

# Gratitude Ping Pong (Levels A-B)

GRATITUDE

To promote connection, communication, and emerging emotional expression by combining simple ball play with highly supported prompts about things students like, enjoy, or feel grateful for.



## Learning Intentions

### Expressing Feelings and Preferences:

Students will explore sharing simple likes, feelings, or choices using gestures, pictures, sounds, or AAC.

### Social Connection:

Students will participate alongside a partner by noticing them, taking turns, and responding with support from adults.

### Turn-Taking and Joint Attention:

Students will practise passing or rolling a ball in a predictable back-and-forth routine.



## Success Criteria

Students take turns rolling, passing, or gently tossing a ball with a partner.

Students respond to simple prompts using any form of communication (pointing, choosing pictures, vocalising, using AAC, looking at the object/prompt).

Students show engagement through smiling, looking toward their partner, or attempting to share an idea.



# Gratitude Ping Pong (Levels A-B)

**Duration:** 5–15 minutes

## **Objective**

To promote connection, communication, and emerging emotional expression by combining simple ball play with highly supported prompts about things students like, enjoy, or feel grateful for.

## **What You Need**

Soft ball (foam ball, beach ball, balloon, or textured sensory ball)

Simple prompt picture cards (happy, toy, food, friend, music, drink, family, play)(found in PDF resource)

Optional: AAC devices with core vocabulary (“like,” “happy,” “friend,” “play,” “more,” “yes,” “no”)

Optional: floor markers or mats for designated partner spots

## **Setup**

1. Print and cut out the picture prompt cards (ensure there is a set for each pair playing)
2. Students sit or stand in pairs, or sit across from a staff member if needed.
3. Place 3 - 4 visual picture cards in front of each pair (e.g., happy, toy, food).
4. Demonstrate the routine:
  - Teacher rolls ball to student
  - Student chooses a picture or gives a simple response
  - Student rolls ball back
5. Ensure AAC devices are displayed and ready for use.

## **Gameplay**

### **1. Introduce the Routine**

Teacher says:

“When you get the ball, you choose a picture that shows something you like or something that makes you happy.”

Students may respond by:

- pointing to a picture or picking the picture card up
- vocalising their choice
- showing an object that related to the picture card
- pressing AAC symbol
- smiling or giving eye gaze toward a prompt



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## 2. Roll or Pass the Ball

The teacher supports students in rolling, passing, or gently tossing the ball to their partner.

The partner responds by selecting or showing a picture card of their choice.

The game continues until each student has rolled the ball at least 3 times and selected at least 3 picture cards that makes them happy or that they like to do.

## 3. Simple Prompt Examples (A-B Level)

Use **very concrete** and **visually supported** prompts:

- "Show me something you like."
- "What makes you happy?"
- "Choose your favourite."
- "Point to a friend."
- "Show me something you want."
- "Choose a happy picture."
- "Point to something you like playing with."

Students do not need to speak, any movement toward a prompt counts as success.

## 4. Supported Turn-Taking

Partners take turns rolling the ball back and forth.

Teacher narrates:

"Your turn."

"My turn."

"You chose toy. You like toys!"

## 5. Keep It Predictable

Repeat the cycle 2 - 3 times depending on student regulation.

Provide immediate praise for any attempt at communication.

### Debrief / Reflection

Use visuals to support answers:

- "Show me what made you happy today."
- "Point to your favourite picture."
- "Did you like rolling the ball?" (use yes/no visuals)
- "Who did you play with?"

Celebrate all attempts, a look, sound, movement, or AAC press all count.



# Gratitude Ping Pong (Levels A-B)

## Sensory-Seeking Learners Variation

### 1. Use Sensory Balls

Offer different textures: squishy, bumpy, light-up, soft foam.

### 2. Add Movement Before Each Turn

Students can:

- clap
- tap knees
- bounce in place
- do a gentle arm stretch
- stomp once

This prepares them for attention and regulation.

### 3. Add Predictable Rhythms

Count “1–2–3 roll!”

Or use a drum tap before each turn.

### 4. Object Prompts Instead of Pictures

Use real objects for clearer connection:

- small toy
- cup or bottle
- soft animal
- music shaker

Students choose an object and match it to a feeling or preference.

## AAC-Specific Supports

### 1. Prepare AAC Pages

Include:

- “like”
- “happy”
- “friend”
- “toy”
- “more”
- “play”
- “yes/no”



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## 2. Aided Language Input

Teacher models each step by tapping AAC symbols:

“Play.”

“More.”

“Happy.”

“I like.”

## 3. Prompt Choices

Instead of open questions, use binary choices:

“Toy or food?”

“Happy or friend?”

“Yes or no?”

## 4. Use AAC for Turn-Taking

Model:

“My turn.”

“Your turn.”

“Roll.”

## 5. AAC Reflection

Students respond through symbols such as:

“I like \_\_\_\_.”

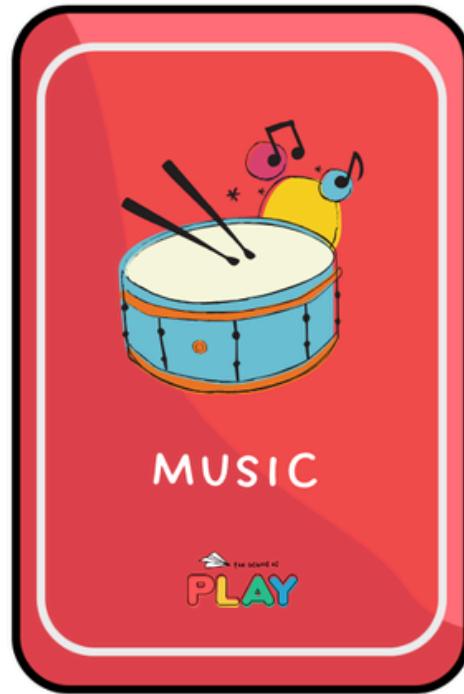
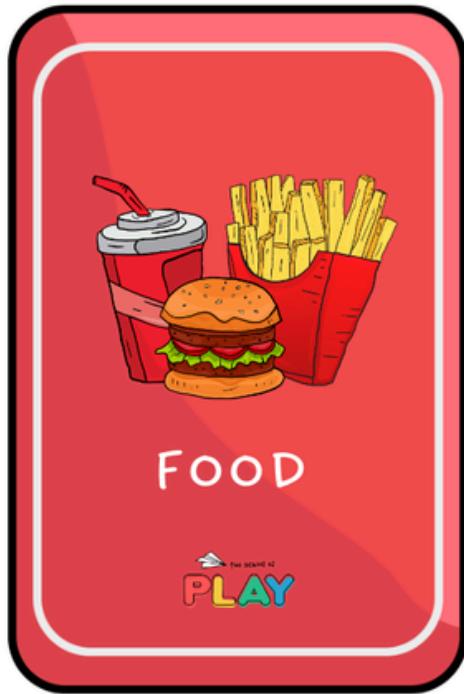
“More play.”

“Happy.”

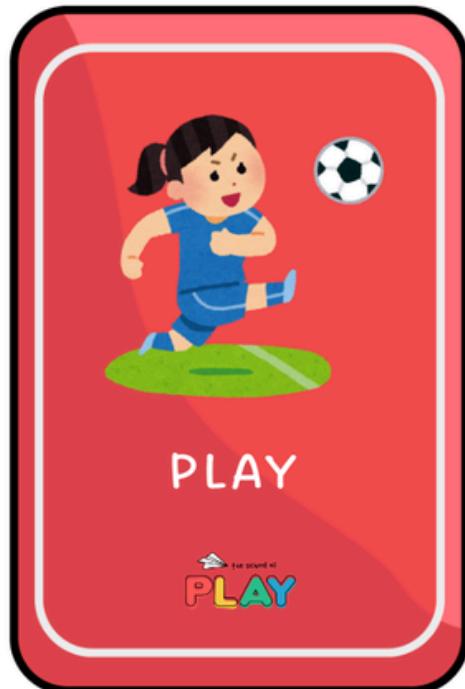


# PICTURE CARDS

PRINT TWICE AND CUT OUT TWO COPIES OF EACH PICTURE CARD. PLACE A SMALL SET OF CARDS BETWEEN TWO STUDENTS OR A STUDENT AND ADULT, THEN ROLL OR PASS A BALL BACK AND FORTH. EACH TIME A STUDENT RECEIVES THE BALL, THEY CHOOSE OR POINT TO A CARD THAT SHOWS SOMETHING THEY LIKE OR FEEL HAPPY ABOUT.



# PICTURE CARDS



# PICTURE CARDS

