

January Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Go



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Playing with cars.
- Showing pictures of places we go (e.g. park, store, school, home, etc.)
- Reading books that focus on the word go (e.g. Go Dog Go by Dr. Seuss, Go Away Big Green Monster by Ed Emberley).
- Create a visual scene with pictures showing things that “go.”
- Engage in conversational speech and ask questions such as “Where do you want to go?” and encourage the learner to use the word on their device.

Week Two:

On/Off



Activities to Work on These Core Words:

- Play with Mr. Potato Head.
- Light up toys or switches that can turn on/off.
- Turning music on/off.
- Using the word during daily activities such as getting dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth or watching TV.

Week Three:

Eat



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Cooking/making a favored snack.
- Playing with play food.
- Reading stories such as The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle.
- Integrate the word into mealtimes.
- Go grocery shopping and talk about things you eat.
- Asking/answering questions (e.g. What do you like to eat? Are you hungry? What should we eat?).

**Week
Four:**

Want



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Requesting for favored toys or food.
- Choice making.
- Go on a scavenger hunt and talk about the items we “want” to find.
- Throughout daily routines, talk about what you “want” to do or who “wants” to do certain activities.
- Coloring or play dough. Have them request for things they want while playing.

February Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

I/Me



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Start to create phrases incorporating “I + want” during daily routines.
- Play a “Who Has What” game. Learners can raise their hand and say “me!” Then rephrase the question with emphasis on the word “I” indicating “I have a...”
- The SLP calls out different actions like jumping, clapping, or twirling. The learner responds by performing the action and using their AAC device or speech to say, “I can [action].” For example, “I can jump.” To increase engagement, turn it into a Simon Says-style game where they only perform the action if the SLP starts with “I can.”
- During turn taking games, ask who wants a turn and have your learners respond with “Me” or “I do.”

Week Two:

More



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Listening to music
- Coloring
- Snack time
- Pretend kitchen play
- Play dough
- Watching a video
- Swinging/outdoor play

**Week
Three:**

Help



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Playing on the playground (i.e., monkey bars, basketball, etc.)
- Completing academic activities
- Getting dressed
- Snack time/meals
- Puzzles
- Sorting activities
- Gross motor such as riding a bike, swinging, climbing, etc.

**Week
Four:**

Stop



Revisit the Word “Go” and Incorporate the Word “Stop”:

- Play with toys that make noise or move and model the word when it “Stops.”
- Swinging
- Go for a walk and “Stop” to find things on a scavenger hunt.
- Watch videos or listen to music and make it “Stop.”
- The learner would then have to request “More” or “Go” to keep watching/listening.
- Use words stop and all done for self-advocacy to terminate an activity. Model this as often as possible!

March Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Open/Close

Things We Can “Open/Close” in a Natural Environment:

- Lids to toys
- Doors/windows
- Snack containers
- Books

Activities to Work on These Core Words:

- Sing wheels on the bus and “Open/Close” your hands for gestures.
- Play with toys that that lids/doors and have the learner request to “Open/Close.”
- Arts and crafts: can use crayons, markers, glue, paint, etc. Have the learner request what they want to “Open/Close.”

Week Two:

Like

Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Play any game the learner likes and ask questions about whether they “Like” certain toys/foods (e.g. apple, ice cream, ball, books, milk, etc.)
- Read a favored book and talk about things you “Like” in the book (e.g. I like the dog, I like the trucks, etc.)

Week Three:

Make

Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Make a snack with the learner, modeling the word “Make” throughout.
- Play bubbles, have the learner request to “Make” the bubbles big or small, a lot or a little, high or low, etc.
- Play dough. Talk about what you are going to “Make” throughout.
- Pretend food play. What are you going to “Make” to eat?

**Week
Four:**

Mine/My

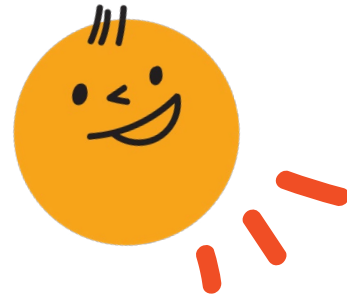


Activities to Work on These Core Words:

- Matching game
- Playing with cars
- Eating a snack
- Bubbles
- Playing a board game
- Arts and crafts
- Going shopping

Work on the word “Mine/My” during turn-taking activities throughout the day!

April Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Over/Under



Obstacle Course:

Set up an indoor obstacle course. Instruct the learner to navigate the course, giving them directions that involve these location words. For instance, go “under” the table then “over” the chair. Take turns giving directions.



Hide and Seek:

Hide items throughout the room and give instructions of how to find them with the device, using location words like “over,” “under,” “next to,” etc.

Week Two:

Big/Small



Comparative Play Dough Shapes:

Use play dough to create various shapes and sizes. Ask the learner to make a “big” ball of play dough, a “small” one, and so on. Encourage them to compare the sizes of their play dough creations. Have them identify the sizes and label them on their device!



Block Play:

Use blocks to build big and small towers and structures, and label them on the device!



Movement Practice:

Practice making your body as big as possible by stretching your arms and legs, or make your body as small as possible by curling into a ball. Have learners take turns calling out which size to be.

**Week
Three:**

Yes/No



Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down:

Play a game where the learner selects “yes” or “no” on the device while giving a thumbs-up for “yes” and a thumbs-down for “no” in response to statements or questions you present.



Memory Match:

During a memory match or bingo game, show two pictures and have the learner identify whether they are the same using “yes” or “no.”



Puzzles:

While completing a puzzle, pick pieces and determine whether they match using “yes” and “no” on the device.

**Week
Four:**

**Hello/
Goodbye**



Greeting Songs:

Sing songs or rhymes that include the words “hello” and “goodbye.” For example, you can sing “Hello, Hello, How are you?” or “Goodbye, Goodbye, See you soon.” Use the device while singing!



Practice Greetings:

Take a trip around the school or clinic and practice greeting peers and adults! Incorporate “hello” and “goodbye” into different activities like recess or lunch!

May Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Play

Things We Can “Play” within a Natural Environment

- Musical instruments (e.g., drums, xylophones)
- Sports equipment (e.g., balls, frisbees)
- Pretend play sets (e.g., kitchen, doctor’s kit)
- Interactive electronic devices (e.g., tablets with educational games)

Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Use musical instruments and encourage the learner to “play” a song, focusing on using the word to initiate or describe the action.
- Engage in sports or physical activities where “play” can be used to start the game or pass the ball.
- Set up pretend play scenarios and have the learner use “play” to choose roles or actions within their imaginative environment.
- Incorporate educational games on tablets or computers, using “play” to select and start games.

Week Two:

Up/Down

Things That Can Go “Up/Down” in a Natural Environment

- Blocks
- Bubbles
- Arms and body
- Volume

Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Play with bubbles and ask if they want you to blow them “up” or “down.”
- Listen to music or watch a video and turn the volume “up” or “down.”
- Build blocks while modeling “up” and then knock them “down.”
- Practice jumping “up” or raising your arms “up” and “down.” Use songs like Hokey Pokey or games like Simon Says.

**Week
Three:**

Now



Things We Can Do “Now” in a Natural Environment

- Starting or stopping play activities.
- Opening or closing objects immediately.
- Eating snacks or reading books at this moment.



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- During play, emphasize “now” to signal when to start or stop, e.g., “We play now” or “We stop now.”
- Use “now” when opening or closing toys, books, or snack containers, signaling immediate action.
- Incorporate “now” in arts and crafts, indicating when to use materials, e.g., “Use the glue now.”

**Week
Four:**

Look/See



Things We Can “Look” at in a Natural Environment

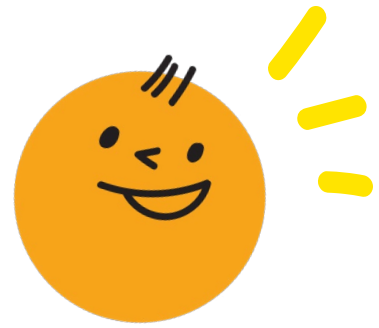
- Animals or insects.
- Different types of vehicles.
- Various plants or flowers.
- Cloud shapes in the sky.



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Go on a nature walk, encouraging the learner to “look” at different objects and describe them. Use the device to label what you “see.”
- Play “I Spy” games, using “look” to direct attention, e.g., “Look, can you find something red?” Then say “I see it” once it has been found! Take turns using the word “look.”
- Use books with detailed illustrations, guiding the learner to “look” at specific parts of the picture and talk about what they “see.”
- Create a scavenger hunt where “look” is used to find items or clues.

June Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Water/Swim



Picture Matching and Naming:

Show pictures of different summer activities. Ask the learners to match the pictures with the core words. For example, show a picture of kids swimming and match it with the word “Swim.” Encourage them to select the word on the device.



Water Play:

If possible, have a water play session with a small pool or water table. Use core words like “Water,” and “Swim” while splashing and playing.

Week Two:

Drink



Beach Ball Toss:

Write “Drink” and other core words on a beach ball. Toss the ball to a learner and have them select the word their hand touches on their device.



Pretend Lemonade Stand:

Have a pretend (or real) lemonade stand! Practice asking people if they would like a “drink” using their device. Talk about different items that you can what drinks are the best for the summer! (e.g., lemonade, water)

**Week
Three:**

Hot/Cold



Summer Story Time:

Read a summer story together, pausing to let the learner label items that are hot or cold in the story! Point to pictures like the sun, beach, or water.



Temperature Test:

Explore items of different temperatures and label them as “Hot” or “Cold.” Select items you can interact with, like ice or warm water, or items you can look at, like the sun!

**Week
Four:**

Fun



Role-Playing:

Talk about “Fun” things to do in the summer and use toy props to role-play summer activities, like going to the beach or going camping.



Outdoor Fun:

Spend time outside, playing games and exploring. Have your learner pick what “Fun” outdoor activities they want to do. Model descriptive words and phrases during plays like “it’s fun,” “fun outside,” etc.

July Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Good/Bad

→ **Things We Can Describe as “Good/Bad” in a Natural Environment:**

- Tastes of foods (e.g., sweet, sour)
- Weather conditions (e.g., sunny, rainy)
- Characters (e.g., villains, heroes)
- Experiences during activities (e.g., fun, boring)

→ **Activities to Work on These Core Words:**

- Taste testing with foods to express if they think it’s “Good” or “Bad.”
- Discussing the weather and how it makes them feel, using “Good” or “Bad” to describe.
- Look at safety pictures and label if the action is good for bad (e.g., running with scissors is “Bad.”)
- Reflecting on activities or games, encouraging the learner to express if they found it “Good” or “Bad.”

Week Two:

It

→ **Things We Can Refer to as “It” in a Natural Environment:**

- Toys (e.g., “It is a car.”)
- Animals (e.g., “Look at it.”)
- Objects around the house (e.g., “It is on the table.”)
- Clothes (e.g., “Wear it.”)

→ **Activities to Work on This Core Word:**

- Play a guessing game with objects where you describe something, and the learner guesses what “It” is (i.e., is it cup? it doll?).
- Use a puppet or toy to perform actions and ask the learner to describe what “It” is doing (i.e., it dancing, it sitting).
- During storytime, refer to objects in the book as “It” and ask the learner to point to or talk about “It.”
- Create an art project and ask the learner to choose materials by referring to them as “It” (e.g., “Do you want to use it?” while pointing to paint or glue). They can label the items and colors using “It” (i.e., it is blue, it is pretty).

**Week
Three:**

Think



Things We Can “Think” About in a Natural Environment:

- Objects in a mystery bag.
- Sounds from outside or in the room.
- Flavors of foods or drinks.
- Pictures hidden in a book or game.



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- Play a guessing game with objects in a bag, encouraging the learner to guess what’s inside based on touch by saying, “Think it’s...”
- Listen to natural or artificial sounds, asking the child to guess their source by using the word “Think.”
- Blindfold taste tests with various foods or drinks, prompting the learner to say what they “Think” the flavor is.
- Use a book with hidden pictures or a hide-and-seek game, having the learner guess where they “Think” the objects or characters are.

**Week
Four:**

Again



Things We Can Do “Again” in a Natural Environment:

- Reopening toys or containers after closing them.
- Going through doors or windows multiple times.
- Repeating snack times or book readings.



Activities to Work on This Core Word:

- During social activities (e.g., ring around the rosy), have the learner request “Again” once the activity is complete.
- Sing “Wheels on the Bus” and other repetitive songs, focusing on actions that can be done “Again.”
- Play with toys that have opening/closing parts, encouraging the learner to open/close them “Again.”
- During arts and crafts, ask the learner to use materials (crayons, markers, glue, paint) “Again” after putting them away.

August Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Turn



Board Games:

While playing preferred board games, encourage your AAC learner to ask for a turn and tell peers it is their turn using single words or short phrases (e.g., “my turn,” “your turn.”)



Turning On and Off:

Using electronic toys, toys with moving parts, or gears, use the word “turn” as you are turning the toy on or off or as you are turning the pieces!

Week Two:

Love



“Love Is” AAC Collage:

Create a visual collage using the AAC device about things the learner loves. How it Works: The learner selects images, either from the internet or personal photos, of things, people, or activities they love. They then use their AAC device to label each image with a phrase like “I love [item].” The completed collage can be printed or saved digitally.



Love-Themed AAC Bingo:

Create a bingo card with different expressions of love and related symbols. During the game, the learner uses their AAC device to match the called-out phrases or symbols. This game can be played in a group setting with each learner using their own AAC device.

**Week
Three:**

You

Who Do You See? Game:

→ Use photos or illustrations of different people (can be people they know or generic characters). Ask questions like, “Who do you see?” and guide the learner to answer with “I see you, [person’s name]” using their AAC device. This activity reinforces the concept of “you” in social contexts and promotes AAC usage for constructing sentences.

Story Creation:

→ Tell a story about you and your learner using pictures. Use sentences like “You go to the park” or “You find a treasure.” Then ask the learner “What should I do next?” during the story. Have the learner use their AAC device to continue the story or respond to questions using “you.” This encourages creativity, narrative skills, and the use of “you” in different contexts through AAC.

Peek-a-Boo

→ Peek-a-boo is a great way to target “you!” Take turns hiding behind objects or your hands and finish the phrase by saying “I see you!”

**Week
Four:**

Say

“Echo Me” Speaking Game:

→ The SLP says a simple phrase starting with “I say,” such as “I say, clap your hands.” Similar to “Simon Says,” the learner then repeats the phrase with their AAC device and performs the action. This can be extended to various actions like jumping, smiling, or turning around. Take turns giving the directions saying the phrase “I say” or “Simon Says.”

“What Does the Animal Say?” Game:

→ Show the learner pictures of various animals, and ask them what sound each animal makes. Encourage them to respond with, “The [animal] says [sound].” For example, “The cow says moo.” You can make this more fun by acting out the animal’s behavior as well.

September Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Why/Because



Cause and Effect Games:

Create simple scenarios and ask the learner to explain “Why” something happened using “Because.” For example, “The floor is wet because...” Take turns asking the “Why” questions. Your user can be as silly and creative as they’d like to be!



Classroom Helper Decisions:

Give the learner a choice of tasks they can help with and ask them “Why” this is their preference, such as, “I want to erase the board because I like cleaning.”



Decision Making:

When decisions are made in the therapy room or in the classroom, let your learning be a part of the conversation. Ask “Why” questions and give answers with “Because” (i.e., “Why are we going to speech?” “Because it’s Monday!”)

Week Two:

Fast/Slow



Physical Activities

Take turns completing an activity “Fast” or “Slow.” Label on the device which speech to try. Try running and walking, jumping, stomping! Have races and discuss who was “Fast.”



Music Speed-Up

Try listening to music that is fast or slow and labeling it on the device! For extra fun, sing a song fast or slow, or watch a video at a different speed. Have your learner pick the speed!

**Week
Three:**

Need



Snack Time

During a snack or meal time, have your learner label things they “Need,” such as a plate, a napkin, or more snack! Use pretend food and have a pretend meal if food isn’t available.



Gaining Assistance

At times when your learner needs help, such as during art, on the playground, or in class, prompt them to use “Need help.” Use “sabotage” to encourage the use of “I need help.”

**Week
Four:**

**Near/Far/
Through**



Treasure Hunt:

Hide objects around the classroom or playground. Use clues that incorporate “near,” “far,” and “through” to guide the learners to the treasures. For example, “The treasure is near the door,” “Walk far past the swings,” or “Go through the tunnel to find the next clue.”



Bean Bag Toss:

Set up targets at varying distances and have learners throw bean bags. Use the core words to direct them: “Throw the bean bag near the red target,” “Now throw it far to the blue target,” or “Can you toss it through the hoop?”

October Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

Happy/Sad

Morning Check-In:

→ In the morning, ask your learner how they are feeling. This can be in a group setting during circle time or one-on-one to start their day! Help by navigating to the emotions page and showing different emotions.

Facial Expressions Game:

→ Practice making different faces using the device! Select an emotion and show the matching face. Take turns selecting which emotion to do next, focusing on “Happy” or “Sad.”

Labeling Media:

→ Read books or watch videos together. During the activities, label the characters emotions on the device! Point out when they are happy, sad, angry, or even scared!

Questions Game:

→ Take turns asking, “What’s that?” with your learner while pointing to items around the room. Use the device to label the items! Label “Where” the item is next asking “Where is it?”

Week Two:

What/Where

Touch and Guess:

→ Hide items in a bag or box. Have your learner feel the items and ask “What” they think it is. Take turns asking and guessing what the hidden item is!

Hide and Seek:

→ Play hide and seek, with the guesser asking “Where are you?” on the device. Once found, label “Where” you were hidden using location core words.

**Week
Three:**

**Morning/
Afternoon/
Night**



Time Sorting Game:

Prepare cards with pictures or phrases representing activities that occur at different times of the day. Have the child sort these cards into morning, afternoon, and night categories.



Greetings Role-Play:

Act out or walk around your location and greet people using “Good Morning, Good Afternoon,” etc. on the device!



Time of Day:

Label the time of day using Morning/ Afternoon/ Evening. Try showing times on a clock and labeling what time of day they are!

**Week
Four:**

Can/Can't



What's Allowed:

Use the words can and can't to talk about what is allowed in the speech room, classroom or at home. Show pictures of actions or point at pictures in books and label whether you “Can” or “Can't” do the action.



Volunteers:

Throughout sessions, ask for a volunteer to complete a simple task (e.g., “Who can turn on the lights?”) Have your learner volunteer by saying “I can.” Complete this task during different activities during the week.

November Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

This/That

Two-Choice Game:

Materials: Two different toys or objects.

Activity: Place the objects apart from each other. Ask the learner, "Do you want this or that?" while pointing to the respective items. Have them answer using the AAC device.

Scavenger Hunt:

Materials: Various items around the room.

Activity: Ask the learner to find items by saying, "Can you bring me this?" while showing a picture of the item. Then switch to "Can you bring me that?" while pointing to a distant item. Take turns giving the instructions.

Interactive Songs:

Have your learner select the action they would like to do during a song and have them demonstrate it while saying "do this." For example, If you're happy and you know it, do this"

Music & Movement:

Activity: Play "Simon Says" but with a twist. Use "Do touch your toes" or "Don't jump" and see if the learner can follow along. Take turns being Simon.

Week Two:

Do/Don't

Safety Rules Game:

Materials: Pictures of safe and unsafe behaviors.

Activity: Show the learner a picture and ask, "Do we [action in the picture]?" Have the learner tell you if we "do" the action or we "don't" do the action. For example, show a picture of running with scissors and have the learner say "don't."

Sorting Activities:

Create a set of cards with different actions depicted. Have the learner sort them into things they "do" and things they "don't" do on a daily basis.

**Week
Three:**

Here/There



Hide and Seek:

Play a modified game of hide and seek with toys. Hide a toy and ask the learner, "Is it here?" while pointing to a nearby location, or "Is it there?" while pointing to a distant location. Have them answer using "here" or "there" on their device.



Ball Toss:

Sit across from the learner and toss a ball back and forth. When you have the ball, say "The ball is here." When the learner has the ball, say "The ball is there."



Musical Chairs with a Twist:

Set up chairs in a circle. As music plays, have the learner walk around. When the music stops, they must find a chair. Ask, "Do you want to sit here or there?" before they make a choice. Have them answer on the device.



Toy Sharing:

Play with toys and practice the act of sharing. Emphasize "give" when handing over a toy and "take" when receiving one.

**Week
Four:**

Give/Take



Role-Playing:

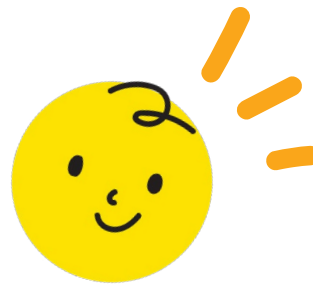
Set up a pretend shop where one person is the shopkeeper and the other is the customer. Practice the act of buying and selling, emphasizing "give" when handing over items and "take" when receiving them.



Pass the Object:

Sit in a circle with a group and pass an object around, using the phrases "give me the [object]" and "take the [object]" each time the object is passed.

December Core Words for AAC



Step One

Introduce the core word. Show the individual where on the device they can find it and practice navigating and using the word.

Step Two

Choose an activity that can help implement the use of the core word you are targeting.

Step Three

Review the core word in a variety of contexts and track the progress of using the core word throughout the week.

Week One:

**Different/
Same**



Matching:

During a matching game or puzzle, label whether the items are the "Same" or "Different."



Color Sort:

Explore a space to find items that are the "Same" color and items that are "Different" colors!

Week Two:

Put



Clean Up:

During clean up, give instructions using the word "Put." Have the learner put items in the correct places or in silly places! Have the learner take a turn giving you instructions about where to "Put" things.

Week Three:

To



Traveling:

Travel around the room or building and have your user pick where to go, using the word "to" (e.g., "to the kitchen," "let's go TO the bathroom.")



Transitions:

During transitions, label where you are going with the word "To," such as "To speech" or "To home."

**Week
Four:**

All/Some



Snack Time:

Using a preferred snack, ask if your learner wants “some” or “all” of it. Present smaller amounts at first so that you can do multiple trials!



Toy Play:

When playing with a toy with pieces, offer “some” or “all” of the pieces. Model these words during play to encourage your learner to try using these words.