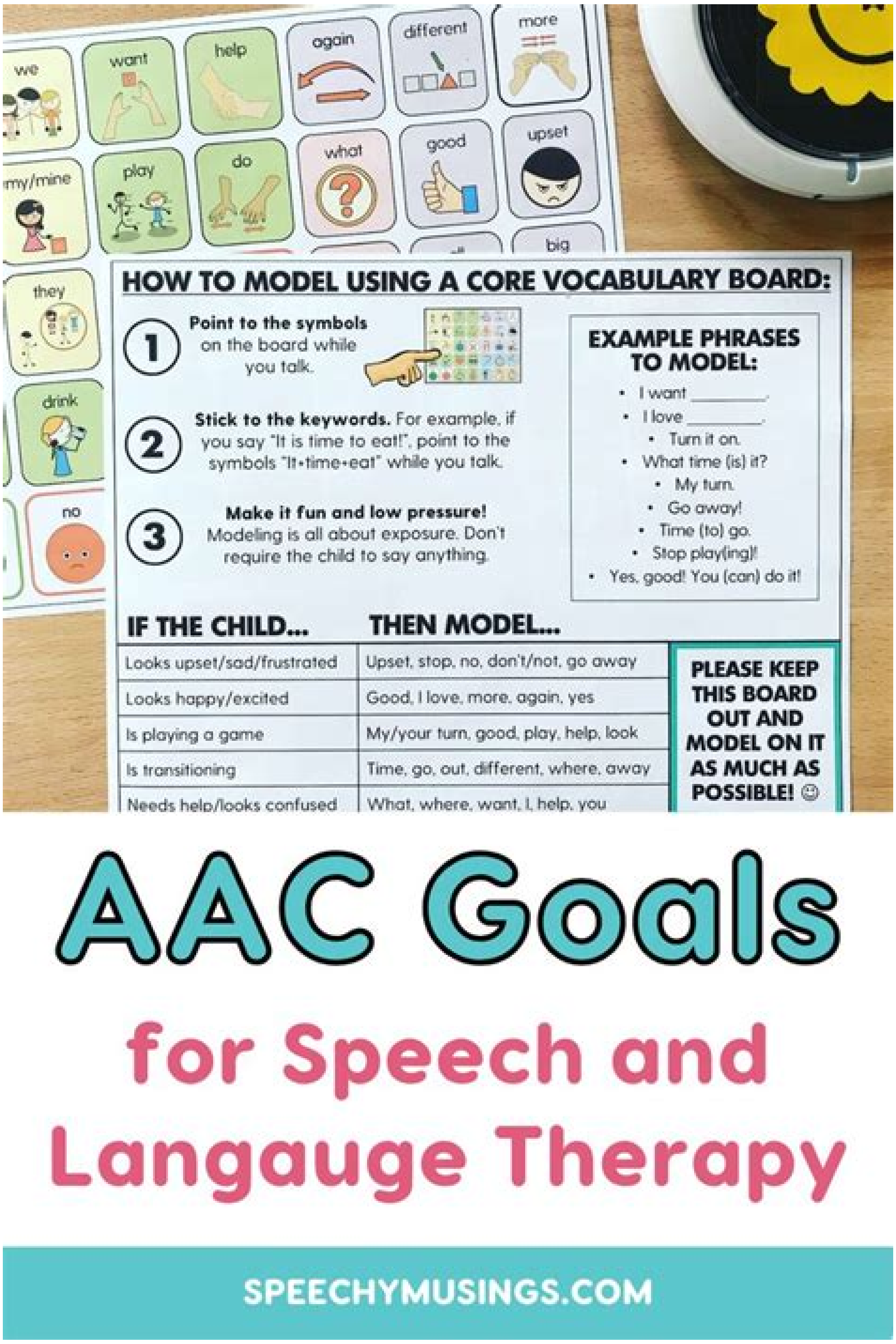
Aac Speech Therapy Goals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AAC Goals
for Speech and
Langauge Therapy
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HOW TO MODEL USING A CORE VOCABULARY BOARD:

1 **Point to the symbols** on the board while you talk.

2 **Stick to the keywords.** For example, if you say "It is time to eat!", point to the symbols "It+time+eat" while you talk.

3 **Make it fun and low pressure!** Modeling is all about exposure. Don't require the child to say anything.

EXAMPLE PHRASES TO MODEL:

- I want ______.
- I love ______.
- Turn it on.
- What time (is) it?
- My turn.
- Go away!
- Time (to) go.
- Stop play(ing)!
- Yes, good! You (can) do it!

IF THE CHILD...	THEN MODEL...
Looks upset/sad/frustrated	Upset, stop, no, don't/not, go away
Looks happy/excited	Good, I love, more, again, yes
Is playing a game	My/your turn, good, play, help, look
Is transitioning	Time, go, out, different, where, away
Needs help/looks confused	What, where, want, I, help, you

PLEASE KEEP THIS BOARD OUT AND MODEL ON IT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE! ☺

AAC **speech therapy goals** are an essential component of therapeutic interventions aimed at enhancing communication for individuals who have complex communication needs (CCN). Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) encompasses a range of strategies and tools that support or replace spoken language. This article will explore the significance of AAC in speech therapy, outline specific goals for AAC therapy, and provide guidance on how to effectively implement these goals in practice.

Understanding AAC and Its Importance

AAC refers to methods for communication that supplement or replace speech. For individuals with speech or language impairments, AAC can provide a means to express their thoughts, needs, and feelings. This communication can take many forms, including:

- Symbol-based communication (pictures, symbols, or written words)
- Electronic speech-generating devices
- Sign language
- Gestures or body language

The importance of AAC in speech therapy cannot be overstated. AAC systems empower individuals to communicate effectively, fostering independence and enhancing social interactions. For many users, AAC not only facilitates communication but also promotes cognitive and social skills that are integral to daily living.

Setting Effective AAC Speech Therapy Goals

When developing AAC speech therapy goals, it is crucial to tailor them to the individual needs and abilities of each client. Effective goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Below are some common categories of AAC speech therapy goals.

1. Communication Skills Development

The primary focus of AAC therapy is to enhance communication skills. Goals in this area may include:

1. **Increase Vocabulary Usage:** Encourage the use of a broader range of words or symbols in communication. For instance, the goal could be to use 10 new symbols or words related to a specific topic within a month.
2. **Improve Sentence Structure:** Help the individual construct longer and more complex sentences using their AAC device. A goal might be to form 5-word sentences independently within six weeks.
3. **Enhance Turn-Taking Skills:** Focus on teaching the client to wait for their turn during conversations. A measurable goal could be to successfully participate in a conversation with peers, taking turns at least 80% of the time.

2. Functional Communication Goals

Functional communication goals aim to improve the individual's ability to communicate in real-life situations. Examples include:

1. **Requesting Needs and Wants:** Set a goal for the client to independently use their AAC system to make

requests during daily activities, such as asking for food or toys, within three weeks.

2. **Initiating Conversations:** Encourage the client to start conversations with peers or family members. An achievable goal could be to initiate a conversation at least twice during a therapy session for four consecutive weeks.
3. **Responding to Questions:** Teach the individual to answer yes/no questions or provide specific responses using their AAC device. A target could be to answer questions correctly in 80% of practice scenarios over a two-week period.

3. Social Interaction Goals

Social interaction is a critical component of communication. AAC therapy can help clients develop skills to engage meaningfully with others. Goals might include:

1. **Engaging in Group Activities:** Facilitate participation in group games or discussions. A goal may be to participate in 5 group activities within a month using AAC.
2. **Using Appropriate Greetings:** Teach clients to use greetings or farewells in various contexts. A measurable goal could be to use greetings in 90% of opportunities during structured activities.
3. **Building Conversational Skills:** Focus on improving the ability to maintain a conversation. A goal might be to sustain a back-and-forth conversation for at least two minutes during practice sessions.

4. Literacy and Symbol Understanding Goals

For many AAC users, developing literacy skills is important for overall communication. Goals in this area may encompass:

1. **Recognizing Symbols and Words:** Aim for the client to identify and understand a set number of symbols or words. For example, recognizing at least 20 symbols in a month.
2. **Using Written Language:** Encourage the client to use written language alongside their AAC system. A measurable goal could be to write a short sentence using a device or paper for 3 different purposes within four weeks.
3. **Developing Phonemic Awareness:** Work on recognizing sounds within words. Goals could include identifying initial sounds in words with 80% accuracy during activities.

Implementing AAC Speech Therapy Goals

Creating and achieving AAC speech therapy goals requires a structured approach. Here are several strategies to effectively implement these goals in practice.

1. Assessing Individual Needs

Before setting goals, a comprehensive assessment of the individual's communication abilities, preferences, and specific needs is essential. This assessment may involve:

- Standardized tests
- Observational assessments
- Interviews with family members or caregivers

The results will help tailor AAC strategies and goals to the individual.

2. Collaborating with Multidisciplinary Teams

Collaboration is key in AAC therapy. Engaging with other professionals—such as occupational therapists, educators, and caregivers—can provide a more holistic approach to goal-setting and implementation. Team members can share insights that enhance the effectiveness of AAC goals.

3. Engaging Family and Caregivers

Family and caregivers play a crucial role in the success of AAC therapy. Involving them in the goal-setting process and providing training on how to use the AAC system can help ensure consistency in communication practices at home.

4. Regularly Reviewing and Adjusting Goals

It is essential to continuously monitor progress toward AAC goals. Regular reviews can help identify areas of improvement and adjust goals as needed. This flexibility allows therapy to remain relevant and effective as the client develops new skills.

Conclusion

AAC speech therapy goals are vital for facilitating effective communication for individuals with complex communication needs. By focusing on communication skills, functional communication, social interaction, and literacy, therapists can create meaningful and achievable goals. Implementing these goals through a structured approach that involves assessment, collaboration, family engagement, and regular review will ultimately lead to improved communication outcomes and greater independence for AAC users. As we continue to evolve our understanding and implementation of AAC, the potential for enhancing communication remains boundless.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are AAC speech therapy goals for nonverbal children?

AAC speech therapy goals for nonverbal children often include increasing functional communication skills, enhancing social interaction abilities, and promoting independence in using AAC devices to express needs and desires.

How can AAC therapy support language development?

AAC therapy can support language development by providing visual and tactile modalities for communication, which can help children understand language concepts, expand vocabulary, and improve sentence structure.

What is the role of family in AAC speech therapy?

Family plays a crucial role in AAC speech therapy by participating in therapy sessions, reinforcing communication strategies at home, and helping to create a supportive environment for practicing AAC use.

What types of AAC devices are commonly used in therapy?

Commonly used AAC devices in therapy include speech-generating devices, communication boards, and mobile apps that facilitate symbol-based communication, allowing users to express themselves effectively.

How do you set measurable AAC therapy goals?

Measurable AAC therapy goals are set by defining specific, observable behaviors, determining baseline performance, and establishing criteria for success, such as frequency of use or accuracy in communication.

What skills should be targeted in AAC speech therapy?

Skills targeted in AAC speech therapy may include symbol recognition, word retrieval, sentence formulation, turn-taking in conversation, and using AAC devices spontaneously in various contexts.

How can technology enhance AAC speech therapy?

Technology enhances AAC speech therapy by providing interactive and customizable tools that engage users, facilitate real-time feedback, and support personalized learning experiences through adaptive software.

What are the challenges faced in implementing AAC goals?

Challenges in implementing AAC goals can include resistance to using AAC devices, limited access to resources, insufficient training for caregivers, and the need for ongoing support to maintain motivation.

How can progress in AAC therapy be assessed?

Progress in AAC therapy can be assessed through regular evaluations of communication effectiveness, observational data, caregiver feedback, and tracking the frequency and context of AAC device use.

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