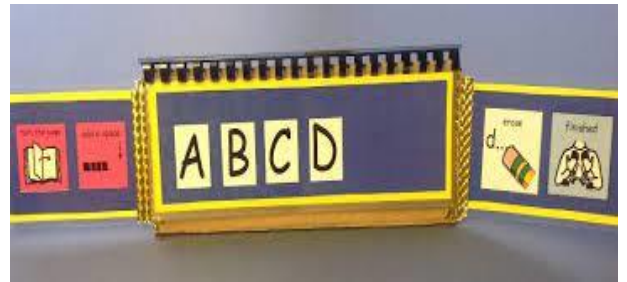


Using your AAC device during the Festive Season 2021

Christmas is a fantastic, fun time of the year where people who use AAC can join in on all the commotion! Here are some ideas on how everyone can get involved over the festive season.

Writing Christmas cards or your Christmas letter to Santa

Santa is making his list and he is checking it twice! Using your alternative pencil try writing your list to Santa. You could use your AAC system to talk through what you want for Christmas to get an idea of the context of what your student is writing about and use your alternative pencil to write the letter to Santa together.



Christmas cards can also be another fun activity with plenty of opportunities for our kids to practice their writing skills! Not only can your kids get creative and put their art skills to use, but they can choose who they would like to write their card to and practice signing their name using their alternative pencil.

Singing along with Christmas Carols or Songs

Singing is an activity that the whole family can enjoy so why not our AAC users? Lots of Christmas carols and songs have repeated lines throughout which are perfect for our AAC users. Record some of these lines into your device so that everyone can join in and sing along!

Guess who? Christmas edition!

Using core words and fringe words on your system, talk around different Christmas objects, people and things while playing guess who! Some examples of this could be: do you have a 'red hat', 'happy' 'man' for Santa or 'red nose' 'deer' for Rudolph. This can be a great skill for our students to learn as a strategy for when words aren't available on their devices at other times, but if they can give you enough information or 'talk around' what they are talking about for you to guess they can still communicate!

Find your elf on the shelf

Using words like where, prepositions and other core words on your system to find out every day where your elf might be hiding and what they have been doing whilst you were sleeping!



Call Santa and tell him what you want for Christmas!

Although we may not be able to go and see Santa to tell him what we want this year, try calling the Santa-line to the North Pole and tell him what you want over the phone! Santa may not be as skilled a communication partner, so pre-prepare your message on your communication system about what you want for Christmas. Be involved to whatever extent possible in preparation of the message at home to ensure that Santa gets the right information! The number for Santaline is 0800 222 222



Make sure you have Christmas related words on your communication system

We can use lots of core words to talk about Christmas, However, to have maximum participation over Christmas and the lead up to it, make sure your student or child has access to Christmas specific vocabulary such as on a fringe strip to add to your core board, or a folder in your high-tech communication system. The 'Christmas' page is usually deep within your device, so get someone to make a quick temporary link on the main page that takes you straight to the 'Christmas' page. That way your student or child has access to as much Christmassy vocabulary they need to share and talk about whatever they want this season!

Christmas tree 	decorate 	Santa Claus 	carols 	tinsel 	bauble 	xmas crackers 	reindeer 	elf 	stocking 	wreath
Christmas 										

Decorating the Christmas tree with core vocabulary

Decorating the Christmas tree can be another awesome communication opportunity during the festive season. Think about all of the describing words, colours and shapes you could talk about when you think about the ornaments you put on your tree, as well as positional language when you are deciding where they should go! Even if your student or child has difficulty putting the ornaments on themselves, they can definitely help out by telling you what to do! E.g. 'put here', 'go up', 'go around', 'put same' etc.



Easy to read Christmas books and other Christmas Switching activities on Tarheel Reader and Game Play

Tarheel Reader and Game Play have some amazing Christmas resources that are fully accessible to students with complex needs.

Tarheel Reader is a library full of accessible, beginning level readers for a range of students of different ages on a range of topics, including Christmas! You can even make your own stories:

<https://tarheelreader.org/find/?search=christmas&category=Holi&reviewed=R&audience=E&language=en&page=1>

Christmas can also be a great source of ideas to practice your switching skills! On Tarheel Game Play there are many pre-made activities for students to develop their switching skills in the spirit of Christmas. You can use ones that have already been made or make your own! <https://tarheelgameplay.org/>

Shopping for gifts (in-store or online)

Don't forget your communication system when you are out shopping! What a great way to get their opinion on the gifts you are buying. There are heaps of modelling opportunities for you to talk about what you are doing when you are shopping as well as heaps of communication opportunities for our students to get involved! Some ideas could be:

- Giving students a choice out of two presents and allowing them to point (with their eyes or hands) to which one they want to give.
- Giving them opportunities to make comments about what you are buying or what you have picked.
- Asking them questions about the type of packaging, who gets what etc.

Holiday Baking

Let's cook together! We can use visual recipes, take pictures or cut recipes out of magazines. Do you have a Powerlink? What an awesome opportunity to turn the blender or mixer on and off. Get your bossy pants on and give instructions when icing a cake or decorating a cookie. Say what colour you want, 'big' or 'little' decorations, ask for 'more' icing and "put on your favourite items". Mum and Dad can use this as a great modelling activity. Use the green action words to describe what's happening in the kitchen: e.g. 'waiting' for it to cook, 'turn on/off' the oven, 'mix', 'taste' the batter, 'eat' it, 'clean' the bowl because it's 'dirty', 'put in' the flour, 'take out' of the oven... there's a lot you can say in the kitchen with core vocabulary!

References:

<https://praacticalaac.org/praactical/merry-christmas-praactical-aac-style/>

<https://themighty.com/2016/12/how-augmentative-communication-aac-can-help-during-holidays/>

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