



Alternative and Augmentative Communication and Aided Language Input: What Does That Mean?

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About Us



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Agenda

- SET-BC intro
- AAC overview (what it is, types, technology)
- Aided language input and modelling
- Challenges and solutions to modelling AAC
- Questions and curiosities



SET-BC

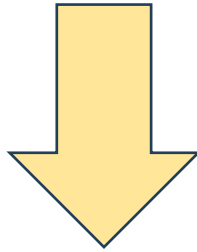
- Provincial Outreach Program
- build capacity for BC school districts to support students by facilitating access to and knowledge of assistive technology, related resources, and training



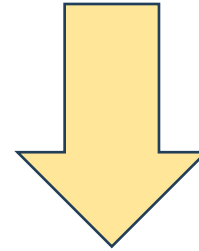
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What is AAC?

AAC = Alternative and Augmentative
Communication



Instead of
speech



In addition to
speech



Types of AAC



Unaided
(no tools needed)

body language
facial expressions
gestures, manual signs

Aided
(tools needed)

low tech
mid tech
high tech

AAC Technology Continuum

No tech



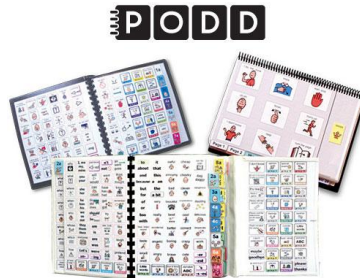
Low tech















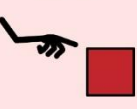







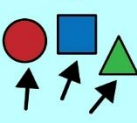

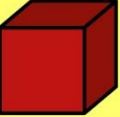
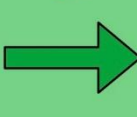


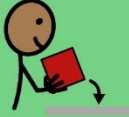












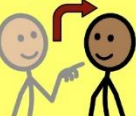

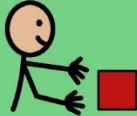


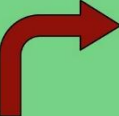


Mid tech



High tech





Vocab									Menu
ABC 123	PEOPLE 	QUESTION 	ACTIONS 	SOCIAL 	PLACES 	TIME 	GROUPS 	DESCRIBE 	good 
clear	I 	me 	to	come 	that 	a-	the	and 	more 
.	my 	is	eat 	drink 	finish 	get 	all 	at	COLORS 
EXTRA And It The WORDS Up	it 	can	go 	help 	open 	put 	in 	for	on 
here 	you 	do	like 	play 	read 	stop 	out 	up 	off 
yes 	your 	no 	want 	take 	tell 	turn 	watch 	down 	with

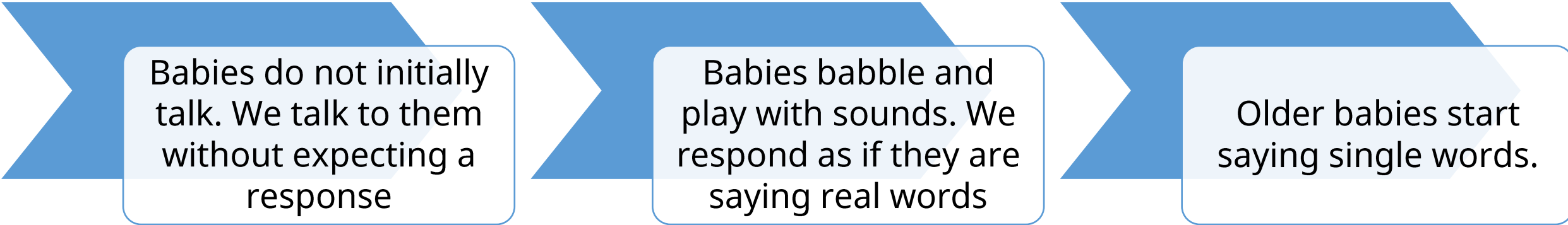
How do our students learn what their symbols mean?

We learn to speak a language – any language – through exposure to it and by being immersed in it.

Exposure to words → Understanding what they mean →
Expressing them

We use the same principles to teach language to AAC users that we use for children who speak to communicate.

Typical Language Development:

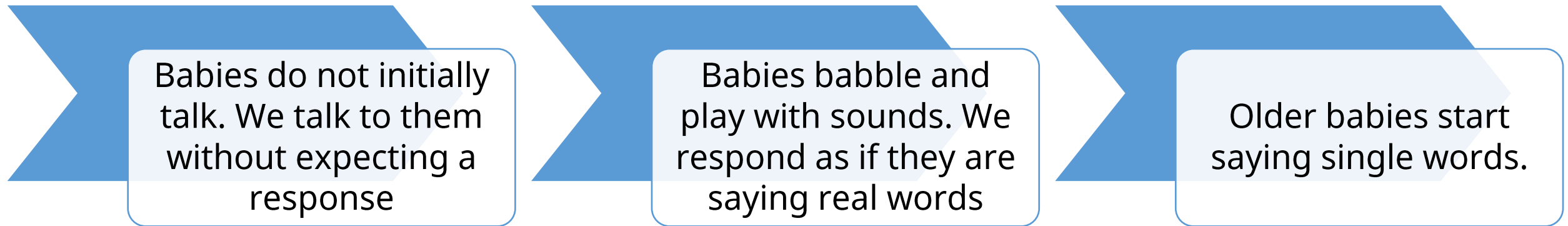


Babies do not initially talk. We talk to them without expecting a response

Babies babble and play with sounds. We respond as if they are saying real words

Older babies start saying single words.

Typical Language Development:



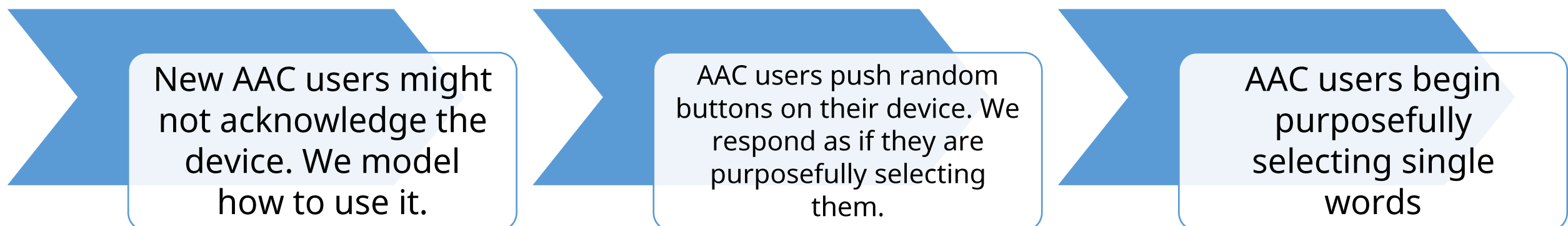
```
graph LR; A[Babies do not initially talk. We talk to them without expecting a response] --> B[Babies babble and play with sounds. We respond as if they are saying real words]; B --> C[Older babies start saying single words.]
```

Babies do not initially talk. We talk to them without expecting a response

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Older babies start saying single words.

AAC Development:



```
graph LR; A[New AAC users might not acknowledge the device. We model how to use it.] --> B[AAC users push random buttons on their device. We respond as if they are purposefully selecting them.]; B --> C[AAC users begin purposefully selecting single words]
```

New AAC users might not acknowledge the device. We model how to use it.

AAC users push random buttons on their device. We respond as if they are purposefully selecting them.

AAC users begin purposefully selecting single words

Typical Language Development:

Babies do not initially talk. We talk to them without expecting a response

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AAC Development:

New AAC users might not acknowledge the device. We model how to use it.

AAC users push random buttons on their device. We respond as if they are purposefully selecting them.

AAC users begin purposefully selecting single words

Definition

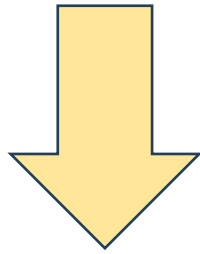
“Aided language input—also called “natural aided language,” “aided language stimulation,” or “aided language modeling”—is a receptive language training approach in which the communication partner provides spoken words along with AAC symbols during communication tasks (e.g., partner points to the AAC symbols while simultaneously talking).”



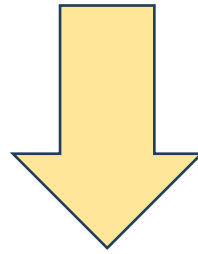
[American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\): AAC](#)

Let's break it down

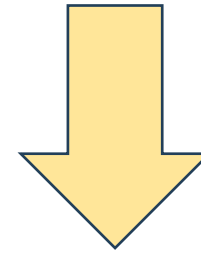
Aided Language Input



Using a tool

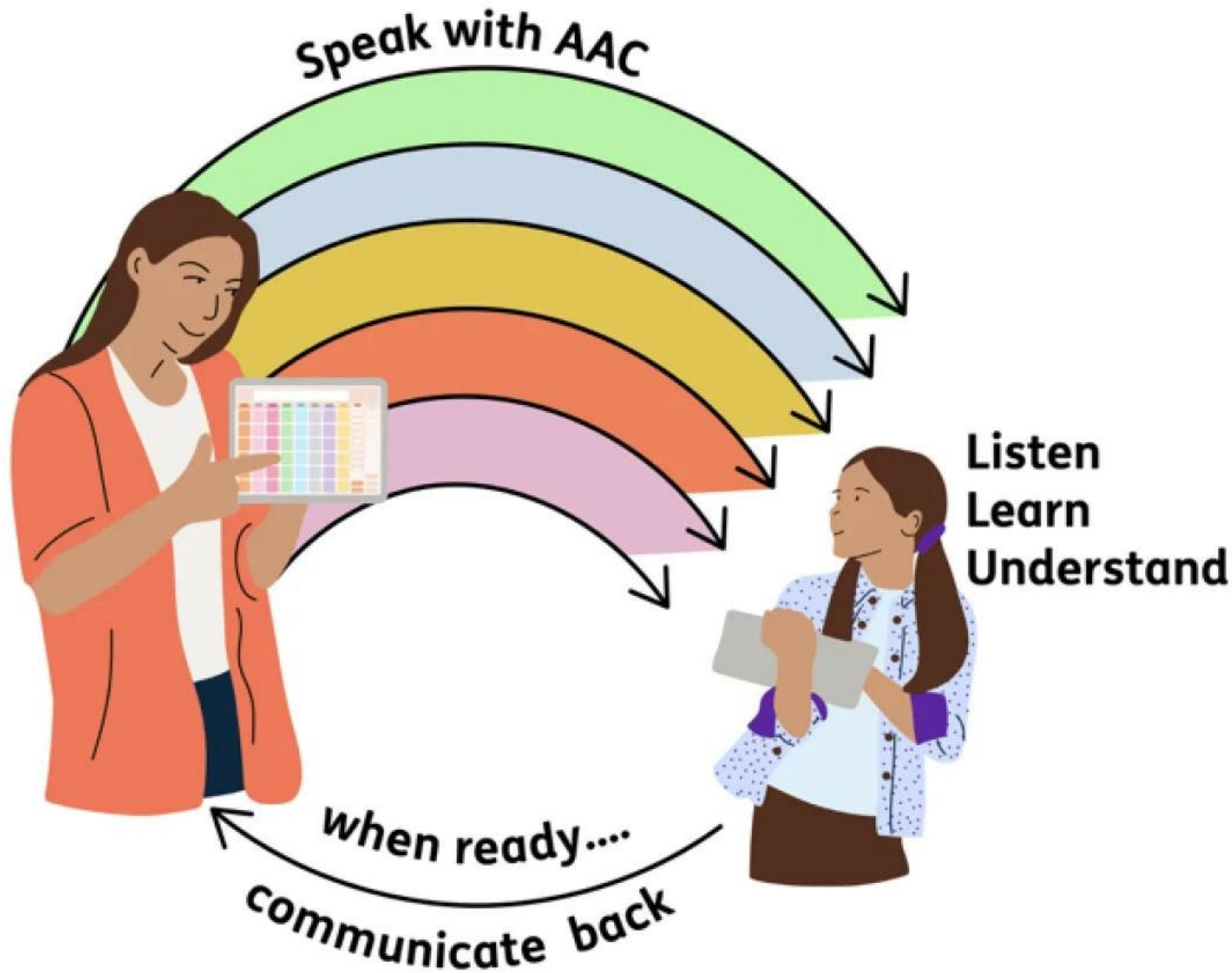


Words



Providing
exposure

In other words, aided language input is using a tool to expose someone to words
We speak AAC to teach AAC!



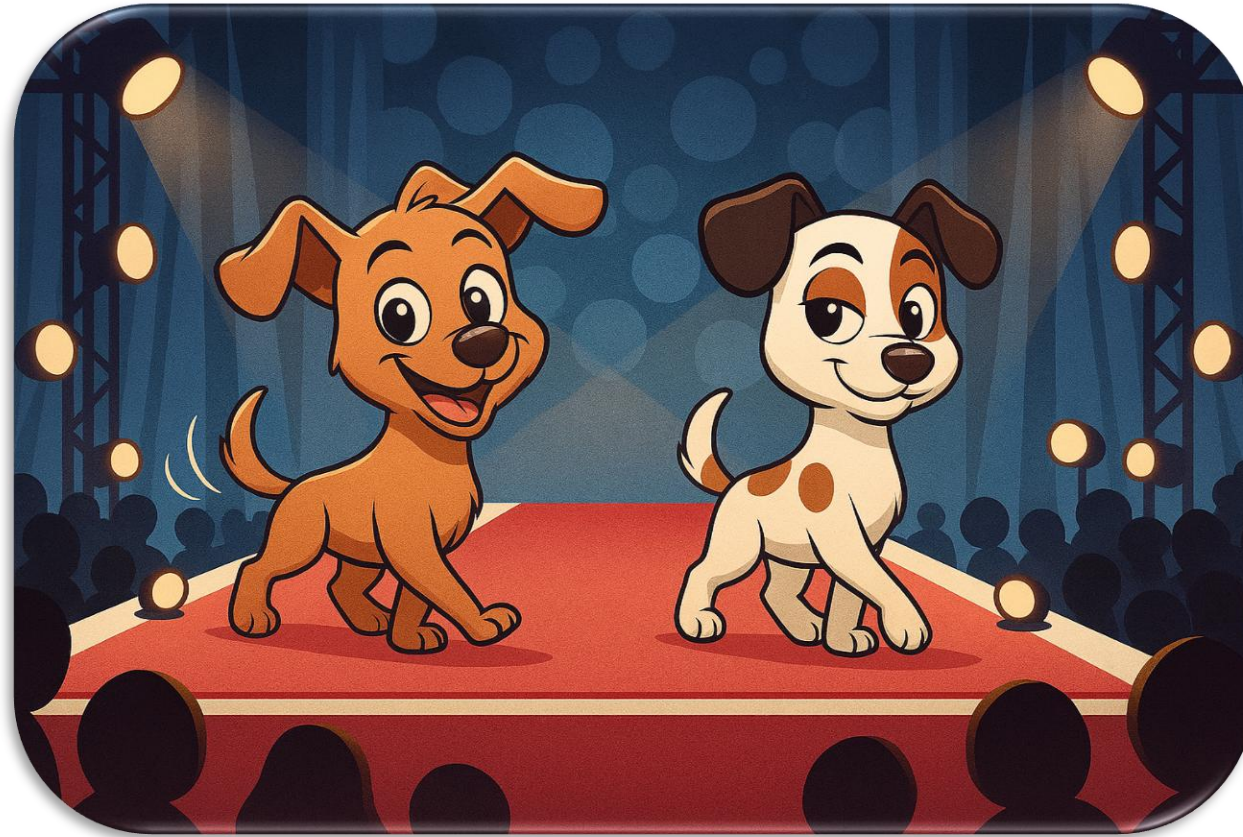
Aided language input (or modelling without expectation) does not require any response from the AAC user.

Telling an AAC user to use their device to communicate before they are ready can lead to frustration.

Communication should not feel like hard work.

Image: [AssistiveWare Aided Language Stimulation](#)

Modelling Language



Model - Without Expectation

point to picture on
display when you speak

start with 1-2 symbols
at a time
(not every word you say)

no need to test location
of vocabulary



Exposure to Language

model as much as you can
throughout the day

allow access at all times

can model same words in
different contexts

repetition is great for learning



Variety of Messages

model comments,
questions, greetings,
commands, requests,
share news, start a
conversation

Encourage Motivation

use highly motivating
activities for fun
shared interactions



Patience and Peristence

start small

be kind to yourself

be flexible

will take time and effort



Challenge

There are too many words on one page!
It feels overwhelming.



Solution

It's ok to go slow, you are learning too!

Pick one word from the front page to get familiar with.

Challenge

The student is not letting other people use their AAC device for modelling.



Solution

Make a paper version of their vocabulary that you can model on.

Print a screenshot from their device or download a free core board from the AAC manufacturer that matches their system.

Challenge

I'm modelling on the AAC device but the student is not looking.



Solution

Our students often show attention in different ways.

They will still benefit from hearing you use their system.

Challenge

The device is available and I'm modelling but the student isn't using it.



Solution

Keep it up! – Remember exposure comes before expression

Ensure that the device has words that are meaningful to the student: favourite shows, characters, people!

Challenge

This student is always on the go! I don't know when to fit in modelling during the school day.



Solution

Use a strap or a lanyard to wear a paper AAC board hands-free.

Brainstorm with their SLP to find opportunities

Opportunities for Aided Language Input

Some examples of language we can model during school routines:



Circle time

do

sing

know

letters/numbers



Shared reading

see

read

story

turn



Lunch time

eat

more

hungry

yucky



Recess

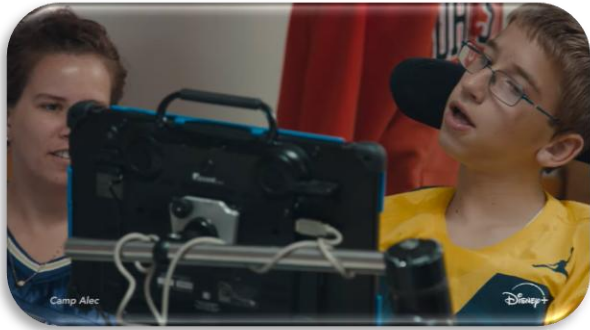
want

fun

high

my turn/your turn

Representation and Exposure



*Camp ALEC Documentary
Featuring Dr. Karen Erickson - Disney+*



"Carl the Collector" - PBS

Out of My Mind – Disney+



Additional Resources

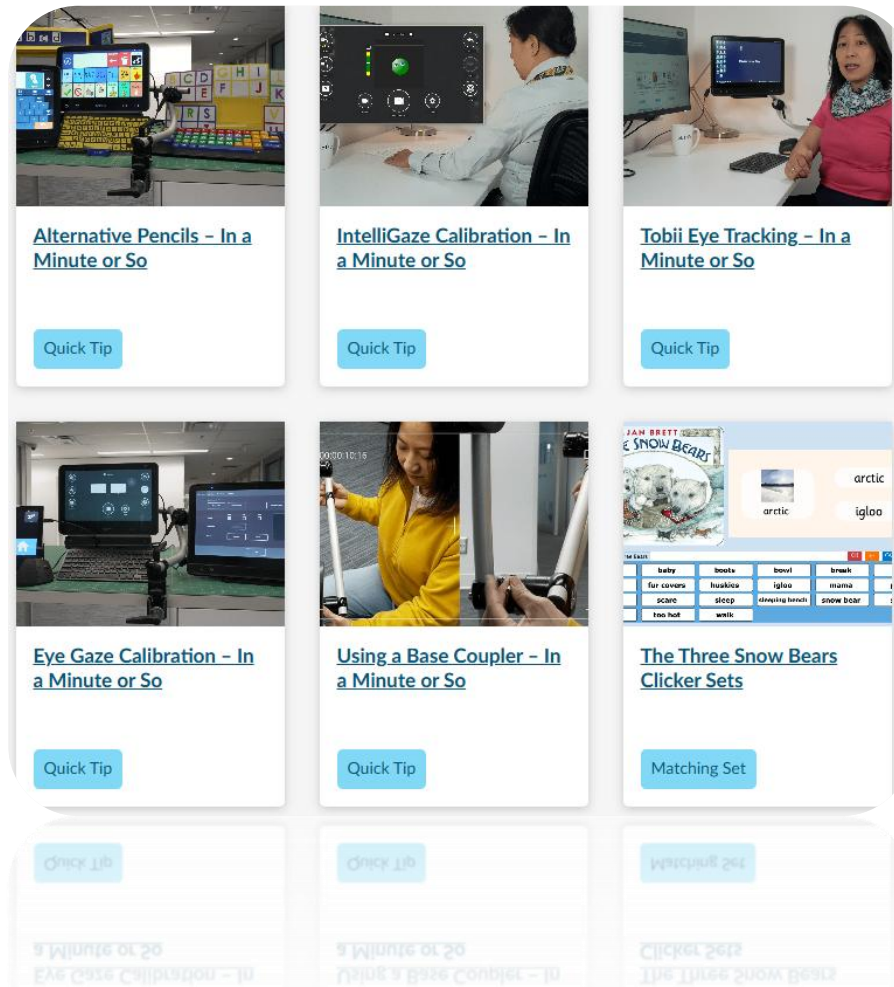
[Project Core](#)

[Stepping into AAC](#)

[AssistiveWare: Use AAC to teach AAC](#)



Thank You!



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