Tangible Objects Cards

(Object Communication – EC COE)

Description:	Image:
Objects can be used to represent activities, places, and people. Examples include: textures (i.e., piece of carpet, blanket, wood, plastic), miniatures, pieces of the real object, and objects that are exactly the same as those being used. Users employ these Tangible Object Cards for getting information about the activities, people, and places around them, making choices, and/or telling others their message. Tangible Object Cards (TOC) pair objects that are easy to recognize and discriminate with words/pictures. Objects are securely fastened to durable 5"x7" PVC plastic cards. The Super Bundle includes the BASIC set, six supplemental sets (School 1, School 2, Community, Leisure, Wellness, and Fast Food), and three Core Words sets; 65 object cards total. See list of words represented in Super Bundle of Tangible Objects Symbols and images of Tangible Objects Cards.	 Purchasing Information

Who Might Benefit?

Those who…

- Have difficulty expressing ideas, feelings, needs, 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).

Why Use?

Provides an opportunity to…

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

Instructions for Use:

- Families, and teachers need to work together to choose the Tangible Object Cards which will have the most meaning for the child's needs.
- The use of the Tangible Object Cards might begin with the purpose of giving the child information about activities, people, and places.
- The Tangible Object Cards can be shown to the student to see which activity, person, and place the student prefers.
- The child might express their choice by a hand movement, body movement, or facial expression (i.e., if the child throws one card on the floor and allows one to stay in front of them, they may be telling you they are choosing what is represented by the Tangible Object Card remaining on the table).
- The child should be encouraged to speak and/or sign in addition to using the Tangible Object Cards if they have those skills.
- Tangible Object Cards can be used with students in a variety of ways: daily calendar boxes, portable systems, or both.

Environmental Considerations

- Tangible Object Cards can be easily used in almost any environment because of the relatively small size, weight, and easy transportability.
- If Tangible Object Cards are used as a part of a child's total communication system, they should be available in all the child's environments, at all times, and without restriction.

Positioning

- Tangible Object Cards are best used laying them on a flat surface, displaying them in a card holder, or used in conjunction with the Portable Object Communication Unit.
- A child could interact with the cards in sitting, standing, prone (Tummy Time position), supine (laying on their back), kneeling, etc.

Alternate Positioning

Adaptation Ideas:

Optional Additional Materials/Supplies

- Velcro
- Duct tape

Build It Up

- Duct tape can be used to create a raised border around the edge of the card for easy gripping. Cards could also be color coded by topic area for easy set up.

Stabilize It

- Tangible Object Cards could be velcroed or placed on Dycem or non-skid shelf liner on most any surface to help stabilize them so they don't move around as the child selects a card to communicate.

Simplify It

- The number of cards presented to the child at one time can be increased over time. When the child understands that the objects represent something that is about to happen, additional cards can be added.

Contain It

- Cards can be velcroed onto a display surface or attached to pages of a communication notebook organized by topic area.

Add Sensory Cues

- Cards could be displayed on high contrast background, or borders could be highlighted using duct tape.

Communication Support

- Vocabulary words would depend on the activity supported by the Tangible Object Cards.

DIY Alternatives

- DIY Tangible Objects Cards

- Tangible Object Cards could also be used on a slant board to improve physical and/or visual access of the device to the child.

Basic Play/Use

- In the most simplistic way Tangible Object Cards can provide a child with an opportunity to communicate a clear 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 an alternative communication system does not impact a child's ability to develop oral speech later and will often help to enhance development of oral speech.

Extended Play/Use

- Tangible Object Cards can be used to make 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.
- Tangible Object Cards can be used to indicate the weather (rainy, sunny, snowy, etc.) during circle time.

Additional Considerations:

Additional Resources:

- Object Communication Fact Sheet
- How to Make and Use Object Schedules
- Communication and the Use of Tangible Symbols

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 cards.

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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