

AAC PARENT GUIDE



Your child is beginning to use an AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) system, and that's a big, exciting step toward building meaningful communication! AAC helps give children a voice using pictures, symbols, or words on a device.

At first, it may feel overwhelming, but you don't need to be an expert to help. The most important thing you can do is model language, just like you naturally do when teaching a child to talk.

Remember: progress takes time, and every word modeled counts!
You're not alone; we're here to support you every step of the way.

What is AAC?

AAC = Augmentative and Alternative Communication

A way to support spoken communication or replace it when needed

Who Benefits from AAC?

- Children who are non-speaking
- Children who are minimally verbal
- Children who have unclear speech
- AAC supports children with:
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Apraxia of Speech
 - Developmental Delays
 - Genetic Conditions
 - Physical/Neurological challenges

Types of AAC



High-tech (like TouchChat):

- Uses an iPad or device to speak aloud
- Includes vocabulary systems like WordPower

Low-tech:

- Core word boards or laminated picture books
- Used for backup or support

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Getting Started with AAC: A Quick Intro for Families

Model = show them how to use their AAC system without expecting them to imitate.

- Talk with the device
- Touch 1–3 icons while speaking naturally
- Use during routines (meals, play, bath, book time)
- Example: Say “want snack” while selecting “want” + “snack”
- No need to force them to repeat — input comes before output!



Core Words Are Key

Core Words = words we use all day, across activities

Examples: go, want, stop, more, like, help, I, you, eat, play

- These words allow your child to build sentences and say what they mean.

Progress is:

- Looking at the device
- Reaching toward icons
- Randomly exploring
- Using 1 word (e.g., “go”)
- Every step is communication! 🎉

What You Can Do at Home

- ✓ Keep the device nearby all day within each natural environment
- ✓ Use AAC during fun and motivating routines
- ✓ Accept any communication attempt
- ✓ Model without expectations = Provide the model without the expectation they will imitate attempt
- ✓ Stay positive! Progress takes time!
- ✓ Ensure the device is charged and ready to be used



MODELING 1-2 WORD FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE WITH CORE WORDS

Hi families!

We're so excited to begin trying out this AAC device together. One of the most helpful things you can do is model language on the device, just like how we talk to babies before they talk back! Below are some easy tips and examples to help you model 1-2 word combinations using core words during everyday activities.

Getting Started with AAC at Home

When your child begins using a high-tech AAC device, it's natural to feel unsure of where to start. The most powerful way to support your child's communication is to model language, just like we do when kids are learning to speak!

Why Core Words?

Core words are the small but powerful words we use every day across many situations (like go, want, more, help, stop, open, all done, you, me, like).

- These words help your child communicate a wide variety of ideas with fewer buttons to press.

What is Modeling?

Modeling is simply talking using your child's AAC system. Think of it like narrating daily life, but with their device!

- You don't need full sentences — just 1-2 core words at a time.



Model by function

Function	Examples	When to Model
Requesting	want more / help me / go out	Asking for food, toys, activities
Commenting	that funny / I like / so big	During play, reading, or watching videos
Protesting	don't like / stop that / no go	When something is unwanted or disliked
Directing	look there / put here / come now	Giving instructions or showing something
Asking questions	what that? / where go? / who that?	During play, reading, or transitions
Answering	I want / it mine / not sure	When you ask them a question

Modeling means YOU use the device just like your child would, pressing words as you speak. This helps your child learn how to use it, even if they aren't pressing buttons yet!



You talk AND tap on the device: You say: "Want more?" / You tap: WANT + MORE

Remember

Every time you model, you're teaching your child how to use their voice in a new way. Keep it fun, natural, and encouraging. Your support makes all the difference!