



This companion guide is designed to support use of the AAC Trial Data Sheets. It provides guidance for collecting, documenting, reviewing, and interpreting AAC trial data to help inform decision making.

Purpose of Data Collection

Data collection during an AAC trial helps determine whether the system meets the individual's communication needs. It provides evidence of strengths, challenges, needed supports, and potential adjustments, helping the team make informed decisions and recommendations. Consult your funder for any required data collection elements or processes.

The most useful AAC trial data comes from naturally occurring communication opportunities across activities, environments, and communication partners.

AAC trial data should include both:

- Quantitative information (what happened, how often, level of support)
- Qualitative observations (motivation, barriers, adjustments, and important details not captured by numbers)

Completing the Data Sheet

Use the data sheet to document communication opportunities observed during the trial. Record what communication was expected, what communication occurred, the support provided, and any relevant observations. Together, these data points help create a more complete picture of how the AAC system was used during the trial.

School/Clinical Sheet

Date: When the communication opportunity occurred

Skill Target: The skill being measured

Message Expected & Message Produced: What communication was expected and what actually occurred?

Initiation or Response: Was communication spontaneous or in response to another person?

Level of Support: Record the support provided.

Routine/Activity: What was happening when the communication occurred?

Home Data Sheet: Use this form to document communication opportunities observed during home and community activities.

Date: When the communication opportunity occurred

Routine/Activity: What was happening?

Support Provided: What support helped the AAC user communicate?

Response Expected & Buttons Pressed: What communication was expected and what actually occurred?

Notes: Record any important observations related to communication, supports, challenges, or successes.



Providing and Recording Levels of Support



Refer to the AAC
Scaffolding Hierarchy
resource

Provide only the amount of support needed for successful communication. In general, least-to-most support works best for emerging skills, while most-to-least support may be appropriate when introducing a new skill, vocabulary, or new AAC system.

- **Record the level of support at which the AAC user was successful.** This identifies the amount of assistance needed to achieve the target and helps track changes in independence over time.
- **Rethink the activity before adding more support.** If communication is not occurring, consider whether the activity is meaningful and motivating.
- **Honor all communication attempts.** Record successful communication even when the message differs from what was expected or targeted. Authentic communication is still successful communication.
Examples: During snack, you may be targeting requesting, but the AAC user comments "good" about the food instead, during a classroom activity you may be hoping to observe a request for help, but the AAC user says "all done" instead.

Notes & Observations

Use this section to capture information that helps explain communication successes, challenges, and patterns observed during the trial. The qualitative data can provide context about motivation, vocabulary, navigation, supports, and other factors that may have influenced performance.

Consider recording:

- What activities, people, or situations seemed especially motivating?
- What supports appeared to be helpful?
- Were any vocabulary or access challenges observed?
- Were any adjustments made or considered (e.g., layout size, Vocabulary Builder, hidden buttons, button timing, keyguard, TouchGuide)?
- Were there any barriers or challenges that could be addressed through additional supports, training, or adjustments?
- Is there anything the team should remember when reviewing this device trial?
- Were activities and communication opportunities consistent across AAC systems?

Example Observations:

- Used the AAC system more often during preferred activities.
- Participated more with familiar communication partners.
- Had difficulty locating vocabulary related to favorite hobbies.
- Communication improved when additional wait time was provided.
- A keyguard appeared to improve access accuracy.
- The device was not always available during communication opportunities.



Your Role in the AAC Trial

Your observations help the team understand how the AAC system supports communication during everyday activities and interactions. Use the AAC system during familiar routines and activities, and record communication opportunities and observations on the Home Data Sheet.

Examples:

- Meals and snacks
- Play and leisure activities
- Daily (bedtime, getting ready for school, etc..)
- Community outings
- Reading and shared activities

Record a few communication opportunities on the Home Data Sheet. You do not need to collect data throughout the entire day.

Completing the Home Data Sheet

Example:

Goal to Target during the Trial:
The AAC user will use the AAC system to request preferred items, activities, actions, or assistance during daily routines with no more than gestural cues in 80% of observed opportunities during the trial period.

Skill Target: Will use the AAC system to request preferred items, activities, assistance, or actions during daily routines.

Date	Routine/ Activity	What support was provided?	Response Expected and Buttons Pressed	Notes
8/24/2026	getting ready for school	model	Expected: "I need help" Produced: help; shoes; need + help; want + iPad	Produced parts of the expected message and Independnetly requested WANT+iPAD (likes to play a game on the way to school)
8/25/2026	dinner time	open-ended question/hint	Expected: "More pasta." Produced: more; more pasta	Needed modeling when started, then responded to open-ended questions. Requested more pasta starting at home page.
8/26/2026	playing outside with sister and mom	Wait Time	Expected: "More go" Produced: More go; more swing	Highly motivating activity. Needed less support to locate vocabulary during play. Independently found and added "swing".

Notes & Observations: Use this section on the 2nd page to capture information that may help explain the data.

- Very interested in outdoor play and communicated more frequently during those activities.
- Needed less support to find words during preferred activities.
- Started with modeling but later communicated successfully with wait time only.
- Had some difficulty locating school-related vocabulary.
- Independently communicated ideas that were different from what I expected.
- Communication increased when the device was available throughout the activity.
- Highly motivated to play with sibling. Increased communication/needed less support to find vocabulary during play.