



Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC)

AAC FAQs

Will focusing on AAC stop my child from speaking?

This is a very common question. Some people worry that if a child begins to use symbols, signs or a device such as an iPad to communicate, it will prevent them from using verbal speech. This is actually the exact opposite! Research has shown that AAC strategies facilitate speech and language development. Children using AAC have also demonstrated improved attention, behaviour, participation, social interaction and academic progress.

My child uses some words, so why would we use AAC?

Even if a child is using a few single words, it is probable that they have much more to say. Giving children as many ways to communicate as possible will help reduce frustration and increase independence.

Should we wait and see if they start speaking?

When considering communication intervention, the earlier the better. We know that when children are young, their brains are the most flexible and susceptible to change. AAC can always be reduced/removed if it becomes unnecessary.

Is it too late?

It is never too late to start implementing AAC strategies. There are no prerequisites for AAC use and any child who is not able to meet their needs using their current means of communication is a candidate for AAC.

Will AAC fix everything?

It is important to remember AAC is a “tool” not a magic wand. AAC success is dependent on many factors and progress may be gradual. Not all systems are appropriate for all children so in some cases several options may need to be trialed. It is also important to give AAC time – a child will not learn to use a system without it being taught and modelled over time.