

# Making a Core Approach Approachable

## Learning Outcomes

- Identify two key components of core language
- List two additional communication tools that can support a core language approach
- Identify one resource with lesson plans to implement teaching core vocabulary

## Approaching Core: Understand It!

### What is Core Vocabulary?

Core Vocabulary refers to high frequency, multi-purpose, commonly occurring words from a range of word classes that are a central part of an individuals' AAC system. AAC implementation needs to be a team approach, meaning professionals from a variety of backgrounds and caregivers need to be on the same page about how to implement a strategy.

The 4 F Framework by Maureen Nevers helps make the definition of core more approachable for everyone on the AAC team. The framework states that core vocabulary is frequent, flexible, functional, and for all.

- **Frequent**
  - Occurs in 80% of all spoken and written communication
  - Used across contexts, ages, communicators, and time
  - An individual focusing on one novel word can use it all day long with purpose
- **Flexible**
  - Made up of pronouns, verbs, descriptors, and prepositions
  - Can be used alone or in combination with other words
  - Words can be combined in a variety of ways
- **Functional**
  - Useful for all daily contexts
  - Allows a communicator more opportunity to communicate and participate in daily roles
  - Promotes shared communication between partners, building a context together
- **For All**
  - Provides the building blocks for higher level language and thinking
  - Used across all age levels
  - Used by all communicators regardless of ability level
  - Words you need for life

Best practices indicate that the best way to determine a core vocabulary is through the use of both research-based Frequency of Use Word Lists and typical language development. This way, a list of core words can be developed that is frequent, functional, flexible, and for all. This is how Snap + Core First word lists were determined.

## Approaching Core: Model It!

It's important to model for AAC users how easy it is to use it as their modality of communication.

Some basic tips for effective modeling include:

- Focus on a few words at a time
- Plan ahead for effective modeling
  - Start small
  - Set personal goals
  - Brainstorm different ways you can use each word
- No expectations for the person using AAC

There are many benefits of modeling:

- You can start immediately
- Helps you learn the layout
- Makes using AAC a positive experience
- Anyone can model
- You can model anytime

## Approaching Core: Use it as a Tool (But Not the Only Tool!)

Core Words aren't the only tool for communication. The core approach can be combined with other communication tools including QuickFires, Word Lists, Topics, and Keyboards to make communication engaging and efficient.

QuickFires can be used:

- In a variety of communication functions
- In most conversations
- To help keep a conversation going
- To help an individual initiate a conversation by gaining attention

Topics allow the communicator to quickly engage in a variety of ways with phrases that are related to a specific topic. Like with QuickFires, Topics have no right or wrong use and users will also find some core words throughout.

Keyboards are the most important tool to allow someone to be a truly generative communicator. They should be provided to the communicator as a tool and modeled by the communication partner.

## Resources

### Pathways for Core First

Pathways for Core First is designed by experts in the field and provides an easy to follow blueprint for getting started and continuing to grow skills with the Snap + Core First software. It is a free

companion app that is available on iPad or Windows 10, and includes lesson plans, videos, goals, research for AAC implementation, and books for the first 12 core words.

Pathways for Core First helps you to:

- Build communication partner confidence and skills
- Support successful use in real life situations
- Facilitate ongoing growth of language, social interaction, and literacy skills
- Encourage ongoing customization of Core First
- Offer resources for teaching and learning

## **Core First Learning**

Core First Learning helps you find, use, and read core words.

Core First Learning offers resources such as:

- Lesson guides and plans
- High and low tech supports
- Parent support activities
- Device overlays and core boards

## **Boardmaker Student Center**

Boardmaker Student Center is a free app that gives you access to resources, games, and activities. It is compatible with Windows or iPad, accessible through Tobii Dynavox software, and links to your Boardmaker Online account.