

Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)

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Purpose of Communication

- To indirectly control the environment
 - To obtain or reject something
- To regulate social interactions
 - To express an emotion or interact with someone
- To receive and convey information and ideas

What is Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)

- Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) includes all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas.
(ASHA.org, 2017)

AAC Goal: Language Acquisition

- “To enable individuals to efficiently and effectively engage in a variety of interactions and participate in a variety of activities of their choice.” (Mirenda & Iacono, 2009, p.14)
- “It is important that the goal of augmentative communication (AAC) use be the most effective interactive communication possible. Anything less represents a compromise of the individual’s potential.” (American Speech Language Hearing Association, ASHA.org)

Interesting Fact

- More than 2 million people in the United States have a severe communication disorder that impairs their ability to talk (ASHA website, 2015)
- Only 5% of these people have a speech device.

More Facts

- Does not impede speech development
- Will decrease behaviors related to communication breakdowns
- Bonus!!! May help with speech development

Who should have an AAC evaluation?

- [https://PRC video](https://www.prcvideo.com)

AAC Acquisition Process @ Easterseals Crossroads

- Referral
- Evaluation
- Trial Period
- Purchase if recommended
- Ongoing Therapy and Training

Things to consider when selecting alternative communication

- Age
- Diagnosis
- Physical Development
- Cognitive Development
- Environment
- Family Support
- Access method
- Lifestyle
- Behaviors

One size DOES NOT fit all!!

- Experienced evaluator
- Try different methods of AAC
- Try different devices, apps and programs
- Keep an open mind
- Do your research

Choosing an AAC system is a **TEAM EFFORT**

- Child
- Parents
- Caregivers
- Teachers
- Other family members
- Doctor
- Therapists

Types of AAC

Unaided systems

Signs

Gestures

Aided Systems

Object Symbols

Pictures (PECS,
communication
boards/books)

Voice output devices

Speech Generating Devices

Tablets

Access Method

- How an individual makes selections for communication.
 - Direct Selection
 - Indirect Selection

Skills Assessed During Evaluation

Cause and Effect

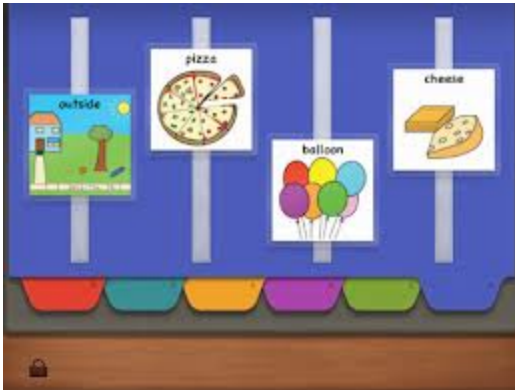
- Switch toys
- Switches
- Computer programs

Symbolic Representation



Types of AAC Systems

Objects vs. Pictures vs. VOCA vs. SGD vs. Tablets



Objects

- Smaller versions of real items
- Good for individuals who do not understand symbolic representation
- Perfect for individuals with a vision impairment
- Limited vocabulary

Pictures

- **PECS**

- Structured learning system to teach language
- Quick to set up
- Cheap
- Easy to use
- No voice
- Someone has to make the pictures/laminate/velcro
- Pictures get lost
- Pictures are used for play

- **Pictures/Picture Boards**

- No structured learning
- Basic requesting
- Easy to set up
- Cheap

Voice Output Communication Aide

VOCA

- Easy to set up
- Recorded message
- Will have a voice
- Cheaper
- Can have core words
- Limited vocabulary
- Not durable

VOCA Devices

- Go Talk
- Quick Talker
- Step by Step Communicator

Speech Generating Device SGD

- Can have a lot of vocabulary=language
- Computer generated voice
- Built in camera
- Core words
- Durable
- Features to make the devices more accessible such as key guards and delays on the touch screen

Speech Generating Devices

- PRC
 - Accent 1400, 1000, 800, PRiO
- Saltillo
 - NOVACHat 5, 8, 10, 12, Chat Fusion, TouchChat Express
- tobii dynavox
 - I series and Indi
- FRS-Solutions
 - ProSlate 5, 8, 10

Tablets

- Can be cheaper
- Easy to access
- Accessories such as cases and key guards can be purchased to increase accessibility
- Some are core word programs
- Distracting if child likes to play with tablets
- Warranties?
- Not as durable as SGD
- Most apps are not as programmable as SGD
- Have to pay for training for apps

Apps

IPAD

- TouchChat
- TouchChat with Word Power
- LAMP WFL
- Sounding Board
- Let Me Talk

Android including Kindles

- Let Me Talk

FUNDING

- Insurance
- Medicaid
- Medicare
- Grants
- Private Pay
- School

4 Keys to AAC Success

(Prentke Romich Parent Guide, prentrom.com)

- Keep it handy
- Keep it fun
- Keep it interesting
- Keep it up

Statistic

- By 18 months babies have heard 4,380 hours of spoken language and we don't expect them to be fluent speakers yet. If AAC learners only see symbols modeled for communication twice weekly for 20-30 minutes, it will take 84 years for them to have the same exposure to aided language as an 18 month old has to spoken language. - Statistic from Jan Korsten-QIAT Listserv 2011.

Quote

- “AAC is not a pill that is taken; it is not an app that is downloaded; it is not a device that’s been delivered. It is a practice and a process.”- David Moffatt, President and CEO of the Prentke Romich Co.

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