SPARK: Simple Play Adaptations to Reference for Kids

Compartmentalized Communicator-4 Messages

(Object Communication – EC COE)

Description:	Image:
The Compartmentalized Communicator-4 Messages is a multi-celled static display augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) speech device consisting of four compartments that can assist children who need speech support throughout their daily activities. Each compartment has space for objects and frames for photos or icons. When the colored plate below the icon holder is pushed, a corresponding LED light will illuminate above the icon holder, for as long as the switch plate is depressed, and a pre-recorded message is played. It is possible to record four messages, five seconds each, for a total record time of 20 seconds. The four-compartment device is 18″L x 10″W x 6″H, and weighs 2½ lbs. It requires 4 AA batteries.	 Purchasing Information User's Guide

Who Might Benefit?

Those who…

- Have difficulty expressing ideas, feelings, needs, and wants.
- Exhibit frustration or anger because others are unable to understand their communication attempts.
- Struggle socially with peers because of communication difficulties.
- Have difficulty understanding and completing multi-step activities (schedules, routines, directions).
- Have adequate fine motor skills to press a plate to activate the device. This skill is specific to this device, however there are many different access methods that can be used with other communication devices if needed.

Why Use?

Provides an opportunity to…

- Make choices.
- Develop object/word relationships.
- Build skills like classification, sequencing, function, opposites and comparatives.

Instructions for Use:	Adaptation Ideas:
Environmental Considerations • The Compartmentalized Communicator can be easily used in almost any environment because of the relatively small size, weight, and easy transportability. • While the Compartmentalized Communicator has good quality digital recording and playback of messages, it may still be difficult for some communication partners to hear in unusually loud environments. • If the Compartmentalized Communicator is used as a part of a child's total communication system it should be available in all the child's environments, always, and without restriction. **Positioning** • The Compartmentalized Communicator is best used laying on a flat surface such as a table or on the floor. A child could interact with the device in a position such as sitting, standing, prone (lying on their belly), supine (laying on their back), kneeling, etc. **Alternate Positioning** • The Compartmentalized Communicator could also be used on a slant board to improve physical and/or visual access of the device to the child. **Basic Play/Use** • Objects and icons/picture cards used on the device to represent the recorded vocabulary are not included with the device. • Messages will need to be recorded for each compartment. It is recommended that a child similar in age and gender of the child who will be using the device provide the recordings.	**Optional Additional Materials/Supplies** • Velcro • Dycem or non-skid shelf liner **Build It Up** • If the size of the compartment plate cell is too small for the child to activate there are single message devices available in the OCALI Lending Library that have larger activation surfaces. **Stabilize It** • The Compartmentalized Communicator could be velcroed or placed on Dycem or non-skid shelf liner on most any surface to help stabilize it, so it doesn't move away when the child tries to activate the compartment plate. **Simplify It** • For the user who might be overwhelmed by 4 communication options, consider fewer options to start. **Contain it** • N/A since it can be velcroed. **Add Sensory Cues** • Sensory cues could be added to the compartment plate such as puffy stickers, puffy paints, or different textures. The background color of the icons could also be changed if needed. **Communication Support** • Vocabulary words would depend on the activity supported by the AAC device. **DIY Alternatives** • Paper communication systems with or without accompanying objects can be used when speech generating devices are not available or are not appropriate for the activity (e.g. water play where exposure to moisture may damage the device, etc.). Paper communication systems can be made by using one of the overlay maker

• Recorded messages (words, phrases, and sentences) need to be relevant to the child's immediate activities. • The Record button is on the left side of the Compartment Communicator. To record a message, first press and hold the red button then press down one of the four large colored buttons in one of the compartments. The unit will retain recorded information indefinitely, even if the batteries are disconnected. Previously stored information will be erased every time a new recording is made. • Changeable picture cards slide behind the clear covers on the black 3-inch x 3-inch icon holders. Each icon holder is held in place with Velcro so that the user can quickly change the icons. • In the most simplistic way, the device can provide a child with an opportunity to communicate a clear spoken message to a communication partner. However, communication is complex and has many purposes. • It is important to note that young children need intentional and consistent opportunities to be exposed to, provided specific instruction in, and learn how to use a communication system. In particular children need to develop the ability to understand that a particular symbol (e.g. real object, photo, line drawing, etc.) represents an action or object and that their use of that symbol is respected by their communication partner so that successful and effective communication can develop. • NOTE: Research has shown that early use of a communication device does not impact a child's ability to develop oral	products such as Boardmaker or LessonPix. They can also be hand drawn and created.

speech later and will actually often help to enhance development of oral speech. Extended Play/Use • Set up to make tangible requests, such as selecting a snack food, choosing a musical instrument to play at circle time, selecting an art activity (paint, color, draw, or playdoh), indicating a sensory choice (I need squeeze ball, I need sensory bottle, I need to swing), etc. • Indicating the weather (rainy, sunny, snowy, etc.) during circle time.	

Additional Considerations:

- 4 AA Batteries are required.

Additional Resources:

- Making the Most of Multiple Message (3,4, and More) Voice Output Devices - Enabling Devices provides ideas on ways multiple message static display communication devices can be used at home, school, and the community.
- Plan for AAC Throughout the Day - Suggestions from AssistiveWare on how to incorporate AAC devices in everyday activities.

Ohio Early Learning Standards

- LL: Language and Communication. Develops and expands understanding of vocabulary and concepts (1b.).
- Depending on the activities supported by the AAC device a wide range of Early Learning Standards could be impacted.

Words to Encourage Play/Use

- Dependent on activity supported by the device.

Adapted from: Haugen's Modes for Adapting Toys based on materials from the "Let's Play" Project at the University of Buffalo

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