



Symboloud Grid Family

An evidence-informed pathway from Easy Access 4 to Core Communication 90

8 coordinated options	24 to 984 distinct labels	100% label retention at each step	3 to 70 words visible on Home
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What the grid family is

Symboloud now provides eight coordinated UK English vocabulary options, from a 2 x 2 Easy Access display to a 10 x 9 Core Communication display. They are related versions of one language system, not eight unrelated boards: every larger set retains every distinct label from the set before it and adds language, topic depth or more direct routes. The smaller sets are access-focused options rather than lesser systems or compulsory stages; any set may be selected as a starting point or retained as a long-term vocabulary.

Easy Access 4 protects immediate agency through I, want and not, with routes to people, actions, support and personal language. Successive sets add partners, help, feelings, body vocabulary, responses, questions, verbs, description, everyday topics, social language and grammar. Core Communication 90 provides 984 distinct labels, with 70 words and all 19 topic routes visible from Home; spelling is available through the device keyboard [3,5,8,9,11,14,17].

How vocabulary grows without starting again

Distinct labels rise from 24 to 48, 109, 207, 305, 396, 683 and 984. The number of words visible on Home rises from 3 to 70, while direct routes increase from one in the Easy Access range to 6, 10 and 19 in the three Core Communication sets. Exact coordinates cannot remain identical when the field changes from 2 to 10 columns, but the semantic-syntactic direction remains recognisable and each chosen grid keeps its own stable map [8,10,11,15,20].

Reduced grids contain genuinely smaller vocabularies rather than hiding the full 90-cell system behind many continuation pages. This lowers display density and navigation demand together. Two transparent exceptions keep coherent sequences intact: 0 to 20 on the Easy Access 18 Numbers page and the 35-item Time page in Core Communication 30 [14].

Shared design principles

Several field sizes. Target size, number of simultaneous choices and total language availability interact; no one field size is assumed to suit everyone [2].

Core plus fringe. Reusable language is combined with personal, topic, support and repair vocabulary, supporting functions beyond requesting [1,3,5,9,11,14,17].

Stable, meaningful organisation. Predictable routes, learned locations, concise visible labels, consistent symbols, fuller spoken messages where appropriate, spacing and semantic-syntactic grouping are treated as primary visual supports [8,10,15,20].

Personalisation and spelling. Individual names, relationships, culture, health, routines and interests remain essential. The V4 grids use the device keyboard for spelling instead of duplicating letters inside the vocabulary set [1,14,17].

Colour is a secondary organisational cue

The same UK Modified Fitzgerald Key is used across the family. It may help users and communication partners recognise broad word roles, but evidence for grammatical background colour is mixed. Printed labels, symbols, spatial grouping, spacing and learned location remain primary. When the same spelling has different meanings or word roles, as with order and right, symbol, colour and position distinguish the cells. Colour can be removed where it creates visual or access difficulty [6,12,18,20].

Yellow people/pronouns	Green actions/verbs	Orange naming words	Blue describing words
Purple question words	Grey little words/navigation	Pink social/whole phrases	Red important function words



The eight-grid pathway at a glance

Grid	Home	Screens	Distinct labels	What the added capacity provides
Easy Access 4	3 + 1 route	8	24	Agency, refusal, and routes to People, Actions, Support and Personal.
Easy Access 6	5 + 1 route	10	48	Adds you, help, Feelings and Body & health while retaining large targets.
Easy Access 12	11 + 1 route	16	109	Adds responses, movement, everyday topics and Quick phrases.
Easy Access 18	17 + 1 route	22	207	Adds questions, needs and all major topic categories.
Easy Access 24	23 + 1 route	22	305	Adds generative verbs, location words and deeper topic vocabulary.
Core Communication 30	24 + 6 routes	22	396	Moves key routes onto Home and deepens topic vocabulary.
Core Communication 50	40 + 10 routes	22	683	Adds pronoun contrasts, grammar, questions and deeper topics.
Core Communication 90	70 + 19 routes	20	984	Provides the fullest core, topic, support, personal and grammar offer.

What the evidence supports - and what it does not

The evidence supports the principles used across the family: offering several field sizes; combining core and fringe vocabulary; supporting multiple communication functions; using stable organisation, meaningful grouping and predictable navigation; and retaining personal language and access to spelling through the device keyboard [1-3,5,8,14,15,17,20]. It does not establish one universal grid size, prove the exact Symboloud cell map, or prescribe the precise point at which each word or route should appear.

Some display studies use small, indirect or diagnosis-specific samples and laboratory search or message-reconstruction tasks. Colour findings are mixed, and research involving visual-perceptual and motor access reinforces the need for individual decisions [6,12,18,20]. The exact vocabulary, ordering, topic allocation and transition points are therefore evidence-informed Symboloud product decisions, not claims of a clinically proven universal layout.

Clinical interpretation and intended use

Selection should be based on the communicator's access method, vision, motor control, language, literacy, culture and priorities. Trialling should consider repeated-use performance: finding high-frequency words, creating varied self-directed messages, reaching refusal, consent, pain, urgent support and repair language, recovering from an incorrect route, and personalising vocabulary without casually moving learned positions. The range is a set of options, not a developmental ladder or a sequence every person must complete [1,14].

Selected sources

Full Harvard references, URLs, study details and limitations are provided in the current long-form Evidence and Design Rationale.

- [1] American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (n.d.) Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). ASHA Practice Portal.
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