





In Step 1 we will be determining which words and messages we need to specifically target for instruction. We often complete the step, not only for targeting specific words and messages, but also when we are first designing the AAC system that our student will be using.

We are going to consider which words and messages are important to the individual student, their family, friends, and teacher. We will be asking all of these partners for their input as we choose the most motivating significant words and messages to target. We will be observing the student interacting in their typical environment so we can determine what messages are necessary in order for the student to participate fully. Finally we will be considering developmental norms for vocabulary, language, and pragmatic development for those students who are learning language at the same time they are learning to communicate.

Home & School Word List Surveys

The image displays two types of surveys used for word targeting. On the left, a Google Form titled "Classroom Words for Communication" is shown, featuring a blue header with stars and a green header with white stars. It includes a "Printable PDF: Word List Surveys" button. On the right, two printed forms are shown: "Home Word List for Students Using AAC" and "Classroom Word List for Students Using AAC". Both forms have a DTA Schools logo and a title. The "Home Word List" form includes a "STUDENT NAME" field and a "Parent/Guardian Name" field. The "Classroom Word List" form includes a "Student Name" field, a "Parent/Guardian Name" field, and a "Teacher Name" field. A purple stick figure is pointing to a speech bubble with the word "ASK". The DTA Schools logo is in the bottom right corner.

The first step in targeting the words and messages we will instruct involves asking the stakeholders, or the student family friends and teaching team, which words and messages are significant and motivating. We do this in two formats depending on the comfort level of the people we are surveying. We have a Classroom Wordlist and a Home Word List document that we can send to the family, friends, and school team to complete. These documents ask for things like names of family and friends, pets, favorite foods, places that the student regularly goes, and favorite activities and interests. There are checklists whenever possible to make this a quick and easy task for the relevant stakeholders to complete.

For our partners who are comfortable completing on-line surveys, we use a Google form document for the home words for communication and another for classroom words for communication. These links can be emailed directly to the stakeholders and completed on-line. The results of these surveys come directly to DTA Schools so that we can begin the process of customization. The team can also print out the results of the surveys to use as they are determining which words and messages they will be targeting with their student. If you would like to have your own forms that come to your Google Drive, just ask us we'd be happy to share a copy of this tool with you!

Home & Community Communication Schedule Analysis:

Just like the Classroom Schedule Analysis, this form helps you think about all of the opportunities students have to communicate at home and around town. You can start by writing down each activity during the day in the first column. Then go to the Messages column and think about what your student needs to be able to say during that activity, for example, during breakfast they may need to be able to say names of foods and make comments like "yummy!" or "gross!!" Once you've gone through the whole day, go back and think about where you will put those words and messages.

classroom communication and AAC goals grid. You will use this form to assess your students current skills communicating for five primary objectives, communicating wants and needs, communicating for social exchanges, communicating to share information, language development and communicating for the purpose of participating in the academic environment.

Finally you want to consider the developmental norms in the areas of language including vocabulary and pragmatics, or social messaging. The same developmental norms we consider for all of our speaking students are also relevant for a minimally verbal or nonverbal students.