

Communicating with Cerebral Palsy

A beginner's guide to AAC

What is AAC?

Hank was alive for 40 minutes before he took his first breath. Like millions of children whose lives begin in similar ways, he developed cerebral palsy. At first, his family worried he might have other complications, but as a toddler Hank began to show signs of curiosity and determination. When he tried high-tech AAC in preschool, it became clear he had a sharp mind and great potential.

Short for augmentative and alternative communication, AAC is any form of communication besides natural speech. Sign language, facial expressions and speech generating devices are all forms of AAC.

A recent independent study found that high-tech AAC solutions nearly double quality of life for the people who use them, while easing stress for their caregivers. 66% of people with cerebral palsy said it helps them develop new skills.¹

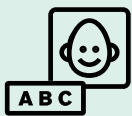
Every child with cerebral palsy has different abilities and challenges. While some have cognitive impairments, many do not. Determining this can be especially hard if they, like Hank, have physical limitations. High-tech AAC can help. Hank was able to demonstrate his abilities through a device that tracked his eye movements, but people with CP can also access AAC with their hands, heads, or other parts of their body.

Learning AAC does take practice, not only for the communicator, but also for their care team. Everyone who supports your child, including their teachers, should feel comfortable with their solution. Let's get started.

1. Augur. *Exploring the Benefits of Assistive Communication*. 2024.

The AAC Journey

The AAC Journey consists of five phases. If you haven't already teamed up with a speech therapist, you'll want to find one to recommend solutions, as well as a Tobii Dynavox professional who can guide you throughout the process.



Evaluation

Discuss & assess your child's communication needs and goals with a speech therapist.



Recommendation

Discover and try AAC devices and apps with the support of a Tobii Dynavox Solutions Consultant.



Funding

Apply for financial coverage for your child's solution with the support of your speech therapist and Tobii Dynavox.



Setup

Personalize your child's AAC solution in collaboration with your Solutions Consultant.



Support

Adapt the solution to meet your child's goals as they develop over time.

Evaluation

You know your child better than anyone. As part of an AAC evaluation, their speech therapist will want to interview you about their communication at home, school and anywhere else they spend time. Their therapist will also encourage them to explore different forms of AAC to find what works best for them.



Evaluation Resources

The AAC Needs Assessment is a survey designed to prepare kids for success by helping their speech therapist identify their strengths, goals and access method. DAGG-3 (Dynamic AAC Goals Grid) is an AAC assessment chart based on core communication skills. It will help your speech therapist make a detailed growth plan for your child.

Learning Hub

If you're looking for a more in-depth understanding of what's involved in the AAC assessment process, our online Learning Hub includes live and on-demand courses that range from just a few minutes to a few hours depending on your schedule. Just search "assessment" for a complete list.

We felt the urgency to find a way for him to communicate when we realized that he was very intelligent.

– Kathy, Hank's mom

Recommendation

Following your child's AAC evaluation, your speech therapist will make a recommendation to a physician who can write a prescription for the solution that works best for them.

Find the best solution

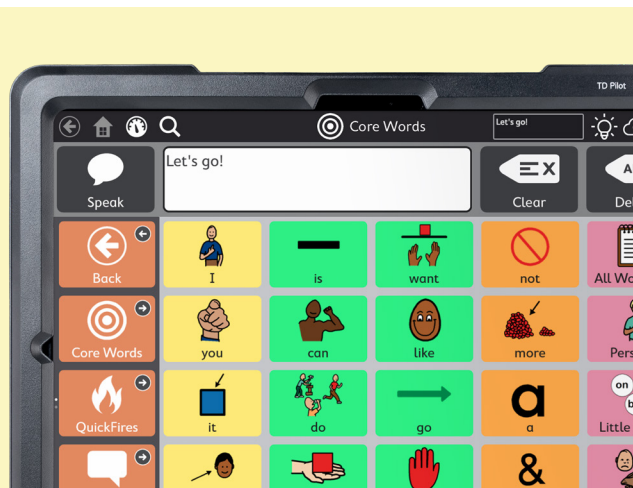


Light-tech AAC

You and your child can start learning Picture Communication Symbols (PCS), the symbol-based language they'll use to communicate, right away. You'll find printed communication boards that mirror different vocabulary collections (called "pagesets") on our website. Having the same symbols in both low-tech and high-tech formats can boost language learning for your child.

Speech generating apps

TD Snap is a symbol-based communication app that makes language visual and interactive. Different vocabulary collections (pagesets) within the app address different communication styles and needs. Many symbols also include diversity options to represent your child's family and friends. As children with CP gain literacy skills, they have the option to transition to TD Talk, a text to speech app with more advanced features, like phrase prediction and in-sentence editing.



Eye gaze devices

While some children with cerebral palsy can use their hands, many find an eye-gaze speech generating device feels more comfortable to control. Both TD Pilot and TD I-Series allow children to access speech generating apps using just the movement of their eyes. Depending on how CP affects their movement, your child's speech therapist may suggest an alternate access method, such as a head mouse or switch.

[High-tech AAC] revolutionized the concept of independence. The idea that I can control a computer with my eyes leaves people speechless.

– Delaina



AAC device mounts

If your child uses a wheelchair, you'll want to make sure their AAC solution includes a wheelchair mount, a floor mount and a table mount, so they can access their device in their favorite places at home and on-the-go. To save you time and effort, Tobii Dynavox mounts ship preassembled.

Voice customization

Your child will have the option to choose a digital voice to pair with their device. You'll hear this voice speaking the words your child selects within TD Snap. The app includes a library of synthetic voices, representing different ethnicities, ages and genders. Tobii Dynavox also supports voice donation, where a sibling or friend can digitize their voice for your child to use with their communication solution.

Funding

Considered durable medical equipment, communication solutions are generally covered through insurance or funding, depending on where your family lives. While different regions have different options, your child's speech therapist and Tobii Dynavox will help you determine the best one for you. You can manage your child's application with ease through the eFunding site.

Setup

Once your child's device arrives, their speech therapist will work with a Tobii Dynavox Solutions Consultant to customize TD Snap to their communication style, needs and interests.

Customize your child's solution



A variety of pagesets

A pageset is a collection of symbols organized to support a particular approach to communication. Within the TD Snap communication app, you'll find a variety of customizable pagesets. Some young communicators begin with Core First. Based on the most frequently used words in your language, Core First Learning is a logical starting point on your child's path to literacy.

Beyond conversation

AAC devices don't just let kids communicate. Older children and teens can use their TD Pilot or TD I-Series to control smart home technology, listen to music, play video games and explore social media.



Support

As your child progresses with AAC, their needs and goals will likely change. Your TD Solutions Consultant will work with you and your speech therapist to ensure their solution continues to reflect the communicator they want to become.



The benefit of using a company like Tobii Dynavox is having an ecosystem of support.



— Erin, TD Solutions Consultant

Tech support

A team of knowledgeable AAC experts is here to help via phone or online chat—whichever is most comfortable for you.

Reliable warranty

If your child's device gets damaged, Tobii Dynavox devices come with an industry-leading 5-year warranty which even covers accidents to ensure peace of mind.

Learning Hub

You can rely on the Learning Hub to deepen your knowledge of AAC at any point during your child's communication journey. Pick up new tips any time with our live or on-demand courses.

MyTobiiDynavox

A cloud-based resource for backing up and managing TD Snap, MyTobiiDynavox makes it easy to share your child's communication profile with their care team and ensure consistency across platforms.



Ready to start exploring AAC with your child?

Connect with a Solutions Consultant near you.



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