

AAC

&

you

{AAC 101}



What is alternative augmentative communication? How does it work? Why would an SLP recommend AAC? Let's start with what AAC is and what it is not.

AAC is...

...communication. AAC allows for your child to be able to access the world around him. It allows for the back and forth communication for your child. that you and I experience verbally every day. It doesn't look, or sound, quite liike our conversations, but it's communication all the same.

...a means to an end. For some AAC users, communication devices aren't a forever tool. It can be used for a few months or a lifetime. It can also be assigned to a child for a variety of reasons as well. Even if it's a temporary assignment, AAC helps aid in communication.

...a helper. "My child doesn't need AAC—I understand them just fine". While you may understand your child in the way they communicate, as may other caretakers, not everyone in their community does. AAC opens up independence, and the chance to communicate with others in resturaunts, stores and school.

AAC is not...

...giving up on speech. IF the AAC your child uses is high-tech or low-tech, use of a device does not mean your child is giving up on verbal communication. The more modalities, or forms, of communicating a child has, the more successful a communicator they can be. Also, the use of images or voice-output can act as a form of prompting for your child to use verbal speech or gestures. AAC is a tool and a helper when it comes to communication, not always a take-over.

...a cure-all. Just like toddlers experience language development, AAC users do, too. Learning time with the device, for both you and your child, is a real thing and that learning takes time. Your SLP is there to help guide you during that learning process, and it requires everyone's determination and motivation to make AAC successful. Remember it's just as new for your child as it is for you. If it seems overwhelming, that's perfectly normal.

...for "big kids". Research shows that there's no pre-requisite skills for children who use AAC to have, which is great news! This means any child of any skill level can learn to use some kind of AAC.



AAC FACT:

More than 2 million people in the US use some form of AAC.

(www.asha.org)