Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC)

What is 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."

- American Speech Language & Hearing Association (ASHA)

Will AAC hinder speech?

No! AAC may help facilitate many forms of communication.

Are there any prerequisites to using AAC?

No! There are no Cognitive, Visual, Linguistic, or Physical requirements.

Is the main goal of AAC to have individuals request?

No! Autonomous communication is the goal.

Why do we communicate?

Socialize

Greet others
Tell a joke
Start & maintain conversations

Add Information

Tell stories
Generate ideas
Describe
Comment
Use imagination

Protest

Reject what we don't like
Negate facts

Express wants and needs

Ask for objects, activities, help, information, etc.

Express feelings

Express emotions
Share opinions
Set goals

Respect & acknowledge all communication

- We all use AAC & multiple modes everyday ~ Honor all forms of communication
- Recognize how a person communicates may be the quickest and easiest for them
- Motivate others by acknowledging that their communication is understood.
- Minimize the efforts it takes to produce an utterance.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Each individual's AAC system should represent themselves
  - Skin tone, Gender, & Voice
- Multiple languages can be accessed through a toggle switch
- Include meaningful, family-specific words on AAC system


**AUGMENTATIVE & ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)**

**Ideas & strategies to communicate**

**Aided Language Stimulation**
- Use AAC to teach AAC
- Model language in daily routines
- Increase the # of exposures
- Immerse in AAC
  
  (Kent Walsh et al., 2015)

**Modeling without expectations**
- TEACH, DON’T TEST
- Reduce the pressure
- Engage in hands-on learning
- Have a conversation
- Model to **connect**

“**I SEE a DOG!”**

“**CAN YOU STOP?”**

“**WE LIKE to RUN FAST”**

“**LET’S GO IN”**

“By 18 months, babies have heard **4,580 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 them **84 years** to have the same exposure to aided language as an 18 month old has to spoken language” - Jane Korsten, SLP QIAT Listserv 2011

**S’MORRES**

- **Slow down**
- **Model**
- **Respect & Reflect**
- **Expand**
- **Stop**
  
  (Senner & Baud, 2013)

**Be a good communication partner**

Slow down your rate of speech & modeling

Model on the AAC system

Respect all forms of communication

Reflect another option

Expand a person’s single word to a short phrase

Stop and allow more wait time

“Communication helps build relationships so we need to make communication fun and not always homework.”

Chris Klein, Former USSAAC President and AAC User

**Use CORE & Fringe Vocabulary**

**80% CORE Vocabulary**

- 80% of language ~ 300 words
- High Frequency & Flexible
- Many verbs, location words, and pronouns
  
  *I, me, can, go, stop, no, in, out, open*

**20% Fringe Vocabulary**

- 20% of language ~ 1000’s of words
- Motivating & Specific
- Primarily nouns/objects
  
  *Legos, Bubbles, TV characters, Animals*

**Sources**