

AAC: Give It A Try

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Assistive Technology Device

- Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. (Assistive Technology Act of 2004)

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

- All forms of communication (other than speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. (ASHA)
- An area of clinical practice that attempts to compensate (either temporarily or permanently) for the impairment and disability patterns of individuals with severe expressive communication disorders (i.e., the severely speech-language and writing impaired).
- AAC incorporates the individual's full communication abilities and may include any existing speech or vocalizations, gestures, manual signs, and aided communication. (Sevcik & Ronski)

Unaided communication systems (low tech)

- do not provide voice output or electronic hardware. Someone must be present for unaided systems to work (they cannot be used on a phone or from room to room).
 - Gestures
 - Body Language
 - Sign Language
 - Communication Boards

Aided communication systems

- Electronic devices that may or may not provide some type of voice output.
 - display letters, words, and phrases, or a variety of symbols, to allow the user to construct messages.
 - Messages can be spoken electronically and/or printed on a visual display or strip of paper.
 - Many can connect to a computer for written communication.

Lite Tech

- typically consist of a digitized speech recorder with a touch sensitive display pad and sometimes switch access
- may have one or many messages
- usually require a battery
- Examples include the **big mac**, **tech talk**, and the **LEO**
- Usually less than \$1500

High Tech

- Computerized VOCAs that vary from single purpose appliance-like systems to multipurpose computer-based communication aids
- Typically require training and ongoing support
- May also have integrated computers
- Examples include those from the **Dynavox** company (DV4, MT4, V series, etc) and those from the **Prentke-Romich** company (Pathfinder, Vantage, Vanguard, ECO)

Technology Abandonment

- Client stops using a device even though the need for which the device was obtained still exists.
- About 30% of all devices previously used are abandoned.

Reasons for Technology Abandonment

- Lack of consumer opinion / poor match to device
 - Individual
 - Family
 - Education/work
- Complexity of device
 - Lack of support/training
 - Difficult to set up
- Technical Difficulties
 - Device broken or malfunctioning
 - Not easily replaceable

TAD Center

- TAD Center attempts to prevent technology abandonment by providing
 - Inclusive Evaluations
 - Device Loan/Trial
 - Training and Support

Evaluations / Demonstrations

- Involves as many team members as possible (client, family, school/work, therapist, etc.)
- Client and team shown multiple devices.
 - Needs of client
 - Demonstrations
 - Pros
 - Cons
- Team's decision

Loan / Trial

- Client can try device in their daily setting for about 90 days
- TAD set up device and train family/staff
- Personalization can often be transferred to permanent system

Training / Support

- Resource books and materials.
- One on one training and support.
 - Email
 - Phone
 - Visit
 - On-site
- Limited technical support.
- Information on other resources (vendors, technical support, websites, etc.)

Resource Activity: Games

- Fun activity
- Variety of communication devices
- Many different communication levels can participate at one time.

Resource Activity: Classroom Newspaper

- Conduct survey
- Interview feature
- Take pictures
- Write articles
- Import pictures

Project START

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