

AAC Adventures at the Aquarium or Zoo

OBJECTIVE

Utilize a visit to the aquarium or the zoo as a chance to encourage real-world AAC use, promote commenting, descriptive language, and a sense of curiosity! Incorporating AAC into community activities provides opportunities for contextual language use and carryover beyond the therapy room or home!

BEFORE HEADING TO THE AQUARIUM OR ZOO



Communication Opportunity

Discuss what they are excited to see.

Communication Facilitation

If you are deciding between the zoo or the aquarium, let your user decide by selecting their preferred location on their device! Before leaving, ask your AAC user what animals they are excited to see. If needed, open the device to the “animals” page to guide the conversation.

ARRIVING AT THE ANIMAL PARK



Communication Opportunity

Buying a ticket.

Communication Facilitation

When buying tickets, help your user count how many people are in your party and select the number on their device. Upon reaching the ticket counter, encourage your AAC user to greet the person and say the number of people in your party. Practice before entering the animal park. Use the speech bar to hold a message, such as “Hi, 5 tickets please” so that your user can hit the speech bar or speak button when appropriate. If your AAC user is not ready to practice device use with others, try modeling on the device for them when you arrive to increase their comfort using the device with new communication partners.

EXPLORING THE ZOO OR AQUARIUM



Communication Opportunity

Use the device to talk about what you see.

Communication Facilitation

Exploring the zoo or aquarium is a great time to label animals, use descriptive words, and discuss actions. Model on the device to support communication and turn taking. Try single words or sentences based on your user's language level. Model how to make comments, say what animals they like or don't like, and express their emotions.

Zoo Examples:

"monkey," "scary lion," "giraffe eat," "it is running," "big elephant" "look, the bear is sleeping," "this is fun"

Aquarium Examples:

"fish," "swim fast," "dolphin jump," "don't like shark," "penguin is silly" "look, it's nemo"

DIRECT ACTIVITIES



Communication Opportunity

Allow the user to select when to go to the next exhibit.

Communication Facilitation

While exploring the space, allow the AAC user to select when they are done and direct where they want to go next using phrases like "all done," "let's go," and "what's next?" If they are not independently using transition phases, model language on the device when your user looks ready to leave. You can also model phrases like "I need more time" if they are still enjoying an exhibit. Allow the user to select which animal to see next!

CREATING WONDER



Communication Opportunity

Ask questions about the animals.

Communication Facilitation

Ask questions on the device to show different language functions. The user can try asking the caregiver, peers, or staff questions! Simple questions include: “What is it?” “Where is this animal?” “What giraffe eat?” “Where does polar bear live?”

Remember, when building phrases or sentences, not all words need to be selected. Build sentence length as your user gets more comfortable with the device.

LEAVING THE ZOO OR AQUARIUM



Communication Opportunity

Discussing favorite animals and experiences.

Communication Facilitation

Talk about the animals that you saw on the device and select which animals were your favorite! Describe animals you did and did not like using description words such as: *big, fast, scary, cool, awesome, boring, don't like*. Try retelling others later what you did and saw (i.e, “I see shark at the aquarium.”)