

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

AAC is a range of strategies and tools to help people who struggle with speech. These may be simple letter or picture boards or sophisticated computer-based systems. AAC helps someone to communicate as effectively as possible, in as many situations as possible.



Early implementation of AAC can support a young person to learn, to interact and to engage with people and the world around them.

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Low tech AAC

Low tech AAC does not require power to work. It could be a picture, a symbol, a communication book, a pen and paper, signing or an object.

Light Tech and High Tech AAC

These AAC strategies require power to work. This could be single or multiple messages recorded on a switch or a symbol or text based voice output system on a device such as a computer or tablet.

More information

You can help by:

- Creating opportunities to communicate.
- Ensuring that any communication system is always available.
- Having high expectations for communication – 'Presume competence'.
- Consistently modelling language on the chosen AAC method alongside spoken language.
- Using a range of core (general) and fringe (specific) vocabulary.
- Modelling a range of language functions including commenting, refusing, starting and maintaining communication.
- Talking to a speech and language therapist about an AAC assessment.

Everyone has the right to communicate.

There are no 'pre-requisites' for introducing AAC.

AAC will definitely not stop someone talking and it may help speech develop.

