

Say It with Your AAC Device!

Select a food or drink



Ask mom or dad for help



Tell the dog what to do

Tease a brother or sister

Describe the weather



Comment on the news

Request to go to the bathroom



Voice an opinion

Tell a joke



Work on homework

Say good morning or good night



Play a game

Show & tell about school

Tear off this card and put it on your refrigerator to remind yourself and your family to encourage your child to speak with his or her device.



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Additional Resources for Parents

AAC Language Lab
aaclanguagelab.com

Educational resources and teaching aids to support language development, vocabulary acquisition, and effective AAC use.

The Center for AAC and Autism
aacandautism.com

Online resource dedicated to building awareness of the power of AAC to change the lives of children with autism and other developmental disabilities that limit communication skills.

Realize Language
realizelanguage.com

Online service that gives parents and professionals powerful ways to monitor, measure, and maximize a child's use of an AAC device.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
asha.org

The national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for more than 173,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists, speech-language pathologists, speech, language, and hearing scientists, audiology and speech language pathology support personnel, and students.

Explore AAC
Exploreaac.com

Learn the basics about AAC: What it is, who uses it, AAC solutions, and more. A great resource for those wishing to learn more about AAC.

Parent Resources from PRC

PRC has created a series of *AAC & Your Child* guides for parents. Visit our website at prentrom.com or contact your PRC Regional Consultant at (800)848-8008.

Visit prentrom.com for additional educational materials, to locate a PRC Consultant in your area, or to read inspiring stories of successful AAC users.



About PRC-Salttillo

PRC-Salttillo is the global leader in the development of AAC solutions, including augmentative communication devices, apps, computer access products, and other assistive technology for people with speech disorders.

Over fifty years ago, PRC-Salttillo pioneered the use of technology to bring speech and language capabilities to adults and children with disabilities. Since then, the company's products have enabled children and adults worldwide to achieve spontaneous, independent, and interactive communication regardless of their disability, literacy level, or motor skills.

In addition to powerful AAC devices, PRC-Salttillo provides teaching and implementation ideas, therapy materials, curriculum sequences, funding assistance, and training to speech-language pathologists, special educators, and the families of people who communicate with AAC.



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AAC & Your Child

PARENT GUIDES



Your Child's AAC Device: How to Get Off to a Good Start

An augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device can help your child communicate. Using the device can open up a world of spontaneous, independent, and interactive communication.

Parents new to AAC may have many questions about using a device, from basic operation to questions

about introducing a device to a child, helping them use it, and making the device part of the child's everyday life.

This guide shares recommendations on the first steps of using an AAC device, so you and your child can get off to a good start.



How to Help Your Child Begin Using an AAC Device

1. Set Up the Device

- Inform your child's SLP and teachers that the device has arrived. They may be available to support you in setting up the device to meet your child's unique needs.
- Contact the device manufacturer and ask if there is a local consultant in your area. Regional consultants often provide training on device setup, operation, and implementation.
- Review the contents of the box. Check that all items ordered are enclosed.
- Attach any accessories to the device.
- Turn on the device. If it needs to be charged, plug it in and begin charging.
- Set the device to the vocabulary recommended by the speech-language pathologist (SLP) or evaluation team. If you're unsure, your consultant can help you set up the right configuration as recommended.
- Choose a voice for the device (male, female, age, etc.).
- Set and adjust the access method (such as eye tracking or switch-scanning) so your child can make selections on the device accurately and efficiently. Your consultant can help you adjust any setting to make selecting comfortable and easy.

Your device manufacturer's regional consultant is available to help you with helping you learn more about your child's device, from understanding proper handling and cleaning methods, how to set up the device for optimal functioning, and more.

2. Familiarize Yourself with the Device

You will be your child's best teacher and most consistent AAC partner and advocate in the months and years ahead. It's important that you understand how the device works and become comfortable using it so you can confidently support your child:

- Learn how language is organized on the device. Once you know where nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other parts of speech are stored, you can help your child locate them and also program new words. Practice putting two- and three-word combinations together so you can teach your child how to combine words.
- Explore the device's pre-stored words and phrases. Personalize the vocabulary by adding names of family members, friends, pets, and favorite places, as well as routine messages. Always back up the vocabulary by saving your customized file to a USB.
- Explore any Help or other support programs built into your device, such as Vocabulary Builder or Word Finder.

What's in the Box?

Your shipment should contain:

- Your child's AAC device
- Owner's manual and/or Getting Started guide
- Charger
- Information on free trial subscriptions

Plus any accessories you have purchased, such as:

- Keyguards
- Keyboard
- Switches
- Mouse
- Eye-gaze module
- USB flash drive

If you ordered a wheelchair or table mount, these may be shipped separately.

Keep the Box! You may need to ship the device back to the manufacturer and some warranties require shipping returns in the original box.

3. Start Simply with Your Child

Once you are familiar with using the device and have set it up according to your SLP's recommendation, introduce it to your child by playing on the device and modeling words. Modeling words means you are showing your child how to find and use the words. Keep your initial interactions fun and low-key. Your child may need time to get accustomed to having the device around.

One strategy to help you get started is to practice on the device together once a day at the same time, such as at breakfast, snack time, or before bed.

Start by showing your child how to say one or two words on the device. For example:

- In the morning, have your child select the color of shirt he or she will wear that day;
- Have your child say "good morning" at breakfast or "good night" at bedtime;
- At snack time, have your child choose "apple" or "cookie;"
- While reading a book to your child, introduce the device to make comments like "sad" or "happy" to talk about what's happening in the story.

Always respond naturally when your child communicates using the device. If your child says "read," begin to read a book. If your child says "off" at bedtime, shut the lights off. When you respond to your child's communication, he or she will experience how powerful words are and how rewarding communicating can be.

Accept all forms of communication your child uses – gestures, facial expressions, and intelligible verbalizations. If you understand what is being communicated, don't insist that your child "say it on your device." But if you don't understand, prompt your child to use the device by asking, "I'm not sure I understand, can you tell me this way?"

As your child becomes more comfortable on the device, choose topics of particular interest to him or her to teach new vocabulary words and progress toward fuller communication and interactive conversations.



4. Engage Your Child's Support Team

If possible, arrange a "team training" with your device manufacturer's regional consultant that includes the rest of your child's complete support team – the SLP, classroom teachers, occupational and physical therapists, and any others – so all team members understand how the device works and why it is important to encourage its use across all daily activities. If group training cannot be arranged, try to meet individually to orient them to support team members with the device and your child's communication goals.

5. Be Patient, Stay Positive, and Expect Success

Learning to use an AAC device requires dedication, time, and lots of practice, so don't let yourself or your child get discouraged. Your child's SLP, device manufacturer's regional consultant, and support team can answer your questions about AAC and help you and your child overcome any stumbling blocks. Be sure to make use of any demo software or online training opportunities provided by the device manufacturer's regional consultant.

With help from an AAC device, your child can achieve their full communication potential!

AAC Devices & Everyday Family Life: 4 Keys to Success

1 Keep it Handy: Children are more likely to use an AAC devices if it is charged, turned on, and accessible. Do NOT allow your child's device to be left in a backpack or put away in a closet. Make sure the device is always available, whether mounted on a wheelchair or on the kitchen table or a night stand.

2 Keep it Fun: Encourage device use during activities that are meaningful and enjoyable. Don't push too hard or too fast. You don't want your child to see the device as something that makes life harder.

3 Keep it Interesting: Follow your child's interests and passions to expand his or her vocabulary most easily.

4 Keep it Up: Becoming a proficient AAC user requires frequent device use and practice. Encourage your child to use the device and give them the support and professional help they need to achieve success.