

# Myth Busting

## AAC in Early Intervention

### **MY CHILD WILL BECOME DEPENDENT ON THEIR AAC DEVICE AND LOSE THE MOTIVATION TO TALK**

Research suggests AAC devices do not impede natural speech development and instead have shown to be great supplements to spoken language and enhance an AAC users' communication methods. AAC is a tool that can be utilized as a total communication approach for the child and provides a bridge to help them expand their language skills.

### **AAC DEVICES ARE TOO HIGH-TECH FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

There are no prerequisites for using a high-tech AAC device. Children of any age and cognitive level can benefit from using AAC to aid in communication and language development. If your child is successfully using no tech and mid-tech devices, there is opportunity for them to have their own high-tech AAC device. Due to advancements in technology and communication apps, we can configure them to mirror more simple set ups, whether it is a one cell, two cell, or 32 cell page set. This gives your child the opportunity for the device to grow with them as they continue to develop language.

### **YOU HAVE TO BE A CERTAIN AGE TO GET STARTED WITH AAC**

Young children who experience complex communication needs benefit from AAC devices and strategies to help aid in the development of language, literacy, communication, and cognitive development. The earlier AAC is incorporated into their lives, the greater the potential for improved outcomes.

### **CHILDREN THIS YOUNG SHOULDN'T BE ENGAGING IN SCREEN TIME ACTIVITIES**

Although increased exposure to passive screen time is not recommended for children under 18-24 months of age, use of a dynamic display to enhance a child's communication does not exhibit the same effects. Access to a high-tech speech generating device is considered to be beneficial in supporting communication skills in nonverbal children. It is important to remember that the dedicated device is the child's voice and not to be used for other activities.

### **THERE ARE PREREQUISITES AND CERTAIN SKILLS CHILDREN NEED PRIOR TO USING AAC**

There are no predetermined skill sets that a child needs to have prior to beginning the use of AAC. Research suggests that development of language skills at a young age can be beneficial in functional cognitive development. Early intervention is a critical which these skills need to be introduced.

**We encourage you to check out the sources we used for creation of this document for more information on the benefits of AAC in early language development!**

Criscuola, M. (n.d.). Critical questions about screens, AAC, and kids with autism. ASHA Wire. Retrieved April 18, 2023, from <https://leader.pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/leader.FMP.24082019.8>

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MaryAnn Ronski, Rose A. Sevcik, Andrea Barton-Hulsey & Ani S. Whitmore (2015) Early intervention and AAC: What a difference 30 years makes. Augmentative and alternative communication (Baltimore, Md. : 1985). Retrieved April 18, 2023, from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26153901/>

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