

Empowering Social Communication Through AAC



Social communication skills are essential for building relationships and participating fully in classroom and community life. Begin weaving social communication skills throughout an AAC user's day to build foundational skills that will help with future social interactions. With these practical activities and AAC target words, support social communication skills for individuals in preschool all the way through high school.

Preschool

Greeting and Farewell Routines: Practice daily hellos and goodbyes with teachers, peers, and family members.

Target Phrases: "Hi", "Bye", "See you later", "Good morning."

Peer Play and Sharing: Practice playing alongside and with peers, taking turns with preferred toys.

Target Phrases: "Can I have it?", "Your turn", "Let's share", "Thank you."

Expressing Feelings: Help children identify and express basic emotions throughout the day.

Target Phrases: "Happy", "Sad", "Mad", "I feel", "I like it", "I don't like it."

Additional Preschool Activities to Target Social Communication Skills

- ✔ **Snack Time** - Practice requesting food items and saying "please" and "thank you."
- ✔ **Circle Time** - A great opportunity to target responding to yes/no questions and participating in group songs or shared book reading.

Elementary School

Turn Taking Activities: Practice turn-taking skills through simple board or card games.

Target Phrases: "My turn", "Your turn", "Who's next?", "You win!"

Practice Extending Invitations: Model inviting others to join a game or activity.

Target Phrases: "Do you want to play?", "Let's play together", "Want to join?"

Encourage Good Sportsmanship: Model phrases that show respect and inclusion with peers.

Target Phrases: "Good job!", "That was fun!", "Want to play again?"

Additional Elementary Activities to Target Social Communication Skills

- ✔ **Show and Tell** - Practice telling a short story or describing preferred objects.
- ✔ **Playground Interactions** - A great opportunity to model turn taking and playing with others in a natural environment.

Middle School

Practice Initiating Conversations: Model how to initiate conversations with familiar and unfamiliar communication partners.

Target Phrases: “How was your weekend?”, “What did you think about...?”, “Did you see/hear about...?”

Sharing opinions or preferences: Consider dedicating a page on the AAC device to the user’s personal preferences and interests.

Target Phrases: “I like to ___”, “I don’t like to ___”, “My favorite show/movies are ___”

Additional Middle School Activities to Target Social Communication Skills

- ✔ **Conversational Games** – Such as table topics or conversation starter cards.
- ✔ **Would You Rather Games** to target expressing opinions.

High School

Group Projects: An opportunity to practice collaborative phrases and using language to express opinions.

Target Phrases: “I have an idea”, “What if we try...?”, “I can help with that.”

Community Outings: Provide opportunities to practice skills like ordering food at a restaurant, checking out at the grocery store, or greeting others in a store.

Target Phrases: “I would like ___”, “I’d like to check out”, “How much is it?”

Job Interview Practice: Target introduction skills and describing professional preferences.

Target Phrases: “Hi, my name is ___”, “I like to ___”

Additional High School Activities to Target Social Communication

- ✔ **Debate Activities** – To target respectful disagreement and active listening.
- ✔ **Conversational Groups** – To target a variety of social communication skills such as understanding humor and discussing opinions.

Tips for Success Across All Levels

Modeling: Continuously model social phrases in natural contexts throughout the day.

Role Play: Set up practice situations to reflect real-world situations.

Customize Vocabulary: Ensure device vocabulary matches the student’s interests and personality.

Practice Regularly: Build in daily opportunities for social communication.

Peer Support: Encourage classmates to be patient and respectful communication partners.

Social communication is a skill that everyone continues to develop throughout their lives, and having the right vocabulary ready makes these interactions smoother and more successful.

