

What is the Core Word Approach?

- Good for children with very severe speech problems (like severe childhood apraxia of speech) or those with limited attention for drill and practice. Also helpful for children who make very slow progress in speech or who only say a few words because of their speech problems
- A short list of common words that the child mis-pronounces is assembled
- These words are practiced in isolation and then the child gets to play with whatever he wants (as long as he will talk with the therapist). When those words come up in conversation, they are practiced with correct production

Criteria for Selecting Words:

You should select just a few words to start with at a time to help reduce overwhelm (for both the student and you!) and to maximize progress. I usually pick 5-10 words to focus on at first but you can always do more or fewer depending on the needs of the child.

Words selected should...

- Not be too long or complex. Try to figure out what word structure the child is able to do. Start with simple words like consonant-vowel (CV) or VC words if the child isn't speaking much yet. If the child has mastered CV and VC words but needs help with CVC words, start there.
- Not contain too many new sounds. Try to find words that contain only one or two challenging sounds for the child. For example, if the child can say "bye" and "ball" then a good new word might be "bee" because you know he already has the /b/ sound and you're just working on getting the "ee".
- Be words that can be used in normal conversation or interactions. The best words would be words that can be used in a lot of different situations, like "go" and "up". But sometimes, we have to balance words that would be most functional with words that are going to be easiest for the child to learn.



Word Lists

For the Core Word Approach to Speech Therapy

Selecting Words from the Lists:

Remember, you need to find 5-10 words that can be used in everyday conversations that will either be super functional to the child or that will help the child practice a new sound that he's not yet using in other words. Try to get your list to include a nice mix of functional words and words that may be slightly less functional but introduce needed sounds.

The following lists should give you some words to choose from based on what the child needs. You should not try to target all of these words. Just choose a few words that seem like they would be good fits for the child you're working with.

Super Functional Words:

Done
Down
Eat
Get
Go
Help
In
My
More
No
Open
Stop
Up
Cup

Ball
Car
I
Uh Oh
Again
Weee
Boom
Pop
Favorite toys
Family names

CV and VC Words

Go
No
Bow
Whoa
Me
Bee
Knee
Weee
See
Hey
Kay (okay)
My
Why
Hi

Moo
Shoe
Who
Too
Up
On
Out
Eat
Egg
Ice

CVC Words

hat
pot
fan
mouse
coat
comb
cup
one
boot
bus
cake
cat
bed
phone

bike
book
dog
duck
face
foot
pig
leg
nose
light
kite
lake
gum
food

