



# Employers: AAC Implementation Strategies

This should be accompanied by *Communication Partners: Introduction to ACC and How You Can Help*

## **About me:**

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefers to be called: \_\_\_\_\_

AAC Devices/System used: \_\_\_\_\_

My interests and hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Some daily challenges: \_\_\_\_\_

## **What is autism:**

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication. Autism looks different for everyone, and each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges.

## **What I need you to know to support me:**

- **Autistic people, including those who use AAC, can and have the desire to work.** Companies that embrace best practices for hiring and supporting people with disabilities, including autism, outperform their peers financially.
- **Provide information about AAC users rights and usage in the workplace:** Let coworkers know that using an AAC is a right, not a privilege. If it is ok with the AAC user, provide information and training to coworkers on AAC and the user's system.
- **Normalize AAC use:** Treat the AAC device as the employee's voice. Encourage coworkers to wait, listen and respond as they would to spoken communication.
- **Provide materials ahead of meetings:** This allows the user extra time to prepare responses ahead of time.
- **Promote inclusion:** Encourage coworkers to include the AAC user in casual conversations, team meetings and social activities.
- **Encourage leadership:** Invite the AAC user to share feedback or lead parts of meetings when comfortable.

Autism Speaks [Workplace Inclusion Now™](#) program includes [free training for HR, supervisors and coworkers](#) on how to manage and welcome autistic employees into the workplace. The accompanying [Employment Tool Kit](#) also has information on types of accommodations and how to request them.

See this article for additional suggestions, including information on what an employee can do if their employer won't let them use AAC: [AAC in the Workplace: What Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) Tools Do People Use at Work? | Ability Central](#)

For free, confidential assistance with issues related to workplace accommodations and rights, including issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please contact [JAN - Job Accommodation Network \(askjan.org\)](#) (JAN) at (800) 526-7234.