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Getting Started: A Parent's Guide to Reading with AAC

Read...Talk...Connect

1

Let Your Child Choose a Book



- Look at the cover and talk about what the book might be about.
- Turn a few pages and use the pictures to help your child connect what they already know to the new story.



2

Read & Model



- Read each page.
- Then comment by speaking in a short, full sentence and say 1-2 words on the AAC device. We call this modeling. Example: "Look at that dog GO."



3

Pause



- Wait 7-10 seconds after you model.
- Give your child time to communicate in their own way.



4

Respond & Expand



- Respond to all communication (AAC, gestures, looks, sounds).
- Repeat your child's comment and add another word to grow their language
- "You said "DOG." That is a BIG DOG."



✓ What Matters Most

- Focus on ideas, connection, and communication - don't ask lots of questions
- You may use the AAC device more than your child at first... and that is OK.
- Enjoy the story together!

Make It Stick

- Reread favorite books.
- Use silly voices and sounds.

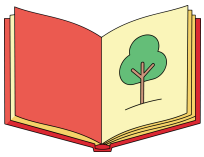
Every bit of communication builds literacy.

You are your child's best teacher!



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A Parent Guide to Reading with AAC
FAQ's



What if my child won't sit for a whole book?

That's completely normal! Instead of reading the text, turn the pages and comment about what is happening. Encourage your child to point or look at pictures. Follow their interests and try one more page each time. Let them tell you when they are finished. You can offer another one or stop and try again later. Focus on fun...not finishing.



What do I do when my child sits with me but doesn't seem to pay attention?

Keep reading! Many children listen even when they're not looking at the book. As long as they're nearby and not resisting, it counts. Try video read-alouds or digital books for variety. Maybe have another relative, sibling, or friend read.



How can I get my child more involved in the story?

Your energy matters most. Use silly voices, funny faces, puppets, or make simple props from the story. The more playful you are, the more they'll want to join in.



How do I practice target words beyond reading time?

Choose a few favorite words from the book and use them often during your day. Model these words on the AAC device during routines and play to help your child hear them in different situations.



What if a book seems too advanced for my child but they are interested in it?

Skip the text, or just read parts of it, and talk about the pictures. Comment on what you see, let your child show/tell you what they like, and model words on the AAC device.

Monarch Reader™
by Building Wings

My child has physical difficulty turning pages. Can I do anything to help them have more independence?

Add a small tab or foam sticker to the edge of a page to make it easier to grasp and turn. Check out Monarch Reader™ by our friends at Building Wings. Books can be read on a computer, tablet, or PRC-Saltillo AAC device or app. Your child may have more control to turn the pages. Try read-aloud recordings on YouTube or audio books for those who prefer listening to stories.

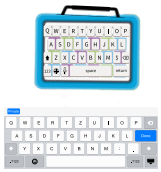
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Getting Started: A Parent's Guide to Beginning Writing with AAC

Talk...Write...Connect

1



Identify Your Child's Alternative Pencil

- Decide how your child will use all 26 letters of the alphabet - don't worry if they don't know them yet.
- It might be the keyboard of the AAC device or iPad, a printed alphabet board, or something else with all 26 letters.

2



Your Child Chooses the Writing Topic

- Help your child collect photos and momentos from memorable events
- Ask them to choose one to write about.
- Honor their choice

3



Time to Write with the Full Alphabet

- Ask your child to write about their picture using the alphabet.
- Any letters they choose are okay.
- Let your child decide what to write. You can ask, "Anything else?"
- When they're finished, take a photo of their writing and the picture.

4



Make Connections and Conversation

- Talk about the letters your child wrote - even if it isn't a word you can read "*I see a lot of Ds in your writing*." Circle the letters for emphasize.
- Try to make an authentic connection to their writing and the photo "*You wrote a lot of Ds when writing about grandma's house. I wonder if you were thinking about Travis, her dog",* then write the word dog.
- Or make connections to a person or place in the child's life. "*I am going to borrow one of your Ds and write the word "dad". Dad begins with the letter d." T*hen write the word "dad."

REMEMBER

- Your child is learning about letters. We aren't looking for perfect spelling or punctuation yet.
- Putting random letters together is a develomental milestone for learing to write.
- There are no wrong responses - Your child is writing their own "story".

Every bit of communication builds literacy.

Making Connections Builds Communication



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A Parent's Guide to Beginning Writing with AAC
FAQs



What if my child doesn't know any of the alphabet yet? Isn't this too hard?

Children go through a stage of pretending to write when they begin to play with letters. Our AAC writers need access to all of the alphabet so they can go through this stage of playing with letters. We are giving them letters so they can *learn* about them.

Why can't I tell my child what letters to use so their writing is correct?



xxxjjkllffxlwww

Beginning writing isn't about getting it right. It's about learning that letters can be put together to share ideas.

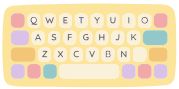
- Let your child choose their own letters. Avoid telling them what to write.
- Encourage them with comments like, "Tell me more" or "Want to say anything else?"
- The most important part is exploring and writing letters to create a message.

What if they don't want to write, write too much or not enough?



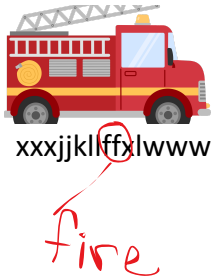
Never force any activity. If your child isn't interested now, put it away and try another day. If they write a few letters and stop, you can ask if they want to write anything else. Honor their request to stop and try to make some connections to their writing. Some AAC writers will fill up the screen with letters. You can suggest they take a break so you can talk about their writing. Make connections. Return another day to the same photo to see what else they want to say.

Should we use ABC or QWERTY Keyboards?



It is suggested to use the QWERTY format since that will transfer more easily to using computers, tablets, and phones. But if your AAC writer is using a lite-tech scanning board, they may prefer the ABC format. Talk with your teachers and therapists to make sure everyone is using the same style of keyboard.

What do we do with their writing when they are finished?



Make connections to the letters they wrote and the photo prompt. If you see a letter that represents a sound in the picture, point that out. "You wrote about the firetruck. You wrote the letter "f". Firetrucks put out fires. Fire starts with "f". I am going to borrow your "f" and write the word "fire".

Celebrate! Take a photo of the writing project. Get your AAC Author's permissio to share with others.

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