**Core Words**

Core words are the common words we use for most of our communication. They make up 80% of the words we use on a daily basis. These are words like *I, that, it, what, go, more, and, we, there, is, like*. Their flexibility is what makes them so powerful! The ability to use core words will help your child communicate effectively across many environments and activities.

Individuals who are learning to use their AAC systems (“talkers”) to communicate need lots of practice with core vocabulary words. It can be helpful to focus intensely on **one core word per week**. Post the weekly word where your child and the whole family can see it.

Encourage as many different ways to use the word as possible. Try to use the word often both in your aided language modelling (you use the talker to emphasis key words in your regular conversation) and also in routines and in special activities that give your child meaningful communication opportunities.

Tips & Tricks

for the Core Word Approach to Communication

1. Use [***“aided language modelling***](http://http/praacticalaac.org/praactical/pivotal-skills-for-aac-intervention-aided-language-input/)***”*** many, many times each day throughout activities and environments. Set a goal for yourself for how many times you intend to use the word that day.
2. Think ahead to how the your child currently communicates the core word message using their body language, actions, and/or sounds. Be ready to interpret that communication and then model the core word. This is called ***“interpret and translate.”*** It’s not important to have your child then use the talker to say the same thing, or even to attend to it while you model—rather the value is in them hearing you understand them and then learning there is another way to communicate that message to you using their talker.
3. Find different ways to work with the word for every day of the week.
4. Look for the word in songs and stories. Highlight the core word and pause expectantly to draw your child’s attention to it.
5. Have fun!