



# AAC and Early Intervention

## Getting Started

### Common Myths & Concerns

What concerns do you hear from families and teams?

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**Concern 1: Does she need certain skills first?**

What we know...

- There are no pre-requisite skills to use AAC
- The earlier we start incorporating AAC, the better the outcomes
- Children learn by doing! Don't wait for them to prove themselves.  
(Ronski & Sevcik, 2019)

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**Concern 2: Do I need to wait until he's older?**

What we know...

- No research to support this.
- Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have benefited from AAC.
- Cognition and language support each other.  
(ASHA, 2008)

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**Concern 3: How am I going to embed AAC into routine?**

What we know...

- AAC is a tool that can make routines and family life easier.
- Research has shown parents and caregivers CAN learn to embed AAC communication strategies into routines.
- Using SGDs in natural routine results in increased parent confidence and turn taking with their child.

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**Concern 4: Won't AAC keep my child from talking?**

What we know...

- Research indicated speech will maintain or increase
- Children use the quickest, most effective means available to communicate.
- AAC increases communication!  
(Cress & Martin, 2003)

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**Working through Concerns**

- Validate concerns
- Share stories & video
- Educate and train caregiver
- Include caregiver in device and vocabulary selection

**Supports and Resources!**

- [www.exploreAAC.com](http://www.exploreAAC.com)
- PRC & Saltillo Brand YouTube Channels
- Consultant [https://exploreaac.com/#whats\\_next](https://exploreaac.com/#whats_next)



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### Where to Begin

What does your intervention look like? What model/framework are you using?

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#### Early Intervention Strategies

- Parent coaching
- Reflective questioning
- Routines based intervention

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#### What makes AAC different?

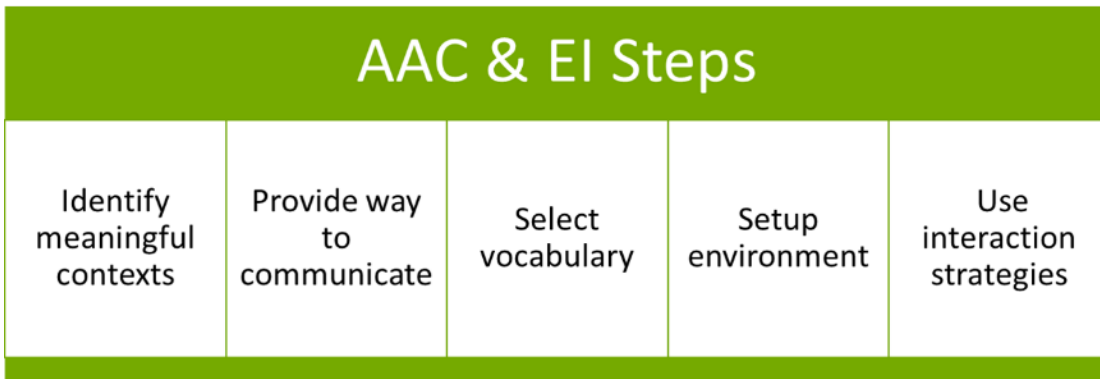
AAC is a tool in our toolbox to assist infants and toddlers in their daily routines. It is not the goal. We need to help families feel comfortable using AAC across all their routines.

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#### Early Intervention Steps with AAC (Light & Drager, 2019)




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#### Supports and Resources!

Low-tech boards available for FREE. Download from [www.aaclanguagelab.com](http://www.aaclanguagelab.com)




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### Early Intervention Steps with AAC

This handout is based off the work by Light & Drager (2019). Visit <http://aackids.psu.edu> for more information.

#### Step 1: Identify meaningful contexts for communication with your child

- *Is this activity motivating for my child?*
- *Do I have a way to interact socially with my child during the routine?*
- *Is what we're doing appropriate for their current level of understanding and interest?*

<b>Context</b>	
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#### Step 2: Provide effective way(s) for your child to communicate

- *How will my child respond?*
- *If using a high-tech SGD, do I need a low-tech backup for this activity?*

<b>Communication Method</b>	
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#### Step 3: Select appropriate vocabulary for your child

- *Which words are we targeting for my child to use?*
- *Are we using words that are motivating? Are enough words flexible for many situations?*
- *Do I know how to model these words?*

<b>Target Words</b>	
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#### Step 4: Set up the environment to support your child's communication

- *Are they in a position where they are stable and able to use the AAC?*
- *Can my child easily see and reach the AAC?*
- *Am I face to face with my child so they can see me and my face?*

<b>Environment Setup</b>	
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#### Step 5: Use appropriate interaction strategies to support communication

- *Am I modeling as much as I can? Can I model more?*
- *Do I wait to give my child time to respond? Do I need to count to 10 in my head?*
- *Do I respond to every communicative attempt? Do I recast on the device at times?*

<b>Strategies</b>	
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### Resources & References

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#### Resources

- AAC Language Lab: <https://aaclanguelab.com>
- Explore AAC: <https://exploreaac.com>
- PRC-Salttillo: <https://prc-salttillo.com>
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: <https://ectacenter.org/topics/atech/atech.asp>
- Pennsylvania State University Early Intervention: <https://aackids.psu.edu/index.php/page/show/id/1/>
- Colorado IMPAACT Program: <https://www1.ucdenver.edu/centers/center-for-inclusive-design-and-engineering/community-engagement/assistive-tech-in-k-12/colorado-impact>
- Stay, Play, Talk Program at Vanderbilt: <https://ebip.vkcsites.org/stay-play-talk-procedures/>

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