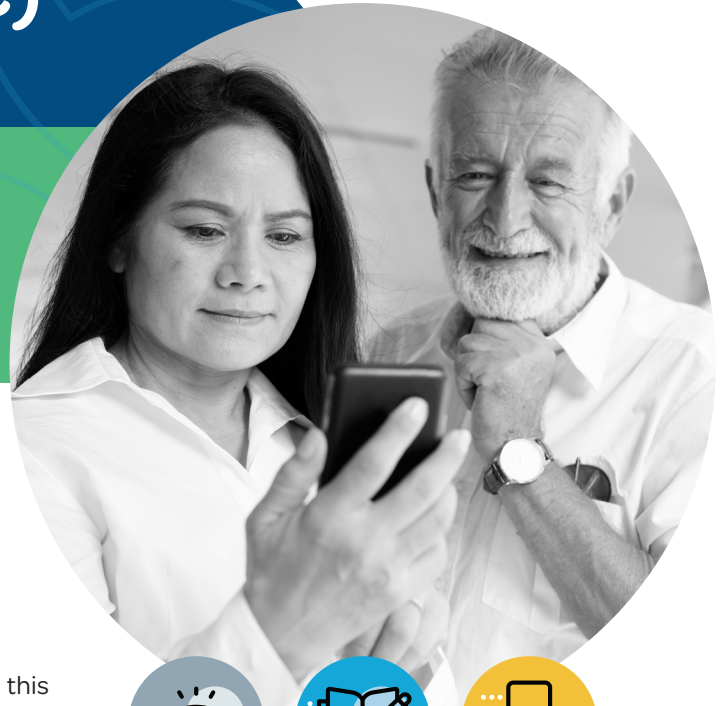


# Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

AAC supports communication  
for those with speech and/or  
language difficulties.



## What is AAC?

**Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is when a person uses something other than speech to communicate.**

All of us use forms of augmentative communication at times; this might be eye contact, a wink, a raised eyebrow, gestures, or body movements. Alternative methods of communication might include drawings, writing, picture boards, books or other printed materials, a computer, or an app on a mobile phone. **People can use AAC systems full time or part time.**



## Who might use AAC?

- Individuals with developmental, intellectual, or motor challenges or atypical neurological development, such as autism or cerebral palsy.
- Those with acquired conditions such as stroke or traumatic brain injury.
- Persons with progressive neurological conditions, such as ALS or Parkinson's.
- Patients with disability following surgery, which may be temporary (intubation and/or ventilation) or permanent (laryngectomy, total glossectomy).
- Patients at the end of life who are unable to express their thoughts, feelings, and wishes verbally.

There are no “pre-requisites” required for an individual to be considered for AAC, although some systems might be more beneficial than others for an individual at any given point in time. All individuals are considered candidates for AAC intervention if their communication abilities do not meet their communication needs.

Speech-language pathologists can **offer** a comprehensive assessment, **communication strategies, supports, techniques, equipment, and communication partner training**, taking each AAC user’s unique needs and abilities into account. AAC intervention requires ongoing collaborative decision making and training, as well as modifications to support changes in communication needs over time.<sup>1</sup>

Communication is essential for allowing us to connect with others, share **our thoughts, opinions, needs and wishes**, retain our autonomy, and help us **respond** in potentially unsafe situations.

**Communication is a human right, and everyone deserves communication access.**

1: American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) (n.d.). Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) ([asha.org](https://asha.org)) Retrieved August 9, 2024



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