

USING A CORE BOARD

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

WHAT IS A CORE BOARD USED FOR:

- To teach children visual language and give them a way to express themselves in any setting/environment and with a variety of communication partners.
- To support their understanding of language (e.g., language structure, word order, etc.).
- To support their expressive language (e.g., clarification, increase sentence length, support correct word order, etc.).
- To support motor planning. This refers to keeping icons in the same location for consistency and easier access to vocabulary. Motor planning also decreases cognitive demands on the user (e.g., child, teacher, parent, EA, or other communication partners).

WHERE DO I START WITH THE CORE BOARD?

- Students must be taught how to use their tool; all communication partners (e.g., teacher, EA, parent, sibling, daycare provider, and community member) should model using the Core Board wherever possible.
- Take time to explore the tool together, talk about the core words and where vocabulary is found.
- Respond appropriately when the child is pointing to icons. They are exploring, so provide them with the word as well as a context for that word (e.g., 'EAT' icon— "You are **hungry**, you want to **eat**" while pointing to the 'EAT' icon; 'PLAY' icon— "You're right! Your brother is **playing** a video game over there.").

HOW TO MODEL:

- Modelling means pointing to the icon (vocabulary) on the display when you speak.
- Modelling does not mean testing the child about the location of vocabulary (e.g., "where is 'GO'?", "find 'APPLE'").
- You do not need to model EVERY word you say (e.g., "Let's **go play** a game" but only model 'Go' and 'PLAY' on the Core Board; "I **feel** tired. I **need** a nap" but only model 'FEEL' and 'NEED' on the Core Board).
- Model in short grammatically correct phrases (e.g., 'I' + 'GO' + 'PARK' while saying "I am **going** to the park").
- Aim to model vocabulary hundreds of times throughout the day as repetition helps learning. This practice helps to support the learning of both the child and communication partner.
- Model the same words in different contexts to help them generalize those concepts across situations (e.g., 'GO': to the park, to bed, to grandma's, I want to go, you need to go, go away).
- Don't be restricted to the written labels on the pictures. You can use the same icon for related word meanings and grammatical endings (e.g., 'GO': go, going, gone, went, will go; 'DO': do, done, did, does; 'LOOK': look, see, saw, looking).

HOW TO EXPAND SINGLE WORDS:

- Expand on what the child says verbally or indicates using the Core Board:
 - If they say/request 'book', you could model "I **want** a **book**" while pointing to 'WANT' and 'BOOK' on the Core Board.
 - If they say/comment 'bus', you could model "You **see** a bus" while pointing to 'LOOK' on the Core Board.
- If the user communicates something non-verbally (e.g., points to something, uses a gesture, uses a sound effect), you can also use the Core Board to model and expand on the message they gave you (e.g., if their cup is empty and they hold it up to you, model "You **want more** juice").

References:

1. Aided Language Stimulation handout from An Overview From: Infusing Assistive Technology into Early Childhood Classrooms, Early Assistive Technology Training Project Staff: (1996). J. Wilcox, T. Norman-Murch, J. Oberstein, D. Kempka, M. Volkman, E. Malena, & C. Musselwhite.
2. Getting Started with Core handout: CTN ACCS July 2013
3. Flip 'n Talk Implementation handout: CTN ACCS August 2014