

# Do you know someone who uses AAC?

(AAC is another name for things like communication devices or “talkers” that produce computerized speech)

Designed by Elizabeth E Biggs, Ph.D for use in schools, but helpful to be a communication partner with people in all settings and of all ages.

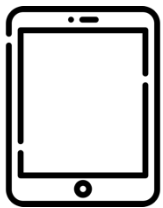
## Here are some simple things to do to be a great communication partner:

### 1. *Initiate conversations!*



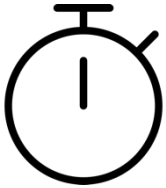
- Initiate means to start conversations. Initiating is a great way to provide communication support!
- You can initiate with many different types of comments and questions—don’t just use yes or no questions.

### 2. *If your classmate is okay with it, use the communication device or “talker” when you talk*



- Using an AAC device can sometimes feel like a lonely experience. It’s a whole new language! If you also use the symbols on the AAC device when you talk to your classmate, it can make it so that it isn’t such a lonely experience. It may even make it easier for your classmate to know what you are saying.
- Just be sure to ask and make sure your classmate doesn’t mind you using their device. If your classmate doesn’t want you to use their device, they might like it if you used a paper version or a second device. Talk with your classmate and teachers to find out what is best.
- Make it your goal to use the device to say lots of different types of comments and questions—you don’t have to use a symbol for every word. 1-2 symbols for the most important parts of what you are saying is great!
- Having trouble finding the right word? That’s okay! Talk out loud about what you are doing to find it. You can use the “search” and model how to try to spell a word to find it.

### 3. Wait for your classmate to communicate before helping them



- Communicating with AAC can be slow, and that's okay. Give lots of time. No one wants to feel rushed when they are trying to say something.
- It's okay to look at your classmate to show them that you are listening.
- After you have waited (count to 5 if you need to), it's okay if your classmate hasn't responded. You can show your classmate that you wanted to hear what they had to say by pointing to their communication device

### 4. Help if needed, but always after waiting

You don't need to be a teacher, but you may want to help. Ways to help may include:



- Make sure the communication device is on and within reach
- Find the page on the communication device with the words your classmate might want to use to talk with you
- Give a few choices: Point to 2-3 symbol choices on the device that might answer the question, saying them out loud
- If you asked your classmate a question related to class that they were not able to answer correctly, show them the correct answer
  - Think about how you would want someone to do this to you—it's not a big deal to not know something. You can talk about it and move on.
  - Point to or press the correct answer on the AAC device, saying "I think it is \_\_\_\_\_"

### 5. Respond to your classmate's communication



- Always acknowledge your classmate's communication and respond, no matter how they communicate. No one needs to use a device all the time. Your classmate might communicate with gestures, sounds, looks, other body language, signs, or lots of other ways! It's good to pay attention to all of the ways that your classmate might be trying to tell you something.
- If you do not understand, ask your classmate:
  - "Do you mean \_\_\_\_\_?"
  - "I don't understand. Can you tell me again a different way, maybe with your device?"