

My child can talk; why should we consider AAC?

Many parents whose children have speech difficulties worry that introducing an alternative communication system, such as a picture book or an electronic device, will slow down their child's speech development. However, research shows that introducing augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) does not hinder children's speech development. Rather, it gives them an opportunity to practice and use some more complicated grammar or vocabulary than their speech might allow. It is also a way to communicate with people that have more difficulty understanding your child's speech (e.g., substitute teachers, extended family).



Children can use a combination of speaking and AAC to communicate all of the messages that they want to. As children's speech improves, they will need and use their AAC less.

Most Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) recommend that children with severe speech difficulties receive access to AAC as soon as possible, so that they can communicate to their full potential today and get the same opportunities as other children to practice grammar even when they can't practice it using their speech. At the same time, SLPs also work with these children to help them improve their speaking abilities.

Questions to Think About:

- Can your child use speech to communicate all of the things that he or she wants to say?
- Can teachers, peers, and other people in your community understand your child most of the time?
- What strategies or tools can your child use to communicate when people have trouble understanding?
- Is your child frustrated or socially withdrawn because of speech difficulties?

**Talk with a Speech-Language Pathologist to find out more about AAC.
Discover an option that works for you and your family.**