

# Extended Learning Support for Students with AAC/AT Devices

## How Parents can Support AAC at Home


Chino Valley Unified School District  
Special Education Department



## What Is AAC?

Augmentative and alternative communication, or **AAC**, is a term used to describe various methods of communication that can help people who are unable to use verbal speech to communicate. **AAC** methods vary and may be personalized to meet each individual's needs.

AAC includes all the ways we share our ideas and feelings without talking. We all use forms of AAC every day. You use AAC when you use facial expressions or gestures instead of talking. You use AAC when you write a note and pass it to a friend or coworker. We may not realize how often we communicate without talking.




People with severe speech or language problems may need AAC to help them communicate. Some may use it all of the time. Others may say some words but use AAC for longer sentences or with people they don't know well. AAC can help in school, at work, and when talking with friends and family.





## Unaided Systems

You do not need anything but your own body to use unaided systems. These include gestures, body language, facial expressions, and sign language.



## Aided Systems

An aided system uses some sort of tool or device. There are two types of aided systems—basic and high-tech. A pen and paper is a basic aided system. Pointing to letters, words, or pictures on a board is a basic aided system. Touching letters or pictures on a computer screen that speaks for you is a high-tech aided system.



Short Video: How a Communication Device can Support Language  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIFNMky22-U>





Aided Language Stimulation Explained

107,079 views • Aug 11, 2015

👍 280    💬 5    ➦ SHARE    ⚙️ SAVE    ⋮





# How to Use AAC at Home

- Parents have a unique opportunity to teach language in natural situations. As a parent, you are the constant in your child's life. Schools, therapists, and teachers may change, but you are always there. If you understand your child's device and effective implementation strategies, you can help train new members of the team. You can't teach your child a skill you don't have. Learn your child's device. Know how to communicate with it and know how to program it. Practice, practice, practice!
  - Kids with language delays have difficulty learning concepts by being told what they mean. They need to see it and experience it! To develop expressive language, you'll want your child to pair a consistent motor movement with hearing the word and seeing something happen.
- 
- 







# How to Use AAC at Home

- Initially, give them an opportunity to use words and see a response without a right or wrong answer. Provide opportunities for errorless learning.
  - Ask open ended questions. Don't focus on labeling items or testing their knowledge.
    - “Which color do you want to wear?” or “What color should I wear?”
    - “What do you want to drink?”
    - “What do you think?”
    - “What animal am I?” Then act like that animal and make animal noises
    - Have several verbs accessible and whatever they say, their sibling has to do
- 
- 







# How to Use AAC at Home

- Teach core words in a variety of activities throughout the day.
    - “Go” - To go in the wagon, to go in the car, to make someone go away, to make a toy operate
    - “Turn” - To spin in a swing, to spin a top, to open a jar, to request a turn
    - “On” - to turn the light on, to turn the TV on, to ride piggyback
    - “More” - to request more food/drink, to blow up a balloon more, to dance more
    - Consult with the SLP to determine what other words your student is working on that you can support outside of the school day
- 
- 



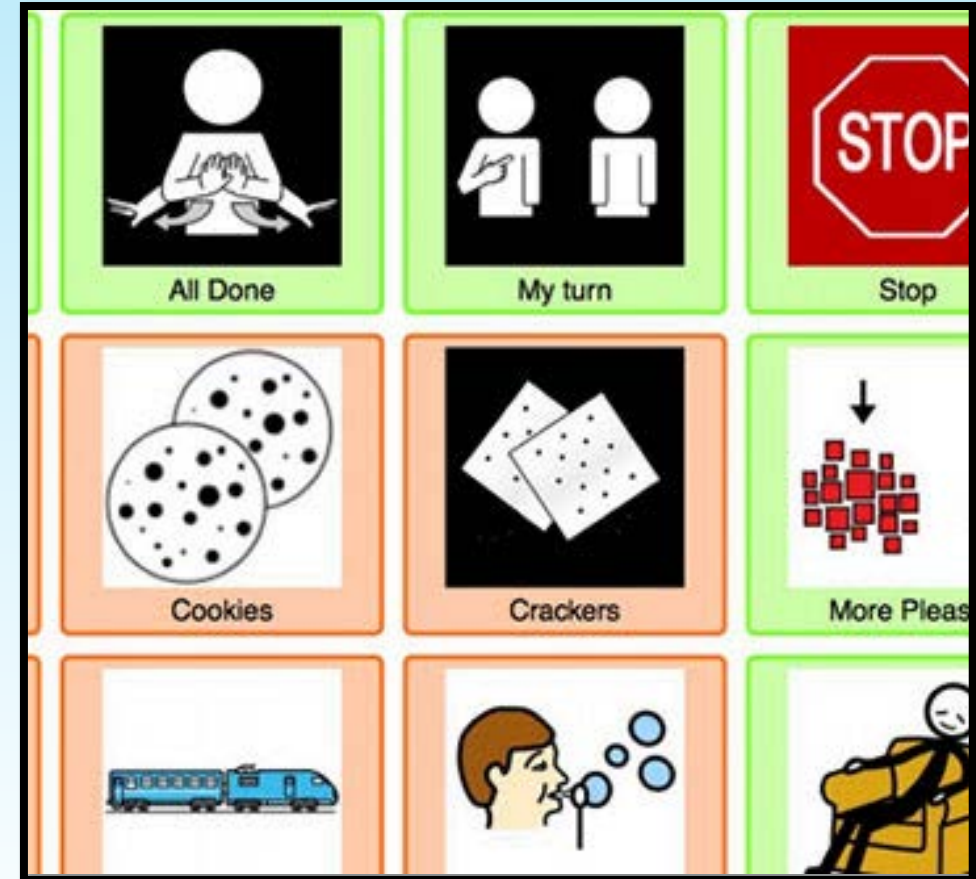
# How to Use AAC at Home

- If a child “says” a word you don’t think he meant to say, respond to it anyway. This provides an opportunity to teach a new word.
  - Encourage them to communicate for a variety of reasons, not just to request an item or activity. Allow them to practice their language with greetings, rejection, commenting, directing, describing, etc.
  - Briefly encourage device use during activities while they are meaningful and enjoyable but quit while it’s going well. There is a danger in pushing too hard and too fast in that the child will see the device as something that makes his life harder.
  - Follow your child’s passions or interests, you can expand your child’s vocabulary around them.
- 
- 
- 
- 



# How to Use AAC at Home

- Accept all forms of communication: gestures, facial expressions, intelligible verbalizations. If you understand what the child is saying, don't make him "say it on your device." If you don't understand, "Can you tell me this way?"
- Model the language at your child's level of communicating. If he uses one- or two-word combinations, don't model complete sentences. Allow siblings to use the device.



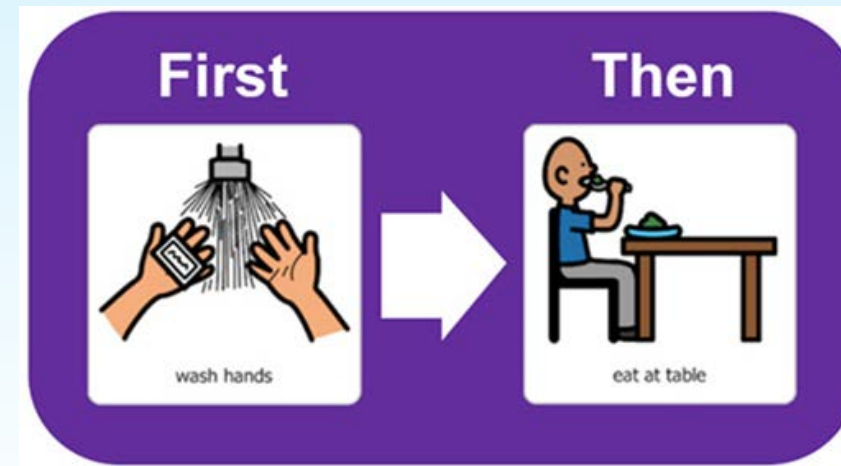
The background is a light blue sky with several stylized autumn leaves in shades of green, orange, and yellow scattered around the edges. At the bottom, there are rolling green hills. The main title is centered in a large, black, serif font.

# General Strategies for Home

<https://www.assistiveware.com/blog/language-opportunities-using-aac-home>

# General Strategies for Home

- Communication does not stop at home or at school.
- Successful communication happens when people with communication difficulties can use their AAC system in all environments.
- Your home is a busy active place, with many comings and goings. But two things need to stay consistent for your child who uses AAC.
- Firstly, your child needs to have easy access to their AAC system.
- And secondly, your child needs to see their AAC system being used by people at home to communicate real messages in real situations (aka “modeling”).



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

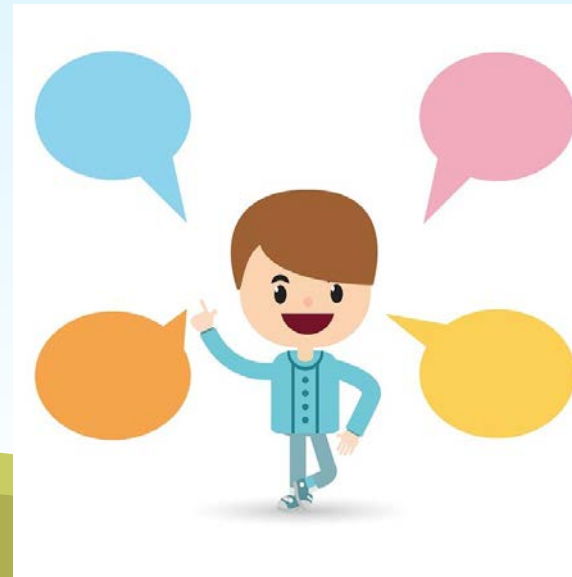
# General Strategies for Home

## Always Available

- Is your home set up for AAC?
- Can you grab the AAC system ready to communicate quickly and easily?
- Can your child access their AAC system independently?
- It's important to give your child access to an AAC system all the time. It needs to be in easy reach and/or always in the same place.
- If your child uses a high-tech AAC system (such as an AAC app on an iPad), it can be a great idea to have light-tech (or paper-based) version of it in places around the house.
- Could you stick laminated boards to places such as the mirror in the bathroom, cupboard doors or tabletops? This means that the AAC can be grabbed and used easily!
- Having a light-tech or paper-based backup of the AAC system is also useful if something happens to the AAC device.

## Know the Core Words

- Know the Core Words that your student is working on with the Speech and Language Pathologist and with their teacher.
- Have a Core set of words that you use consistently with your family; consult with SLP as needed.





# General Strategies for Home

## Modeling

Right... you have your house set up for AAC, with the AAC easily available - now you can MODEL!

Kids learn how to speak by hearing their parents, teachers, siblings and other people around them speak all the time. Similarly, AAC learners also need to see what it looks like to communicate using their AAC systems in real conversations. So how do you do this?

You need to model words and sentences on the AAC system regularly. Never heard of modeling before? The idea is to use the AAC system, by pointing to words, when you talk with your child. You don't need to model every single word you say. Instead, model the core words - the most important words. Make sure you model one step above your child's level.

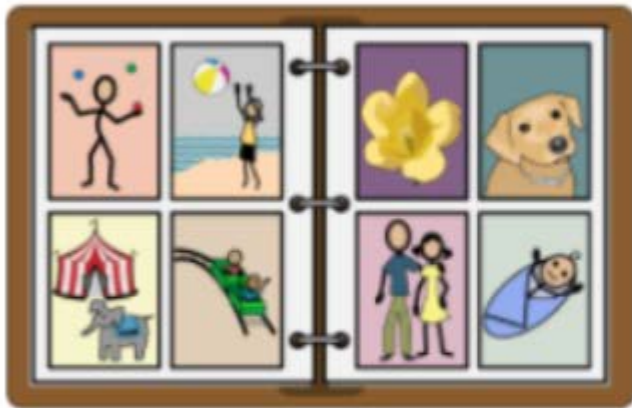
## Practical Ideas and Activities at Home

Once you have the AAC system in place and you're modeling as much as you can, provide fun and motivating reasons for your child to use their AAC system.

The more often you build in opportunities to model AAC with your child in natural and fun ways, the more easily your child will learn to use AAC.

These ideas and activities are easy and engaging ways to interact with your child using their AAC system.

# Example Activities



**Look at** a family photo album

**Talk about** the pictures, the people, what happened, what you like, what you see, etc.

# Example Activities



**Read through** junk mail, catalogues or magazines

**Talk about** things to buy, birthday wish lists, gift ideas for friends, things of interest, stories about celebrities, recipes, etc.

# Example Activities



**Cook together**

**Talk about** what you have to do, the ingredients, the taste, what you like or dislike about it, etc.

The illustration shows a cartoon chef with a white hat and a red neckerchief, smiling. He is holding a blue bowl with a wooden spoon, and a pot of brown liquid is cooking on a red burner to his left. The entire scene is set within a white rectangular frame.



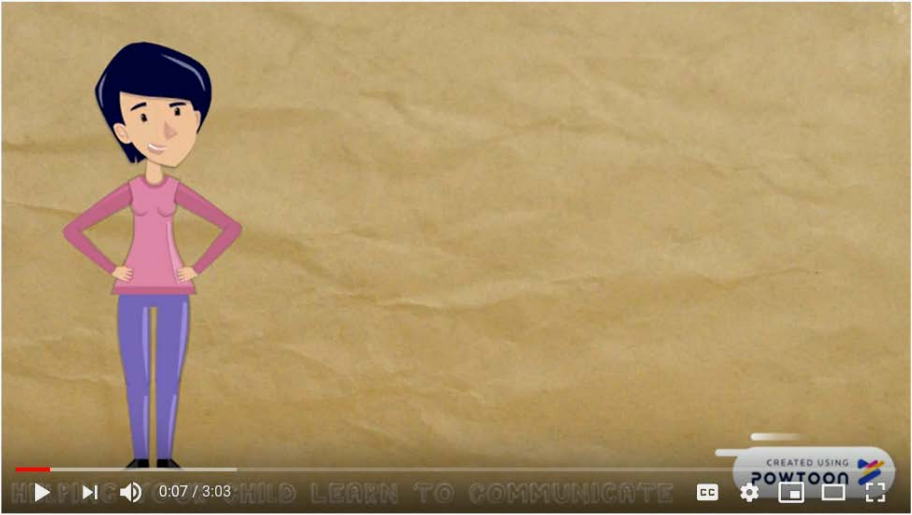
# Example Activities



Play with favourite toys and games

Talk **about** the toys and games, take turns and model words like: *more, play, on, off, like, all done,* and much more!


# Another Great Video for Parents & Caregivers



Self Talk, Parallel Talk, & Toy Talk

854 views • Jul 24, 2019

8 0 SHARE SAVE ...

 **Heather Hayworth**  
29 subscribers

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

This video is part of a series geared toward parents, guardians and caregivers who want to help their children learn to communicate. Learn about the strategies of self talk, parallel talk, and toy talk!

[SHOW MORE](#)

- Self Talk
- Parallel Talk
- Toy Talk

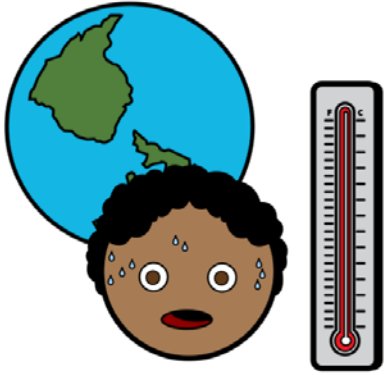


# Social Stories

Social Stories are used to teach particular social skills, such as identifying important cues in a given situation; taking another's point of view; understanding rules, routines, situations, upcoming events or abstract concepts; and understanding expectations.

WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

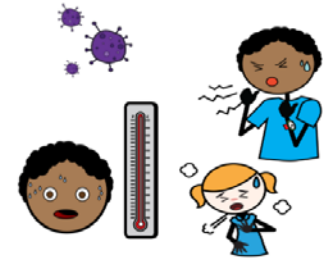
**WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS?**



Written by Amanda Mc Guinness

WWW.LITTLEPUDDINS.IE

The Coronavirus is a virus that can make people feel unwell.

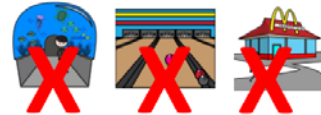


The Coronavirus can also be called "COVID-19".

**COVID-19 / CORONAVIRUS**

WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

WWW.LITTLEPUDDINS.IE



I will not be able to go to my favourite places for now.

Once the Coronavirus is gone I will be able to go to my favourite places again.

For Parents/Caregivers

Please note that this document is not a diagnostic tool for the Coronavirus.

It is a social story and by its very nature provides limited specific information.

If you require additional factual information about the Coronavirus please go to the following;

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Many thanks

Amanda (The Autism Educator)

WWW.THEAUTISMEDUCATOR.IE

# Social Stories

## Advantages of Using Social Stories

- Memory development. Reading and rereading stories that include a series of events helps young children practice their memory skills, including prediction.
- Empathy. ...
- Concrete instruction. ...
- Clear communication. ...
- Literacy skills.










### I wash my hands



### Handwashing Poster

Download this resource from [Angie S](#) by [clicking here](#).

### Social Distancing

-  Clean your hands regularly.
-  Mind how you cough and sneeze.
-  Avoid large crowds and events.
-  Ration hugs and kisses.
-  Swap out handshakes.
-  Rework high fives.
-  Delay visiting large venues.
-  Chat on social media or phones.
-  Hold meetings online.



### Social Distancing Poster

This poster was developed by [SpinDrift](#). Get [your copy here](#).



# Please Don't Leave My Voice on the Shelf

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=20&v=z3vtcjJfxvg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=20&v=z3vtcjJfxvg)





#hearmyvoice

Please Don't Leave My Voice on the Shelf - A Powerful Video about AAC Access

4,098 views • Feb 17, 2019

👍 35    💬 0    ➦ SHARE    ≡+ SAVE    ⋮



# AAC at Home

Parents, siblings, and extended family need to take the opportunity to interact with the AAC device.

Encourage your student to use their AAC device consistently for their communication.

## DO's & DON'Ts of AAC

### This is what we do

- ✓ Do use the AAC system to talk yourself
- ✓ Do aim high
- ✓ Do use a well designed, comprehensive vocabulary e.g. core vocabulary or PODD
- ✓ Do provide enough wait time
- ✓ Do ask open ended questions
- ✓ Do focus on key words when modelling
- ✓ Do respect multi-modal communication
- ✓ Do allow exploration and access to the whole vocabulary
- ✓ Do make sure AAC is available all day, every day
- ✓ Do describe what you want to say using core words

### This is what we don't do

- ✗ Don't expect the AAC user to communicate without you modelling how
- ✗ Don't demand prerequisite skills
- ✗ Don't provide an AAC system with only a handful of choices
- ✗ Don't do all the talking
- ✗ Don't ask questions the AAC user knows you already know the answer to
- ✗ Don't think you need to always model grammatically complete sentences
- ✗ Don't say "And now say it on your talker"
- ✗ Don't create custom pages for specific activities
- ✗ Don't limit access to the AAC system
- ✗ Don't focus on adding lots of vocabulary

Learn more: [assistiveware.com/aac-do-dont](https://assistiveware.com/aac-do-dont)



AssistiveWare

Based on a presentation by Jane Farrall and David Niemeijer, May 2015

# Free Communication Board Resources for Parents

Boardmaker images—create and personalize your own communication board for home

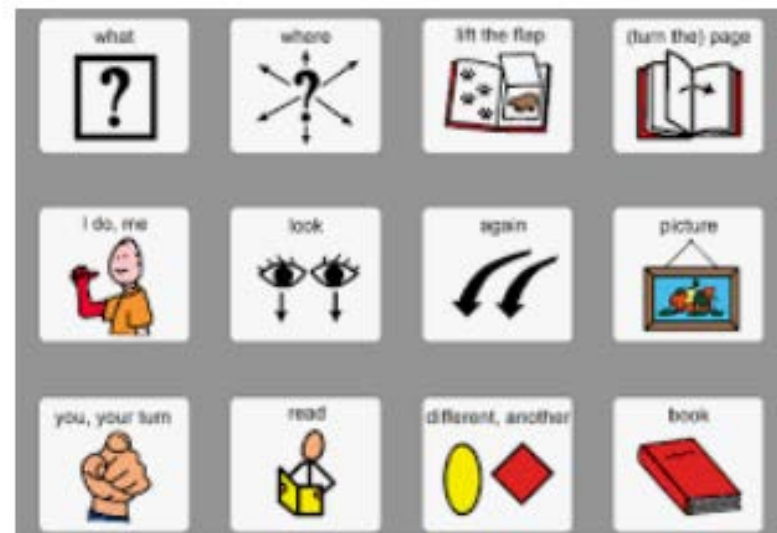
[https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&surl=1&q=boardmaker+images+free&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwit0cDDjaPoAhWPgZ4KHSI-AM8Q2-cCegQIABAA&oq=boardmaker+images+free&gs\\_l=img.3..0j0i67.2275.2275..2808...0.0..0.264.264.2-1.....0....1.gws-wiz-img.np5HPZI-CC0&ei=tphxXq2eBI-D-gSi\\_ID4DA&bih=770&biw=1368&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enUS869US869](https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&surl=1&q=boardmaker+images+free&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwit0cDDjaPoAhWPgZ4KHSI-AM8Q2-cCegQIABAA&oq=boardmaker+images+free&gs_l=img.3..0j0i67.2275.2275..2808...0.0..0.264.264.2-1.....0....1.gws-wiz-img.np5HPZI-CC0&ei=tphxXq2eBI-D-gSi_ID4DA&bih=770&biw=1368&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS869US869)







Feelings/ Emotions Charades  
boardmakeronline.com



### Meal Time



Free Boardmaker Resources

# Important Things to Remember:

## Communication

- Repetitive
- Reinforced
- Rewarded
- Repetitive

## Parent/Family Role

- Create Opportunities
- Model
- Have fun

## AAC supports:

- Communication
- Relationships
- Child's Connection to World

