

Speech and Language Therapy

Unlocking Communication with Core Boards

What are Core Boards?

A **Core Board** is a communication tool that displays high-frequency words (core vocabulary) in a structured layout, allowing AAC users and communication partners to form sentences and express themselves. Core vocabulary consists of words like 'want,' 'go,' 'help,' 'stop,' 'like,' 'more,' and others that can be used across many situations.

What symbols / words are on a Core Board?

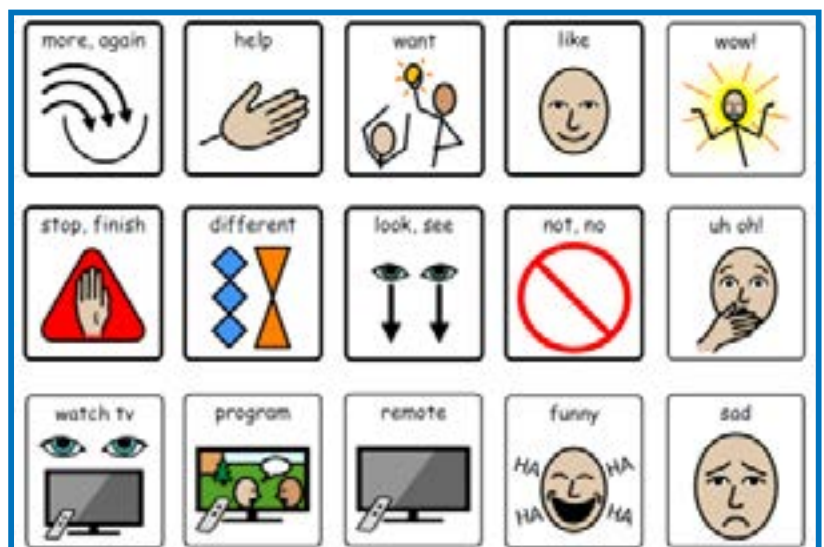
Core words are highly useful words that are used frequently. They can be used across lots of different situations. They include:

- verbs e.g. want, like, stop
- adjectives e.g. different big
- pronouns e.g. I, you, it, they
- questions e.g. who, what, where
- concepts e.g. more, again, not

Fringe words are relevant to a specific topic or situation and tend to include a lot of nouns. They are meaningful words but are used in limited contexts.

This is a core board with core words and fringe words for watching television. These can be combined in the following ways:

- Request: 'watch tv more' 'want remote' 'help'
- Reject: 'not watch tv'
- Describe: 'programme sad' 'not funny'
- Give information: 'programme finish'
- Ask a questions: 'want different programme?' 'see remote?'
- Get attention: 'wow look!'



Top Tips!

Do

- Model using the boards without expectation.
- Say the word as you point to it.
- Comment on the child's play, pointing to the symbols on the board as you do this.
- If the child points to a symbol, say the word they are pointing to, and do what it says straight away e.g., if they point to 'bubbles', you should say 'bubbles' and blow the bubbles again.
- Bring core boards into daily activities that are relevant to the child and their environment.
- Interpret and honour all forms of communication. If the child pushes the toy away, say 'finished' while pointing to the 'finished' symbol.

Don't

- Don't worry if the child doesn't look, just keep modelling.
- Don't take the child's hand to the board or ask them to point.
- Don't ask lots of questions or test the child e.g., 'where's the car picture?'. Model pointing to the car
- Don't worry if you make a mistake.

Remember

- Remember that children need to learn what symbols mean, especially core words that are difficult to represent with a symbol e.g. 'more, again'.
- Using core boards is not an activity, they should be used alongside activities or play.
- Model, model, model!

Video Resources

ACE Centre - how to model a simple communication board whilst playing with bubbles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJ1pEMbHmug>

ACE Centre - how to model a board with more symbols whilst playing with bubbles:

[Bubbles symbol chart \(20 symbols\) - YouTube](#)

ACE Centre – how to model a more complex board whilst doing an arts and craft activity:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruheJZnnKyQ>

ACE Centre – how to expand language using a communication board

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaAx4zSOESg>

Barnsley AAC – examples of modelling (using core board from 2:05)

[Model model model - YouTube](#)



If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Children's Therapy Services
Speech and Language Therapy
Princess Royal Community Health Centre

Telephone: 01484 344299

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

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