

FACT SHEET

Augmentative and Alternative Communication

What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)?

AAC stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication and describes ways, other than using verbal language, that people communicate. This can include using gestures, signing, pictures, typing, communication books and communication devices.

Here are some examples of AAC



Communication book



Signing



Choice board



Communication device

Why do we use AAC?

We use AAC to enable individuals to communicate to the best of their abilities; to express their needs and wants, to increase their independence, to share ideas and to actively engage with others at home, at daycare/ school and in the community.

Will AAC stop my child from talking?

The short answer is 'No'. Research has shown that AAC does not prevent talking but will often facilitate speech development by increasing interaction, language skills and by providing a voice output model for speech. Children who use speech and AAC will always choose to use speech first if they are able to, as it is often the quickest and easiest way to get their message across.



Who is AAC useful for?

We ALL use different forms of AAC to augment our verbal communication, from using gestures, to texting and sending emails. AAC can be useful for any child who has difficulty processing, understanding and using spoken language. This includes children who, during times of dysregulation, experience difficulty accessing their language system. AAC can often enable them to communicate more easily during these times.



What age is suitable to start using AAC?

You can start using AAC at any age but the earlier, the better! There are no cognitive or other prerequisite skills for a child to start using AAC.

How long will my child need to use AAC?

Every child is different and their needs will change over time. Some will need AAC for a short time, others may use it throughout their lives, some may only need it in some environments or contexts.

For more information about AAC and whether it will support your child's communication, speak to your Speech Pathologist at CliniKids. Alternatively, email: clinkids.reception@thekids.org.au

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