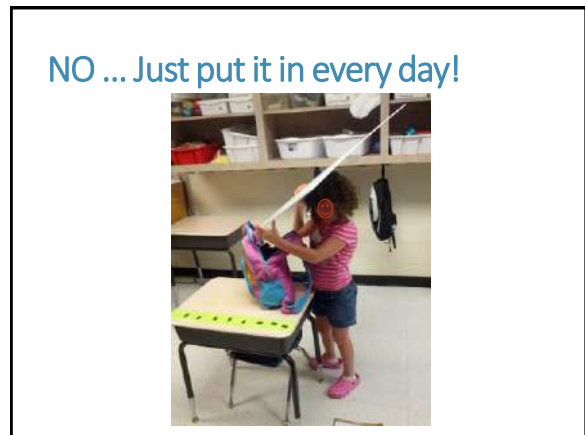
FALSE!! This thought is counterintuitive. Fewer buttons are more difficult to teach language.

### What WE Need to do more of...

Teach meaning and use of core words in all its various uses and meanings. (Ex ... concept ON)

To encourage learning, student must be engaged and motivated. Kids learn more quickly when they are having fun!

You want to see a connection and, hopefully, joy in the interaction!



## 2 Strategies for Teaching Core Vocabulary and Language Skills

### 1. Aided Language Input

-Provide natural language models (input) to facilitate expressive output

### 2. Descriptive Teaching

-Allow students to use the words already in the device to express meaning and understanding for teaching lessons.

-Ask open-ended questions of your student

-Model possible responses for your student

-Ex: "big thing outside with hot red stuff coming out from on top"

## Aided Language Input

### What is it?

"Aided Language Input (ALI) is a teaching strategy in which the facilitator highlights symbols on the user's communication display as he or she interacts and communicates verbally to the user."

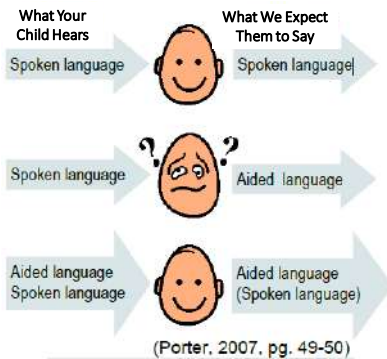
Goossens, Crane and Elder, 1999

### Premise of ALI:

That AAC Users will acquire language the same way that typical speakers learn language – through natural interaction in a language rich environment.

Language develops, AAC must be learned. (Smith, 2006)

From Navrotski and Witkowski, Aided Language Stimulation 1/2013



## Aided Language Input by...

### A. Modeling, Modeling, Modeling

Provide short, but complete models consistently using the student's AAC system.

Teachers, therapists, and families should learn "what" is on the device or communication board and how to communicate those words.

Makes the words being said to our children visual (see it), in addition to auditory (hear it).

ALI gives words to a child's thoughts and feelings.

From Navrotski and Witkowski, Aided Language Stimulation 1/2013

## Aided Language Input by...

### B. Conversational Recasting

Respond to everything the student communicates – even if you think it is a mistake!!

Expand on a student's message.

Ex: Student: "up"

Teacher: "Oh, you said... [on communication board] 'go up.'"

Student: "Dog water."

Teacher: "Yes ... He [on board] drink it ...[verbal] drink water."

The learning of target language structures was more rapid for conversational recasting than for imitative prompts. (Camarata and Nelson, 1994)

\* From Navrotski and Witkowski, Aided Language Stimulation 1/2013

## Number of Exposures to Learn a New Word

(Gates, 1931; McCormick, 1999)

LEVEL OF INTELLIGENCE	IQ	REQUIRED EXPOSURES
Significantly Above Average	120-129	20
Above Average	110-119	30
Average	90-119	35
Slow Learner	80-89	40
Mild Cognitive Impairment	70-79	45
Moderate Cognitive Impairment	60-69	55

## So Essentially ...

... Aided language input is a strategy in which the parent uses the words in the child's AAC system interactively with the student.

... Appropriate communication using the child's own AAC system then, in essence, is modeled for the child consistently.

... This not only models appropriate use but develops comprehension and expression of vocabulary and language use within daily routines and activities.

## Do you speak core?



## "Points to Remember"

The average 18 month old child has been exposed to 4,380 hours of oral language at a rate of 8 hours/day from birth.

A child who has a communication system and receives speech/language therapy two times per week for 20-30 minute sessions will reach this same amount of language exposure in 84 years.

-- Jane Korsten

## Additional points ...

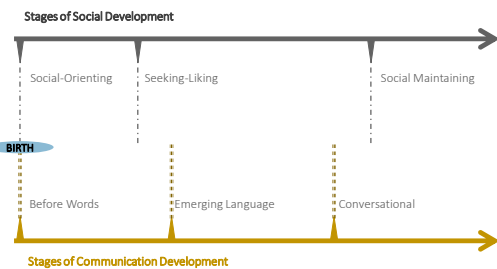
AAC users need to have models 50-350 times before independent spontaneous use noted.

-- AAC Clinical Therapy Data, Van Tatenhove

- Typically developing children start combining words (2-word phrases) when they have acquired approximately 50 spontaneous expressive words.



## Social and Communication Development



Chevallier, C. et al. (2012)  
SEE-KS - Rubin, E., Townsend, J. & Vittori, L. (2015)

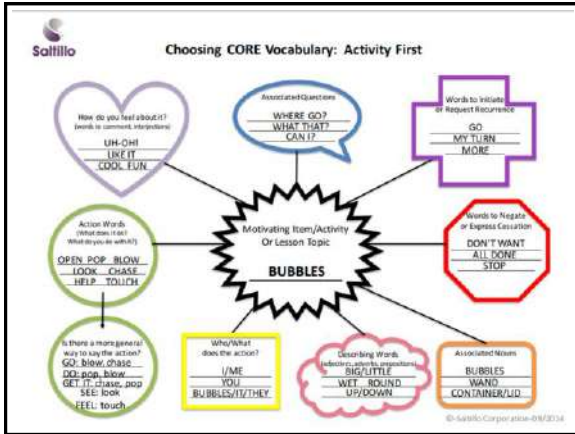
## Activities for Home

1. Activity \_\_\_\_\_  
Core words to be targeted:





2. Activity \_\_\_\_\_  
Core words to be targeted:







## Word of the Week at Home

“It’s time to  to school.”

“Do you have to  ?”

“  sit down”

“Let’s  to the store”


Pick the word first and then find any and all opportunities to model that word

## Video

The Language Stealers  
 Heh ... heh ... heh ... ☺

## Final Thoughts

Play.  
 Talk.  
 Love.



☺

Have fun talking with your child using AAC!

Thank you for joining us.



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