

AAC TERMS TO KNOW

AAC

- ✓ Augmentative and Alternative Communication
 - **Augmentative:** communication method that enhances or supplements existing speech.
 - **Alternative:** communication method that completely replaces spoken language when speech is absent or severely impaired.

AAC SYSTEMS

- ✓ An integrated group of symbols, aids, strategies, and techniques to enhance communication.
 - **Aided:** include tools and devices, like communication boards, SGDs, apps, or symbols.
 - **Unaided:** include the user's body, like facial expressions and gestures.

AAC METHODS

- ✓ Also known as selection technique, it refers to how a user interacts with their device to communicate.
- ✓ **The two methods include:**
 - Direct access/ direct selection
 - Indirect access/ indirect selection

AID

- ✓ A physical tool, object, or device that is used to help send or receive messages.
- ✓ **Aids can include:**
 - Communication books, charts, or a voice output communication aid (see VOCA).

AIDED LANGUAGE STIMULATION

- ✓ When someone talks and uses an AAC device at the same time, pointing to pictures or words on the device.
- ✓ The goal is to model/demonstrate effective language for the AAC user to observe and listen to.

ALTERNATIVE ACCESS

- ✓ Refers to methods of accessing AAC devices when traditional methods (like direct touch) do not fit with the user's needs.
- ✓ **Forms can include:**
 - **Switch scanning** (*selecting options with a switch*), **eye gaze** (*selecting options with eye movements*), **head tracking** (*selecting options with head movements*), and **voice activation** (*using voice commands*).

CORE VOCABULARY

- ✓ Consists of a small set of frequently used words that are applicable across various contexts and everyday situations.
- ✓ **Can be used for a wide range of purposes, like:**
 - Making simple requests for items, developing social connections, expressing opinions, and sharing information about topics of interest

FRINGE VOCABULARY

- ✓ Consists of more specific or less frequently used words that are relevant to a particular individual's interests, preferences, or contexts
- ✓ Unlike core vocabulary, these are words that promote personal relevance and individual expression, are tied to specific topics or contexts, and change over time.

DIRECT SELECTION

- ✓ A method where the AAC user directly selects symbols, words, or images on the communication device to convey their message via a body part or an accessory.

INDIRECT SELECTION

- ✓ A method where the AAC user makes selections through a process that typically involves scanning (see scanning).
- ✓ This typically benefits individuals with limited motor control, as it eliminates the need to directly point or touch their choices.

SCANNING

- ✓ An indirect selection technique where the AAC user selects items from a set of options, typically when they cannot use direct selection due to a lack of fine/gross motor control.
- ✓ Items can be presented in a linear sequence one at a time (A, B, C) or via group-item (A-C, D-F) to gradually narrow down the choices.

MEDICAL NECESSITY

- ✓ A criterion used by healthcare providers and insurers to determine whether an AAC system should be covered by insurance.
- ✓ The insured/medical team need to provide evaluations and documentation that the AAC device is essential for the patient's health, well-being, and ability to communicate.

MULTIPLE PRIMARY INTERACTANTS

- ✓ Key individuals who regularly engage with and support an AAC user in their daily communication.
- ✓ **Key individuals can include:**
 - Caregivers, teachers, school paraprofessionals, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, etc.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST (OT)

- ✓ Plays a key role in helping the AAC user obtain, use, and maintain the communication device.
- ✓ **Key responsibilities include aiding with:**
 - Positioning and access, choosing the alternative access/AAC method, choosing adaptive equipment, and training and maintaining the device.

PRE-STORED PHRASES

- ✓ Pre-programmed, commonly used sentences or expressions stored in an AAC device. They are often used to enhance speed and ease of communication, especially for routine purposes.
- ✓ **Common pre-stored phrases can include:**
 - How are you? • I'm feeling tired.
 - I need help! • May I have a drink?

PROMPTING HEIRARCHY

- ✓ A structured approach to assisting an AAC user, ranging from the least to the most supportive prompts, used to encourage independence by gradually reducing the level of prompting as they become more confident.
- ✓ **Prompts can include:**
 - Gestures, verbal cues, visual cues, modeling, or full physical assistance.

RECEPTIVE COMMUNICATION

- ✓ An individual's ability to understand and process communication from others, including spoken words, gestures, symbols, and messages conveyed through AAC systems.
- ✓ It focuses on the user's comprehension of what is being communicated to them rather than their ability to express themselves (*known as expressive communication*).

SPEECH-GENERATING DEVICE

- ✓ An SGD is an electronic device that helps individuals with communication difficulties produce spoken language.
- ✓ The user selects words, phrases, or symbols on the device, which then generates speech through a built-in voice output system.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST (SLP)

- ✓ SLPs ensure that AAC users have the tools and strategies they need to communicate and participate fully in their environments.
- ✓ **Key responsibilities include:**
 - Evaluation, device selection, training and support, language development, and customization.

SYMBOLS

- ✓ Visual representations used to convey meaning and help AAC users express their thoughts, needs, and feelings, making communication more accessible and effective.
- ✓ The choice of symbols (pictures, icons, etc.) depends on the user's preferences, abilities, and the specific AAC system being used.

SOFTWARE SYSTEMS

- ✓ Various programs and applications that support communication and can be installed on a range of devices, including tablets, computers, and dedicated AAC devices.
- ✓ **Software systems can include:**
 - Communication apps like Proloquo2Go and TouchChat, language/symbol libraries, and more.

USSACC

- ✓ **United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication.**
- ✓ This organization focuses on advancing the knowledge, skills, and awareness of AAC through advocacy, education and training, networking, and research promotion.

ISACC

- ✓ **International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication.**
- ✓ This organization focuses on promoting the use of AAC worldwide and improving the quality of life for AAC users and their families through global advocacy, research, and education.

VOCA

- ✓ **Voice output communication aid.** A speech-generating device used to communicate needs, thoughts, and feelings through synthesized speech or pre-recorded messages.
- ✓ **Key features include:**
 - Speech generation, touch or switch activation, and customizable vocabulary.