# Core Words
Introducing Core To Beginner Communicators

Core vocabulary refers to words which we use across situations. These words compose 80% of what we say regardless of age, gender and setting. English has approximately 100,000+ words, There are around 250 to 400 core words in the English language.

Core words include:

1. Verbs/ action words: go, stop, turn
2. Pronouns: your, it, mine
3. Prepositions: in, on, behind
4. Adjectives: big, small
5. Questions: what's, why, where is

Core words are often hard to represent using pictures. Abstract symbols may be used to represent core words in a visual AAC system.
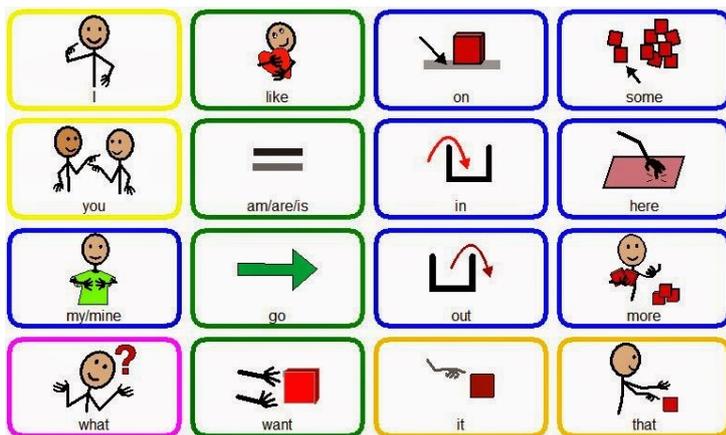
People with disability, regardless of IQ measures, have the ability to learn the meaning of abstract symbols and how to use them to communicate. If you would like more information please refer to the Iconicity of Symbols Information Sheet.

Core words do not include nouns (e.g. milk, table, chair). Nouns are fringe words. These are words which are specific to topics or situations.

It is possible to compose a meaningful and grammatically correct sentence using core words alone, e.g. "I want it". This means that if you have core words on the first page of you communication system, you reduce the need to navigate through folders and pages.

Teaching Core Vocabulary

When working on developing the language and communication skills of people who are non-verbal, it is recommended to start by modelling the use of core words in meaningful and real situations.

1. Choose 4-6 core words to teach per fortnight.

2. Try to choose pairs, e.g. I/you, up/down, go/stop.

3. Look these core words up in the person's AAC system, learn how to navigate to them.

4. Write out your day's schedule, write down the name of each activity, e.g. getting dressed, eating breakfast, playing in the sandpit, art and craft.

5. Think of how you can use these core words in each of the activities, e.g. how and when could you use the core words 'I/you' and 'go/stop' when getting dressed, eating breakfast, playing in the sandpit and during art and craft.

6. Model the use of these core words, aim for 100 times a day (it is easily doable). Model slowly and in real and meaningful contexts.

7. After modelling, wait expectantly for the person to respond. This is to give the person time to respond if they want to. However you must not request a response from him/her. Remember modelling is used to build their comprehension skills and to provide examples of what things could be said in particular situations. Refer to Aided Language Stimulation Information Sheet for more information on how to model AAC language.

8. Choose a book that you can read with the person. You may use book sharing strategies instead of traditional book reading. Think of how you can model using the same core words during your book sharing/reading activity.

9. HAVE FUN!

For more information, please contact:

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