

# AAC at Home

**Building the Core of Communication**

## Communication Happens at Home

- Successful communication happens when people with communication difficulties can use their Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system in all environments.
- Families are so important in this process! As a parent, you are the constant in your child's life.

# You Know Your Child

No one knows your child better than you! But it is important not to assume we always know what our children are trying to tell us. They have so much more to say!

Look at how your child communicates and interacts with AAC and use it as an opening to build language at home!



# THERE ARE SO MANY REASONS TO COMMUNICATE!

COMMENTING

ASKING FOR  
HELP

GREETING

ASKING  
QUESTIONS

SHARING  
INFORMATION

PROTESTING

EXPRESSING  
OPINIONS

JOKING

REQUESTING

SELF  
ADVOCACY

NEGOTIATING

EXPRESSING  
AFFECTION

GETTING  
ATTENTION

PRETENDING

TELLING  
STORIES

AND MANY  
MORE

# Tips for Using AAC at Home

1. Your child needs to have easy access to their AAC system.
2. Your child needs to see their AAC system being used by people at home to communicate real messages in real situations (aka “modeling”).
3. Your child needs to use their AAC throughout their day.
4. Your child needs opportunities for learning through comments, choices and open ended questions.

# Access to AAC



- At home the AAC needs to be easily and readily available.
- Make sure the child's AAC is in an area that they can access it (i.e. refrigerator doors, table tops, cabinet doors).
- Sometimes electronic AAC devices can malfunction. If that happens, have a paper back up available.
- Make sure the AAC device is charged each day. When using an electronic device, having a designated charging area helps to locate a device and to establish a routine for the whole family.

# Model, Model, Model

AAC learners also need to see what it looks like to communicate using their AAC systems in real conversations.



# How to Model

- Create a phrase/sentence by selecting icons on the individual's AAC. The message should be one word above the student's spontaneous communication.
- While selecting the icon, also say the word or words (icon meaning).
- Go slow.
- Pause between models to let the child join in.
- Model CORE words as much or more than nouns.
- Repeat the same model across contexts.
- Acknowledge and respond to any communication response.



# Communicate Throughout the Day



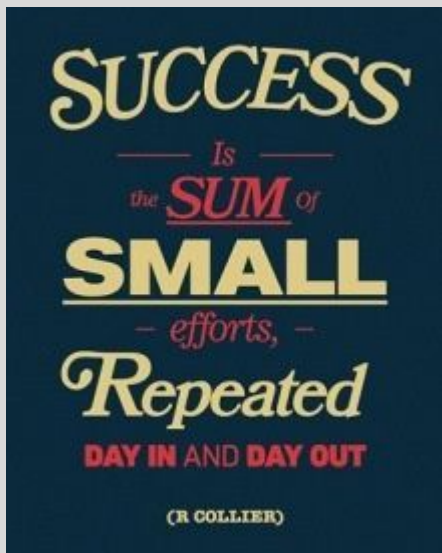
- ❖ AAC practice should occur in natural family activities and should ideally be during motivating times of the day. Build on what your child already knows and use familiar experiences (i.e. eating dinner, getting dressed, reading books).
- ❖ Consistency is key. Same time, same place, same activity. Being consistent and practicing the same activities helps develop habits and habits create success!
- ❖ If you don't have a lot of time, start with 5-minute daily routines, then build up. Within a few months, you can hopefully incorporate AAC into the entire day.
- ❖ Remember it does not have to be perfect! Just connect with your child using AAC!

# Using AAC at home with siblings!



# AAC Activity Sheet

Remember! It's ok to plan out how you are going to target specific words during a family activity!



Model Master Activity:				
Core Words that Relate				
People	Actions	Location	Describe	Questions
Questions to Ask	Core Comments	Talk about the process	Inspire!	
			Quietly Wait 5-10 seconds or MORE	
			Add 1 More Word	
			Use more comments than questions	
Fancy Fringe	Attribute Meaning!		Discuss!	
			Advocate!	

# On our Core page:



## AAC Modeling: Mealtime

Model AAC in everyday activities to demonstrate language for your learner. Remember **connection over perfection!**

Here are some ideas for modeling while enjoying a meal together:

### Share about your day!

- IT BORING
- LONG DAY
- NO SCHOOL
- WATCH TV
- TALK FRIEND
- GO WALK
- READ BOOK
- CALL GRANDMA
- SISTER ANNOYING

### Comment on your meal!

- YUMMY
- YUCK
- HUNGRY
- NOT HUNGRY
- TASTE GOOD
- LIKE IT
- MY FAVORITE
- DON'T LIKE
- THIRSTY
- DELICIOUS
- I FULL
- HOT

### Ask for things

- WANT MORE
- HAVE THAT
- WANT DRINK
- NEED NAPKIN
- PLEASE GIVE

### Ask questions!

- HOW DAY?
- HOW IS IT?
- HAVE DESSERT?

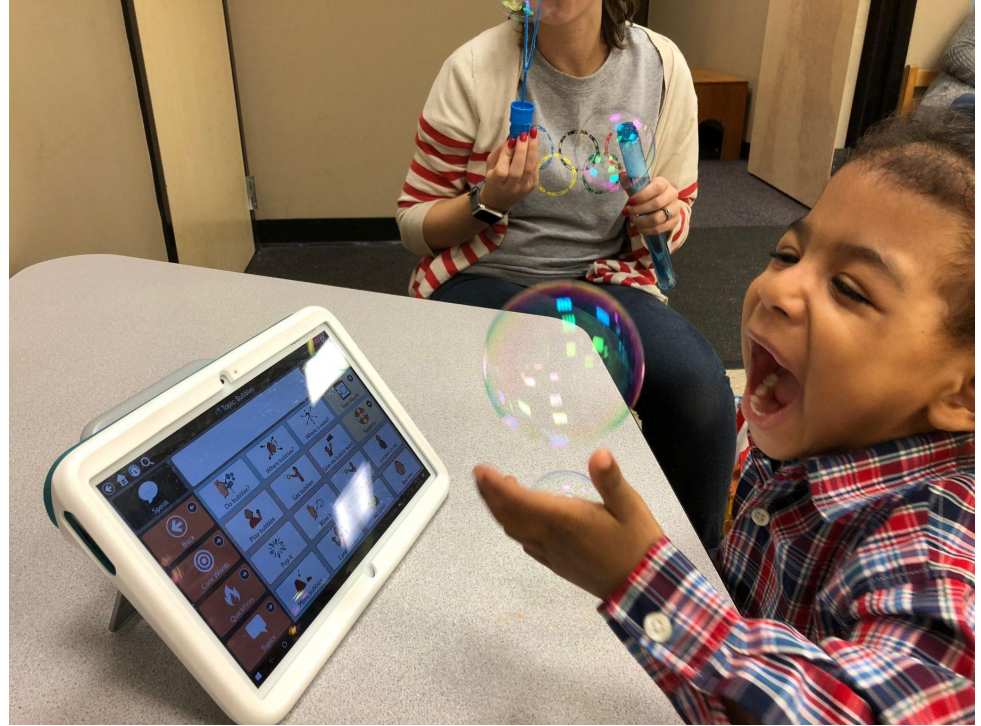


A woman with long, wavy blonde hair is smiling warmly. She is wearing a grey and white vertically striped, long-sleeved top. The background is a soft-focus blue wall with a white, chalk-like texture. The text 'Don't Demand, Encourage' is written on the wall in white. 'Don't Demand,' is in a clean, sans-serif font, while 'Encourage' is in a cursive script.

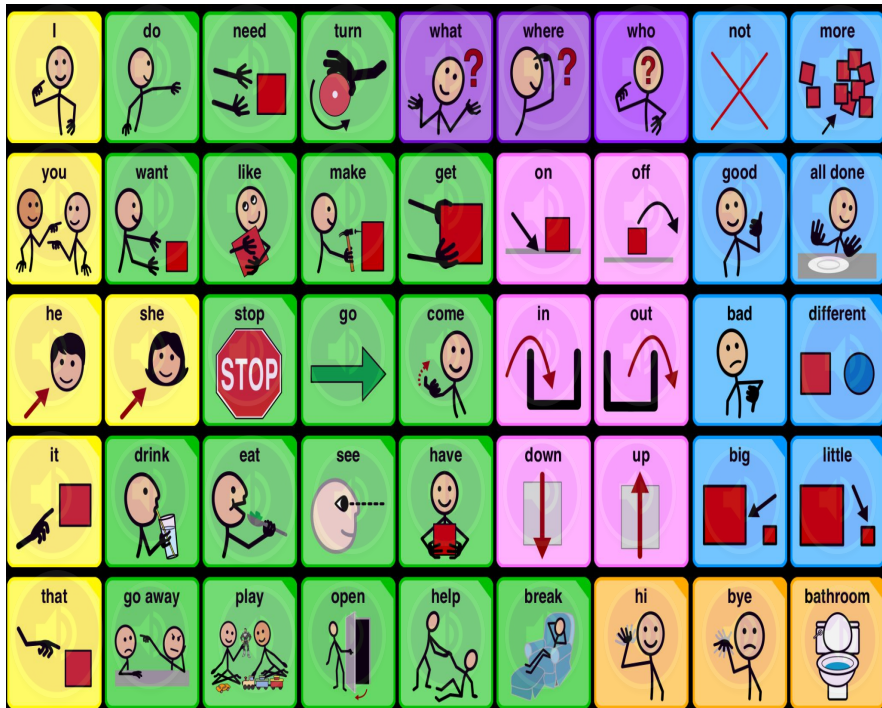
Don't Demand,  
Encourage

# AAC Tip

- You do not need special activities or fancy materials to teach AAC.
- Do something your child is drawn to or enjoys.
- Connect with each other and use their AAC system to talk to each other.



# On our Core page:



## AAC Modeling: Play With Pets

### Comment!

- CUTE
- HE SILLY
- SMELLY MOUTH
- WET
- PRETTY CAT
- SOFT
- NEED BATH
- LOOK!
- SHE LOUD
- LOVE YOU
- GOOD DOG
- FUN TOY
- LIKE IT

### Talk About the Fun!

- WANT PLAY
- COME
- GO OUT
- GET IT
- WAIT
- BRING IT
- THROW BALL
- MY TURN
- YOU DO
- GIVE FOOT
- SIT DOWN
- WANT EAT

### Ask Questions!

- WHERE GO?
- WHERE THROW?
- WHERE HIDE?
- WHERE CAT?
- WHO GOOD?
- WHO BEAUTIFUL?
- CAN I PET?

If you have a pet, playing with them can be a great time to model language on your learner's AAC system. There is a lot to comment on! Love on your pet and connect with your AAC learner at the same time!



# AAC

**Don't make it  
feel like work!**

It won't become  
their voice if it  
feels like work!





# AAC Modeling: Building Toys

## Comment!

- AWESOME
- OH, NO!
- IT FALL DOWN
- THAT SMART
- TALL TOWER
- THAT FUNNY
- MAKES ME MAD
- YOU SILLY
- FRUSTRATING
- COOL
- THAT MINE
- GREAT

## Talk About Building

- PUT ON
- TAKE OFF
- MAKE BIG
- KNOCK DOWN
- I HELP
- YOUR TURN
- DO MORE
- GIVE ME
- DON'T DO
- MAKE DIFFERENT

## Ask Questions!

- WHAT BUILD?
- WHAT WANT?
- WHERE GO?
- WHAT THAT?
- WHO DO?
- WHO TURN?
- YOU SEE IT?
- HOW DO?

## Pretend & Imagine!

- IT HOUSE
- MY STORE
- DRIVE CAR
- BUILD ZOO
- OH NO MONSTER!

Whether you have wood blocks, legos, or old boxes, building is a great activity for modeling AAC. You can talk about what to build and how. There are also lots of opportunities to pretend! Keep it playful and use your learner's AAC to talk about it. Add a remote control car or a bowling ball for extra knock down fun!



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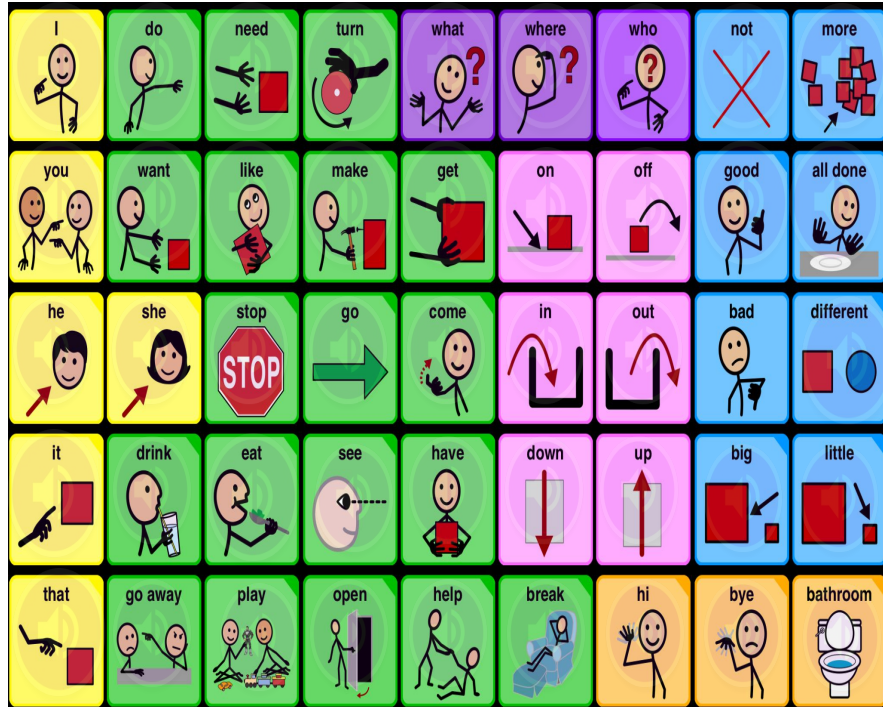
# On our Core page:



# Legos at Home



# On our Core page:



## AAC Modeling: Cooking Together

Make modeling a part of your daily life. Don't get caught up in making it perfect! Enjoy time with your AAC learner and connect using their language!

Here are some ideas for modeling while cooking together:

### Ask for things

- WANT MORE
- MAKE COOKIES
- NEED DRINK
- MORE CHOCOLATE!

### Comment on what you make!

- YUM
- YUCK
- TASTE GOOD
- CRUNCHY
- SMELLY
- LIKE IT
- HOT
- SWEET
- SALTY
- MESSY
- EXCITING!
- GREAT
- OH NO!
- NOT GOOD

### Ask questions!

- WHAT MAKE?
- WHAT NEED?
- WHO DO IT?

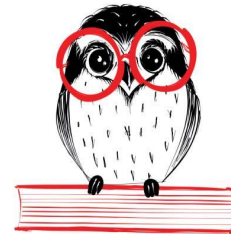
### Tell each other what to do!

- WASH HANDS
- MAKE MORE
- YOU TASTE
- HELP DO
- PUT IT IN
- STIR/MIX IT
- TAKE OUT NOW!
- DO DISHES
- GET THAT



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# Be WISE



## Wait

-Wait 5-10 seconds after asking a question or commenting. Provide expectant pauses.

## Invite

-Invite the child to communicate without requiring it. Use "I wonder" statements.

## Show

-Show/model how to say things on the AAC device. Show how to "speak AAC."

## Expand

-Repeat the communication and add one word. Give words to what you think they are trying to say.

-SuperPower Speech

# On our Core page:



## AAC Modeling: Baby Doll

### Comment!

- UH OH STINKY
- IT DIRTY
- UPSET
- CLEAN DIAPER
- LOVE YOU
- IT OKAY
- YOU HUNGRY
- YUMMY
- BABY TIRED
- LOOK SLEEP
- QUIET
- GOOD BABY
- CUTE

### Pretend!

- I HELP
- GIVE KISS
- YOU HOLD
- NEED CHANGE
- TAKE OFF
- GIVE BATH
- CLOTHES ON
- DRINK MILK
- WANT MORE
- EAT BABY
- GO BED
- NIGHT NIGHT

### Ask Questions!

- WHAT WRONG?
- WHY CRY?
- WHAT SMELL?
- WHAT WANT?
- WHAT EAT?

### Talk About The Activity!

- COME PLAY
- DO MORE
- DO DIFFERENT
- PUT AWAY
- ALL DONE

Baby dolls are so cute and great for pretend play. Play with your AAC learner. Model language on your learner's AAC system. Do your best. Remember it's about connection over perfection!



# Baby Doll



**Communication and play**

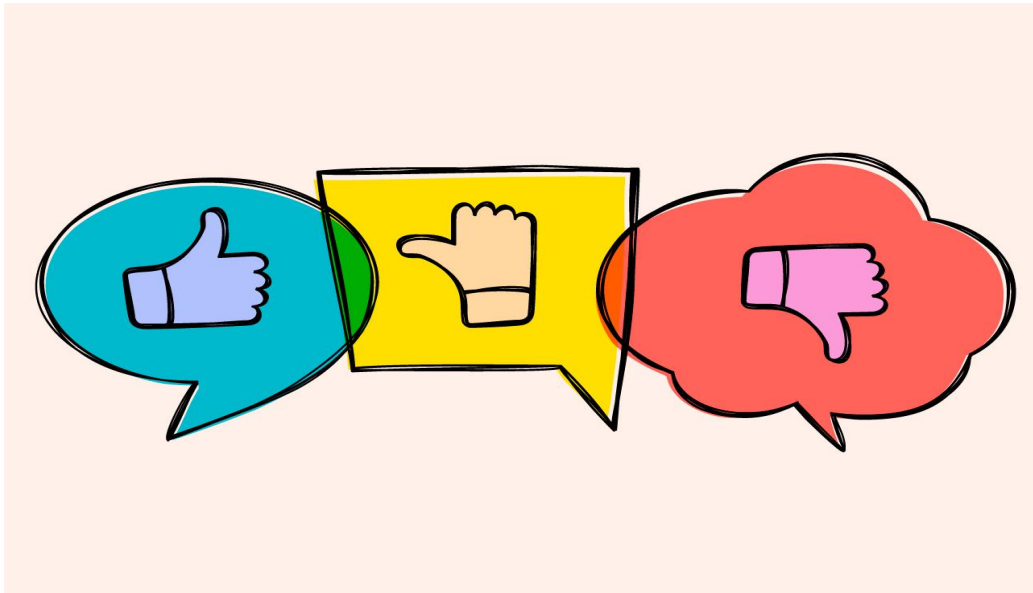
TALKING THROUGH IPAD

a Family of *Chris*

AAC!

# How did it go?

What feedback would you give the mom in this play session?



# Tips for Learning AAC

- ❖ Give your child choices to help expand their language skills.
- ❖ We don't know what our child wants to say so we can't pick just one word for them. Plus feedback given to a "mistake" provides a rich learning opportunity.
- ❖ Allow your learner to say anything they want to with their AAC! Respond to what they say and keep modeling.
- ❖ Over time, your child will learn how to express themselves more effectively. You'll learn more about them too!



# Hey, Parents!

It's okay if you don't have all the answers!



Believe it's possible.

Learn as much as you can.

Value your child's autonomy.

Focus on relationship & connection.

Model, model, model.

Be kind to yourself and keep going. You got this!

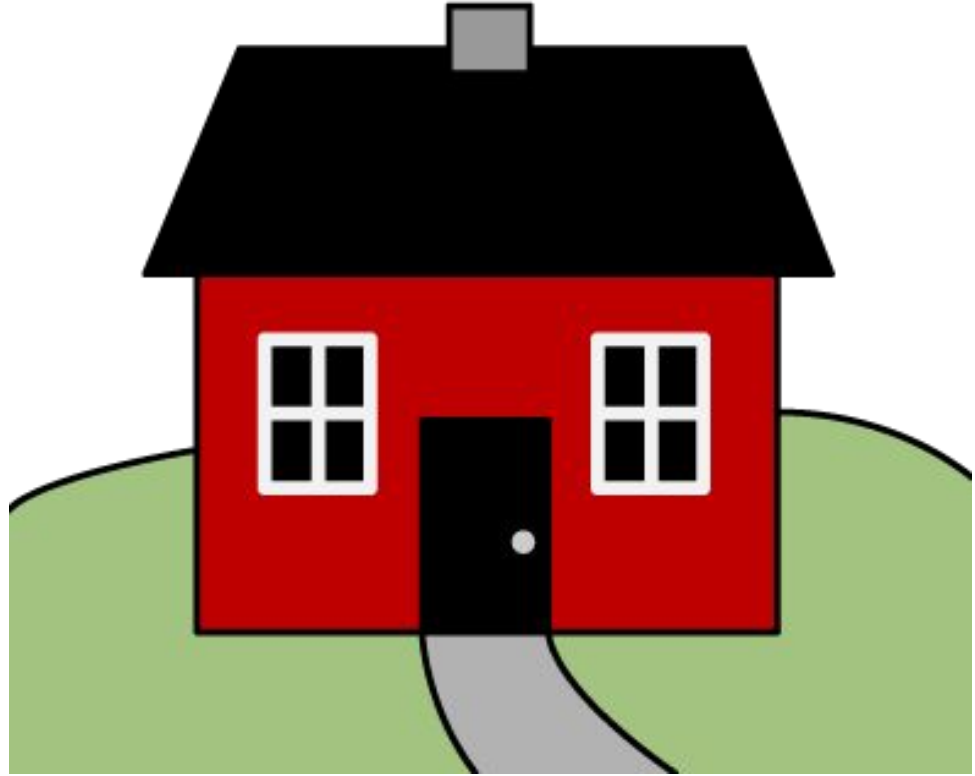


**H:** Hands on Modeling

**O:** Opportunities

**M:** Motivate

**E:** Everywhere



**Remember that your child's speech-language pathologist and the inclusive technology coaches are here to help and support you on your AAC journey!**



## Additional Resources

<https://www.mrsslpeechiep.com>

<https://www.assistiveware.com/blog/teaching-core-words-building-blocks-communication-and-curriculum>

[https://www.aacandautism.com/assets/uploads/Core\\_Word\\_of\\_the\\_Week.pdf](https://www.aacandautism.com/assets/uploads/Core_Word_of_the_Week.pdf)

<https://www.rachelmadel.com/>

<https://thepedispeechie.com/2021/09/core-vocabulary-speech-therapy.html>

<https://thespeechroomnews.com/2021/11/what-are-core-words-for-aac-and-how-do-i-implement-them.html>

<https://www.communicationcommunity.com/aac-core-word-of-the-week-more-speech-therapy-activities/>

<https://superpowerspeech.com/>

<https://www.theaacoach.com/>