



How to model with Augmentative and Alternative Communication

What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)?

- AAC stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication.
- It is when a person communicates using a method other than talking, such as pictures, signs, or typing.

What is AAC Modelling?

- When families, teachers, or friends use AAC to talk with someone who is learning to use AAC.
- Modelling helps a child learn the meaning of AAC words and see how AAC works!

Steps for AAC Modelling

1. **Get the AAC.** Make sure your iPad, coreboard, or switches are within reach!
2. **Get your child's attention.** Use something fun (their favourite book, a snack, a toy) to catch their interest.
3. **Say something using AAC.** Touch a button on a device or point to an icon and say the word out loud on a coreboard.
4. **Offer AAC to your child.** Wait expectantly for 10 seconds.
5. **If your child says something, respond!** Even if they say something that does not make sense, they are exploring and learning.
6. **If your child doesn't say anything, that is okay!** They are watching you use AAC, and learning how it works.
7. **Repeat steps 3-5.** Keep modelling in lots of different places and situations. Learning happens everywhere!

Strategies for AAC Modelling

- **Talk about what your child is doing:** They are putting cars DOWN the ramp, putting pieces IN to the puzzle, GO-ing outside, OPEN-ing and EAT-ing their favourite snacks! Model what is happening using AAC.
- **Talk about what you are doing:** WAIT-ing in line at the store, going UP the stairs, READ-ing a book... model what you are doing using AAC too!
- **Focus on Core:** Core words are the most common words we use in English, e.g., stop/go, want, I/you, more, all done, help, etc. We use these same words in many different situations. When we focus on teaching core, our children can express themselves in powerful ways!
- **Start with 1-2 words at a time:** It is okay to use 1-2 words at first. Don't worry about using complete sentences! Pick one or two words that you can use often and keep modelling in different situations. Repetition helps learning!
- **Play with AAC:** Children learn AAC by exploring the words in their system. You can do that, too! Experiment to see what you can find. Use AAC while you are playing and as a way to play. Talking should be fun, and it is okay to make mistakes!

Adapted from Ms. Petersen SLP: "AAC Modelling: How to support AAC at home"