



# AAC Strategies

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# What is AAC?

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication

- Refers to methods of communicating that do not involve direct speech from an individual. May include gestures, facial expressions, writing, sign language, Morse code, communication aids (language/core boards, charts, PECS books), and electronic devices.

What is the difference between AAC and Assistive Technology?

- Assistive Technology (AT) is a broad term that refers to all assistive, adaptive, or rehabilitative devices that a person may use to increase functional independence. AAC is one type of AT.

# A few more AAC terms to know:

PECS - Picture Exchange Communication System

PCS - Picture Communication Symbols (Boardmaker, Pixon, symbol stix)

“Low tech” vs. “High tech” - low tech refers to everything from simple paper core boards, flip books, PECS books, choice boards, and devices on which you may place symbols or symbol sets. High tech refers to computerized devices with touch screen or other selection methods

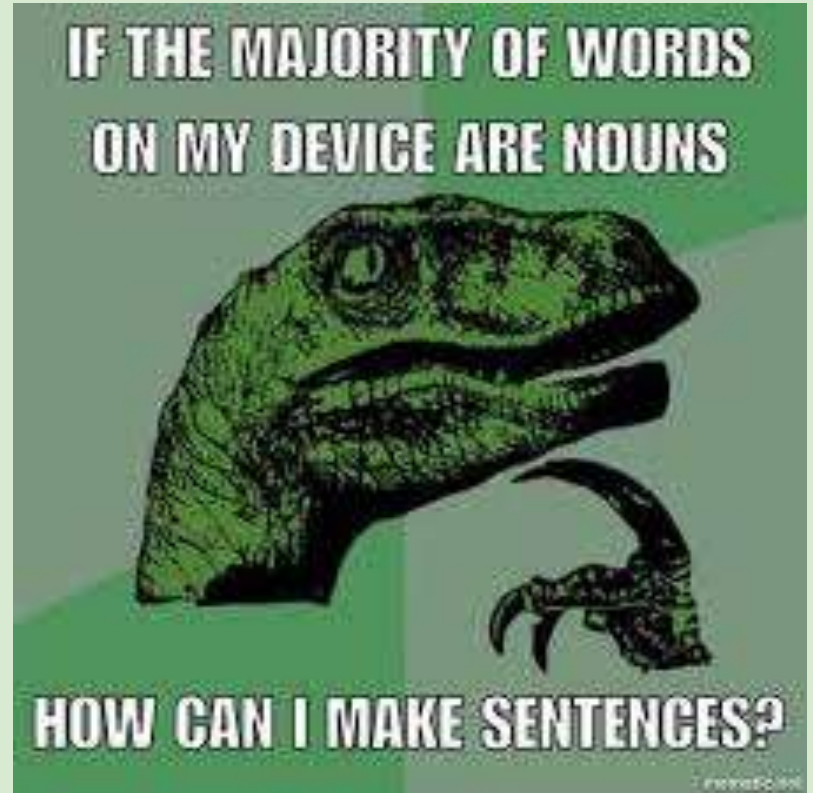
Core Boards or CVES boards - Low tech communication board that targets individuals use of “core” vocabulary

Dedicated system - devices that are used for communication purposes only.

Aided Language Stimulation - Modeling method (see next slide)

# What is Core Vocabulary?

Core Vocabulary refers to high frequency words that make up about 80% of what we say. Most pronouns, and verbs are included in core vocabulary.



# What is Fringe Vocabulary?

Fringe vocabulary refers to a set of low-frequency words that are specific to a particular person (personal fringe) or activity. Typically fringe vocabulary is nouns. Fringe vocabulary make up about 20% of what we say.



# Aided Language Stimulation

Aided Language Stimulation (a.k.a. aided language input) is a communication strategy, where the communication partner teaches symbol meaning and models language by combining his or her own verbal input with selection of vocabulary on the AAC system. This is done by simultaneously selecting vocabulary on the AAC system and speaking



A quick video about aided language stimulation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIFNMky22-U>



# Did you know?

The average 18 month old has been exposed to 4,380 hours of oral language at a rate of 8 hours/day from birth

A child who has a communication system and receives speech-language therapy two times per week for 20-30 minute sessions will reach this same amount of language exposure in 84 years (Korsten)

\*\*\*Think about learning any foreign language\*\*\*



# A few outcomes to consider...

## Using Aided Language Stimulation:

- ★ Shortens partner sentence length
- ★ Slows partner speaking rate
- ★ Forces emphasis on key words
- ★ Shifts teacher interactions from questions to comments and models
- ★ Works towards the long-term goal of S.N.U.G. (Spontaneous Novel Utterance Generation)



# How do you do it?

1. Attention - make sure the student is attending
1. Create a message - select icons on the device to create your message. While selecting the icon, also say the word. This step helps the student learn the display, vocabulary items, and word order.
1. Use a complete sentence that is 1-2 words longer than an utterance the student can generate on their own (for example if the student says “help please”, you can model “Help open please” or “I need help”).

# A few tips and thoughts...

Make sure devices are always accessible!

It is OKAY to hesitate or need time to find icons on a device...there are too many different devices for everyone to feel “fluent” in each of them! It is okay to let the student know you are learning with them.

Start with modeling keywords then build as you get more comfortable! Model the phrases/sentences you’d like for the student to begin using

It is perfectly acceptable to model use on a hard copy or “back-up” page set (or wall display, or no-tech boards in the classroom or therapy session).

Use multiple communicative intents! Model commenting, protesting, greetings, asking questions, etc.

# A few Home and Community Ideas...

- ★ Provide opportunities for errorless learning. Ask open ended questions and offer choices. Avoid labeling items/testing knowledge.
  - What color do you want to wear? What should I wear? What do you want to drink?
- ★ Use core words in a variety of activities throughout the day
  - “Go” - go in the car, go away, ready set go, to make a toy operate, etc.
  - “On” - turn on the light, tv on, on the table, you’re on!
- ★ Encourage communication for a variety of reasons - not just requesting!
  - Protesting, asking questions, directing, commenting, greetings
- ★ Briefly encourage device use while activities are meaningful and going well, but quit while the activity is still enjoyable.
- ★ Allow siblings to use the device!
- ★ Accept all forms of communication and then use the device to model and utterance that is 1-2 words more than what the student used.

