

AAC Systems and Strategies for Individuals Diagnosed With DS/ASD



Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area
Empower - Inspire - Support

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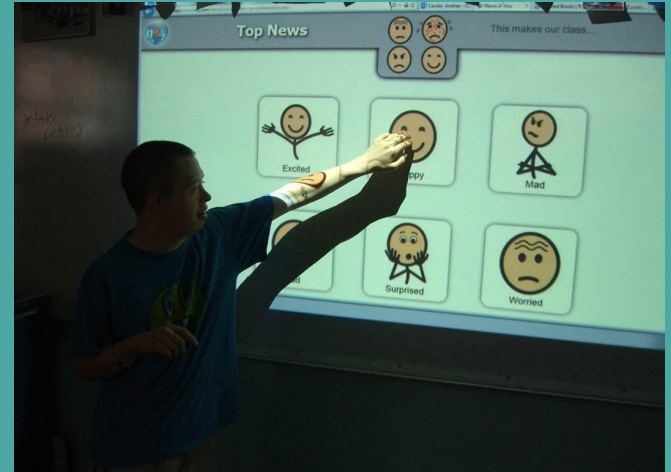
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Webinar Objectives

Gain an understanding of:

- AAC terms
 - When AAC is needed
 - Evaluation Process
 - AAC systems
 - AAC teaching strategies
 - AAC programs at the DSCBA
 - A parent's perspective
-

Expression Connection Core Beliefs

“Just because I don’t talk does not mean I don’t have anything to say.”

“Everyone deserves a voice”

“Voices can be different things for different people.”

“It’s our job to listen and learn.”

AAC Overview



Terms

Assistive Technology (AT): any tool and /or system implemented to improve and/or maintain the capabilities of an individual with a disability

- Writing
- Reading
- Computer Access
- Communication
- Play
- More...

Alternative/Augmentative Communication (AAC): a subset of AT; AAC involves the study of, and when necessary compensations put in place for individuals with severe speech and language disorders (ASHA, 2005)

Speech Generating Device (SGD): systems that enable individuals with severe speech impairments to verbally communicate their wants, needs, emotions, thoughts, etc.

Why do you use AAC?

- Moderate-Severe expressive speech/language disorder(s)
 - Limited speech output
 - Poor speech clarity
 - Language Disorder
- Expressive/Receptive Gap: understanding more than you can say
- Frustration
- Limited speech improvement with therapy
- Frequent communication breakdowns

**DS/ASD
Profile
&
Communication**

**It's
complicated**

Many moving parts

- Multiple areas of impact
 - Cognitive
 - Linguistic
 - Sensory
 - Motor
 - Behavior
- Competing strengths and challenges
- Learning styles

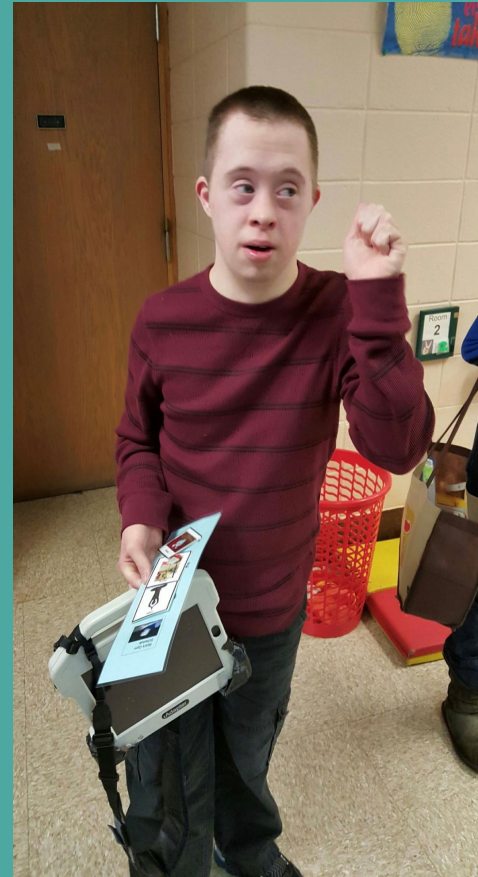
A Parent Perspective



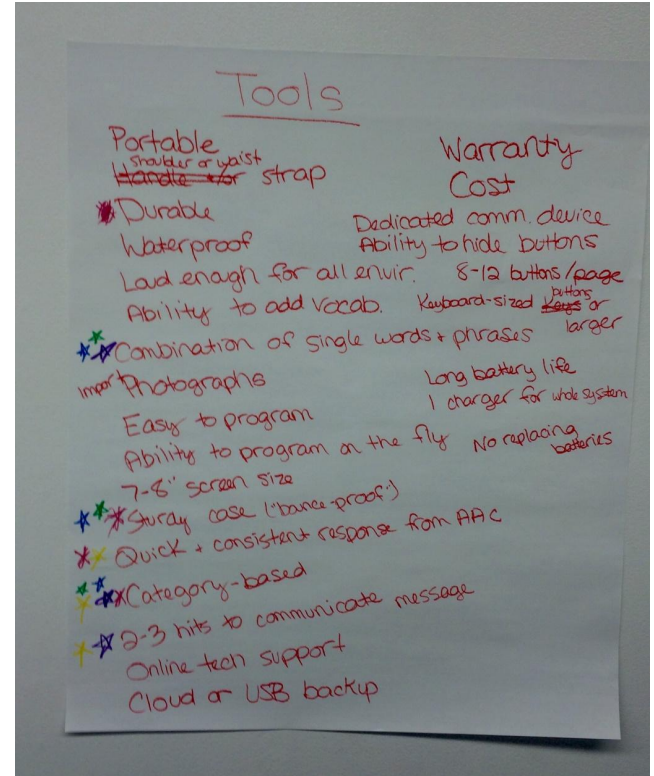
Nick age 27, dual diagnosis of DS-ASD and Verbal Apraxia

Nick's AAC Journey

- The power of pictures
- AAC evaluation age 5, Livermore, CA
- Pairing pictures with PECS icons
- Proper training in usage of Picture Exchange System (PECS)
- Re-evaluation AAC age 13, Chicago, IL
- Re-visiting AAC with the IEP team



AAC Evaluation Overview



When to explore an AAC eval

- Documented evidence of:
 - Moderate-Severe expressive speech/language disorder(s)
 - Expressive/Receptive Gap: understanding more than you can say
 - Limited speech improvement with therapy
 - Frustration

Who provides an AAC eval

- Medicare National Coverage Guideline (2001)
 - Licensed Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)
- Internal Funding with School Districts
 - AT Specialist
 - Licensed SLP

Assessment Components

Background Information

Comprehensive Assessment

Motor: ambulation, access

Sensory: vision, hearing, tactile

Cognition

Behavioral

Communication

Speech

Receptive & Expressive Language

Unaided & Aided Communication

Communication Needs

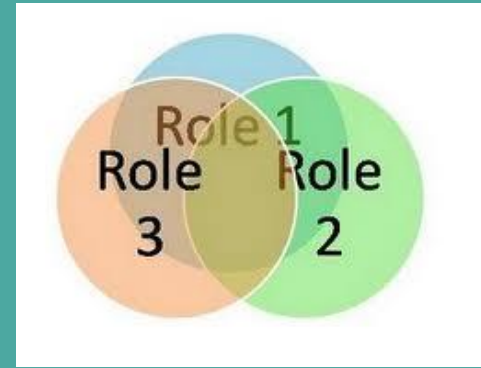
Needed Features

System/Device Trials

Recommendation(s)

The Collaborative Team

- **Essential** for AAC success
- **Team meetings and open communication**
- **Includes:**
 - User
 - Family Members
 - Teacher
 - AAC Specialist
 - SLP
 - OT
 - And more...



- **Role Delineation and Overlap (transdisciplinary)**
 - Roles are assumed by various team members
 - These roles are shared with team members (i.e. OT shares access with team)
 - Team members implement roles to ensure success (e.g. SLP implements access with SGD)

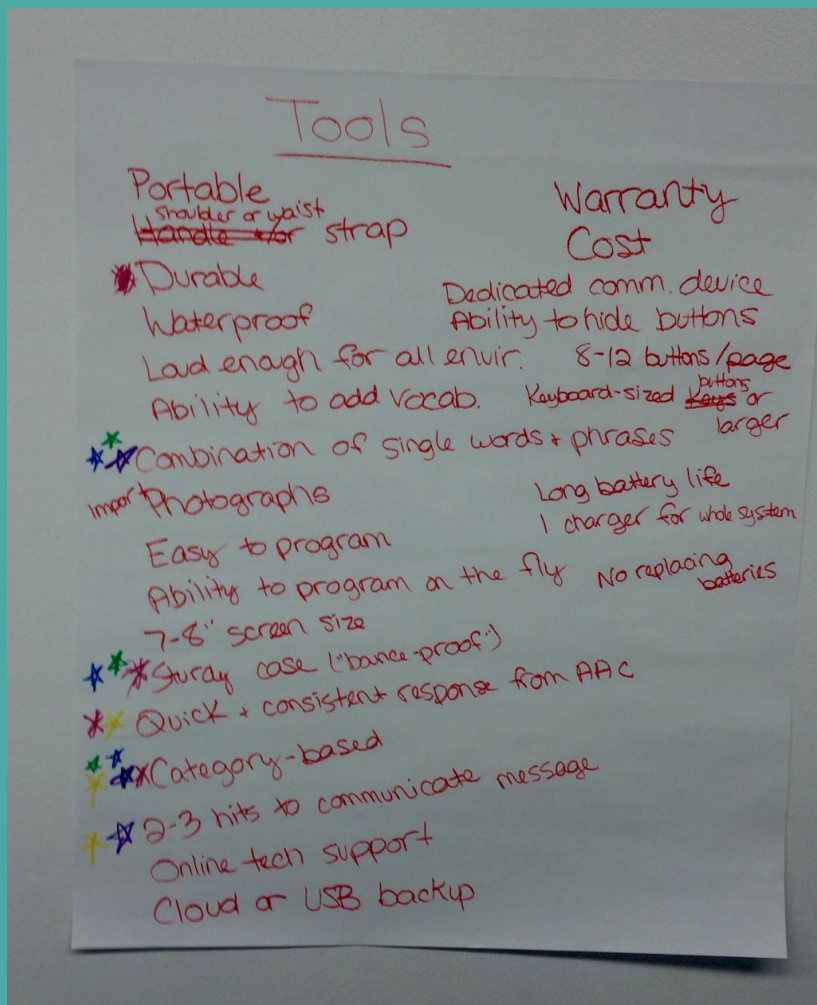
System/Device Trials = Diagnostic Intervention

- What is diagnostic intervention?
 - trying various systems as you are teaching communication
 - when one system is not working, trying another
 - data collection
 - may be a recommendation of the AAC evaluation
 - may be a long(er) process
- Why diagnostic intervention?
 - importance of trialing and providing access to a multitude of AAC systems to facilitate successful communication (Foreman & Crews)
 - Limit communicative failures to encourage the use of communication (Foreman & Crews)
 - Intervention is an art and science (Drager & Light)

A Parent Perspective

SETT is an acronym for **S**tudent, **E**nvironment, **T**ask and **T**ools. The team gathers to ask key questions and get information that will help to pinpoint what AAC technologies would best suit the student.

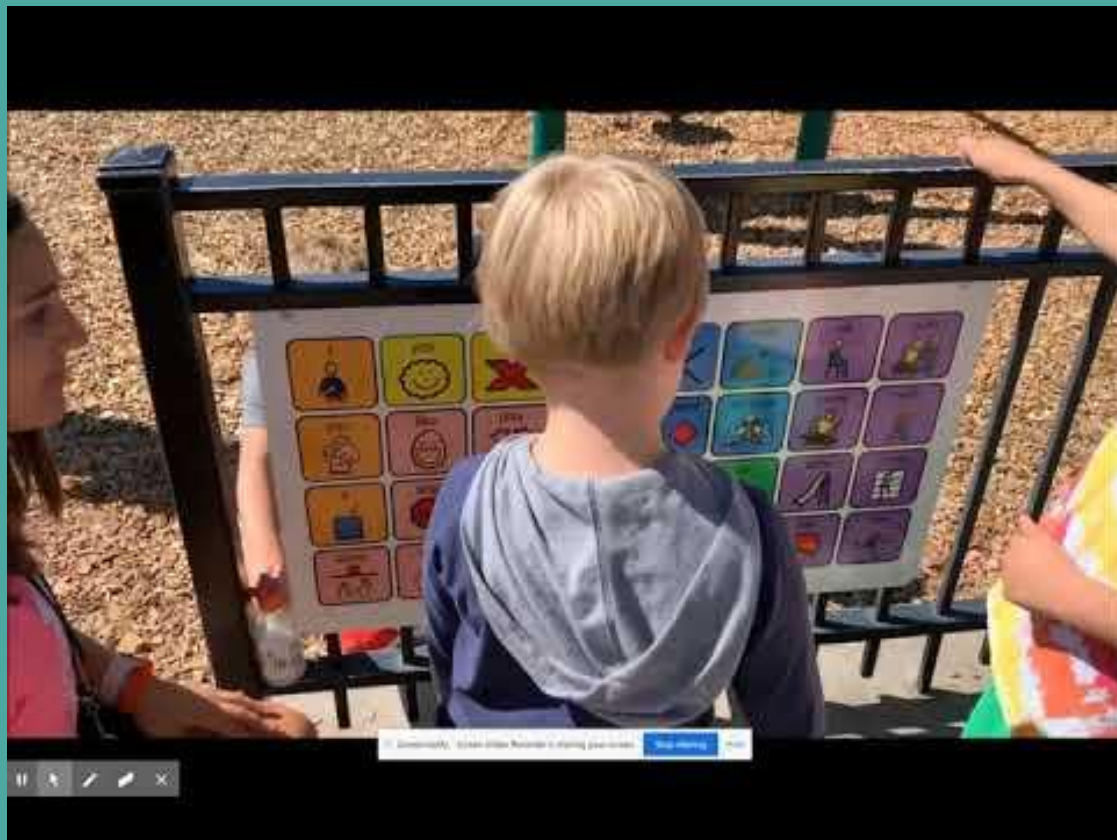
- **S= Student** (abilities, learning styles, concerns)
- **E= Environment** (What places will the talker be used and how)
- **T=Tasks** (What type of work and learning will the student be doing?)
- **T=Tools** (What tools are needed on the device to make it a success for Nick?)



AAC in Action



Low Tech



Light Tech



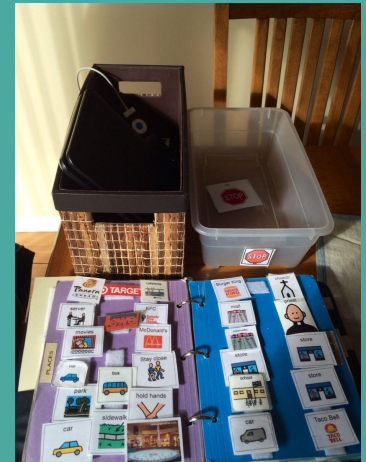
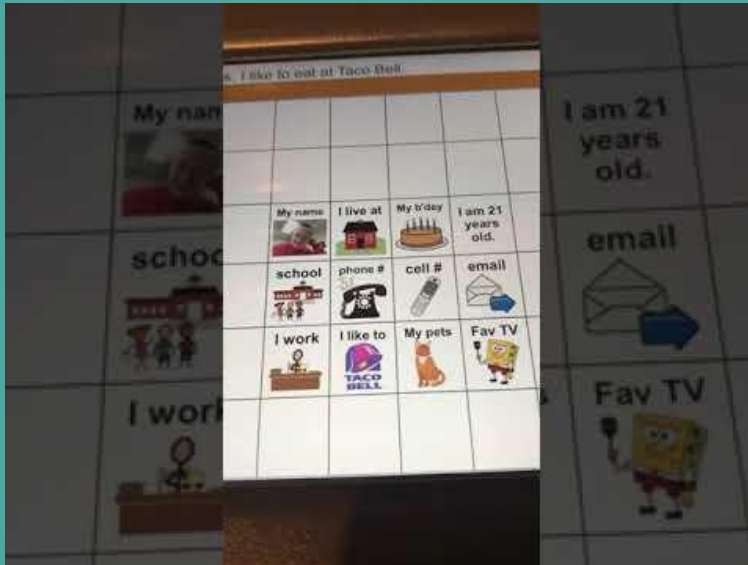
High Tech



A Parent Perspective

Nick's AAC Systems

- Proloquo to Go with low tech PECS
- Go Talk with low tech PECS



Strategies



Tie it all together

Use strategies we know work for the ASD/DS Profile

- TEACCH framework
- Structure
- Visual aides
 - Limit verbal input

Our favorite strategies

Create a supportive and positive communication environment

Multi-Modal/Total Communication (:54)

- Respond to and encourage all forms of communication

Partner Augmented Input (Goosens', Crain, & Elder, 1992)

- Point to pictures and use communication tools when talking to the AAC user to model and encourage AAC use
- Getting other children involved!!!

Scripting

Tips for successful interactions

Interactions must be:

- Open ended questions ensure success
- Motivating
- Functional
- Implemented across environments and partners
- Accessible- easy to get to



A Parent Perspective: Tips & Strategies

- Diagnostic Intervention, trial and error, observation to hone in on the most effective AAC for the child
- Start early, be consistent and readily available using AAC across all environments
- Communication should be an interaction with no right or wrong answer or feeling of failure
- Give choices/options= A sense of control over their environment
- Model, Model, Model
- Find their motivation, most desired items and activities-Control access
- Reinforce immediately with lots of praise
- Find opportunities to use AAC in your day (What you like/ don't like, More/ all done, What do you see when reading books, watching movies, at the park, zoo, What color are you wearing, etc.)
- Pause 10 seconds before prompting. Resist the urge to do it for them.
- What action item will you take away from today and try at home?

A Parent Perspective: Tips & Strategies

- Visuals are key



Our offerings



Down Syndrome Connection of the Bay Area
Empower - Inspire - Support

Expression Connection

Consultation

- Home
- School
- Community
- Workplace

AAC Lending Library

- High-tech
- Low-tech
- Light-tech

Linguistic supports

Referrals

For more information about navigating DS-ASD,
consultations, book and blog at www.teresaunnerstall.com
Follow us on FB and IG @ Down Syndrome with a Slice of
Autism



Questions & Comments

For More Information visit The Down
Syndrome Connection of the Bay
Area at:

www.dscba.org

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