### **The Achilles Guide to the Galaxy aka Communication Passport**

I**ntroduction**

* **Brief overview of the guidebook's purpose**
* **Introduction to Achilles: Age, Personality, and Preferences**
  + **Age and developmental stage**
  + **Favorite activities, toys, and interests**
  + **Overview of communication abilities and preferences**

**Chapter 1: Getting to Know Achilles**

* **Detailed profile: Interests, strengths, and areas for growth**
* **Daily life and routine: What a typical day looks like for Achilles**

**Chapter 2: Achilles' Communication Chart**

* **Understanding Achilles' cues: Verbal sounds, gestures, and expressions**
* **How to interpret Achilles' unique ways of communicating**
* **Response guide: Best ways to respond to Achilles' communication attempts**

**Chapter 3: Achilles' Disciplined Routine Chart**

* **Structured daily schedule: Timetable of Achilles' routine from morning to night**
* **Importance of routine in supporting behavior and reducing anxiety**
* **Flexibility within the routine: When and how to make changes**

**Chapter 4: Allowed / Not Allowed Behaviors**

* **Clear guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable behaviors**
* **Strategies for encouraging positive behavior**
* **Consistent approaches to managing challenging behaviors**

**Chapter 5: Role Modeling Chart and Expectations**

* **Role model behaviors: How caregivers and siblings can lead by example**
* **Setting realistic expectations for Achilles and family members**
* **Social stories and scenarios: Teaching through example**

**Chapter 6: Current Verbal Language**

* **Inventory of words and phrases Achilles currently uses**
* **Phrase Level Scripts**
* **Working with speech therapists: Goals and strategies**

**Chapter 7: Communication Tools and Aids**

* **Visual aids, picture boards, and communication devices**
* **Sign language and alternative communication methods**
* **How to use technology effectively in communication**

**Chapter 8: Calm Down Strategies**

* **Steps that work**
* **Encouraging caretaker to note what worked**

**Chapter 9: Collaborating with Professionals**

* **Feel free to throw educational resources here that may be helpful**
* **We will add the any specialists insights here**

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### **Chapter 2 : Achilles Communication Chart**

Achilles communicates verbally and non verbally and will respond to a prompt.

Primarily.. Ready, Set, GO

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| **I Say or Do This** | **When I Need/Feel** | **In This Situation** | **Strategies for Enhanced Communication** |
| Lay down on my back | To have my diaper changed after doing a poo | At home or in a comfortable setting | Narrate and act out the response  e.g., “Let’s Change your Diaper.” |
| Say "No" or shake my head | To express refusal or dislike | When I don't want to do something | Acknowledge his refusal respectfully and redirect as needed.  E.g “How about this” (point to train) |
| Say "Up" or reach upwards | To be picked up, see something, or climb | In general settings | Respond by helping him explore or see things, e.g., “Let’s go up and see!” |
| Say "Go" or point | To express interest or desire for something | In general settings | Encourage exploration and verbalization, e.g., “Do you want to go there?” |
| Say "Eat" or go to the kitchen/table | To indicate hunger or thirst | At home when it’s mealtime or snack time | Ask about specific food choices to encourage more detailed communication.  “Let’s sit at the table” |
| Rub dirt or sand on my hair or face | When feeling distressed or uncomfortable | In general situations, often outdoors | Provide reassurance and a change in activity or environment.  “How about we climb over here” |
| Sit away from circle time | Due to shyness, but still interested | During group activities like circle time | Encourage engagement with gentle prompts and gradually involve him more. |
| Take a friend's car | Because it's my favorite and I want to play | In play settings, especially with peers | Teach about asking for permission and sharing, modeling polite requests.  “That’s his car” |
| Waving hands excitedly | To say hello or attract attention | In social situations or when meeting someone new | Smile and wave back to acknowledge his greeting. Encourage verbal greetings as well. |

### **Tips for Effective Communication and Interaction**

* Use Simple Phrases: Incorporate 3-word phrases like “Let’s GO UP” to simplify and clarify communication.
* Narrative Approach: Use a narrative style to describe Achilles’ actions or needs, which can be more engaging and easier for him to understand.
* Encourage Imitation: Model actions or words you want Achilles to learn, encouraging him to imitate and practice.
* Visual Aids: Utilize visual aids, like pictures or gestures, to support verbal communication and understanding.
* Consistent Responses: Ensure consistency in how you respond to his cues to reinforce his understanding of effective communication methods.

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### **Chapter 3: Essential Routine Chart**

Since it is hard to implement all routines in a rigid manner, we have chosen these activities to be strict with. Highlighted are the ones that are showing progress with.

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| **Activity** | **Steps and Expectations** | **Notes for Adult Assistance** |
| Diaper and Clothing Routine | 1. Adult says "One step, two step" – Achilles steps into diaper/shorts.  2. Adult says "Pull up" – Achilles pulls up diaper/shorts.  3. Assistance as needed with shirt. | Provide verbal cues for each step. Offer physical assistance only as needed to encourage independence. Provide a gesture of pulling up. |
| Sitting While Eating | Achilles sits at the table for the duration of the meal.  Buckled in to sit and in a seat that allows feet to touch ground. | Encourage a consistent sitting routine. Use verbal reminders if Achilles tries to leave the table.  Gesture ASL sit |
| Pouring Own Drink | Achilles attempts to pour his own drink with supervision. | Use child-friendly cups and pitchers to minimize spills. Guide his hand if necessary, but encourage self-effort. |
| Washing Hands After Eating | 1. Prompt Achilles to go to the sink after meals.  2. Guide through the steps of hand washing – wet hands, apply soap, scrub, rinse, and dry. | Use a step-by-step guide or visual aid near the sink to remind him of the process.  Stand behind him and use hands over his hands |
| Brush Teeth Every Night | 1. Guide Achilles through the process of tooth brushing.  2. Use a timer or a song to ensure thorough brushing for two minutes. | Demonstrate the correct technique and supervise the process. Gradually encourage more self-brushing. |
| Encourage Using Fork and Knife | Gradually introduce the use of fork and knife during meals, starting with easier-to-cut foods. | Cut into small bite sized pieces that can be eaten without chewing on too long.  Provide child-friendly utensils. Demonstrate how to use them and assist as needed while encouraging independence. Hold left hand down and fork in right hand. Stand behind and enforce. Let him bring the plate to the table. If doing a “fork lesson” then only bite sized food on plate  Red text can be input from OT  Purple text can be input from Speech  Blue from parents  Q: He seems to have a lack of dexterity in his chewing, similar to his hand fine motor skill, anything we can do to further extend this and would this apply to ability to articulate  Green from Teacher |
| Potty training | Waiting to get back on track a bit before revisiting. In the meantime he is very good about getting your hand and laying down on back when finished so you can change him. |  |

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### **Tips for Implementation**

* Consistency: Consistency in these routines is key. Try to follow the same steps each time to reinforce the routine.
* Positive Reinforcement: Praise Achilles for following through with each step, even if he needs some assistance.
* Gradual Reduction of Help: Gradually reduce the level of help provided as Achilles becomes more capable of performing these tasks independently.
* Visual Aids: Consider using visual aids or picture cards to illustrate each step of these routines.
* Patience: Be patient and understanding, recognizing that developing these skills may take time.

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**Chapter 4: Role Modeling Chart and Expectations**

This is a guide for whomever is presently responsible for Achilles care and education.

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| **Role Modeling Behavior** | **Commitments** | **Alternatives/Strategies** |
| Managing Anger and Frustration | - Not showing anger or frustration in a negative way | - Using calm-down techniques like deep breathing or taking a moment alone  Expressing feelings in a controlled manner ("I feel frustrated because...") |
| Physical Reactions | - Not hitting or pinching back, even playfully | - Using positive discipline techniques  - Teaching problem-solving and conflict resolution |
| Language Use | - Not swearing | - Using appropriate language  -Expressing feelings without inappropriate words |
| Interacting with Other Caretakers | - Not arguing with others in front of Achilles | - Discussing disagreements privately  - Demonstrating healthy communication and conflict resolution |
| Phone Usage | - Limited use of phone in front of kids | - Designating specific times or areas for phone use  - Engaging with children directly |
| Being Present | - Not being distracted and being present, especially if he is being present with you | - Setting aside dedicated time without work interruptions  - Planning work tasks around Achilles down time  - Using tools like to-do lists and calendars to manage work tasks efficiently |

Strategies for Implementation:

* Structured Work Hours: Stick to your structured schedule as much as possible to ensure work doesn't spill into care time.
* Quality Care Time: Set aside dedicated periods each day where you are fully present with Achilles. During these times, avoid checking emails or being distracted
* Time Management Tools: Use tools like calendars, to-do lists, or apps to help manage and prioritize work tasks efficiently. This can help free up more mental space to be present
* Mindfulness Practices: Engage in mindfulness practices that help you stay grounded and present, like brief meditative exercises or focusing techniques.

### **Chapter 5: Allowed / Not Allowed Behaviors**

This is a guide to help assess what is acceptable behavior, where we'll draw the lines, and what strategies we will take

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Allowed Behavior** | **Not Allowed / Boundaries** | **Notes/Strategies** |
| Playing with Rocks | - Picking up and examining rocks. Lightly dropping  - Placing rocks in designated areas | - Throwing rocks  - Removing rocks from play area | *Encourage sensory play but establish rules about throwing. Use redirection and explain safety concerns.*  *Still having issues with this one and it's more common that rocks are tossed when he dysregulated* |
| Climbing | - Climbing in safe, designated areas  - Climbing on certain furniture with supervision | - Climbing on counters - Climbing in non-designated areas | *Set up a safe climbing space. Redirect to appropriate areas if climbing occurs elsewhere.*  *Everything seems to be open game for Achilles.* |
| iPad/Screen Time | - Limited use during specific times  - Educational content | - No iPad between 8 PM and 8 AM | *Establish a digital curfew. Explain its a special circumstance when used outside these hours (e.g., when sick).* |
| Beach Outings | - Running within a defined area <br> - Exploring under supervision | - Running beyond set distance <br> - Ignoring calls to stop or come back | *Set physical boundaries for play. Use consistent commands for stopping or returning.* |
| Meal Times | - Eating politely  - Trying new foods | - Rubbing food in hair/on ground  - Playing with food excessively | *Encourage proper eating habits. Gently correct food play and offer praise for good behavior at meals.*  *Doing great here when supervised* |
| Clothing | - Wearing clothes during the day  - Dressing appropriately for activities/weather | - Taking clothes off and running around | *Explain the importance of wearing clothes. Redirect or distract if they start undressing inappropriately.* |
| Evening Routine | - Family activities like playing, reading, talking <br> - Dinner and bath time routines | Engaging in stimulating screen activities | *Create a calming evening routine. Emphasize non-screen activities for relaxation and bonding.*  *Get outside for sunset* |
| Midday Screen Time | - Limited TV/iPad use during high sun hours  Interactive content | - Prolonged screen sessions  - Passive screen time without engagement | *Allow screen time when outdoor play is limited. Focus on educational and engaging content.* |

Additional Strategies:

* Consistency and Routine: Implementing and sticking to a routine can help children understand and adapt to the boundaries.
* Positive Reinforcement: Reinforce good behavior with praise or small rewards.
* Clear Communication: Clearly explain the rules and the reasons behind them.
* Model Desired Behavior: Children learn by example, so model the behaviors you want to encourage.
* Gentle Correction: When boundaries are crossed, gently correct the behavior and remind them of the rules.
* Flexibility: Be prepared to adjust rules as your children grow and their needs change.

### **Chapter 6: Current Verbal Language**

Achilles has a lot of intermittent words and phrases being used. Highlighted are the ones we are hearing the most

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Word/Phrase** | **Context/Usage** | **Expansion Ideas** | **Notes for Caretaker** |
| **"Apple"** | **When asking for an apple or seeing an apple** | **Expand to “LET’S EAT apple"****“red apple," or "big apple"** | **Use visual aids like pictures of apples; offer choices like "apple or banana?" to encourage decision-making language.** |
| **Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes** | **During the song or identifying body parts** | **Encourage full pronunciation, add more body parts, sing slowly to articulate** | **Praise efforts, even if syllables are missing. Use hand-over-hand to point to body parts as you sing together.** |
| **"So many bananas"** | **When seeing a bunch of bananas or during snack time** | **Add adjectives or quantities, e.g., "five yellow bananas"** | **Use actual bananas for counting and identifying; encourage him to help count out loud.** |
| **Count to Ten** | **When counting objects or during learning activities** | **Encourage counting objects, "Let's count [items] together!"** | **Count objects in daily life to generalize the skill. Prompt him after "one" to continue the sequence.** |

Achilles is also working on PHRASE LEVEL SCRIPTS

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Script Phrases** | **Usage Context** | **Examples** | **Notes for Caretaker** |
| **Let’s…** | **Initiating activities or joint actions** | **Let’s play with blocks. Let’s draw.** | **Use to encourage participation in an activity.** |
| **It’s …** | **Describing objects or situations** | **It’s a sunny day. It’s your favorite toy.** | **Helps in labeling and identifying objects or situations.** |
| **That’s…** | **Affirmation or identification** | **That’s right. That’s a big truck.** | **Reinforces recognition and understanding.** |
| **We / We’re …** | **Inclusive actions or experiences** | **We’re going to the park. We’re eating lunch.** | **Encourages a sense of togetherness and joint activity.** |
| **I’m… / I…** | **Expressing personal actions or preferences** | **I’m drawing. I love apples.** | **Models expressing personal thoughts and actions.** |
| **How about …** | **Suggesting or offering alternatives** | **How about we read this book? How about the red one?** | **Introduces the concept of options and choices.** |
| **That’s… (so good)** | **Positive reinforcement** | **That’s so good! That’s really nice.** | **Encourages positive behavior and gives praise.** |
| **(Where’s … ?)** | **Locating objects (use cautiously)** | **Where’s your teddy? (while pointing to it)** | **Use sparingly. Turn into a statement if needed, e.g., "Here's your teddy!"** |

### Additional Notes for Caretakers:

### Narrating/Commenting: Continuously narrate or comment on what you or Achilles are doing, even if it seems like you're talking to yourself. This constant verbal input provides language exposure.

### Avoid Direct Questions: At this stage, try to avoid direct questions that require a response. Instead, turn questions into comments to reduce pressure on Achilles.

### Emphasize and Repeat: Emphasize key words and repeat phrases where appropriate to reinforce learning.

### Match Actions With Words: Whenever possible, align your actions with the words you're using. This visual association helps in understanding the language.

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### **Chapter 7: Communication Tools and Aids**

### **Chapter 8: Calm Down Strategies**

If Achilles feels anxious or unwell and needs to calm down these are the steps that can be taken. Assuming this will vary based on context.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Calm Down Steps for Achilles** | **Action Items for Caretaker** | **Notes for Caretaker Input** |
| 1. Remove Triggers | - Separate from little brother | - Note any specific triggers that may not be listed. |
|  | - Remove any off-limits items | - Observe and update with new triggers as noticed. |
| 2. Add Sensory Distraction | - Give a tight hug | - Document which sensory distractions work best. |
|  | - Gentle chin against collarbone/neck | - Vary sensory activities to find the most calming. |
|  | - Engage in spinning movements | - Ensure safety during movement-based distractions. |
|  | - Play with water, sand, or pasta | - Include additional sensory play options as discovered. |
|  | - Offer iPad if necessary and appropriate | - Monitor and limit iPad time as suited to the situation. |
| 3. Change Environment | - Move to a quiet space | - List preferred quiet spaces that Achilles responds to. |
|  | - Go outside | - Note weather conditions or outdoor environments that help. |
|  | - Dim the lights or find less bright areas | - Adjust lighting as needed for comfort. |
|  | - Ensure the space feels open, not confined | - Avoid spaces that may cause discomfort or anxiety. |

Instructions for Use:

* Start with Step 1 and remove any known triggers that may be causing distress.
* Move to Step 2 and introduce sensory distractions that Achilles typically finds soothing.
* If distress continues or in parallel with Step 2, change the environment according to Step 3 to help facilitate calmness.
* Caretakers can add notes and observations in the third column to tailor the calm down process specifically for Achilles and to keep a record of successful strategies for future reference.