

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.



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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.



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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



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