

Frequently Asked Questions About AAC

What is AAC?

AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) includes different tools and systems that help people communicate when speech is limited or unavailable. It can be used to express needs, make choices, share feelings, interact socially, and support learning.

Why would my child use AAC?

AAC can help children who have difficulty speaking by:

- Giving them more ways to express themselves
- Reducing frustration
- Supporting language development
- Encouraging social interactions
- Helping them participate in school and daily activities

What are the different types of AAC?

AAC can be low-tech or high-tech and includes:

- Visual schedules and picture communication boards
- Speech-generating devices (some covered by insurance)
- iPads with communication apps
- Switches or buttons for communication
- Sign language

How much does AAC cost?

- Some AAC tools, like sign language, are free
- Communication apps for tablets range from \$50 to \$300
- Dedicated speech-generating devices can cost around \$3,000 but may be covered by insurance or Medicaid
- Evaluations and therapy are often covered by insurance—check your plan for details

How do we get an AAC device?

If a therapist recommends a high-tech AAC device, the process includes:

1. **Evaluation:** A specialist assesses your child's needs and tries out different options
2. **Funding Request:** The therapist submits paperwork to insurance for coverage
3. **Training & Support:** Ongoing guidance for families to help your child use their AAC system successfully

Does my child need specific skills to use AAC?

No! Research shows AAC helps children develop language, improve communication, and even gain verbal speech skills. Every child can benefit, regardless of their current abilities.

Will AAC stop my child from talking?

No! Studies show AAC does **not** prevent speech development. In fact, a study by Millar, Light & Schlosser (2006) revealed the following:

- **89%** of children using AAC increased their speech
- **11%** had no change in verbal speech
- **0%** lost speech skills

AAC actually encourages communication by reducing frustration and providing a model for spoken language.

Will my child be seen as “different” if they use AAC?

Not at all! AAC helps children connect with others by improving their ability to express themselves in conversations, classroom activities, and social interactions.

Will my child rely only on AAC and not speak?

Children naturally choose the easiest way to communicate. If speech is possible, they will use it! AAC helps build overall language skills and supports spoken communication whenever possible. Many AAC users combine speech, gestures, and their device to communicate effectively. Available research indicates that AAC facilitates spoken language by increasing interaction, language skills, and/or providing a voice output model for speech. (Cynthia J. Cress, PhD).