

Core Vocabulary

What is core vocabulary?

- Relatively small number of words that constitute the vast majority of what is said in normal communication.
- Messages commonly used by a variety of individuals that occur very frequently
- Determined by analysis of operationally and socially competent people who use AAC
- With a few hundred words, a person can say over 80% of what is needed (Vanderheiden & Kelso, 1987)

High frequency words have two components:

- **General core vocabulary** - high frequency words that are of general conversational use (e.g., pronouns, articles, and prepositions)
- **Personal core vocabulary** - words frequently used by a particular individual that are not frequently used by others (e.g., names of people and places)
- Consistent across
 - **Population** (toddlers/preschoolers, adolescents, adults, elderly, people who use AAC)
 - **Environments** (home, restaurants, malls, churches, hospital)
 - **Topics** (work, food, family life, gossip, education)
 - **Activities** (talking on the phone, eating, shopping, playing games, hobbies)

Top 30 core vocabulary words that everyone should have on his or her communication display:

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| all done / finished | all gone / gone | bad |
| different | good | more |
| what | not / don't | that |
| this | I / name | it |
| you / your | again | ready |
| do / does / did | help | look / see |
| stop | want | big |
| little | away | come |
| drink | eat | get |
| give | go | like |

* Information gathered from the work of Gail M. Van Tatenhove
<http://www.vantatenhove.com/>