

I'm super excited to talk to you today all about materials. I feel like materials are very important when we are getting started working on communication. I do a lot of consulting work with parents and professionals. And one of the things that always comes up is, what materials do we need? So if I'm working with a center or I'm working with families in a district, people will say, "Well, what materials do we need at each of the centers? Or what materials do we need at our own house?" And so I wanted to make sure that I had a module that talks about some of the materials that are helpful when you're working on some of these foundational skills with your students. So the thing to think about our learning objective is that you'll be able to list at least five, but we'll go over more than that, materials that are helpful to target these early learner foundational skills.

So sometimes, I keep going back to when I was starting out in the field and my supervisor said, "Well, just work on joint attention." I mean, I thought, huh, what does that even mean, really? It's kind of an abstract concept, and I was new in the field. So I want to talk about, well, these are items that might be helpful when you're working on joint attention. And then when we talk in subsequent models, modules about joint attention, I will have tutorial videos to show you exactly what I mean.

This is the course I wish I would have had about 20 years ago when I was starting in the field, because I think it's one thing to hear about a concept, especially as a professional or even as a parent. I talk with my parents a lot about these foundational skills when I'm working in the home. And I think it's another thing for me to talk about the skill, I'm with their child on modeling the skill, and then I can give them feedback when they're trying to do the skill. So that's why I try to really replicate here in this course with our private Facebook group. When you're learning these things and you're trying these things, and you have questions about these things, make sure that you come and talk to me in the Facebook group. I really love being able to connect with everybody who takes the courses. It means a lot to me that you're here in the course.

Okay. So what items do we need to get started? Now, these are just recommendations. You could talk to 20 different speech therapists. You could talk to different parents and they're going to have different answers for you. But this has been over time, the past 20 years, items that I really love to get started. They're not have to have, they're just recommendations.

I adore bubbles. They are a dollar at Target and you can probably get them cheaper somewhere else. You can do so many things with bubbles. You can say "Ready, set," and the student says, "Go," to work on fill-ins. You can show the student pictures of bubbles and they can label bubbles if they like the bubbles. They can request bubbles. You can bring them in your therapy bag. They might see them up on the shelf. You could work on pointing. "Bubbles!" There are so many things that you can do with bubbles, and they're fun. Okay, and they're fun. So bubbles, bubbles are an amazing go-to for students at this age group.

Farm toy. This is my actual farm toy. Okay, I took pictures of some of these items that I just use all the time. I love having a farm toy. There are so many cool things that you can do with a farm toy. When we talk about object imitation, I'm going to show you a tutorial on working on imitation with the farm toy. But I had these little characters one day with one of my little students, little guys that I work with. And I was like, in my mind, I was thinking like, okay, one of the things I really want to work on with this student, which we're going to talk about, is object imitation during play. And so I had all these different animals and I thought, oh, I know what we'll do. I have my little farm animal and I'm going to walk it into the farm. Here's my piggy. Oink, oink. He's going into the farm. My kid loved the farm toy, but he didn't want to walk them into the farm. He wanted them to start in the farm and he wanted to walk them out, which was great.

So I just followed his lead and I had my little piggy and I walked it out. And then he took his little cow and he walked it out. It was a cool way to work on joint attention, a shared activity. It's play-based, we're working on imitation. All these amazing things wrapped into one thing, and it was because I had my farm toy. Other things you can work on is labeling the different farm animals. You can do fill ins for the different sounds animals make. A pig says... Right? A cow says, "Moo," and the student says it. Answering questions about the farm toy. There's so many different things. Just that joint attention, that social reciprocity, we're doing this activity together. If your child's never played with a farm toy before, that would be working on a novel item for play as well. And so there's a lot of nice things that we can do with this very simplistic farm toy.

And I will have for you a printable PDF with some links of where you could get these different items. Books. Books are so important. Literacy is so important just for all students. Even with my own kids at home, I try to make sure, it doesn't happen every day, but I try to make sure that either I'm reading to them, they're reading to me each day. I love to read. If you could see my office right now, I have a lot of books, okay? A lot of professional books. I do read for leisure. That is kind of my leisure. I read business books. I read biographies. I read books about autism. That's what I really love to do, speech therapy. But reading is so important. So I try to model that too for my kids, but I love using books in therapy.

I'm going to include some of these printable one sheets here. I had my designer make these. I've been sharing them over on Instagram at ABA Speech By Rose. But I love to talk about how can we use books in therapy. And it's just so important. You can work on joint attention that way. You can work on pointing that way. You can work on labeling that way. There's so many things to work on with books. This particular book is called Brown Bear. Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see? There's that repetitive line. And so I talk about in this, which you'll get as part of the course, how do we work on one-step directions with Brown Bear? How do we work on fill in the blanks? How do we make this a shared activity?

So for my shared activity, I say, make a note of how long the child's engaged with you while reading the book. You can make a note of the time. And then the hope is that we can increase that time that they stay with you. We're not going to make the kids sit with us or make our child. We're not going to say, "Okay, we're going to read now. You sit right here." We're not going to do that. We're going to open the book. It's going to be fun. "Wow, it's Brown Bear. I love Brown Bear. Look at him." And use character voices, and we're going to make it fun and animated if your child likes that. Every kid is going to be different. But we don't want to make it a forced activity. We want them to want to engage in these activities. But books are great.

This is another amazing book called Chicka Chicka Boom Boom. If you have not heard of this book, it's amazing. I have a student who really loves the alphabet. And so when you opened the cover for Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, it is the alphabet. So what I love to do is I like to start singing it and I point to each letter. (singing). Maybe the student will fill that in. That's a nice embedded way to work on a fill in the blank. I try to always, as kind of like my mom, speech therapy, BCBA hat, I'm always trying to find these teachable moments. With our little ones, our sessions should be fun and functional, play-based, and this is how we do it. It's an art form.

Over time, you feel more comfortable working on these skills and analyzing that like, hey, we just read this book together. We just did that for five minutes. That's so cool. He went over and he got the book when I said, "Hey, can you get Chicka Chicka Boom Boom?" And he did. Wow. We have to celebrate those successes. One-step directions. You can work on fill in the blanks, a really great way to work on these foundational skills. And Chicka Chicka Boom Boom is the cutest book. The cutest. We have a couple of copies at my house. I think every child I have has their own copy of... It's just that good. It's amazing.

Okay, puzzles. Puzzles are great, okay? Puzzles like this, where there's just a couple pieces. Some of the puzzles that I really love too make sound, so Melissa and Doug have some really great puzzles where you could have the student requests for different animals that they want as part of the puzzle. You're also working on matching because usually it's an inset. It's a picture where you would put the puzzle piece at. So you're working on matching. When you're doing that shared activity together, it's joint attention. There's so many different skills that we're working on all together.

And so puzzles are really, really fun and something nice that students could eventually do for play too. They might enjoy this. This might be part of that independent play. If you think back to our goal section, where we had somebody who was working on increasing their play skills, having a variety of different play items is great for our kids. Because maybe our kids aren't going to love every single toy that I bring. This happens to me all the time. I think to myself, oh, this is great. I had this little Minnie Mouse and she was Halloween and I loved it. My kids loved it when they were little. We have a finished basement with a toy area, and so that's where I take all my... I get all the old toys. They're not old, they're in great shape, but I take all those toys and I rotate them through my therapy bags because the kids love them.

But anyway, I had this little Minnie Mouse and she had this little Halloween outfit on. It was very cute and I brought it for therapy and I played it and I thought, oh, this one kid is going to love this, and we can feed Minnie and it's going to be great. We're going to embed it in the session, it's going to be awesome. And he didn't like it at all. So that's okay. Your kids don't have to like everything that you bring. It's good just to observe. And then sometimes I have something that's very random in my therapy bag and the kids love it. And I'm like, "What? how do you even like that?" So it's just funny how those things work out, right? So really important to kind of rotate those things that we're bringing. But puzzles are really great if you're thinking about getting some materials to get going.

Cars and car track. This is my own car and car track. A lot of these are Fisher Price. I love using this for therapy. Kids seem to love this, how they go down. Whee! You can do verbal imitation. Vroom! All these different things are embedded. You can have your own car. I have a car, you have a car. I do it first. You do it after me. Or vice versa if the kid likes to go up the track. You never know how the kids are going to want to play with it. What's cool about this one too, is you open that little door and there's a fake little gas pump. So if your student as a more advanced learner and they're pretending to put gas in the car, that's super fun. But there's a lot of things you can do with cars and a car track. Super, super fun toy.

Noun flashcards. So I typically, when I have students who are toddlers and preschool-aged students, I don't do a lot of flashcards. Everything I do is really embedded in play, even labeling. But if you do want to work on things that are a little more structured, I wanted to talk about that because every student's going to be at their own process. They're going to be in their own way of how they like to work on things. And eventually as students get into preschool and more of a school-age setting, and they're kind of transitioning, so if you're listening and you have an older student, who's maybe five and they're going to go to kindergarten soon, working on some things that are a little more structured, might be good to get them ready for kindergarten. And so this, I wanted to touch on just a bit.

So these Language Builder cards are really great. Why I like those is they have updated them since that box, but this is the box that I have. So I wanted to show you what I really use in my therapy bag because I'm a treating clinician. So they have lots of different pictures. It's amazing. And what's cool about that car picture is they have lots of different pictures of cars. Because what we really think, and what research says, is that for autistic learners and for learners in general, when we show students multiple examples... So if I'm working on labeling car, I don't want to just show that one picture of car. I want to show a couple pictures of cars. And that Language Builder set has those. Multiple exemplars is what we call them. So a variety of pictures, that's really the gold standard.

And then the cards right underneath it are cards that I used for my own children when they were little. They're first word cards. They're from the dollar store. And so what some people do is they just buy two packs of those so that you can work on them for labeling, if you're going to do labeling. And then you can also work on them for matching, once you have two of each, if you're going to use them. So if you're going to incorporate more structured activities into your sessions to work on communication, these are flashcards that I like. The Language Builder cards are more expensive. The other ones are less expensive. It just depends what you have access to and what you can purchase. But both are really, really nice options.

I had a student who I had the flower and the cup. I had those pictures, and we were going to work on labeling. The student loved these cards, and the student was so excited to see what the next one was. And he said the label and I gave him the item and he kept saying, "Game, game." He was taking all the cards after I gave them to him. And he was putting them all together on his table in his house, kind of like a memory game or like Go Fish or something. It was very, very cute. And it was a really cool way to work on requesting. He was labeling. It was joint attention. We were doing the shared activity together. It was just so cool. The level of engagement was really amazing. So you never know, right? That's one of the things too. We have to remain flexible in our sessions.

If we're working with our own child and you're... have this whole idea about what you're going to work on that day, and it doesn't work, don't get down. Don't be down on yourself because we never know what's going to work for the child that day. Every day is a new day, and we have to just kind of be detectives to see those teachable moments. Verb flashcards. These are my cards, the Action Builder cards. As a disclaimer, I created these as the whole reason I started ABA Speech, because I was working with kids who were a little bit older and we were working on labeling and there weren't any cards out there that had multiple pictures of one word. So the Action Builder cards are a hundred flashcards. There are 13 really functional actions represented, and there's multiple examples. What's really cool, when you flip them over, on the back too, there's-