

AAC Core Vocabulary Board — 40 Words

I	you	it	my	we	this	want	go
like	stop	help	look	eat	play	make	put
more	big	little	hot	good	please	thank you	hi
bye	sorry	yes	what	where	who	why	in
on	up	out	with	no	don't	not	all done

Color Key & Adding Fringe Vocabulary

Color key (Fitzgerald Key — the standard AAC color system):

 Pronouns	 Verbs	 Descriptors	 Nouns
 Social words	 Questions	 Prepositions	 Negation

Why core words, not just nouns:

The 40 words on the board make up most of everyday spoken language across ages and settings — a small set of verbs, pronouns and descriptors combine into far more sentences than a board of nouns alone ("I want more" vs. only "cookie"). Nouns change by environment; core words stay useful everywhere.

Adding fringe vocabulary:

Fringe words are specific to a setting, interest, or activity — shown here in the same orange as the Nouns key, since fringe is almost always nouns. Starter list for a classroom:

food book toy friend bathroom water music outside school home shoes coat

Write your own fringe words in the blank cells below:

Modeling tip:

Point to words on the board as you speak, without requiring the student to respond every time — this is aided language modeling, the single most-supported strategy for building AAC use, and it works even before a student initiates independently.