



The VOICE framework highlights strategies communication partners can use to support AAC users. These strategies are not about getting a specific response, they are about creating more opportunities for communication, honoring all forms of expression, and helping AAC users build confidence using their communication systems.

V: Value Wait Time

Waiting gives AAC users time to think, process, locate words, and respond in their own way. A few extra seconds can make a big difference.

Try this:

- Pause after asking a question or making a comment
- Stay present and engaged while waiting
- Wait at least 10–15 seconds, and longer when needed
- Avoid filling the silence too quickly

Remember:

Wait time is not doing nothing. It is giving communication time to happen.

O: Offer Meaningful Communication Opportunities

Communication is most powerful when it is connected to something meaningful, interesting, or motivating. Create engaging, motivating activities and experiences that encourage authentic communication.

Try this:

- Use favorite activities and experiences
- Build communication into daily routines
- Offer chances to comment, ask, protest, choose, share, or joke
- Follow the AAC user's interests
- Create opportunities across routines, play, learning, and social interactions

Remember:

Meaningful communication is about more than answering questions. It includes sharing ideas, feelings, preferences, and personality.

I: Input Through Modeling (Aided Language Input)

AAC users learn language by seeing it used in real interactions. Model words on the AAC system while you speak to demonstrate how communication works in everyday situations.

Try this:

- Select key words on the AAC system as you speak
- Model during real conversations and activities
- Model without expecting the AAC user to imitate

Remember:

AAC users need to see AAC being used before they can learn to use it themselves. The goal is communication and language learning, not imitation.

**C: Carry AAC Everywhere**

Ensure AAC is available, accessible, and ready to use across settings and activities.

Try this:

- Keep the device charged and turned on
- Ensure AAC is accessible to the user
- Backup communication system available (e.g., paper-based backup)
- Bring AAC to all parts of the day, not just therapy or instruction

Remember:

AAC access is communication access. If the system is not available, the AAC user may lose an opportunity to communicate.

E: Expand and Recast

Expansion and recasting help build language while honoring the AAC user's original message. These strategies show how messages can grow without correcting or requiring repetition.

Expansion:

Add 1–2 words to what the AAC user says to model a longer message.

- Example: AAC user says: "go" Partner models: "go outside" or "want go"

Recasting:

Model the same idea using more complete grammar or vocabulary while keeping the original meaning.

- Example: AAC user says: "she go" Partner models: "She is going."

Remember:

The goal is to model possibilities, not to make the AAC user repeat the message.

Encourage Authentic VOICE and Expression

AAC users communicate in many different ways (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, body movements, vocalizations, signs, and devices). Communication partners should honor all forms of communication

Try this:

- Respond to the message, not just the method
- Accept different ways of communicating
- Support communication without requiring compliance
- Celebrate the AAC user's unique voice and personality

Remember:

Authentic communication happens when AAC users are supported in expressing what they think, and what matters to them.



The goal is connection, not a specific response. Focus on creating opportunities for authentic communication.