From Goals to Growth: The Essential Elements Of An AAC System

August 20, 2015

Maureen Nevers, M.S. CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist
Augmentative Communication Consultant
Welcome!

- Webinar process
- GoToWebinar for technical issues
- Questions taken at the end, typed in chat box
- Other Resources:
  - ASF Website
  - ASF on YouTube
  - ASF CTS FaceBook Group
ASF website

www.Angelman.org
ASF YouTube Channel

AngelmanSyndromeFdn

Select “Videos” to see archived webinars (among other videos)
ASF CTS FaceBook Group

ASF Communication Training Series
Select “join”
About me…

- Speech-language pathologist
- 2-year training grant at UVM in AAC
- 22 years as AAC consultant in MA and VT
- Individuals 0-22 with “complex communication needs” including
- Collaborator in ASF-CTS
Family Connections to AAC

Nickolas

Jacob

mom
Today’s Goals

1. Practice use of technology for webinar and resource access
2. Begin developing a framework for organizing information related to AAC
3. Learn specific recommended AAC practices
4. Set stage for the year of CTS
5. Meet one of the ASF-CTS collaborators
Today’s REAL Goal

Practice using technology for webinar and resource access.

Begin developing a framework for organizing information related to AAC.

Learn specific recommended AAC practices.

Set stage for the year of CTS.

Meet one of the ASP-OTS collaborators.
“Augmentative Communication Recommended Practices”

Introduction

Dear Educational Team Member,

This document was created to share a process for how you might organize and prioritize information related to an Augmentative Communication (AAC) system. The structure and content have evolved out of my work with hundreds of educational teams over the last two decades, as well as my ongoing professional development activities.

Using my 5 STEPS structure, five essential AAC practices have been identified in each area. These practices were selected based on their strong contributions to a successful AAC system and are supported by the current AAC literature.

While these are not the only elements necessary for a successful AAC system, a system without many of these elements would not likely achieve meaningful communication outcomes. Hopefully this collection will spark conversations, inspire new ideas, and help to guide you in the selection of appropriate practices to support the individuals you live and/or work with who need AAC support.

Sincerely,
Maureen Nevers, M.S. CCC-SLP
"Augmentative Communication Recommended Practices"
Formatted AAC Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Student’s learning outcomes, goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>: Frequently acts on their environment in physical ways – moves, touch, reach, push, pull, etc. to produce specific actions and reactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>: Communication for a variety of purposes is able to express a range of language functions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>: Academic message length. The student expresses himself in a wide range of parts of speech, types of words (e.g., general, more specific, very specific), and has a broad depth of vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong>: Student is exploring the communication environment – new situations, new people, new locations, new activities.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Communication materials, format, and context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Specific Supports</strong>: Specific supports are used to aid in understanding, remembering, and using information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Focused Parts of Speech</strong>: Expressive communication tools include different parts of speech, supports communicating for a range of functions/purposes such as academic participation, expressing wanted/needed, sharing information, and participating in social interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Sufficient Vocabulary</strong>: Expressive tools include a sufficient quantity of vocabulary overall utilizing alternative access methods as needed to maximize the available usage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary Format</strong>: Expressive tools include vocabulary in a variety of formats such as letters, single words, and phrases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Instructional Approaches, Partner’s Role</strong>: Communication tools are organized in clear, systematic formats that promote learning of linguistic and motor patterns.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Testing</th>
<th>Methods of progress monitoring</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Formative Assessment</strong>: Appropriate speech, language, and communication assessments have been used to identify accurate present aptitudes and appropriate intervention targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Progress Checks</strong>: Instructional programs are monitored to ensure they are being implemented as intended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Baseline</strong>: Valid and reliable student responses are documented, along with those that are not, so that the student is evaluated using appropriate means.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Redefinition</strong>: Student is provided an opportunity to participate in classroom and statewide assessments with appropriate adjustments to ensure they are represented in the accountability system.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Data Collection</strong>: The team uses an effective progress monitoring system, incorporating a range of data collection formats, and identifying the methods of analyzing and applying the information.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Resources for team to implement program elements</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Core Team</strong>: The team participates in regular planning sessions to achieve the program expectations.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Program Administrator</strong>: The student’s educational program elements are clearly documented and shared to ensure program quality and compliance.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Team Members</strong>: The team members have the knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to provide an appropriate educational experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Student</strong>: The student’s IEP is complete, accurate, and concise, providing a logical progression from present levels of accommodation to services and goals.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>IEP Goals</strong>: The IEP goals are limited to promote the most important learning in the next year, integrate foundational and academic skills, and are discipline-free.</td>
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<th>Activities</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
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<td><strong>Respectful</strong>: Use materials that are appropriate in form and content for the student’s age-related peers.</td>
<td><strong>Instructional Approaches, Partner’s Role</strong>: Partners incorporate the use of the communication system into daily routines, demonstrating how the support can be used without any expectation of use by the student.</td>
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<td><strong>Goal-directed Language</strong>: Partner use statements, comments, and observations as questions and directives.</td>
<td><strong>Instructional Approaches, Partner’s Role</strong>: Student has reasons, time, and opportunity to communicate throughout the day.</td>
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<td><strong>Goal-directed Routines</strong>: Partners establish routines and systems related to activities to improve consistency and predictability when possible.</td>
<td><strong>Instructional Approaches, Partner’s Role</strong>: Partners support communication by using expectant pauses, incorporating natural cues, responding logically to communication attempts, etc.</td>
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Framing the AAC System

1. Student goals
2. Instruction
3. Materials
4. Data
5. Resources
5 STEPS

1. Student goals
2. Instruction
3. Materials
4. Data
5. Resources

1. Targets
2. Teaching/Task
3. Tools
4. Testing
5. Team
AAC framework
Putting the AAC pieces together
AAC complete picture
Targets

What are the priority learning outcomes for students with complex communication needs, including AS?
Targets

Students initiate communication of their own thoughts and ideas by combining appropriate vocabulary to express messages for different purposes, people, places, and activities.
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Teaching

What are most effective instructional approaches and interaction guidelines for students with complex communication needs, including AS?
Teaching

Partners make statements, comments and observations as they demonstrate the use of the student’s AAC system. Partners also create many opportunities for genuine communication by establishing routines, inserting expectant pauses, and embedding natural cues.
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Tasks

What are the features of effective learning activities for students with complex communication needs, including AS?
Tasks

The student consistently participates in a wide range of age-respectful activities that maximize grade-level curriculum connections, foster engagement, and incorporate a balance of variety and consistency, challenge and success.
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What are the format and content guidelines associated with effective communication materials for students with complex communication needs, including AS?
Tools
The student has consistent access to both receptive and expressive communication supports containing a sufficient quantity of vocabulary, representing different parts of speech, that are clearly organized and include letters, words and phrases.
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Testing

How are program integrity and progress monitored for students with complex communication needs, including AS?
Testing

Information about program implementation and student progress is based on assessments and other data collection methods that are appropriate for the student’s abilities and are used to inform changes in instruction.
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What are the team resources necessary to implement effective communication programs for students with complex communication needs, including AS?
Team

A knowledgeable and skilled team participates in regular planning sessions, documenting and sharing important program information, and generating a complete IEP that includes flexible, meaningful goals.
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### Framing Our Thinking…

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<th>You should think…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“This information applies to kids who have more advanced communication skills”</td>
<td>“There are no prerequisites for these practices – they are good practices for all users of AAC – including my child!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This student has to work on motor/sensory skills before they can do this..”</td>
<td>“Motor and sensory supports are incorporated into the communication system – they do not replace these program practices.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Oh no, I am going to have to rewrite the whole IEP!”</td>
<td>“Do the ideas and concepts make sense to me? What elements can I find that are similar in the IEP?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We are doing it all wrong.”</td>
<td>“Awareness is a powerful and necessary first step.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am overwhelmed – I’ll never be able to do all this”</td>
<td>“This is the start of a full year of learning, so we will just put one foot in front of the other”</td>
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Possible Next Steps

- Share the handouts
- Share the webinar link
- Read FB posts
- Look for some of the practice key words on FB etc.
- Plan to attend/view next week’s webinar!
Questions?
Thank You!

The ASF Communication Training Series is made available by the Angelman Syndrome Foundation and a generous grant from The Foster Family Charitable Foundation, a family foundation established in Central California.
5 STEPS

Student and Team Educational Profile System

Graphic organizer for learning