



My child has AAC, now what?

Encourage your child to express their wants, needs, preferences and opinions through both verbal speech production and on their AAC system/device by modeling these behaviors and interacting with them.

It is important to note that although it is their voice, parents need to model speech, grammar, vocabulary, etc. similarly on their low- or high-tech system just as you would with an infant/child who is learning.

Allow for exploration and play. Their responses may not always be on topic and can become repetitive, similar to a child asking “why,” over and over again. Simply explain, provide further clarification, or redirect the topic and/or behaviors appropriately.

Remember that high-tech voice output communication aids are the student’s voice, not a toy or gaming system. Devices should be used primarily as their voice.

Be patient. It takes time to learn AAC. People need encouragement and consistency to learn the value of AAC in their everyday communication.

Do not dismiss or ignore gestures, vocalizations and/or communicative attempts. All communication is important. Children can still be redirected after initial communication is validated.

Remember, it is a team effort. You are not alone.

Getting Started

Customizing Vocabulary and Settings

AAC may be used to for a variety of reasons. An individual may be primarily non-verbal, working on development of improved receptive (understanding) or expressive language (use) skills, or to improve interaction with peers and adults, amongst many other reasons.

AAC may be used to participate in the classroom, the community or at home. It provides a supplement to current means of communication (i.e., sign language, gestures, vocalizations, etc.) or replaces typical means of communication. AAC aids one’s ability to clearly express their wants, needs, preferences, thoughts and opinions, while increasing independence.

When developing vocabulary or programming settings, it is recommended to consult your team; the team may include: the speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, behavioral therapist, and will vary by the family and child.

Vocabulary will vary by the setting and/or environment, such as home, school, community, etc. It will also change based on each child’s experiences, beliefs and/or preferences, etc.

Settings of the device can include: means of access (i.e., switch, eye gaze, direct access using a body part, use of an adapted pointer, or stylus, etc.) or access options, such as duration for selection, (i.e., blinking, maintaining direct eye gaze, scanning, etc.)



Resources

<https://aaclanguelab.com/parent/stages>

<https://www.aacandautism.com/lamp/resources-and-support>

<https://www.childrenscolorado.org/doctors-and-departments/departments/audiology-speech-learning/camp/questions/>

<http://www.everyonecommunicates.org/resources/moresources.html>

<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/aacpage/>

Contacts

SWAAAC (State-Wide, Assistive Technology, Augmentative, Alternative, Communication)

Contact Us

Mesa County School District
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You may also contact your local school-based SLP or local outpatient/clinical agencies.

