AAC Activities for Gestalt Language Processors

Teaching gestalt language processing on an AAC device involves leveraging the natural tendencies of gestalt processors, such as echolalia, to facilitate meaningful communication.

These activities are designed to leverage the natural processing style of these individuals, using their strengths in understanding and using language in chunks.

✓ Emotive Script Play

Objective: To highlight the importance of intonation and emotion in language modeling to make communication more engaging and understandable for children in the early stages of GLP.

Activity: When using scripts or gestalts during play, exaggerate intonation and incorporate many emotions to model how the same phrase can convey different meanings. For example, express excitement, disappointment, or curiosity using the same script but altering your tone and facial expressions.

Why It Works: The emotional content and intonation of speech help children understand the meaning behind words and phrases, especially important for those who process language in large chunks. This approach makes language more accessible and meaningful.

✓ Choice Making with Visual Support

Objective: To support decision-making in children at the early stages of GLP without overwhelming them with verbal information.

Activity: Present choices using visual supports only, without accompanying verbal models. Observe which option the child looks at or indicates interest in, and then provide the verbal model for that choice, e.g., "I want the apple," aligning with the child's perspective.

Why It Works: This method respects the child's current processing abilities, reducing confusion and helping them make choices more independently. Providing the verbal model after their visual selection reinforces language understanding and decision-making.

✅ Echo to Conversation Transition with Emotional Intonation

Objective: To guide children from repeating phrases to using them adaptively in conversations, with a focus on emotional expression.

Activity: Identify phrases the child frequently echoes. Model these phrases on the AAC device, emphasizing varied emotional intonations and facial expressions that match the context. Engage the child in activities encouraging them to alter the phrase on their AAC device to fit new conversational contexts, mimicking the modeled emotional expressions.

Why It Works: This approach helps children understand the nuanced meanings phrases can convey through different intonations and emotions, moving beyond mere repetition to meaningful, context-appropriate communication.

✅ Game-Based Script Mixing and Matching with Emotional Expression

Objective: Encourage creative combination and emotional expression of language chunks within game play.

Activity: Select games that allow for verbal communication and preload the AAC device with scripts that express a range of emotions. During the game, guide the child to mix and match these scripts based on the game context and the emotional tone they wish to convey.

Why It Works: This activity motivates children to think about both situational appropriateness and emotional expression, enhancing their ability to use language flexibly and expressively in social contexts.

✅ Role-Playing with Script Adaptation and Pronoun Switching

Objective: Enhance social communication skills by adapting scripts for various scenarios and practicing accurate pronoun use from the child's perspective.

Activity: During role-play, use the AAC device to select scripts that involve actions or desires relevant to the child. Modify these scripts to ensure they reflect the child's perspective, focusing on correct pronoun usage (e.g., changing "Do you want me to hold you?" to "I want you to hold me"). Encourage the child to participate in role-playing by selecting and using adapted scripts in different social scenarios.

Why It Works: This activity addresses the challenge of pronoun reversal and enhances the child's ability to communicate accurately and effectively in social interactions, fostering a deeper understanding of language structure and social norms.

By framing these activities with clear objectives, detailed activities, and explanations of their effectiveness, we support a comprehensive approach to facilitating communication for children with GLP using AAC devices. Celebrate communication by engaging in these structured yet flexible activities designed to meet each child's unique communicative needs.