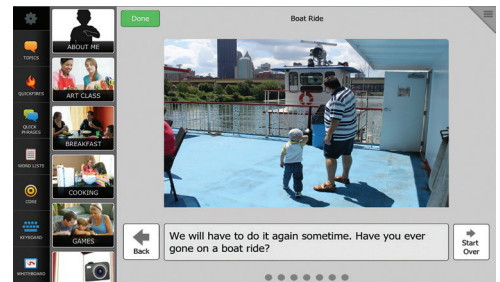# Encourage social participation for all students

Supporting the social needs for students with significant speech and language disabilities can be a challenging task for service providers and caregivers. Unfortunately, many of these students have limited access to social experiences. It may be necessary to use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) strategies to support their social skills development and provide many opportunities to practice.

DynaVox Compass provides, students with access to many pages and strategies that support social participation in the school setting. The following tips will give you some ideas to share with members of your team and caregivers to encourage and support social skills development.

Tip 1: Use Photographs to help Students Share Information or Tell a Personal Story.

A picture is worth a thousand words! By importing pictures into your student's DynaVox Compass software, they will be able to initiate conversations using a picture of a motivating event or topic. Use the Photo Stories Topic pre-programmed templates found in most pagesets to add photos and text to their personal stories.
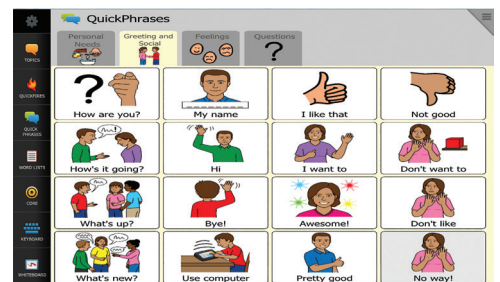
If you already have digital photographs on your camera or computer, you can start using this strategy immediately. To find the step-by-steps on how to create a photo story, log into your myDynaVox account, link to Community & Support and type in the key words "photo story".

PhotoStories

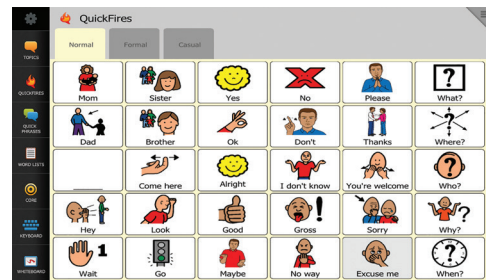## Tip 2: Select Messages in QuickPhrases to Support conversation with Friends

QuickPhrases include conversational statements and questions that provide students with a way to comment about what they think, initiate and close conversations, argue, indicate wants and needs that are applicable across environments. Depending on the pageset you are using, QuickPhrases may be located on the Toolbar or on a button. For lesson plans and teaching ideas, log into your myDynaVox account, link to Resources and Ideas for Therapy and Everyday use.

QuickPhrases

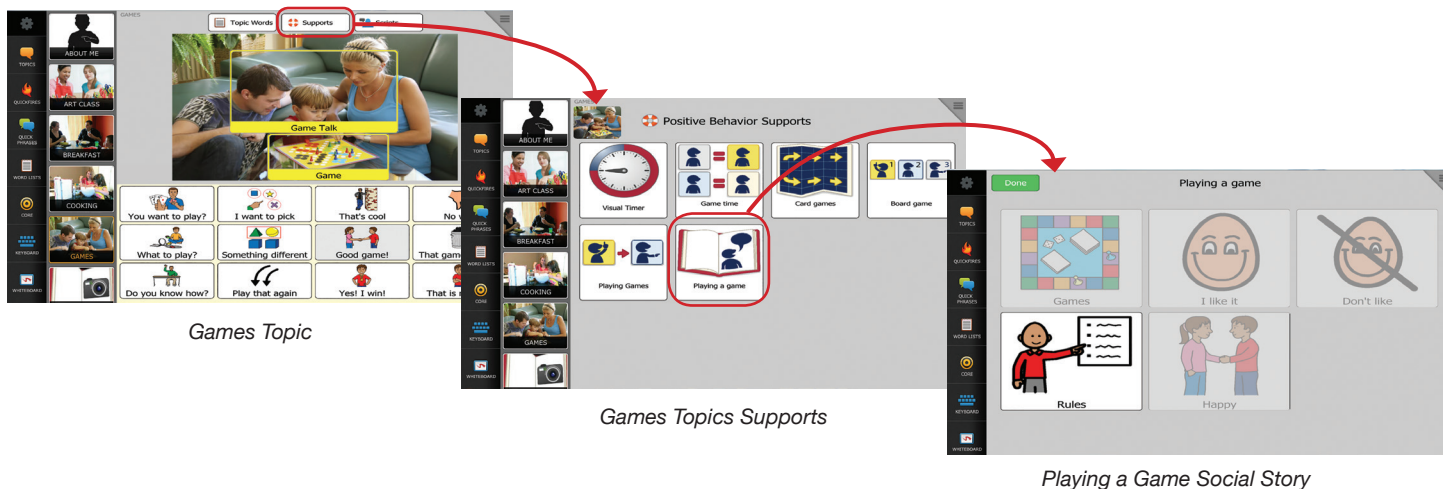**DYNAVOX**®

Tip 3: Use QuickFires to Manage Conversations.

QuickFires provide students with a way to initiate and maintain interactions, get more information, direct attention, comment and request quickly in all environments with single words and phrases. QuickFires can also be combined to create more meaning in the message. Like QuickPhrases, QuickFires will be located on the Toolbar or on a button within each Topic.

QuickFires

Tip 4: Provide Access to Social Stories to Give Students the Skills they Need to be Successful Communicators

Social Stories are tools for teaching social skills to children with autism, but are great for all students with communication difficulties. Social stories provide an individual with detailed information about situations that he may find difficult or confusing. The situation is described and focus is given to: the important social cues, the events and reactions the individual might expect to occur in the situation, the actions and reactions that might be expected of him, and why. The purpose of the story is to increase the individual's understanding of, make him more comfortable in, and possibly suggest some appropriate responses for the situation in question. Each Topic in DynaVox Compass has specific Supports for that Topic that includes a pre-programmed social story. In the example below, you see the Games Topic with the Supports button at the top and a social story support related to playing a game. You may modify the existing social story or use a blank template to create additional ones.

Games Topic

Games Topics Supports

Playing a Game Social Story

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Tip 5: Support Social Interaction and Learning with Social Scripts

Social scripts are based on the gathering of vocabulary used during day to day social interactions. Social scripts include sentences, phrases, and words specific to activities and provide opportunities to interact in these activities. Social scripts support the back and forth engagement and interaction between two or more parties. (Burkhart and Musselwhite, 2002).

Like Supports, pre-programmed Scripts can be found for each Topic in DynaVox Compass as either a Monologue or a Dialogue. The existing ones may be modified or new ones may be created using the templates.

Art Class Topic Dialogue Script

Tip 6: Play a Game

Give your student the opportunity to interact with others playing games or participating in fun activities! There are many pre-programmed game or activity related Topics such as:
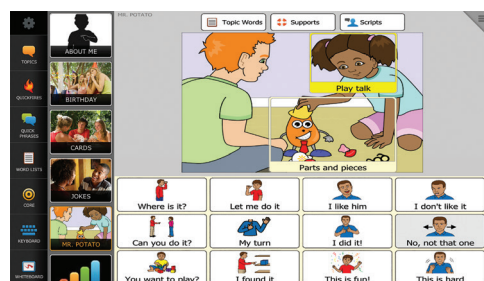
- Games
- Cards
- Bowling
- Centers
- Bubbles
- Jokes
- Mr. Potato Head
- Recess

Card Game Topic

Jokes

Mr. Potato Head

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