Introduction to TELL ME: AAC in the Preschool Classroom

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AAC for Preschool Children with Significant Communication Challenges

Recipe

- Frequently used words (core)
- Specific but important words
- Whole messages
- Alphabet

Image Credit: Nancy Inman
WordPower 60 Basic
"I wish you can come in."  
"No! Let me!"

"I really do."

"You really hurt me!"

"Put me down."

"Don’t do that!"

"You can watch me."

"Do you know what?"

Teaching Early Language & Literacy Through Multimodal Expression

It was developed because...

There are too few SLPs who are comfortable with AAC

Those SLPs have too little time with the students

Teachers in preschools serving students with disabilities didn’t get adequate preparation in AAC when in their preservice training programs

Teachers struggle with how to teach high frequency words to nonverbal and minimally verbal students

Too many children are entering kindergarten without a foundation of language

What is the TELL ME program?

Is

A classroom-based approach to teaching high frequency words (i.e., core vocabulary)

Uses repeated reading of story books as a context for AAC instruction

Designed to be used with any AAC system

Is Not

Specific to a certain AAC device, app, communication board, or type of symbol

A full curriculum that covers an entire school year
4 Components of TELL ME

- Shared reading
- Shared writing
- Classroom centers & routines
- Home extension activities

Classroom-based Approach

For whom is TELL ME appropriate?

*Preschool children who:*

- Are nonverbal or minimally verbal
- Are using or will be using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools that include high-frequency (aka core) vocabulary
- Can speak, but rarely do (i.e., reluctant communicators)

Each book has a set of core words & a designated letter.

- ‘o’
  - Bad, come, messy, no, now, play
Remember:
Core Words
First Words

4 Components of TELL ME

Shared reading
Shared writing
Classroom centers & routines
Home extension activities

Classroom-based Approach

Shared Reading
Pre-reading activities
- Music/Song
- Review all core words
- Establish a purpose
- Introduce concepts of print

Reading
Post-reading activities
- Story sequencing
- Character list
- Retelling

10 days of lessons with a predictable structure

Shared Reading as a Context for Core Word Practice

“me”  “see”  “good”  “help”  “like”  “want”
Before Reading: Input & Output
- Preview with Focused Language Stimulation
  - “Get ready to listen and say our special words.”
- Singing the Story Time Song
  - “Let’s sing! I LIKE this song!”
- Warm Up with Choral Responding
  - “Everyone say CAN.”

During Reading: Input & Output
- Listen and Look
  - “Let’s find our special words in the book... Oh! Here’s one of our words! Let’s say IT together... CAN.”
- Focused Language Stimulation (Adult)
  - “I need HELP! WHO CAN turn the page?”
  - “WHO CAN show me the FRONT of the book?”
  - “Let’s read to find WHO was in the book.”
- Frequent Productions (Child)
  - “I CAN.” “I DO IT.” “HELP me.”

Story Song: Sing with Core
[I, see, what]

After Reading: Input & Output
- Focused Language Stimulation
  - Example: Creating a ‘Who’ poster
    - “WHO wants to go first?” “DO!”
    - “CAN YOU pick one?” “I CAN!”
    - “WHO did YOU SEE?” “I see!”
Shared reading is used to teach language.

Each lesson has a self-rating form.

4 Components of TELL ME

Shared reading  Shared writing
Classroom centers & routines  Home extension activities
Classroom-based Approach

Shared Writing as a Context for Core Word Practice

“like”  “want”
“me”  “see”  “good”  “help”
Shared Writing

- Based on the Structured Language Experience Approach by Patricia Cunningham.
- Predictable Chart Writing
  - Teacher chooses a topic & a structure or predictable pattern for the children to follow
  - Teacher and children compose text together. Teacher supports and writes as children dictate.
  - Once the chart is initially created, they do many other things with it.

Children Who Are First Learning AAC

Dictate responses using:
- Choice boards made specifically for the activity
- Personal SGDs
- Shared classroom communication devices
- Communication boards, books, eye gaze boards
Repetition with variety helps us build our own teaching skills.

Each lesson has a self-rating form.

4 Components of TELL ME
- Shared reading
- Shared writing
- Classroom centers & routines
- Home extension activities

Classroom-based Approach

Infusion Activities
Provide for multiple opportunities to practice core words

“"I can do it.”

“"I see that.”

Give teachers the flexibility to select what works for their classrooms.

Circle Time Ideas
- Introduce core words
- Say & Repeat
- Modified songs for core word practice
- Search for Special Letter
Outside Time
- Monkey See/Monkey Do
  - Animal Action with Puppets
  - Blow Bubbles
- Froggie Find (scavenger hunt)

Quick Quack Questions
- During Snack Time
- Questions that give additional practice on core words
- Beyond choice-making & requesting
  - Build conversation skills by noticing and talking about other people/things

Centers

Pretend Play: Let’s play monsters!
- Who wants to be ‘it’?
  - I do!
- What should we tell him?
  - Go away!
Art

App Connections

And more...
- Vocabulary sort
- Bingo, Lotto
- Self-selected reading
- Collage building
- Making an alphabet book
- General conversation (Talk Two-gether)
- Letter-sound correspondence
- Sound blending
- Etc.

Self-check for infusion activities
4 Components of TELL ME

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Classroom-based Approach

Parent Involvement
Weekly SHARE Packets:
1. Tells which book, set of core words, & letter is the focus of the week
2. Provides strategy information
3. Activity suggestions
4. Ideas for apps
5. Symbols
6. Note from teacher
7. Rating scale & note back from family

WORDS WE ARE LEARNING

- No
- Do it
- My
- Is
- There
- It is not
- Our
- Where
- Do it now
- You can come here
- Read now
- Can you come?
- I like to read it
- I do not play
- This
- Do you eat?
- I like to come here

THINGS WE CAN DO WITH THESE POWERFUL WORDS

Examples of questions and statements:
- Play
- My heart
- Follow it
- My hand is big
- You can come here
- I like to read it

SHARE PACKET WEEK 1

Books:
- No, Dashi!
- This is a book
- Our children are getting used to the new activities and routines that these kids have practiced. The book will help these children get more experience with these activities in this packet.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Strategy of the Week: Use core words while pointing to things in the environment. When you are with your child, point with your fingers at many different things around you. Point to people and objects. Label these people and objects as you point. Add a description of the person or object the core words your child is learning to use. For example, while pointing you can say things like:
   - "This dog is my best friend."
   - "Look! I see a cat. It is black."
   - "Look! A butterfly!"
   - "Look! A bear is sleeping!"
Cooking Instructions—Orange and Dinosaur Print
You will need:

- Range sheets of construction paper
- A range of different sizes
- Cut into shapes
- A range of different sizes
- Cut into shapes

1. Take a piece of orange and smell it on a cone.
2. Take a piece of construction paper and contrasting paint color.
3. Dip the orange into the paint and stamp them on your paper.
4. Do this several times and stamp them on your paper.

Resource Material
Symbols for core words in manual signs, Smarty Symbols, Pixons, PCS
TELL ME

Framework can be replicated by teams to meet their own needs for core vocabulary instruction with:

- Their own books, set of words, types of AAC, types of learners, age group, etc.
- Ideas for group and individual instruction that is systematic and intensive
- Their preferences for activities
- Flexibility to work within other curricula

Attainment
http://bit.ly/PrekAACTellMe

Questions?

Thank you!

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