



AAC Guide to Getting Started Checklist

AAC is an acceptable method of communication used by people of all ages in all situations. **Using AAC is a right, not a privilege.**

Start with a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) Assessment: Work with a licensed SLP who specializes in AAC to identify the best system (apps, speech-generating devices, etc.) for your specific needs.

- Request an assessment in writing through your school district.
- Get a referral from your primary medical doctor.
- Make sure your recommendation clearly states the AAC is a proven “medical necessity.”

Explore Funding Options:

- Check what your school district will provide and support.
- Contact your insurance for “medical necessity” coverage.
- Some state’s Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offices will fund AAC for adults with disabilities so they can obtain and maintain employment. Find your state’s VR office in our [State Directory: Transition to Adulthood](#)
- Some AAC vendors have funding departments that provide equipment loans and financial assistance to obtain a system.
- Other options include grants through non-profits, private pay, equipment donations and loans.

Identify Key Environments: List all the settings where you will use the device (e.g., school, work, social situations, community activities) so it can be set-up properly.

Personalize Vocabulary: Be sure the system includes language that will be used across all environments, such as workplace terms (e.g., “meeting,” “deadline,” “process”), self-advocacy phrases (e.g., “I need a break,” “This isn’t working”) and medical terms (e.g., “My head/throat/stomach hurts,” “I feel dizzy,” “I take medicine”).

Practice, Learn, Review: Plan for a trial period with your new AAC. Adjustments may be made until the best fit is found. With every life change or new situation, the AAC should be reviewed and updated so it meets your needs.

If in School, Make a Transition Plan: Include goals around using your AAC in life after school, such as employment interviews, college participation, or making health appointments.

Support Communication Partners Training: Ensure family, school, providers and even potential employers understand how to be supportive communication partners and your rights as an AAC user.

Maintain the device/system: Keep the device fully charged and a charger near by and/or batteries replaced or replacements available. The device should be within reach for use at all times. New technology should always be reviewed and the system updated for it.

Prepare a Backup System: Create a low-tech backup, such as a printed version of your device’s core pages, to use if the device loses power, battery or malfunctions.