STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING AAC USE

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AAC Strategies: Overview

- Framing AAC and Communication
- Language Goals for Children who use AAC
- Techniques to Improve Expressive Communication
Framing AAC and Communication
AAC is a TOOL, not a Goal

- GOAL
  - Improved daily life communication
- TOOL
  - AAC
- GOAL ≠ AAC

AAC is about COMMUNICATION

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What are the Outcomes?

- AAC use is never an outcome in and of itself

- Devices cannot accomplish anything in and of themselves
  - Nothing magical about using aided AAC

- Devices are TOOLS to reach the same goals as clients who rely on speech

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Language Goals for Children using AAC
Focus, Goals, & Context of Communication

Focus
- Improving daily life communication

Goals
- Very similar to non-AAC clients; e.g.,
  - Expand sentence length
  - Expand vocabulary diversity, etc.

Context
- We will discuss AAC devices within the context of communication
- NOT the features of each device in isolation

• AAC is much less intimidating when viewed this way!
Goals for Children who use AAC

Social skills
• Turn-taking, commenting, asking questions
• NOT just requesting!

Vocabulary
• Vocabulary size & diversity

Sentence structure
• Grammatical markers such as plural –s and progressive -ing
• Message length and complexity

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Example Goals

**Early vocabulary-building**

- Dakota will label 5 different insects and snakes and 5 new verbs (e.g., crawl, hop, slither) accurately during science center over three consecutive days.

**Social skills**

- Jasper will take at least three commenting turns with his peers during free play time using an appropriate communication mode (e.g., using pre-programmed phrases such as “That one is fast!”).

**Sentence-building**

- Margarite will use at least 5 grammatically complete sentences when giving an oral presentations in science class.
Techniques to Improve Expressive Communication
# Intervention techniques to Improve Expressive Communication

(e.g., Binger, Kent-Walsh et al., 2008, 2010; Binger & Light, 2007; Kent-Walsh, Binger, et al., 2010)

## Prompts
- Aided modeling
- Spoken modeling
- Expectant delay
- Open-Ended or WH-question asking
- Direct spoken prompting
- (Physical prompting)

## Responses
- Contingent responses
  - Imitations
  - Recasts
- Can be spoken and aided

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Sample Communication Board: Sentences with Prepositions and Adjectives

Penguin is happy in basket
Cow is clean on car
Pig is wet dry next to house
Sheep is big little behind bathtub
Monkey is red under trash
Lion
Early Sentence Productions with Prepositions

- **Child H Video 1**
  - Motivation situation
  - Prompts
    - Natural set-up and cueing
  - Responses
    - Spoken and aided model

- **Child H Video 2**
  - Motivating situation
  - Prompts
    - Natural set-up and cueing
    - Spoken model
    - Direct spoken prompt: “Tell Cow where he is.”
    - Expectant delay
  - Responses
    - **Natural** consequence

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Early Sentence Productions with Prepositions

- **Child H Video 4**
  - **Motivation situation**
  - **Prompts**
    - Spoken model + direct prompts
    - WH question
  - **Responses**
    - Spoken confirmation within an natural consequence
    - Aided model
  - ➔ Lots of help with forming this new, more complex structure

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Early Sentence Productions with Prepositions

- Child H Video 5
  - Motivating situation
  - Prompts
    - Natural cue
    - NO higher level cues here; doesn’t need them
  - Responses
    - Spoken model/ imitation
Did you see...

- How much FUN this can be!
- How *expecting* more = *getting* more
- Encouraging immediate correction of errors
- Encouraging use of grammatical markers
- Speed of learning to use the markers
- Impossibility of producing such sentences without AAC

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Challenge your Clients

- Provide them with the communication solutions they need
  - Motivating contexts
  - Appropriate vocabulary
  - Expectation for success
- **Expect** them to keep improving
- Increase expectations every time they improve


