Getting Started with Core

Children's Treatment Network of Simcoe York
Augmentative Communication Consultation Services (ACCS)

WHAT is core vocabulary?

Core vocabulary are high frequency words that make up the most common words we use in daily conversation (e.g. I, you, want, help, go, etc.). Research shows that we only need about 400 core words to express 75% of our messages.

WHY use core vocabulary?

When introducing an Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) system, the first vocabulary many people think of introducing are nouns (e.g. food, activities, people, etc.). Although, these are easier to represent with pictures, we actually use them less frequently. Therefore, introducing core vocabulary first is more powerful, because it can be used across environment/activity and gives individuals a much richer vocabulary.

HOW do I introduce core vocabulary?

Core vocabulary can be introduced using a variety of different tools (ie. Flip 'n Talk, Core Vocabulary display, Speech Generating Device, etc.). It is imperative that the vocabulary remains in the same location on the display, to make it easier to find. Imagine if the keys on your keyboard were constantly being moved around. It would make typing a very frustrating task. Keeping the symbols in a consistent place allows users to focus more on WHAT they want to say rather than HOW they are going to say it.

To introduce core vocabulary:
- ☑ MODEL, MODEL, MODEL
- ☑ Modeling means pairing the vocabulary on the display when you speak
- ☑ You don't need to model EVERY word you say
- ☑ For example, you might say, "Let's go to the park" but only model, "GO + PARK"
- ☑ Aim to model vocabulary hundreds of times throughout the day
- ☑ Expand on what the user says e.g. if they request: "book" you could model, "want + book"
- ☑ If the user communicates something nonverbally, model the symbol for what they communicated, e.g. if their cup is empty and they hold it up to you, model, "more + juice"

See page 2 & 3 for suggestions on core vocabulary to begin modeling. There are examples of how the same words can be used in multiple activities.

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Activity	One-Word	Two-Word	Three-Word
Games	"more" "that" "go" "stop" "help" "turn"	"what's that?" "go more" "my turn" "get that" "I do"	"I want that" "you go more" "I need that" "read more please" "I have that"
Play Dough	"more" "that" "do" "don't" "help" "in" "out"	"take out" "don't want" "want more" "want that" "make it" "put in"	"Put it in" "I need help" "don't want that" "take it out" "I do it" "Help me please"
Potato Head	"more" "that" "go" "in" "out" "help" "put"	"that in" "help please" "take out" "put in" "want that" "go in"	"I want help" "put it in" "I do it" "don't go in"
Bubbles	"more" "up" "go" "stop" "help" "want" "big"	"stop that" "like more" "help please" "go up" "that big" "more big"	"I want more" "that go up" "I need help" "I see big" "I have more"
Snack	"more" "that" "go" "stop" "help" "need"	"more please" "don't want" "want more" "more drink" "need help"	"I need help" "more drink please" "I don't like" "I want that" "you stop that" "I have that"
Social/People Games	"more" "come" "get" "stop" "help" "play"	"come get" "help please" "more play" "come play"	"Don't get me" "Come get me" "Stop, no more" "Play with me"
Songs/Music	"more" "that" "go" "stop" "loud" "quiet" "fast" "slow"	"go fast" "go slow" "loud please" "too loud"	"I want quiet" "I want stop" "I like that" "I hear it"

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GO	"Let's **GO**" "Ready, set **GO**" "We're **GOING** to the.." "Tell your friend to **GO**" "Where do you want to **GO**?"	STOP	"Time to **STOP**" "**STOP** that" "You can tell your friend **STOP**" "Do you want me to **STOP**?"
HELP	"you need **HELP**" "you can **HELP** your friend"; "Can you **HELP** me?"; "I will **HELP** open that";	PUT	"**PUT** it away" "**PUT** it in/on" "Where can you **PUT** it?" "I am going to **PUT** it here"
LIKE	"I **LIKE** that" "I can see you **LIKE** that/him/her" "You don't **LIKE** that?" "I **LIKE** you"	EAT	"Time to **EAT**" "You are **EATING**" your snack" "What do you want to **EAT**?"
WANT	"What do you **WANT**" "You **WANT** that?" "Do you **WANT** a drink/ to play etc.?" "I **WANT** that one"	DRINK	"You want a **DRINK**" "I see you are thirsty, do you want a **DRINK**?" "Let's get your **DRINK**" "Your friend has a **DRINK**"
COME	"COME and play" "Let's ask your friend to COME play" "COME here"	MAKE	"Let's **MAKE** a picture" "What do you want to **MAKE**?" "Your friend is **MAKING** a picture, etc."
COLOR	"Do you want to COLOUR" "Let's COLOUR" "What COLOUR do you want/like" "My favourite COLOUR is…"	MORE	"You want **MORE**" "**MORE** please" "Ask your friend for **MORE**" "Do you need **MORE** help/drink/snack/etc?"
READ	"Let's **READ** a book" "What book do you want to **READ**?" "Time to **READ**" "Ask your friend to **READ**"	ALL DONE	"Are you **ALL DONE**?" "I see you are **ALL DONE**" "Ask your friend if they are **ALL DONE**"
YES NO		Find multiple opportunities to model "**YES**" and "**NO**" to help shape their gestures or signals into something more CLEAR and CONSISTENT ("You mean **YES**"; "You are saying **NO**, you don't want that"; "**YES**, I want that")	