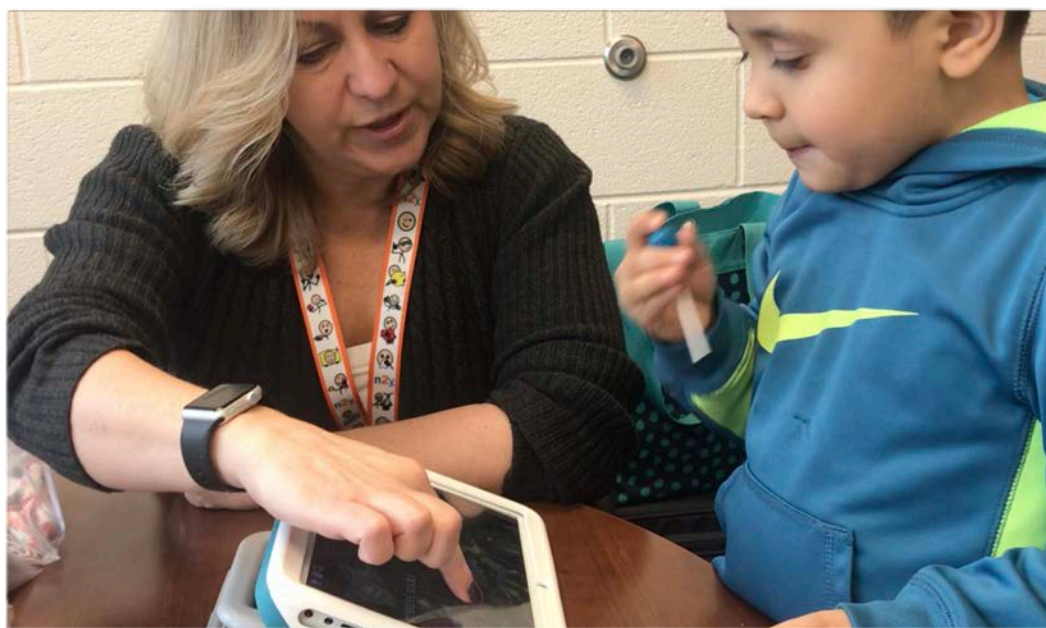


AAC Talk the Talk

Tips to Help Your Child Learn the New AAC System



Speaking Children

Hear a word 500 times before they say it themselves.



AAC Users

Usually need to see someone use a word symbol as much as 50-125 times to learn it.



Adults should talk with symbols

...as often as you speak. Try to use just one symbol at a time until you get better!

Speak AAC to Teach AAC!

The best way to learn a new language is hear other people speak it.

Did you ever try to learn a new language? Do you remember how nervous you felt trying to speak it? When you are first learning a new language you need time to see other people communicating that way. You can help your child learn to use their new AAC language by using it yourself!

1

Touch at least one symbol on your child's system with each phrase you say.

2

Make sure your child can see what you are touching. Keep talking while you are touching!

3

Don't MAKE your child say anything. Just let them relax and watch. It's the best way to learn!

Aided Language Input

...is a fancy term that just means the adults around a new AAC user should talk to the child using his AAC.

“Keep it real, and really simple!”

We learn a new language by watching other people talk, for real purposes in real situations! You are the most powerful influence on your child’s ability to learn to “speak AAC.” The more you speak with symbols, the easier it is for your child to understand how AAC works.

Start Simply

You don’t have to talk in symbols all the time at first. Pick a typical activity you and your child do often and start there. Reading a book or playing a game is an easy place to begin. Using your child’s AAC system, choose 1-3 symbols/ words that you will try to use as often as possible during the activity. For example, while playing a game, each time you take a turn you



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could touch “**I**” (like “I go!”) or touch “**go**.” You might say “**turn**.” When you are reading a book, you might comment on the story, “**like!**” You might say “**go**” or “**more**” as you turn the page. Don’t worry about making perfect sentences at this point. Think about what your child can do with his system and try to talk in symbols just *one tiny step* above him. For example, if your child is not using his system at all yet, just touch one symbol for each statement you say. If she’s starting to use one word at a time on his system, use two symbols when it’s your turn to talk! She says “go” and you say, “**you go**” while touching the symbol for “you” and “go.”

“HIGH TECH” AND “LIGHT TECH”

“I only have one device and he doesn’t want me to touch it!” Does this happen to you? What if the AAC device isn’t available (UH-OH! Did we forget to charge it?). No one communicates in just one way. We all smile, nod our heads, point, speak, make little sounds (like “Um Hm!”). Our AAC users often do these things AND talk with symbols. They may use symbols on their device, a matching iPad app, on their classroom SMART board, in a book or even taped to the refrigerator. You can use all of these symbols too! The important piece is to let your child see you talk with SYMBOLS as much as possible. If you can use their actual system (book, device or iPad) that’s best, but don’t hesitate to use all the other options too! All high tech AAC users should have at least one printed backup!!

