

AAC Toy Companion Activities



- *Farm Set*
- *Coin Pig*
- *Blocks*
- *Ball Popper*
- *Cars/Car Ramps*

AAC Implementation Tips for All Activities:

AAC Integration Strategies:

- Model vocabulary on the student's AAC device throughout all activities
- Pause and wait for student responses (10+ seconds)
- Use aided language input - select an icon on their device as you speak
- Honor all communication attempts, including approximations
- Repeat target words/phrases multiple times in natural contexts
- Focus on core words or phrases that can be used across multiple activities
- Use a variety of language functions during activities including requesting, commenting, protesting, sharing joy

Differentiation Ideas:

- For emerging communicators: Focus on single-word vocabulary (*i.e. go, stop, more, colors*)
- For expanding communicators: Target 2-3 word phrases (*i.e. I want __, put on __*)
- For advanced communicators: Practice full sentences and descriptive language
- For gestalt language processors: Incorporate phrases or gestalts that can be used in a variety of settings

For Virtual/Teletherapy Sessions:

- Prepare materials list for families ahead of time with common household alternatives
- Use screen share effectively for PowerPoint activities and videos
- Use household items for sensory activities (*rice, beans, cotton balls*)

Farm Set

Theme/Focus:

Farm Animals & Actions



Play Idea 1: Animals and the Barn

Use action words to play with animals and a barn. Have animals go in and out of the barn, eat, sleep, or walk around while labeling on the AAC device. Talk about how the animals might be feeling and what they are doing. Don't have a barn? Try using household items like boxes, containers, or paper.

Target Vocabulary: walk, play, sleep, eat, go, in, out, fast, slow, hungry, tired, thirsty

Play Idea 2: Making Tracks

Using flattened playdough, have the child pick a farm animal and "walk" it through the playdough to leave tracks. Compare tracks from different animals and discuss their sizes and shapes using the AAC device. Try moving the animals at different speeds or using a tractor to make tire tracks!

Target Vocabulary: animals, push, walk, go, stop, on, big, small, more, fast, slow, circle, triangle

Play Idea 3: Feed the Animals

Pretend to feed the farm animals using play food or simple sensory materials. Try using string as straw, plastic grass, or dry oats for a more sensory experience. Take turns choosing which animal to feed and what it will eat. Model comments like "eat more," "horse like," or "cow want."

Target Vocabulary: animals, eat, more, stop, want, like, don't like, yummy, gross, favorite, textures

Peer Play: Guess the Animal

Each child picks a farm animal and keeps it hidden. They describe it using sounds, size, color, or other features while peers try to guess which animal it is. Encourage use of AAC to give and respond to clues.

Target Vocabulary: animals, animal sounds, big, small, colors, it has, I hear

Sensory Activity: Mud & Bath Time

Create a “mud” sensory bin using flour, cocoa powder, and water. Roll animals through the mud, then give them a bath in a separate bin of soapy water. Talk about what’s happening at each step on the AAC device, targeting dirty, wash, and clean!



Target Vocabulary: animals, wash, clean, dirty, water, soap, bath, wet, dry

Teletherapy Activities

Activity 1: Virtual Farm Trip.

Explore virtual farm tours at virtualfarmtrips.com/on-demand. Pause throughout to comment on what you see, label animals, and describe what’s happening.

Target Vocabulary: animals, look, I see, more, big, small, colors, clean, dirty

Activity 2: Journey to Ernie – Sesame Street

Watch this [Sesame Street clip](#) where Ernie plays hide and seek on a farm. Have the child help find Ernie and comment on the animals and settings along the way.

Target Vocabulary: animals, look, I see, find, more, stop, descriptors



Coin Pig

Theme/Focus:

Cause & Effect, Colors, Basic Concepts, Open/ Closed, Turn-Taking



Play Idea 1: Open and Close the Door

Shake the pig so the child can hear the coins rattle inside. Point to the coins through the clear door and model “look!” Knock on the door and use repetitive phrases like “who’s there?” or “knock knock!” Open the door and take coins out one by one, labeling colors and items as you go. Model phrases like “what’s next?” Put the coins back in through the top, using phrases like “bye bye [color/ animal]” or “ready-set-go!”

Target Vocabulary: look, open, close, knock, in, out, colors, animals, what’s next, who’s there, bye bye, see you later, ready-set-go

Play Idea 2: Shake It Up

Use a verbal routine like “ready, set, go!” and shake the pig together. Try shaking it fast or slow, up high, down low, or behind your back, targeting prepositions on the AAC device as you go. For added fun, try hiding the pig around the play area and finding it before shaking it. Model phrases like “where is it?” and “I found it!” Follow the child’s lead! Not every child wants to take things in and out, and shaking is a great way to model language too.

Target Vocabulary: go, stop, up, down, fast, slow, front, back, behind, next to, under, where, find, found it, my turn, your turn, loud, quiet, more, again

Play Idea 3: Decorate the Pig

Pick out stickers and decorate the coin pig together. For a twist, use band-aids instead. As you place each one, model labeling body parts and commenting on the process.

Target Vocabulary: put, on, off, help, like, different, body parts (ears, nose, tail, feet, legs, stomach), wow, I like it, uh oh

Peer Play: Coin Hunt Collaboration

Have one user hide coins around the room. Other peers search for the coins while the user gives clues using their AAC device (“*up high*,” “*it’s next to the book*”). Whoever finds the coin gets to put it in the bank! Take turns being the clue giver.

Target Vocabulary: prepositions, high, low, next to, my turn, your turn, look, wow, cool, found it, peer names

Sensory Activity: Coin Impressions in Playdough

Try pressing the textured coins into flat playdough and discussing the imprints and shapes on the AAC device. Roll the playdough flat, then push different coins in to see the designs.



Target Vocabulary: roll, push, help, make, colors, shapes, animals, wow, cool, pretty, I like it

Teletherapy Activities: Virtual Color Spinner

Use a virtual spinner with color options matching the coins. Share your screen and model a verbal routine like “ready, set, go!” before spinning. Whatever color it lands on, that’s the next coin to put in the pig.

Target Vocabulary: go, stop, put in, spin, more, colors



Blocks

Theme/Focus:

Colors, Shapes, Sizes, Sorting, Actions, Labeling, Pretend Play



Play Idea 1: Block Race

Place toy blocks on one side of the room and start a small tower in a designated play area. To get more blocks, the user chooses an action (e.g., *run*, *walk*, *jump*, *go fast*, *go slow*) using their AAC device. They perform the action to travel across the room, pick up one block, and bring it back to add to the tower. Take turns to keep building and don't forget to knock the tower down at the end and start again!

Target Vocabulary: run, jump, fast, slow, my turn, your turn, ready-set-go, build, up, put on, knock down

Play Idea 2: Creating Patterns

Sort blocks by different features, like color, size, or shape, while labeling each feature on your AAC device. Determine which color or size has the most pieces! Try arranging the blocks in patterns, such as rainbow order or alternating colors. Try building a tower together using a pattern. The AAC user can identify which color or size block comes next using their device.

Target Vocabulary: look, see, colors, shapes, big, small, more, less, same, different, put, on, next, here, there

Play Idea 3: Pretend Play with Blocks

Turn blocks into anything, such as a restaurant, a zoo, or a construction site. Build structures and "fix" them with block "tools." Set up a restaurant and serve block "food." Let imagination lead the way.

Target Vocabulary: up, down, go, again, help, it, here, there, me, you, more, stop

Peer Play: Don't Let it Fall!

Have clients take turns placing a block on the tower. Before each turn, have them select their color or shape on their AAC device. Encourage them to work together to decide on the design. As the tower gets taller, build suspense with phrases like “uh oh!” or “don't fall!” See who can place the last block before it all comes tumbling down!

Target Vocabulary: my turn, your turn, up, down, crash, uh oh, big, tall, put on, fall down

Sensory Activity: Sensory Bin Dig

Hide blocks in a bin of dried beans, rice, or cereal (cereal works great if mouthing is a concern). Have children dig to find blocks, then build with them. Add in small animal toys or pom poms to extend play.



Target Vocabulary: in, out, hide, look, feel, touch, pour, textures, I did it!, here it is, wow

Teletherapy Activities: Build What I Build



Both the clinician and client have blocks. One person builds something and gives directions on the AAC device while the other tries to build the same thing without seeing it. Then reveal and compare!

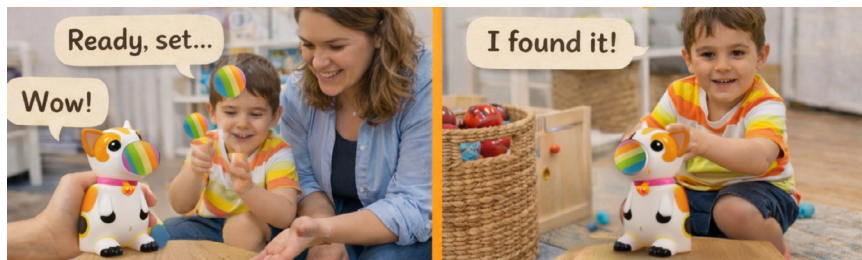
Target Vocabulary: put on, on top, next to, stop, help, colors, same, different, up



Ball Popper

Theme/Focus:

Cause & Effect, Movement, Describing, Engagement



Play Idea 1: Verbal Routines

Use verbal routines such as “ready, set, go!”, “3-2-1, blast off”, or “on your mark, get set, go”, each time a ball is launched. Use this activity as a social opportunity, pausing between words and allowing the user to fill in the phrase on their device. Model requests like “again” or “more.” Celebrate each pop with comments like “woah!” and “wow!”

Target Vocabulary: ready, set, go, blast off, 3-2-1, stop, my turn, your turn, woah, fun, wow, again

Play Idea 2: Hide and Seek with the Balls

Hide the balls around the room before the session. Have the child find them one at a time, then bring each one back to load into the popper. Have them ask for clues on the AAC device and use repetitive phrases on the device, such as “where is it?”, “I see it,” or “I found you.”

Target Vocabulary: on, next to, up, down, under, over, I see it, I need help, find, found you, where is it?

Play Idea 3: I Spy with the Ball Popper

Play I Spy by describing items in the room on the AAC device. When the child identifies the item, they aim the ball popper at it! Take turns giving clues on the device.

Target Vocabulary: big, little, colors, shapes, describing actions (something I jump on, something I slide on)

Peer Play: Target Practice

Set up a target like a bowl or bucket. Peers take turns aiming the ball popper at it. Adjust difficulty by changing the distance or the size of the target. Have users cheer on their peers on the AAC device.

Target Vocabulary: in, out, again, help, hard, easy, go, my turn, your turn, good job, keep going, you did it

Sensory Activity: Obstacle Course

When the ball pops out of the ball popper, the child retrieves the ball and completes a movement task before returning it to you. It can be a simple action, like jumping 2 times, or a multistep obstacle course, like jumping onto a crash pad then crawling through a tunnel. Repeat this sequence, allowing the user to identify on their AAC device which obstacle course actions they want to complete each turn.



Target Vocabulary: go, fast, again, jump, run, crawl, bounce, in, out, sensory items

Teletherapy Activities: Find the Ball

Place cups of different sizes and colors on a table or surface visible from your computer screen. Hide a ball under one of the cups and have the child guess which cup it's under using their AAC device. Shuffle the cups around for an added challenge. Try swapping in other items to hide the ball under, like bowls, books, or boxes, and have the child keep guessing until they find it. Then pop the ball in the popper to celebrate!

Target Vocabulary: where, under, that one, found it, again, more, big, little, colors, descriptors



Cars / Car Ramps

Theme/Focus:

Core Words, Actions, Spatial Concepts, Basic Concepts



Play Idea 1: Make a Driving Course

Use painter's tape to create a road course on the floor or table. Have the child help plan the route using their AAC device, then build it together and drive cars along it while modeling on the device.

Target Vocabulary: up, down, push, pull, rip, help, right, left, road, car, more, all done

Play Idea 2: Will It Roll?

Make a ramp (books or cardboard work well) and gather cars, balls, and objects of different sizes. Select the toys together using the AAC device. Test how each one rolls, commenting on which goes fast and which gets stuck. Make predictions using the device before you drop each item.

Target Vocabulary: fast, slow, little, big, go, stop, uh oh, stuck, help, fall off, up, down

Play Idea 3: Book Ramps, Bridges, and Tunnels

Prop books up like tents to create ramps, bridges, and tunnels. Drive the cars up, slide them down, and cruise through the tunnels while modeling action words on the AAC device. Board books work especially well for this.

Target Vocabulary: up, down, in, out, dark, under, over, where, go

Peer Play: Mega Slide Ramp

Take the cars to a playground and use the slide as a giant ramp. One peer stands at the top, the other at the bottom while sending cars back and forth! Use the AAC device to ask for a turn and comment on what happens.

Target Vocabulary: ready, set, go, my turn, your turn, fast, down, up, slide, car, push, stop

Sensory Activity: Painting with Cars

Drive cars through washable paint and then onto paper to create tracks. Use the device to talk about the colors and compare the prints left by different wheels, such as bumpy, smooth, thick, or thin.

Target Vocabulary: colors, fast, slow, go, stop, wet, messy, bumpy, smooth, thick, thin



Teletherapy Activities: Design a Car

Using an online whiteboard, draw a car based on the child's choices. Using their AAC device, they can pick the colors, features, size, and details while you bring their ideas to life on screen.

Target Vocabulary: big, little, colors, like, don't like, wheels, doors, lights

