No More Shelves!
Easy Ways to Use Communication Devices
at School and Home

Property of Kandis Chatman, 2013
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- **Easter Seals, Director of Outpatient Rehab**
- **UAB Sparks Clinics, Clinical Fellow**
• War Eagle! Hey!
Why Shelves?
What is AAC?

“...AAC refers to an area of research, clinical and educational practice. AAC involves attempts to study and when necessary compensate for temporary or permanent impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions of persons with severe disorders of speech-language production and/or comprehension, including spoken and written modes of communication.”
AAC is Multimodal

Use of more than one mode of communication such as gestures, vocalizations, facial expressions, speech, manual signs, and speech generating devices (SGDs).
Why Use AAC?

Just because I cannot talk doesn’t mean I don’t have anything to say.
Why Use AAC?

- Provides visual/sensory reinforcement
- Encourages independent communication
- Increases comprehension of verbal language (receptive language)
- Promotes verbal ability (expressive language)
- Improves sentence formulation & length
- Increases vocabulary
- Improves literacy
- Decreases negative behavior
- Can be used short-term or long-term
Why use AAC?

• Enable individuals to efficiently and effectively engage in a variety of interactions and participate in activities of their choice.
Why use AAC?

• A child who is not able to communicate effectively is at great risk for cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral problems (Berry, 1987; Silverman, 1980).
Why use AAC?

• Children who use AAC have shown improvements in behavior, attention, independence, self-confidence, class participation, academic progress and social interaction (Abrhamsen, Romski, & Sevcik, 1989; Silverman, 1980; Van Tatenhove, 1987).
Why use AAC?

- AAC can provide a person with the ability to have and develop strong and rewarding relationships with others. Deny a person the ability to articulate intelligibly and that person is sentenced to live in social, intellectual, and emotional isolation (Prentice, 2000).
Who can benefit from AAC?

✓ Individuals who are nonverbal?  
  YES

✓ Individuals with diagnoses (Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, ALS, TBI)?  
  YES

✓ Individuals who are verbal but significantly unintelligible?  
  YES

✓ Individuals with hearing and/or visual difficulties?  
  YES
Who can benefit from AAC?

✓ Individuals with a gap between receptive and expressive language? YES
✓ Individuals with physical limitations? YES
✓ Children who are typically developing? YES
✓ Adults who lost the ability to speak? YES
Who can benefit from AAC?

EVERYONE!
Why don’t some therapists, families, and teachers use AAC?
“My child is too young for AAC”

Even infants are known to engage in purposeful, communicative behavior well before the development of language. These early exchanges are very important in that they form the basis for later formal, symbolic communication.

Reichle, York, & Sigafoos, 1991
Myths of AAC

“My child is not ready for AAC”

There are no known cognitive or other prerequisites that are necessary for a child to use AAC.

Kangas & Lloyd, 1988
Myths of AAC

“My child will not talk”
“My child will get lazy and only want to use AAC”

AAC does NOT impede the development of natural speech. The introduction of AAC often helps to develop speech faster than if AAC is not used.

Bodine & Beukelman, 1991;
Van Tatenhove, 1987
“AAC is too expensive”

Not all types of AAC are high-tech speech generating devices (SGDs). If the patient needs something high-tech, there are several funding options to consider. AAC is NOT synonymous with technology.
“AAC will only increase expressive language”

AAC can improve receptive language as well with the visual and auditory supports it provides. **You do NOT have to prove the receptive language ability before introducing AAC.**
“My child talks so he/she does not need AAC”

AAC can improve unintelligible speech (auditory/visual component). AAC can increase sentence length and improve formulation of sentences. AAC increases communication skills (augment=increase).
Myths of AAC

“PECS, PCS, PicSyms, Photos....they are all the same”

PECS=Picture Exchange Communication System

VERY structured system! Combines ABA and Speech/Language strategies. Developed by Andrew Bondy and Lori Frost.
Myths of AAC

“PECS, PCS, PicSyms, Photos....they are all the same”


Photos=Actual photographs
Myths of AAC

“Children must go through a hierarchy of symbols starting with real objects and ending with letters and words”

There is not a specific representational hierarchy that individuals “must” progress through (Romski and Sevcik, 2005). Young children do not seem to discriminate between abstract and more concrete symbols for communication.

***It is useful; however, to determine what types of symbols are meaningful to the child.
“If we use AAC, we are giving up on speech”

• The AAC system DOES NOT replace the patient’s current communication modes. It “augments” or increases his/her current skills.
• The earlier, the better!!!!
Myths of AAC

“If we use AAC, we are giving up on speech”

“No one communication mode, no AAC device, no low-tech board, no gestures, signs or speech, could possibly meet all of my communication needs all of the time. I use multiple communication modes. I communicate in many ways. I select the best mode depending on the location, with whom I am communicating and the purpose and content of the communication.” Williams, 2004
Types of AAC

• Functional Communication
  – Simple Sign Language
  – Visual Representations (objects, photos, picture symbols)
  – Choice Board
  – Eye Gaze Frames
  – Communication Notebooks & Wallets
  – Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
  – Aided Language Stimulation
  – Speech Generating Devices (SGDs)
Low-tech SGDs

• Talking Switches
  – BIGmack
  – LITTLEmack
• Step By Step Communicator
• Go Talk 4+, 9+, 20+
• Cheap Talk (4 and 8)
• Communication Builder (1-16)
• Tech/Speak, Tech/Talk
• 32 Message communication builder

AbleNet, Enabling Devices, EnableMart
Low-tech SGDs

- BIGmack
- LITTLEmack

AbleNet

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Low-tech SGD

- Step By Step Communicator

AbleNet

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Big Mack/Step-by-Step

• Great resource site:
  “101 Ideas for Using the BIGmack or Other Single Message Communication Devices”
  
http://www.spectronicsinoz.com/article/101-ideas-for-using-the-bigmack-or-other-single-message-communication-devices-3
Low-tech SGD

- Go Talk 4+
- Go Talk 9+

EnableMart

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Low-tech SGDs

- *Go Talk 20+*

EnableMart

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Low-tech SGD

- Cheap Talk (4, 8)

Enabling Devices

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Low-tech SGD

- 7-Level Communication Builder (1, 2, 4, 8, 16)

Enabling Devices

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Low-tech SGD

- Tech/Speak

- Tech/Talk

EnableMart

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Low-tech SGD:

- **32 Message Communicator**

*Enabling Devices*

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Low-tech SGD with Real Objects
• When using SGDs, be careful not to say “push,” “show me,” etc. Instead, use phrases like “tell me with your talker,” “say _____,” etc.
• NOT just eat, drink, bathroom!
High-tech SGDs

- DynaVox Technologies
- Prentke Romich Company (PRC)
- Tobii
High-tech SGD

- iPad/iPod Touch with Communication Apps
  - Locabulary
  - iSpeech
  - Go Talk Now
  - LAMP
  - Proloquo2go
DynaVox Technologies

- DynaSyms
- Gateway
DynaVox Technologies
Kandis,

I hope you had a wonderful weekend. Gunnar is in love with his new talker. He is able to tell you his name, his pets name, his brothers name, his birthday, and how old he is when you ask. Can you believe it. Saturday night I let him choose his dinner with his talker. He picked spaghetti and sat down at the table and ate the whole thing. It was so awesome. We have added a few personal picks for some tabs. Beau and I have been having fun figuring it out. Can't wait to see you tomorrow.

Kim
• Unity
• LAMP
• Accent and ECO Series

Accent™ 1000
Featuring a 10" display that provides easy readability and access in a portable device

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Eye Gaze Devices

• DynaVox Technologies
  (DynaVox Vmax+ with EyeMax)
Eye Gaze Devices

• PRC (ECO2 with ECOpoint)
Eye Gaze Devices

• Tobii
iPad/iPod Touch with Communication Apps

- LAMP
- Words for Life
- Proloquo2go

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iPad/iPod Touch with Communication Apps

- Locabulary
iPad/iPod Touch with Communication Apps

- My Talk Tools
- Look2Learn

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iPad/iPod Touch with Communication Apps

- Voice4u
- iConverse
iPad/iPod Touch with Communication Apps

• TouchChat
iPad/iPod Touch with Communication Apps

• iComm

• iCommunicate
Using SGD at HOME
Why use SGDs at home?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvC5gzmwq_8
Why use SGDs at home?

• It is not unusual for beginning communicators to exhibit nonsymbolic behaviors (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013)
  – tantrums
  – hitting
  – screaming
  – pushing
  – self-injurious behaviors
Why use SGD at home?

- Families do not ALWAYS understand their child at home
- CONSISTENCY (practicing at home helps them be more confident when using it in the community and at school)
How do we use SGD at home?

• **Daily routines** (dressing, bathing, eating, toileting, position changes)
  
  ***Make sure to allow sufficient time to carry out eat routine when possible***

• **Play** (the “business” of young children)
  
  – Blocks, balls, toy vehicles, potato head, puzzles
How do we use SGDs at home?

• Person-Centered Planning
  – Communication partners (parents, teachers, peers, community workers)

**Great resource site: http://www.aacandautism.com/parents/device-at-home**
Proloquo2go


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Key Points

• Model the language
  – Aided language stimulation

• Start Small
  – Pick one routine and use it during that time
  – Add routines

• Don’t Be Scared!
  – SGD's are durable! Warranty!
Using SGD at
SCHOOL
If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.

Ignacio Estrada
Why use SGDs at school?

- “Professionals must be committed to providing access to the general curriculum for all students, regardless of their needs and abilities” (Soto & Zangari, 2009)
Why use SGD at school?

• Goal $\rightarrow$ Inclusive Education
  1. Requires the student to be a member of the class
• Membership = “access to valued social roles and the symbols of belonging...[that] reflect a vision of equity and reciprocity with classmates who do not have disabilities” (Jorgensen et al., 2010)
Why use SGDs at school?

• Goal → Inclusive Education
  2. Requires the student participate actively in the social and academic activities of the general education classroom
  • Attends recess, pep rallies, school dances
  • Gives oral reports, answers teacher’s questions
  • Engages in group learning
Why use SGDs at school?

• Goal ➔ Inclusive Education
  3. The student acquires skills that are meaningful and relevant, across all academic areas
• No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
Useful Texts

• *Practically Speaking: Language, Literacy, and Academic Development of Students with AAC Needs* (Soto & Zangari, 2009)

• *The Beyond Access Model: Promoting Membership, Participation, and Learning for Students with Disabilities in the General Education Classroom* (Jorgensen, McSheehan, & Sonnenmeier, 2010)

• *Transition Strategies for Adolescents and Young Adults Who Use AAC* (McNaughton & Beukelman, 2010)
Expected Kindergarten Entry Skills

Identified by teachers

1. Social-cooperates, takes turns, shares, self-control, curious, attends, listens to teacher, plays independently with other children

2. Communication-express needs and feelings, ask peers for information and help, initiates and maintains a conversation, answers questions

3. Participation-follows classroom routines, uses playground and classroom materials appropriately, respects others property, follows group and individual directions, accepts positive and corrective feedback
How do we use SGDs at school?

• Incorporate SGDs in School Activities
  – Circle Time
  – Lunchtime at Cafeteria
  – Choice-making

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How do we use SGDs at school?

• Ensure students have education and social vocabulary
  – Support comprehension and production
  – Use visual supports (visual schedule, tangible items, photos, graphic organizers, visual media, etc.) along with devices
Visual Supports
Visual Supports
Instructional Arrangements

• Teacher-Led Small-Group
  – Katz et al. (2002) found students with developmental disabilities are more likely to engage in small groups
  – Advantage= Student participation
Instructional Arrangements

• **Pudding Demonstration**
  – Aided Language Stimulation
  – BIGmacks
  – Cheap Talk 8
  – Communication Builder
  – Visual Supports
Instructional Arrangements

• Teacher-Led Sharing Time
  – Sharing = presentations, book reports, show and tell, etc.
  – Asking questions
Presentations

Pep Rallies!
Instructional Arrangements

• Learning Stations or Centers
  – Cooperative learning
  – Lesson-specific vocabulary
  – May be difficult if the student is not ambulatory
Instructional Arrangements

• One-to-One
  – Adults or Peers
  – Question and answer interactions predominate
  – Fairly predictable words and phrases
Key Points

• Do not reinvent the wheel
  – Team should not modify the student’s current AAC system unnecessarily
  – Child will be a risk for falling behind the other students academically

***Team should prepare before the child begins school
Key Points

• Involve the family in the transition and planning process
  – Only ones with regular contact
  – Crucial role in transferring vocabulary
Key Points

• Team should be up to speed to the knowledge and skills required to facilitate communication efforts of students who rely on AAC
  – Team members must learn the system even if it is unfamiliar
  **This can be alleviated if the student is assigned a paraprofessional that follows him/her from preschool to kindergarten to elementary school**
IEP

Should include Academic, Social, and Cross-Curricular goals (communication, ADLs, motor skills)

Step 1: Identify priority goals (parent input, AAC team, support staff)

Example: Cassidy will use her SGD to communicate topic-specific information during each unit or lesson.

Example: Cassidy will increase her ability to write connected text on her SGD and on a computer.
IEP

Should include Academic, Social, and Cross-Curricular goals (communication, ADLs, motor skills)

Step 2: Identify at least one grade level general education standard that applies to all students

Example standard, language arts: Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

**Effective Communication

GOAL: Cassidy will increase her ability to communicate effectively in writing with her SGD.
IEP

Should include Academic, Social, and Cross-Curricular goals (communication, ADLs, motor skills)

Step 3: Identify classroom settings and activities in which each goal will be taught and the evaluation criteria that will be used to determine the student has met the objectives

Example standard, language arts: Cassidy will contribute to weekly group book reports by producing at least three sentences with her SGD, with peer support.
IEP

Should include Academic, Social, and Cross-Curricular goals (communication, ADLs, motor skills)

Step 4: Determine the specific supports the student will need to achieve the goals and objectives

Example standard, language arts: Classmates will dictate sentences for Cassidy to write when preparing a group book report

Programming: key words may need to be added
IEP Resources


• *Choosing Options and Accommodations for Children: A Guide to Educational Planning for Students with Disabilities* - Third Edition (Giangreco, Cloninger, Iverson, 2011)

• *The Inclusion Facilitator’s Guide* (Jorgensen, Schuh, & Nisbet, 2006)

• *Augmentative & Alternative Communication: Supporting Children & Adults with Complex Communication Needs* - Fourth Edition (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2013)
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