

ACTIVITY

SILENT SNACK

An Inclusion Activity for Empathy & Belonging

A simple activity that fosters perspective, patience, and belonging.

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ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



Purpose:

Inclusion begins with empathy. Silent Snack invites school leaders to step into the shoes of students who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). By requesting a snack without speaking and using only a core communication board, leaders experience both the challenges and strengths of AAC users. This hands-on activity builds understanding, sparks reflection, and reinforces the belief that every voice matters.



When to Use It:

Silent Snack works best when you want to grow perspective and strengthen your team's commitment to inclusion. Try using it:

- At the start of the year to set a culture of empathy and belonging
- During staff PD days focused on equity, special education, or student support



Key Benefits:

- Builds empathy and understanding for the daily experiences of AAC users
- Strengthens a culture of inclusivity by showing that all voices—spoken or unspoken—deserve to be heard

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET STARTED



Snack or breakfast items: Simple options like fruit, granola bars, crackers, juice, or coffee.

Core communication boards: Print enough for each participant. Here's [a site](#) with downloadable boards.

Silent Snack directions: Step-by-step guide for leaders (included in resource)

Reflection tools: Printable worksheet or discussion cards

Conversation prompts: Dice or cards with questions participants answer using the core board

Space to gather: Staff lounge, cafeteria, or meeting room with tables

PRO TIP:

Make Silent Snack a tradition. Running this activity annually keeps empathy alive, builds perspective, and reminds teams that every student deserves a voice at the table.



ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

Here are the steps to try out this activity with your team.

Step 1: Set the Stage

Explain that participants will experience snack time without speaking. All voices are "left at the door."

Step 2: Choose Your Snack

Participants will look over the snacks or meal provided, decide what they'd like and write it down.

Step 3: Communicate with the Core Board

Without using words, participants use only the AAC core board to communicate their choice to a partner (no signing, no asking yes/no questions!)

Note: Ask participants to avoid spelling unless absolutely necessary. Many AAC users may not have typical literacy skills, so limiting spelling makes the activity more authentic.

Step 4: Snack & Converse

Once everyone has their snack, have them roll a dice and use the provided prompts to answer at least two questions using only the core board.

Step 5: Reflect Together

Debrief as a group using the reflection questions to process challenges, successes, and takeaways.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



Ask these questions aloud for group discussion after the activity, or use the printable worksheet.

- Did you get what you wanted for your snack?
- What was your level of frustration during the activity?
- Did you wish there were other words available to explain your thoughts?
- How was your communication partner—did they give you enough time, or make assumptions?
- What is your biggest takeaway from this experience?



QUICK TIPS:

- Normalize wait time—it's essential for real communication, especially with AAC.
- Pair the activity with a guest speaker or short video from an AAC user or family.
- Reflect on how frustrations felt during the activity mirror real student challenges—and how small adjustments can create big wins.

SNACK TALK PROMPTS

Use the dice to spark snack-time conversations—answer each prompt using only the communication board.

1

Food Fun

- What is your favorite fruit?
- Do you prefer salty or sweet snacks?
- What is your go-to lunch?

2

School Life

- What is your favorite subject in school?
- Do you like morning or afternoon better?
- Would you rather have recess inside or outside?

3

Daily Life

- What do you usually do after school or work?
- How do you like to spend your weekends?
- Describe one chore or task you do every day.

4

Fun & Favorites

- What makes you laugh?
- What is your favorite game?
- Do you like music or sports better?

5

School Memories

- Tell me about a teacher you really liked.
- Describe something fun you remember from school.
- Share one rule you think is important at school.

6

Dreaming Big

- Where would you like to travel?
- What job would you like to try for a day?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

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Activity Reflection



Name _____

→ Did you get what you wanted for your snack?

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→ How was your communication partner—did they give you enough time, or make assumptions?

→ What is your biggest takeaway from this experience?

Activity Reflection



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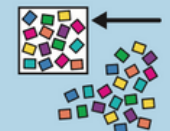
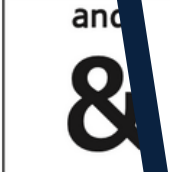
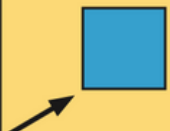
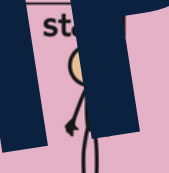
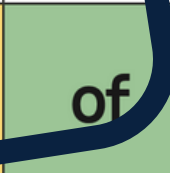
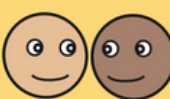
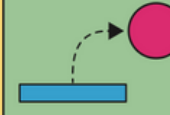
→ Did you get what you wanted for your snack?

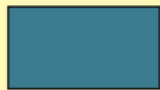
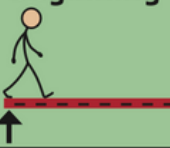
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→ What is your biggest takeaway from this experience?

yes 	no 	wait 	stop 	ready 	now 	turn 	problem 	different 	finished 
one 	something 	to 	not 	any 	good 	more 	all 	same 	some 
I 	me 	am 	the 	look/see 	... 	think 	A 	and 	for 
it 	my/mine 	is 	are 	eat 	stand 	use 	this 	of 	in 
he/him 	she/her 	have 	do does 	go 	help 	like 	at 	on 	with 
they/them 	we/us 	was were 	need 	find 	play 	say 	that 	off 	out 
you 	your 	will 	be 	take 	sit 	want 	work 	here 	there 

moon 	rectangle 	oval 	pentagon 	octagon 	round 	flat 	notebook 	backpack 	computer 
circle 	square 	triangle 	star 	heart 	diamond 	pencil 	paper 	scissors 	th 
q	w	e	r	t	y	u	i	o	p
a	s	d	f	g	h	j	k	l	ch
z	x	c	v	b	n	m	cut 	glue 	sh
letter 	word 	sentence 	beginning 	ending 	read 	spell 	write 	draw 	color 

COLLABORATION

BUILT BY EDUCATORS, FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

This resource was created in collaboration with dedicated educators who believe in building inclusive, empathetic schools where every student's voice matters.

Special thanks to Jade White and Sara King from Region 4 Education Service Center in Texas, whose passion and leadership shaped this activity. Their work with school leaders and students brought authenticity and heart to every detail of Silent Snack.

Together, we're reminded that inclusion is not a single event but a daily practice—and when leaders step into their students' shoes, entire school communities grow stronger.



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Sara King

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WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

Thanks for downloading this resource—at [Alpaca](#), we're on a mission to **make school the happiest place to work**.



Tried an activity?

Send a photo or a staff testimonial to [our team](#), and we'll send you a coffee on us!



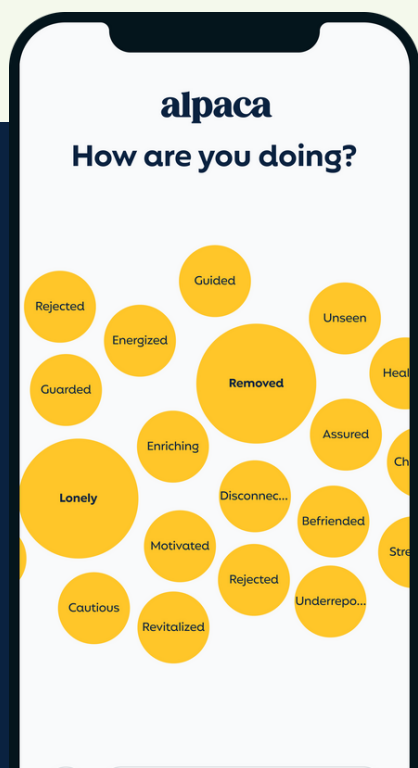
Got an idea brewing?

We love co-creating with school leaders—[drop us a line](#) with any resource ideas you'd love to see next.



Explore more!

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