



SUPPORTING AAC LEARNERS

AAC is short for augmentative and alternative communication and includes any form of communication that is not speaking with your mouth. It includes tools and strategies that replace or support natural speech.

AAC users can learn. We must **presume competence** and set high expectations while providing support. We must focus on progress (not perfection).

Strategies for AAC Success

See Me, See My AAC

Wherever you see the AAC learner, you should also see their AAC system. You can't communicate if you don't have access to communication.

Speak AAC to Teach

The best way to learn a language is to be immersed in it. Learning to speak using AAC is no different. Point to key words/symbols while you talk (this is called modeling).

Core Vocabulary

When modeling, focus on core vocabulary. It is a small set of key words that are useful, flexible, and functional. These words make up to 80% of what we say every day.

Make Opportunities

Create opportunities to use their AAC system throughout the day. It will help them to learn their system but never force communication. Communication is a choice.

4 Tips to Start Speaking (Modeling) AAC

Start small.

1 Pick a couple of words/phrases/symbols to model. Once you become more comfortable you can gradually add more over time.

Don't worry about mistakes.

2 Learning an AAC system takes time. Be kind and patient with yourself. Do not worry about making mistakes - it's part of the process!

Don't expect a response.

3 Just like learning spoken (verbal) language there needs to be lots of input (listening) before you get output (speaking). So keep modeling on the AAC system - every bit helps!

Stick to key words/symbols.

4 Do not feel like you need to point to every word you say. If you say 'Let's go out outside to play' point to key words such as 'let + go + play' or 'go + play'.

