



Core Vocabulary Activities

Core Vocabulary

Core vocabulary refers to the small number of words that make up > 70-90% of what we say on a daily basis. These words are relevant across contexts and can have many meanings. Parents and therapists tasked with selecting vocabulary for a beginning communicator often turn to core vocabulary lists, knowing that these words are more universally relevant than specific context-dependent nouns, or fringe vocabulary. The LAMP approach (Language Acquisition thru Motor Planning; see www.aacandautism.com for more information) emphasizes the use of core vocabulary because these words can be taught and reinforced in a variety of activities and allow for quick and easy 2- and 3-word combinations.

Some examples of core vocabulary include: *stop, go, get, more, turn, mine, on, off, up, down, that*. Even with just these 11 words, a beginning communicator can take control of his or her environment, have his or her needs met and interact socially with friends and family. This beginning communicator can even use these few words to make phrases: "get that," "go up," "stop that," "turn that up," "turn that off," "go more," "that mine," "get that down."

Core vocabulary is so powerful because it allows communicators to express a wide variety of concepts with a very small number of words.

Stop:

Few words in our language are as powerful as the word "stop." Above all other linguistic functions, this word clearly expresses protest. Many children with autism are without a functional, socially appropriate means of expressing protest and turn to aggression and self-injurious behaviors to object to people, occurrences and objects in their immediate environment.

Set up situations in which your child can use the word "stop" to tell an adult or peer to discontinue an activity. Try pressing piano keys while your child is attempting to play, stand in front of the television, block the computer monitor or attempt to steal the child's toy. Prompt him or her to say "stop," then immediately discontinue the "annoying" behavior. These exercises should of course be done with extreme caution and limited frequency; don't overwhelm or frustrate your child.

"Stop" is a great word for children to use to request that an activity be over. Early stages of AAC intervention are often most successful while following a child's lead, so when the child appears to be ready discontinue an activity, have them request to "stop" their current activity before moving on.

Some children with autism are very interested in transportation. When traveling in the car, or looking out a window, cars, buses, trucks and trains are great topics for children to comment on using the word "stop."

Many children love to be able to control their environment and the behavior of others. Engage your child with silly dancing, running, jumping and movement and then prompt them to tell you to "stop."

Exaggeratedly “stop” moving by freezing your whole body or even by falling down. Using “stop” to direct the behavior of others may be a great way to involve a family pet or therapy dog.

Remember, we are all multi-modal communicators! Pair your verbalization and device activation of “stop” with a gesture – arm stretched out with palm facing outwards and encourage your child to do the same.

Other core words that pair well in activities:

STOP & GO : As discussed in the last post, “stop” pairs easily with “go” for many movement-related activities. Try using “stop” while swinging, bouncing, jumping and other sensory/motor activities. In classroom and group therapy activities, allow the child to direct music and movement activities using “stop” and “go.” Other things that can both “stop” and “go” are music, videos, fans and moving toys. **STOP THAT/STOP IT**: “That” and “it” are great words for communicators at the 2-word level to pair when protesting.

Go:

The word “go” has so many meanings and uses in English that it can be applied in almost any activity. The most obvious applications are those involving movement (bouncing on a ball, swinging, jumping on a trampoline, running). The word “go” also comes with a built-in socially relevant verbal prompt: “ready... set...”.

For children who are motivated by moving toys, bubbles, videos and music, “go” is a great word for them to ask for initiation.

Many children enjoy being able to control the behavior of other people. The word “go” can empower a child to direct his peers to “go” during dancing/movement games, tell an adult to do a somersault, tap dance or make silly faces. The child using the device can direct music to “go” during a game of musical chairs or to initiate a relay race.

Remember that core words are relevant for many communicative functions! Let a child protest your involvement in an activity by telling you to “go” away or allow him or her to comment on someone else’s activity (if someone walks out of the room, he/she may say “go”).

Other core words that pair well in activities:

COME & GO – Sneak up or run up to the child when he/she says “come,” then leave when he/she says “go.”

STOP & GO – Most activities that can “go” can also “stop.” Play and pause music and videos, make a fan “stop” and “go.”

GO UP/DOWN – Physical activities like climbing and sliding are great opportunities to teach the prepositions. Many preschool toys have slides, ramps and chutes for action figures, cars and balls to “go up” and “go down.”

Be creative! Remember to follow the child’s lead and help him/her find appropriate vocabulary to request, comment, protest and direct.

Turn:

Look up “turn” in the dictionary and you may find over 100 different uses!

“Turn” is a great word to talk about any activity or object that rotates or spins. Engage your child in play with spinning toys by making them “turn” and stop.

Engage in fun dancing activities in the classroom and let the child direct students or teachers to “turn” while dancing. Many children like to be spun on the swing; allow them to direct you by saying “turn me” “turn it” or “turn swing.”

“Turn” is a very relevant word to use with any activity or object with an on/off switch or volume control. Model using phrases like “turn it on,” or “turn that up” when playing with toys, listening to music or watching videos. Allow your child to object to songs or shows that he or she doesn’t like by saying “turn that off” asking to “turn down” the volume.

Have some fun gently sabotaging your child’s routine by “turning” their clothes inside out, holding a book backwards or offering them a cup upside down. Help them problem-solve these silly situations and tell you to “turn” them. Other problem-solving activities can involve a child directing you to “turn” a key to access a locked room or “turn” a screwdriver to replace dead batteries.

Because one meaning of the word “turn” is to change directions, it is a great word for kids to use to control movement activities. Pull your child on a wagon or push them on a scooter, then change directions when they direct you to “turn.” Model the use of the word when riding in the car or watching traffic from the window to describe the movement of cars, trucks and buses.

Allow your child to control the pace while reading books or looking at photo albums by telling you to turn the page.

One of the most popular applications of the word “turn” in school and intervention programs is for turn-taking during game play. This is a great opportunity for your child to learn pronouns like “my,” “your,” “his” and “her,” so be sure that your child’s device allows him or her the opportunity to combine pronouns with “turn,” instead of having one button say “my turn” or “your turn.”

Get:

The word “get” pairs nicely with nouns, pronouns and prepositions for so many different communicative functions. Children can say phrases like: “get up,” “get in,” “get that,” “get me,” “get wet,” “get on” “get mom,” and “get silly” in many fun activities.

A child who loves to be chased and tickled may very quickly learn to use the 2-word combination “get me” to initiate rough and tumble play. After catching and tickling your child, continue teaching pronouns by saying “I got you” while modeling on his/her device. During recess or group play dates, encourage your child to initiate chasing games to “get” his/her peers.

“Get” can be a powerful word for a child to use to request items that are out of sight or out of reach. Teach your child to use “get it” or “get that” and he or she can direct you retrieve preferred toys or food items. During classroom routines, model the use of “get” when directing children to prepare for activities (e.g., “get” your books, “get” your coats). We can use “get” to access people as well; a child can ask an adult to “get mom” or “get” a peer or sibling.

Pair “get” with prepositions during movement play. Try creating an obstacle course in which your child must “get down” to crawl under a barrier, “get in” and “get out” of a tunnel or ball pit, “get over” a

barrel, “get on” and “get off” therapy ball and then “get up” a set of stairs. Let your child direct you or his/her peers when it is their turn to do this activity. “Get up” is a great phrase to use after sitting on the floor, falling down or pretending to sleep.

The word “get” can be used to mean “become.” Have fun talking about and learning emotions and basic concepts by modeling and prompting phrases like “get happy,” “get tired,” “get silly” or “get wet.”

Up & Down:

The prepositions “up” and “down” have meanings beyond simple directions. We can “get up,” “clean up,” “stay up,” “blow up,” “fall down,” “lie down,” “sit down” and “slow down.”

Gently sabotage music, TV and computer activities by adjusting the sound volume. Have your child direct you to turn it “up” or “down.” Lights can also be turned “up” and “down.” A child who can ask for undesired sounds to be turned “down” or for lights to be turned “up” is empowered to modify his/her environment to a more comfortable sensory level.

Let a child ask you to retrieve specific toys from a shelf by asking for them to be put “down,” then when the child is done playing, you can put the toys “up.”

“Up” and “down” are great words to use when doing gross motor activities. Talk about going “up” and “down” stairs, jumping “up” and “down” or even rolling a barrel or a ball “up” and “down” a large wedge or hill. A child can be asked to be picked “up” or put “down.”

Many songs and word plays use the words “up” and “down.” Let your child fill-in-the-blanks for Ring-Around-the-Rosy, Itsy Bitsy Spider, and the Wheels on the Bus.

Help your child use prepositions to ask to be picked “up” and put “down” and describe falling “down” and getting “up.”

Many of your child’s favorite activities may easily use the words “up” and “down.” Car race toys, videos of rollercoasters, dollhouses with stairs, building blocks/Legos, or blowing bubbles.

Open & Close:

Opposites “open” and “close” are great words to target in a variety of activities. We can “open” and “close” so many things in our environment: eyes, toys, boxes, drawers, containers, laptops, windows, refrigerators, etc!

A ride in the car is a great opportunity to use the words “open” and “close.” You and your child can talk about “opening” and “closing” the car doors, windows, glove compartments and even the AC vents.

Try working on “open” during mealtimes as an alternative way to request a favorite food; hand your child his/her favorite food in a difficult-to-open container and prompt them to direct you to open it. Have your child participate in food preparation or clean-up by having them “open” and “close” the refrigerator, cupboards, pantry or dishwasher. Model the word “open” when using a can opener and “close” when sealing food items.

Use computer-based activities to teach these words by “opening” and “closing” a laptop, CD-ROM drive, game jewel cases and browser windows. Favorite games or computer accessories that are kept in a drawer or file can be accessed using the word “open.”

Gently sabotage your child's routines by placing favorite toys inside of locked drawers or difficult-to-open containers (e.g., large pretzel jars or canning jars with a metal clamp) and prompt them to direct you to "open" it. Leave a normally "closed" door "open" and have your child direct you to "close" it.

Have fun making silly faces by letting your child direct you to "open" and "close" your eyes, nose and mouth.

Even more things that open and close: books, mailboxes, envelopes, new toys, presents, drawers, hands, water bottles, folders, purses, nail polish, window shades/blinds, gates and computer programs.

On:

The word "on" is relevant in so many contexts: traveling ("on" a bus), mealtimes (putting food "on" a plate), playing ("on" the computer) and dressing (putting "on" clothes). Get "on" the discussion page for more ideas on this great core word!

We use the word "on" frequently to discuss locations. Allow your child to direct you or peers to sit "on" a chair, put something "on" a table or shelf or stand "on" a stool. Your child could take a turn giving directions during a game of Twister (e.g., "foot on red").

Allow your child to direct you or make choices about art activities: color "on" the paper, put glitter "on" the page, and paint "on" the canvas.

The word "on" can be used to describe traveling – we can ride "on" a bus, "on" a train, "on" an airplane, "on" a bike, "on" a horse or even "on" someone's shoulders.

Let your child help set the table at mealtimes by putting plates and utensils "on" the table, food "on" the plates and salt "on" the food.

Have fun being silly while learning about body parts by putting play-doh or stickers "on" your child's nose, knee or elbow. Continue with silly dress-up games and put "on" shoes, dresses, wigs, hats and even make-up or face paint.

Many things in your child's environment have on/off switches: computers, lights, toys, flashlights, kitchen appliances, TVs, radios, cars, fans, water faucets. Use these motivating and routine activities to teach the word "on." As your child's language grows, add some more core words to say "turn it on."

In:

"In" is another frequently-used preposition that can be used in so many contexts. We can go "in" a room, put our foot "in" our shoe, pour juice "in" a cup, crawl "in" a tunnel, put a CD "in" a CD player, and get "in" bed.

During transitions around school or in the community, talk about getting "in" the car, going "in" the doctor's office, walking "in" the store, going "in" the classroom, sitting "in" the chair and going "in" the therapy room.

While getting dressed, you can play a silly game while learning about body parts; put your child's hand "in" his/her shoe instead of his/her foot, then have him/her correct you and tell you to put his/her foot "in." Do the same thing with your child's arm "in" pants, leg "in" a shirt and even head "in" underwear!

During clean-up time, “in” is a very frequently used word. Have your child direct you or peers to put toys, clothes, dishes, etc. “in” a box, “in” the drawer, “in” the bag, “in” their backpack or “in” the closet.

Let your child participate at mealtimes by helping you pour juice “in” the cup or pour cereal “in” the bowl. While preparing for school, your child can help pack his/her lunch or snack by putting food items “in” his/her lunchbox.

In your OT gross motor/sensory gym, your child can ask to get “in” a tunnel, “in” a barrel or even “in” a taco-shaped swing. Many OT spaces and preschools have sensory bins full of sand, rice or beans that you can hide toys “in.” Direct your child to put toys or letters “in” the bins, then put his/her hands “in” to find them again.

Many of your child’s favorite leisure and therapeutic activities can incorporate the word “in.” Have your child request his/her favorite CD or DVD to be put “in” the player, put pieces “in” a puzzle and shapes “in” the shape sorter. Many preschool toys are manipulated by putting a ball, car or figure “in” the toy.

Use “in” during evening routines; talk to your child about getting “in” the bath, putting his/her toothbrush “in” his/her mouth, spitting “in” the sink and finally getting “in” bed.

Off:

The preposition “off” can be applied in so many settings and activities. Your child can modify his/her environment by asking for bright lights or loud noises to be turned “off,” ask for help getting his/her coat “off,” tell you to jump “off” a step or describe taking “off” a lid.

During cleaning routines, you and your child can take items “off” the table, sweep “off” the floor and clean “off” or wipe “off” the tables.

When arriving at school, model using the word “off” while directing your child to take “off” his/her coat and backpack. At the end of the day, talk about getting undressed by describing taking “off” socks, shoes, pants and shirts. After dress-up games or cold winter days, there are even more things to take “off:” coats, gloves, headbands, hats, wigs and even nail polish!

Your child can ask for help access preferred foods, drinks or toys by asking for a lid to be taken “off” or by asking for items to be taken “off” a high shelf.

Many items and activities in your child’s daily life can be turned “off.” Have your child direct you or peers to turn “off” the water, turn “off” the lights, turn “off” the car, turn “off” the music and turn “off” the TV. The word “off” can be empowering for a child who is easily overwhelmed by sensory stimuli ; if your child can ask for bright lights to be turned “off” or for loud music to be turned “off,” he/she can take control of regulating his/her environment.

“Off” is a relevant word in many leisure and therapy activities. We can get “off” a bike, swing or horse. Because movement can be motivating to many children, we can talk about jumping “off” a step or falling “off” the bed. Wind-up toys can also fall or jump “off” surfaces.

Make:

The word “make” is one of the most versatile core words in our vocabulary. We can “make” money, “make” noise, “make” friends, “make” a phone call, “make” faces, “make” a phone call and “make”

people laugh. "Make" can mean to create, to cause and to control and it is used in many common idioms. "

The word "make" is commonly used in the kitchen. Involve your child when it is time to "make" meals. Your child may enjoy getting to "make" kool-aid, "make" cookies, "make" pizza or "make" macaroni and cheese.

Many children enjoy playing with play-doh and "making" different shapes and objects. Describe the shapes you "make" with cookie cutters and let your child direct you to "make" familiar objects. Expand on these utterances with color vocabulary (e.g., "make a yellow ball" or "make a blue star").

Because the word "make" can mean "create," craft activities are great opportunities to teach and use this word. We can "make" pictures, "make" dots, "make" stripes, "make" circles and "make" sculptures.

In music class or therapy, encourage your child to "make" noise with instruments or to "make" it loud and "make" it quiet.

"Make" can be used to mean "cause" or "control." Let your child control your behavior and "make" you jump, "make" you laugh or "make" you sleep. Your child can direct you to control objects or activities in his/her environment; when playing with a moving toy, he/she can ask you to "make" it stop or "make" it go.

Fast & Slow:

The words "fast" and "slow" can describe the speed of movement, music, visual stimuli and sensory stimuli. We can "go fast," "slow down," "swing fast," "sing slow," "jump fast" and "walk slow." Allow your child to control the speed of preferred and daily activities using these common adjectives.

"Fast" and "slow" very commonly describe movement and since many children with autism are motivated by movement, these words are very relevant. Allow your child to set the pace of sensory activities in the OT gym while swinging, jumping, rolling in a barrel, running, crossing balance beams, riding bikes and climbing. Teach the meanings of "fast" and "slow" by having your child complete an obstacle course at different speeds.

Music class or music therapy is another great environment for your child to learn about "fast" and "slow." Alternate playing instruments or singing "fast" and "slow" and allow your child to make choices about how they would like you to sing routine songs. Your child may also control the speed at which he/she and his/her peers dance and move during music time.

Some video and audio equipment allows for varying speeds. Your child may enjoy watching familiar videos or even videos of himself/herself while asking you to change the speed of the video by saying "fast" or "slow."

Have fun learning about "fast" and "slow" while at the park. Alternate walking "slow" and running "fast" and allow your child to control their speed on the playground equipment by asking you to push them "fast" or "slow" on the swing.

Allow your child to control your actions during daily activities at home. Your child may direct you to drink "fast" at dinner, wash his/her back "slow" during bath time and even read "fast."

Play:

“Play” is a very important word to children – “playing” is their occupation. Allow your child to “play” and learn at the same time by using this core word. Your child can “play” music, “play” a video, “play” a game, “play” with a toy, act in a “play,” “play” a joke on someone or “play” sports!

Many children are motivated by listening to music or watching videos. These are great opportunities to teach the word “play.” Your child can request to “play” music or “play” a video, then he /she may direct you to “push play” on the CD or DVD player. Children can even request specific videos by saying “play that,” or “play Dora,” or request a favorite track on a CD by saying “play 16.” Listening to music in the car or watching videos on the internet are other great opportunities to use “play.”

“Play” is a great word to use when selecting toys and games. Your child can make general requests to “play” with toys in his/her environment or can combine the word with favorite toys, like “play Elmo” or “play phone.” Use “play” to talk about specific sports and gross motor games. Teach your child use “play” when describing pretend “play” activities as well: “play house,” “play school,” etc.

The word “play” can also help your child express where or with whom he/she would like to play. When you and your child are transitioning to another space to “play,” consider using this word instead of “go” on occasions (e.g., “let’s ‘play’ in OT” or “it’s time to ‘play’ outside”). Because facilitating social communication is an important role in the education of children with autism, pair “play” with pronouns and names.

Teach your child to initiate with peers by saying “play with me.” Your child may ask to play with specific people – “play with Miss Kellie” or “play with Elyse.”

Many adults direct children to take a break from work by saying “go play.” Model these words on your child’s device and teach them to request a break by asking to “play.”

Children with more communication experience may expand their use of the word “play” to discuss “playing” roles in the school “play,” “playing” jokes, making “plays,” “playing” around and “playing” cool.

Push:

The word “push” has many applications for use in everyday life, especially in motivating movement activities. We can “push” a button, “push” someone on a swing, “push” open a door, “push” toy cars, “push” off of something and even “push” our luck!

“Push” is a very relevant word for use in movement activities. Take advantage of motivating activities in the OT sensory/motor space or on the playground by teaching your child to say “push me” on the swing or at the top of the slide. Your child may enjoy being rolled in a barrel – another great opportunity for him/her to say “push me.” While playing outside, your child could ask to be “pushed” on his/her bike, scooter, wagon or ride-on cars. Your child may also enjoy “pushing” a toy wheelbarrow or lawn mower.

“Push” is also a great word for your child to use when directing an adult to manipulate computers or TV/music controls. Your child can ask you to “push” icons on the computer to access preferred games. Your child may also direct you to “push play” or “push stop” on DVD or music controls.

Many preschool toys have buttons or levers to “push.” Take these opportunities to teach the word push and even incorporate some early academic vocabulary, e.g., “push green” or “push the circle.” Playing with toy cars is great opportunity to teach the word “push” in two-three word combinations. Your child can direct you where to “push” a car (e.g., “push up,” “push off,” “push over”).

Swing		
Many children are very motivated by movement – especially on the swing! Whether your child enjoys swinging at the playground or in the occupational therapy sensory/motor space.		
<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go – use this word to encourage your child to request being pushed on the swing. Remember that it has a great built in verbal prompt: “Ready, set...” • Stop – model this word when you stop the swing, and allow your child to tell you that he/she is done with the swing by saying “stop.” • Turn – many children enjoy spinning on the swing. Allow him/her to request the swing to “turn.” • Fast/Slow – encourage the use of these words when allowing your child to request the speed at which he/she is being swung. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get on – before initiating movement, you may model this phrase to teach the preposition “on.” • Get off – gently sabotage your child’s routine by getting on the swing and prompting them to tell you to “get off!” • Push me – this phrase is probably the most commonly used by children on the playground • Turn me – Let your child ask to be spun using this phrase • Go fast/slow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I want to go” • “I want to stop” • “It’s my turn to swing” • “Push me faster” • “Push me higher” • “Make me go fast”

Music		
Playing music can be a fun, motivating and interactive activity for many children. Take advantage of these opportunities to model and teach core vocabulary!		
<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open – Your child can use this word to direct you to “open” a CD case or “open” the drive to insert a CD. • Play – Use this word when pressing “play” on a CD player or MP3 player • Stop – Model this word when pressing “stop” or the pause button • Up/Down – Allow your child to direct you to modify the volume of the music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push play/stop • Play that • Open it • Turn up/down/on/off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn it up/down/on/off • Play number [#] • Play that again • What song now?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On/Off – Model this while turning “on” and “off” the CD player or MP3 player 		
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Cars

Playing with toy cars is a favorite activity for many children. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go – Model and teach this word while making the cars move or to initiate a race. • Stop – Allow your child to direct you to make the cars “stop.” • Up – Have your child use this word while pushing a car “up” a ramp or move up in a toy garage. • Down – Use this word while allowing cars to race “down” ramps or racetracks. • Come – Teach this word to encourage your child to ask you to “come” and follow him/her when pushing toy cars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go up/down • Go in/under/next to, etc – Teach prepositions when making cars go in/under/next to tunnels, furniture or toys. • Push it – Model this word when initiating movement with the cars. • Go fast/slow – Allow your child to direct the speed of movement of the cars by using these simple adverbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push the blue car • Make it go fast • You push that • Go under that • Go down fast

Coloring

Art and coloring projects are a part of many children’s routines. Use these motivating, fun activities to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open/Close – Use these words when accessing art supplies from cabinets or drawers, getting crayons or markers out of their boxes and taking off or putting on marker tops. • Stop/Go – Model these words when drawing on the page; make it a game and allow your child to direct you draw and stop drawing on a page. • Up/Down – Teach these concepts while drawing in different directions. Placing the paper on a vertical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open blue/red/yellow/etc. – when taking off a marker top, or opening paint colors • Color that • On paper/wall/body parts – Teach the preposition “on” while allowing your child to direct where to color, paint or stamp. For a messy, silly game, let your child ask to have his/her (or your) body parts drawn on! • Color more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Color that red • Open the blue one • That’s mine • Color on my arm • Get more (colors, paper, markers)

surface may enhance this teaching opportunity as well as promote your child's engagement in the novel activity and promote a better grasp on the writing instrument.		
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Trampoline

Bouncing on a trampoline is a motivating activity for many children. Whether you are in the backyard, the gym or in the occupational therapy sensory/motor space, utilize this opportunity to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go/ Stop - Model and teach these words while initiating and terminating movement on the trampoline • Up/Down – Teach these words while jumping up and down • Fast/Slow – Allow your child to control the speed with which you and he/she jump • Jump - • Fall – This is a great word for kids who love to crash. Incorporate music into the activity and play Ring Around the Rosy and allow your child to fill in the blank at the end of the song with “fall.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get on/off/up • Go fast/slow • You jump • I jump • No more • Fall down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like it • Let’s jump fast • You jump now • You go under • No more jumping • You sit down

Snack

Snack time is often a very motivating part of a child's routine. We can utilize these opportunities to model, use and teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open – Have your child direct you to open cupboards in the kitchen or his/her lunchbox to access a snack and to open bags or containers holding the food. • Eat – Model and teach this word while taking bites of a snack. • Drink – Model and teach this word while taking a drink. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get that – Allow your child to request access to different foods from the cupboard • Eat/drink more • Open that • You eat/drink • My drink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s time to eat • I am hungry • I like/don’t like it – Model comments like this while eating. • I need (that, more, spoon, plate) - gently sabotage your child's routine by “forgetting” to give him/her a necessary utensil or item for his/her snack routine.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big/little/colors – Allow your child to make choices about his/her snack by asking for different color goldfish crackers or fruit snacks or differently sized pretzels. 		
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Bubbles

Blowing bubbles is fun and motivating for many children. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open – Have your child direct you to open the jar of bubbles. • Go – Have your child say “go” to ask you to blow bubbles; don’t forget the easy prompt: “ready, set...”. • Up /Down – Model and teach these directions by blowing bubbles up or down. • Big/Little – Allow your child to make choices about the size of bubbles he/she wants you to blow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get it – Use this phrase when prompting a child to pop the bubbles. • Go up/down – Have your child direct you to blow the bubbles in different directions. • Go fast/slow – Allow your child to direct the speed of the bubble-blowing by using these simple adverbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blow big ones. • Pop that one. • My turn to blow. • Get the little one. • It is big.

Blocks

Many children enjoy playing with blocks. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up – Model and use this word while stacking blocks • Down – Have your child use this word to ask to knock down a stack of blocks. • Big/Little – Allow your child to make choices about the size of blocks to use. • On/off – Your child can use these words to direct you to add blocks to or take blocks off of the structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall down – Use this phrase when knocking down a stack of blocks • Blue/Red/Yellow on – Your child can direct you which block to add to the block structure • Get more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a castle/fort/dinosaur, etc. • Put it on • Push it down • Make it fall • Put more on • Make it big

Chasing

Many children love to run, be chased and get tickled. Use these fun, engaging opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go – Have your child initiate racing and chasing games using this word. Help prompt by saying “ready... set...” • Stop – Use this word to take a break from running. • Fast/Slow – Have your child direct the speed of the activity by using these words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get me – Teach this 2-word combination to allow your child to initiate a chase or tickle game. • Go slow • You stop • Let’s go 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now you’re “it” • Get my feet/belly/arms – use this phrase to teach body parts while your child asks for you to tickle him/her in different places • Let’s go fast • I am fast • You are slow
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Cooking

Some children enjoy participating in food preparation and cooking routines. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open/Close – Use these words when accessing food and utensils from the fridge, cabinets, drawers, etc. and while opening/closing jars, bottles, boxes and other containers. • Up/Down – Model and use these words while adjusting the oven, getting items down from a cabinet or putting items up • More – Have your child direct you to add more of a favorite ingredient • On/off – Your child can use these words to direct you to turn on/off the water faucet, the oven, microwave or small appliance. • Fast/Slow – Model and teach these words when stirring foods or using different appliance settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get more • Open/Close it • Eat it • Go fast/slow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn it on/off • Turn it up/down • Put it in/on • Take it out • Put more in • I like it

Ball

Many children enjoy playing with balls. Whether you are playing with large exercise balls, playground balls or in a ballpit, use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go/Stop – Use these words while bouncing your child on larger exercise balls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go fast/slow – Use this phrase when bouncing on large exercise balls • My turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give it to me • Get the little one • Let’s get in • Let’s play ball

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up – Model and use this word while throwing a ball up in the air • Big/Little – Allow your child to make choices about the size of ball to play with • In/out – Teach these prepositions when getting in/out of a ball pit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get on/off – Use these phrases when your child gets on and off of large exercise ball • Get in/out – Target these phrases when getting in or out of a ball pit • Go under – Use this phrase when submerging yourselves in a ball pit 	
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Balloons		
Blowing and playing with balloons is fun and motivating for some children. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.		
<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go – Have your child say “go” to ask you to blow up a balloon • Stop – Have your child direct you to “stop” when the balloon is big enough • Big/Little – Allow your child to make choices about how big he/she wants you to blow the balloon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let go – Have your child direct you to let the balloon fly around the room • Get it – Use this phrase when prompting a child to retrieve a balloon after its flight • Go up/down – Have your child direct you to let the balloon go in different directions. • Go fast/slow – Allow your child to direct the speed of the balloon-blowing by using these simple adverbs • Pop it – If you child likes the noise, let him or her direct you to pop the balloon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it big. • Pop that one. • Make a yellow one. • Give it to me. • It is little. • It is loud. • Where is it?

Animals		
Some children enjoy interacting with pets and animals at home, at petting zoos or during hippotherapy. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.		
<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come – Have your child call a pet over using this word. • Stop/Go – Let your child initiate and terminate activities like petting, running or walking with an animal • Fast/Slow – Allow your child to make choices about the speed of an activity with an animal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come here • Sit down • Go fast/slow – Allow your child to direct the speed of movement on a horse or while walking a dog • Get on/off – Teach this phrase when getting on/off a horse • Get it – Use this phrase while playing fetch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s go fast • Sit and stay • Help me up – Let your child use this phrase to request help getting on a horse • I want off – Your child can use this phrase when he/she wants to terminate a horse-riding activity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit /Stay – Some animals may be trained to respond to your child’s AAC system voice 		
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Marbles

Marble racing games are fun and motivating for many children to build and play with. Use these fun opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go – Have your child use this word when initiating a race down the track • Up – Model and use this word while building “up” the race tower • Big/Little – Allow your child to make choices about the size of the construction piece to use • In/out – Teach these prepositions when manipulating the marbles in the chutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My turn • Get blue/green/yellow – Let your child use colors to request different pieces of the track to add • Get more • Go fast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put it in • Put it on • Make it big • Play with me • Watch it go

Play-doh

Many children enjoy playing with play-doh. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open – Teach this word when opening cans of play-doh. • Big/Little – Allow your child to make choices about the size of play-doh structures to make. • On/off – Your child can use these words to direct you to put play-doh on/take play doh off of other toys, the table, or even body parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open blue/red/yellow on – Your child can direct you which can of dough to open • Get more • Help me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a house/ball/train, etc. • Put it on • Push it down • Put it on my elbow/nose/knee • Put more on • Make it big/little

Dress Up

Many children enjoy playing dress-up with fun clothes and accessories. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary. Check out the discussion page for ideas on using core vocabulary at the 1-word, 2-word and phrase levels.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On/off – Let your child direct you to put on/take off hats, gloves, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open it • You turn • Get more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put it on • Take it off • Look at me

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open– Use this word while opening boxes, drawers or closets with clothes inside • Close – Teach this word when closing zippers or buttons on clothes • Turn – Model and teach this word while turning around to show off silly outfits • Look – Teach your child to use this word to draw attention to him/herself 		
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Tops

Many children enjoy playing dress-up with fun clothes and accessories. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go - Have your child use this word to direct you to let the top go • Stop - Model this word when the top stops spinning • Turn - Model and teach this word to comment on how the top turns • Fall - Teach this word when a top falls off the table • Fast/slow - Teach these words to describe the speed in which the top is moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn more • Go fast • It fall • Push it • Get blue/red/yellow etc. - Let your child make choices with differently colored tops • Turn it • Stop it • My turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it fall • Make it go • It goes fast • Turn it on

Sensory Bins

Many children enjoy playing with rice, beans, sand or water inside a sensory bin. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In – Teach this word while putting rice, beans, water or sand from the bin into different containers (or while reminding them to keep the materials IN the bin) • Out – Model and use this word while pouring sensory materials out of containers into the bin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get more • Get it – use this phrase when searching for items hidden in the bin • Feel it • Stop that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pour it out • Put them/some/it in • Take it out • You do it • Put some on my hand/knee/finger/arm • I like it • I don't like it

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More – Use this word when adding materials to cups, bowls or bins • Eat/Drink – Use this word when pretending to consume the contents of the bins • Stop/Go – Use these words when initiating and terminating movement and games like pouring, digging or picking up and dropping materials 		
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Videos

Many children enjoy watching videos on the TV or computer. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On/Off – Teach these words when turning a video on and off • Up/Down – Use and teach these words when adjusting volume • Big/Little – Many video programs on the computer can be minimized/maximized; allow your child to request that the screen be made big or little • Open/Close – Use these words when opening a DVD tray or when opening/closing windows on a computer • Play - Use this word when pressing the "play" button • Stop - Model this word when stopping or pausing the video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn on/off • Turn up/down • Open/close it • Watch it • Which one? • Push play • Push stop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn it on/off • Turn it up/down • Make it big/little • Watch that one • Watch it again • Play it again

Riding In Cars

Many children enjoy riding in the car. Use these opportunities (when someone else is driving) to sit in the backseat your child and to teach core vocabulary. Check out the video on <http://www.aacandautism.com/real-communication-stories/max> for a real life example!

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop – Use this word when the car comes to a stop • Go – Model directing the driver to “go” when leaving a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn right/left • Go home/go shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to school • Look at that • I see _____ • Go for a ride

<p>parking space or when a traffic light is green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast/Slow – Comment on the speed that the car is traveling using these words • Turn – Teach your child to use this word when the driver makes turn • Look – Let your child use this word to comment on what he/she sees outside the car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go back – Model this phrase when the driver goes in reverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn it on/off/up/down – Let your child use these phrases to control the radio
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Board Games

Some children enjoy playing board games. Use these great social opportunities to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn – Use this word while taking turns • Roll – Model this word when rolling dice • Go – Use this word when advancing pieces on the game board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your turn • My turn • Let's play • Roll it • Get it • Try again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You do it • It is my turn • I got ____ • Give it to me

Trick-or-Treat

For individuals who celebrate Halloween, "trick-or-treat" and "thank you" are probably the most common phrases of the night. Consider using this opportunity to teach core vocabulary as well!

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go – When advancing from house to house allow your child to ask to go. • Come – Model this phrase when walking down the sidewalk with your child • That – Let your child pick his/her preferred piece of candy using this word • More – Your child may use this word to ask to go to more houses or get more candy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My turn – Let your child ask for his/her turn to knock on a door • Push it – Model this phrase when ringing a doorbell • That one – Model and teach this phrase when your child is given a choice between pieces of candy • Go right/left – Let your child direct which way to go while trick-or-treating • Get more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I want that one • I am a ghost/witch/cowboy • What are you? • I have more. • Put it in. • I don't like that.

Reading

Many children enjoy reading and looking at books and magazines. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read – Your child can use this word to request to read a book, or direct you to read a line of text • Open – Use this word when opening a book or a magazine • Close – Model and teach this word when closing the book • Turn – Let your child direct you to turn pages in a book or magazine using this word • Look – Use this word when pointing and directing your child’s attention to pictures in the book or magazine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open it • Close it • Read it • Read more • Turn it • Look here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn the page • Read it again • Read to me • Look at that • What is that?
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Videogames

Many children enjoy playing handheld, console and computer-based video games. Use these opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On/off – Use and teach these words when turning on/off the video games • Open/close– Teach this word when opening/closing game cases, disc drives or even windows on the computer • Up/down – Use these words when modifying volume levels on a game • Play – Let your child use this word to ask to play a game • Watch – Teach this word when watching a friend or sibling take his/her turn on the game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open it • Your/My turn • Watch me • You play • We play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn it on/off • Turn it up/down • My turn to play • Can I play? • Your turn to watch

Mealtimes

Whether it’s a Thanksgiving feast, dinner at a restaurant or a routine supper at home, mealtimes are great opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary.

<u>1-word level</u>	<u>2-word level</u>	<u>Phrases:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat – Model and teach this word while taking bites of food. Remember, your child doesn’t need to ask for each bite. Let your child direct you to “eat” also! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More please • Thank you • Open that • My drink • You eat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give/pass me that • Open that, please • I am hungry • I like/don’t like it

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink – Let your child use this word to request a drink, to direct you to drink or comment on someone else drinking. • Open – Let your child ask for access to foods in containers or boxes by directing you to open them. • More – Let your child request second helpings using this word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give/pass that • No more 	
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Silly Social Play

Many children are motivated by silly social play and directing other people's behavior. Use these great opportunities to interact with your child and to teach core vocabulary. Check out the discussion page for ideas on using core vocabulary at the 1-word, 2-word and phrase levels.

1-word level	2-word level	Phrases:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep – Pretend to fall asleep when your child uses this word • Turn – Let your child tell you to turn around in a circle • Sick, sad, angry, happy, scared – Let your child direct you to act out these emotions/feelings. The more exaggerated you are, the more fun your child might have. • Fall – Let your child direct you to fall down • Silly – Make wacky facial expressions and noises if your child directs you using this word. • Stop – Your child can use this word to make you stop turning, sleeping or acting in different ways • Come/Go – Your child can use these words to direct you to come to them or go away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get up – Let your child use this phrase to get you up after you have “fallen asleep” or “fallen down” • Be sick/Get scared • Fall down • Turn around • Be silly • Stop it • Come here • Go away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to sleep • You be sick • You get scared • Make a silly face