

Getting Started with the Basic Communication Vocabulary

The Basic Communication vocabulary is designed for those who are just beginning to use AAC to express their basic needs. These communicators often start with asking for things, people, and activities, but may quickly need to communicate for other reasons, like giving opinions or describing things, or sharing their news. These users may have difficulty navigating between pages in a traditional AAC vocabulary organization, especially one with multiple levels. The Basic Communication vocabulary can be configured to use 3x3, 4x4, 5x5, or 6x6 buttons on a screen. No scrolling is required on the main page, and with a few exceptions, the navigation hierarchy is only 2 levels deep (the main page, and one level of folders that can be reached directly from the main page.)

3 column



Reasons to communicate:

- Request
- Refuse
- Provide basic personal information

Language Skills [Note: these skills may develop as the user explores the vocabulary, if communication partners are responsive to the user as he/she explores]:

- Beginning to understand that a picture such as a SymbolStix symbol or a photograph can represent something in the real world
- Beginning to understand the need to get a person's attention when asking for something

4 column



Reasons to communicate:

- Request
- Refuse
- Provide basic personal information

Language skills:

- Beginning categorization - food, drinks, toys, TV, activities, people
- Access to academic support pages for calendar, numbers, letters, colors, shapes in the School folder.

5 column



Reasons to communicate:

- Request
- Refuse
- Provide basic personal information and personal news
- Opinions and describing (like, don't like, use basic adjectives)
- Ask questions
- Attempt to fix communication breakdowns by providing clues to what he/she meant to say

Language skills:

- Beginning categorization - food, drinks, toys, TV, activities, people
- Access to academic support pages for calendar, numbers, letters, colors, shapes in the School folder.

6 column



Reasons to communicate:

- Request
- Refuse
- Provide basic personal information and personal news
- Opinions and describing (like, don't like, use basic adjectives)
- Ask questions
- Attempt to fix communication breakdowns by providing clues to what he/she meant to say
- Turn taking

Language skills:

- Beginning categorization - food, drinks, toys, TV, activities, people, games
- Access to academic support pages for calendar, numbers, letters, colors, shapes in the School folder.
- Access to visual supports in Rules and Schedule folders

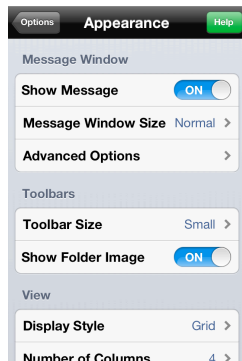
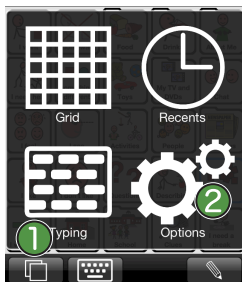
Configuring Basic Communication Vocabulary

To switch between configurations, go to Options > Appearance, and set the number of columns to 3, 4, 5, or 6.

iPad:



iPod/iPhone:



Remember that if your user can handle smaller buttons, but is not ready for some of the reasons for communication listed under a particular configuration, you can always hide the buttons that are not yet appropriate, and unhide them later as the user progresses.

Customizing Your Vocabulary

First, determine the user's preferences on things like food, activities, music, etc., as well as the names of people, places, and things that are important in the user's life. See the Environmental Inventory appendix in the Proloquo2Go manual for a list of information to gather. With this information for a list of useful information to gather.

Next, customize each folder using this information. Some common buttons have been added to the primary and storage levels of the Basic Communication folders. When in edit mode, you can go to the Storage level and promote those buttons that are important to the user into the Primary level. Other buttons may be more uncommon, so you will need to add a button with the appropriate symbol. See tutorials on Promoting and Demoting, and Adding Buttons for instructions.

Things, People, Places, Activities: Add buttons for the things the user will want to communicate about into the appropriate folders.

I need help: This folder should contain messages the user can use to get help quickly.

I feel: This folder contains some basic feelings. The ability to identify feelings can be both important and difficult for a person at the Basic Communication level. It is important to keep this folder simple at first, to make the task of identifying emotions easier.

About Me: In this folder you will find some buttons that contain sentences you will need to fill in with the appropriate information. For example, edit the "I live at" button and add the user's address to the end of the Text To Speak.

Chat: This folder contains common social phrases such as "How are you?" and "Please." Buttons are included in Chat to hold news from home and news from school. Edit these buttons frequently, preferably every day, so that the user always has new information to share.

Home: This folder is included in the 4, 5, and 6 column layouts. It is empty, and is offered as a place to put any buttons that would help with home-specific communication.

School: This folder is included in the 4, 5, and 6 column layouts. It contains links to subject matter often requested by special education teachers for students who are at the Basic Communication level - alphabet, numbers, colors, shapes, weather, and calendar topics.

Questions: This folder is in the 5 and 6 column layouts. It contains commonly used questions such as "What's that?" and "Where are we going?" When you are starting to teach the use of this folder, it is best to use a few key, generally applicable questions such as "What's that?", and model the use of the questions so that the user becomes familiar with how they are used and the power they can provide. As the user begins to initiate simple questions, you can promote more questions from Storage level up to Primary or Secondary levels.

Describing: This folder, in the 5 and 6 column layouts, contains some early occurring adjectives such as good/bad, big/little, yucky, fun, etc.

Clues: This folder, which is in the 5 and 6 column layouts, provides early practice with the important skill of communication breakdown repair.

News: This folder is introduced in the 5 column Basic Communication layout, and is included in the 6 column as well. It contains buttons for home and school news, as well as a partner focused question "What about you?" so the user can take a conversational turn after sharing his news. Edit the news buttons frequently, preferably every day, so that the user always has new information to share. In the 3 and 4 column layouts, these news buttons are in the Chat folder.