

Talking Points for SLPs

1. MY CHILD WILL BECOME DEPENDENT ON THEIR AAC DEVICE AND LOSE THE MOTIVATION TO TALK.

“Research suggests AAC devices do not impede natural speech development and instead have shown to be great supplements to spoken language and enhance an AAC users’ communication methods. AAC is a tool that can be utilized as a total communication approach for the child and provides a bridge to help them expand their language skills.”

2. MY CHILD IS NOT READY FOR HIGH TECH AAC.

“There are no prerequisites for using a high tech AAC device. Children of any age and cognitive level can benefit from using AAC to aid in communication and language development. If your child is successfully using no tech and mid tech devices, there is opportunity for them to have their own high tech AAC device. Due to advancements in technology and communication apps, we can configure them to mirror more simple set ups, whether it is a one cell, two cell, or 32 cell page set. This gives your child the opportunity for the device to grow with them as they continue to develop language.”

3. MY CHILD IS TOO YOUNG TO USE AAC.

“Young children who experience complex communication needs benefit from AAC devices and strategies to help aid in the development of language, literacy, communication, and cognitive development. The earlier AAC is incorporated into their lives, the greater the potential for improved outcomes.”

4. MY CHILD IS FRUSTRATED AND HAVING TANTRUMS BECAUSE THEY CANNOT COMMUNICATE WHAT THEY WANT OR NEED.

“Using AAC as a tool in a total communication approach can help to aid your child express their wants and needs. Introducing AAC early, before communication breakdowns occur, has positive effects on speech and language development because the child learns how to communicate what they are feeling.”

5. THIS IS TOO COMPLICATED; I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE A DEVICE OR AAC.

“There are many resources available to aid in yours and your child’s ability to work towards independently using a speech generating device. Help with AAC intervention will be provided, as well as a service delivery model that supports you to use the device throughout your child’s speech and language intervention.”

AAC Myth-Busting Analogies:

Supporting Conversations

Myth Helpful Analogies

There Are Prerequisites to Using AAC Devices

Just as we don't expect a child to read before giving them books, we don't wait for certain skills before introducing AAC. We give them the tools first. Access to communication tools, paired with consistent support, allows children to build and strengthen their ability to express themselves over time.

Sustained Attention is Required for AAC Use

Language learning is like hearing background music at a party – even if you're not focused on the speakers all the time, you're still absorbing the melody. Kids don't need perfect attention to start learning AAC, they just need repeated exposure.

Children Need Finger Isolation/ Fine Motor Skills to be Given Access to AAC

Learning to use AAC is like how a child learns to eat. At first, they use their whole hand to grab food, then they develop a pinch, and eventually they learn to use utensils. We don't expect a child to wait to eat until they've mastered a fork and spoon. AAC works the same way—we start with tools that match your child's current motor skills, like larger buttons or switches, and adjust as their skills grow with practice and support. We don't wait until a certain milestone to offer communication supports.

AAC Will Make My Child Dependent and Stop Talking

Using AAC as a support is like using subtitles in a movie. The subtitles can support comprehension, but they don't stop a person from hearing the movie if they are able. AAC supports speech- it doesn't replace it.

AAC Devices Are Too High-Tech for Young Children

High Tech AAC is like a light switch. Young children don't need to understand electricity to flip a switch and light up a room. In the same way, they don't need to fully grasp every detail of an AAC device to start using it meaningfully. With the right support, even little ones can learn that pressing a button can "turn on" communication.

You Must Be a Certain Age to Start Using AAC

Starting AAC is like planting a garden – the earlier you plant seeds, the more time they have to grow. There's no such thing as 'too young' to start learning to communicate.

AAC Will Slow Down or Stop Speech Development

AAC is like training wheels on a bike. They don't prevent a child from learning to ride—they provide the stability and confidence needed to practice. Similarly, AAC gives children a way to communicate while they're developing speech. In fact, it often helps them build the foundation for spoken language even faster.

AAC Use Should be Discontinued if Progress Isn't Seen

Learning to use AAC takes time. We wouldn't hand someone an instrument and expect them to play perfectly right away. The same goes for AAC. Just like with any new skill, a child may not know how to do something at first—but with time, demonstration, and encouragement, they can begin to master it with confidence.



Hear from a mom of a QuickTalker Freestyle speech device user on how research led them to their decision to get a QuickTalker Freestyle for their son!

What Research Says About Speech Devices

Research suggests Augmentative and Alternative (AAC) devices, such as the QuickTalker Freestyle speech device, are great supplements to spoken language and enhance communication methods. AAC is a tool that can be utilized as a total communication approach and provides a bridge to help individuals expand their language skills. The earlier AAC is incorporated, the greater the potential for improved outcomes.

AAC Devices Promote Spoken Language:

AAC devices do not hinder spoken language development. Instead, AAC devices complement spoken language and expand communication methods.¹

Introducing AAC Early is Best:

Early integration of AAC, regardless of age, enhances language, communication, and cognitive development. Research shows that children with communication challenges do best when introduced to augmentative and alternative communication as early as 12 months.²

There Are No Prerequisites for High-Tech AAC Devices:

They are suitable for children of all ages and cognitive levels, with customizable setups that adapt as skills progress, they can work for almost all individuals.³

References:

1. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (n.d.). Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/aac/>
2. Davidoff, B. (2017, January 1). AAC With Energy—Earlier. <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/full/10.1044/leader.FTR2.22012017.48>
3. Ronski, M., & Sevcik, R. (2005a, July). Augmentative Communication and early intervention: Myths and Realities. LWW. https://journals.lww.com/ijcjournal/Fulltext/2005/07000/Augmentative_Communication_and_Early_Intervention_00002.aspx