

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

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Augmentative Communication
Consultant



angelman
syndrome
foundation

COMMUNICATION TRAINING SERIES

Welcome!

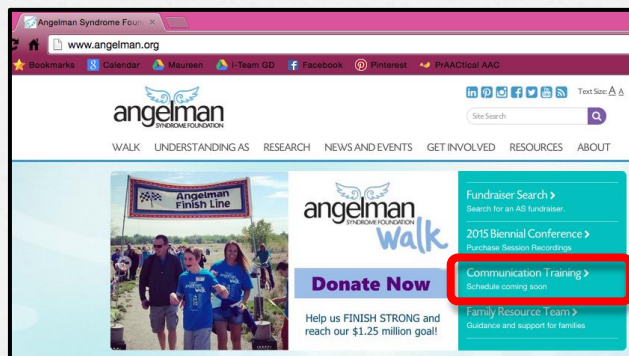
- ★ Webinar process
- ★ GoToWebinar for technical issues
- ★ Questions taken at the end, typed in chat box
- ★ Other Resources:
 - ★ ASF Website
 - ★ ASF on YouTube
 - ★ ASF CTS FaceBook Group



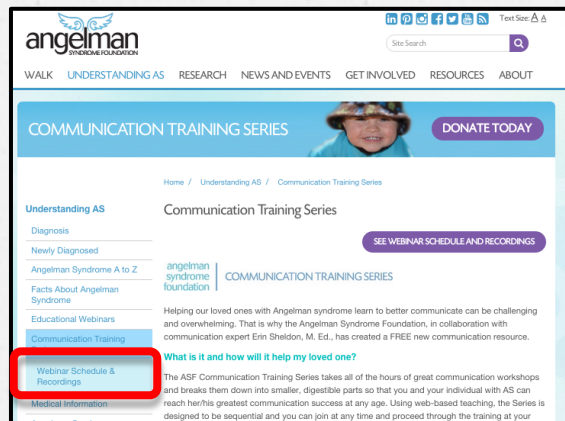
ASF website

www.Angelman.org

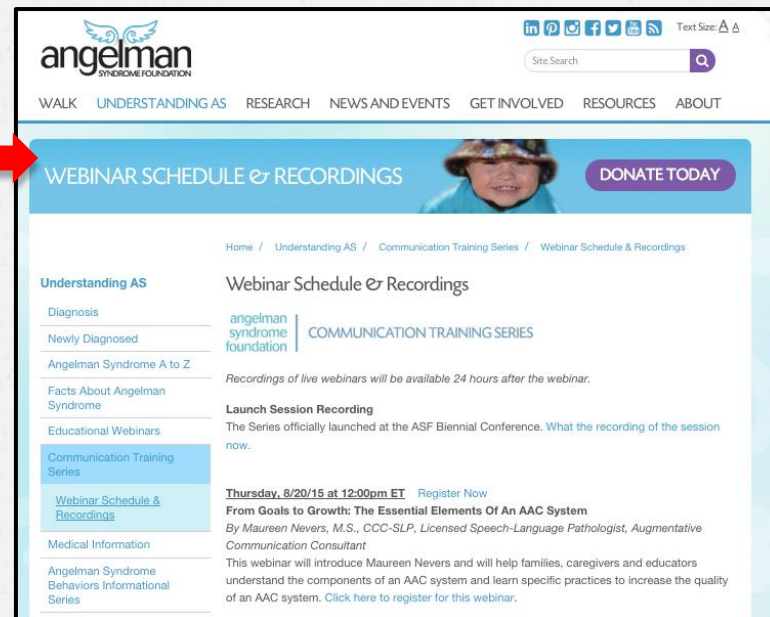
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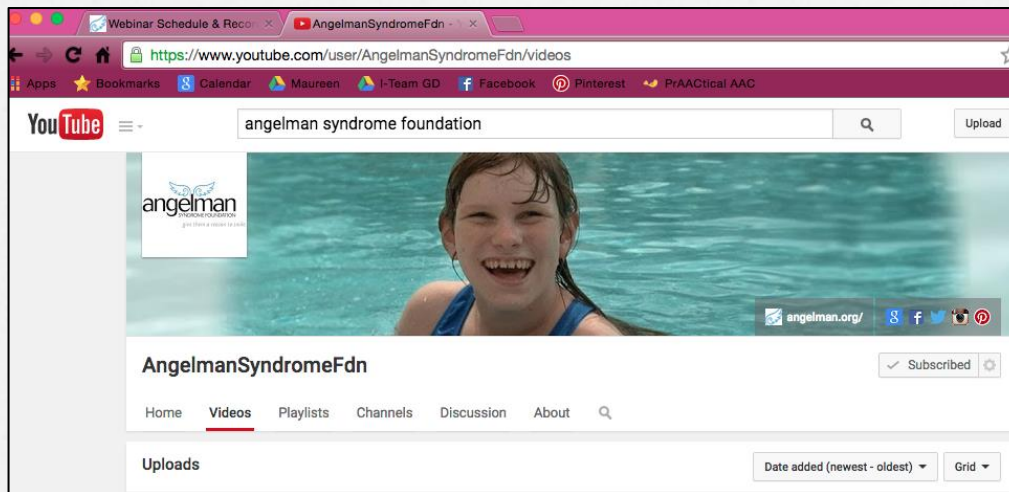
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ASF YouTube Channel

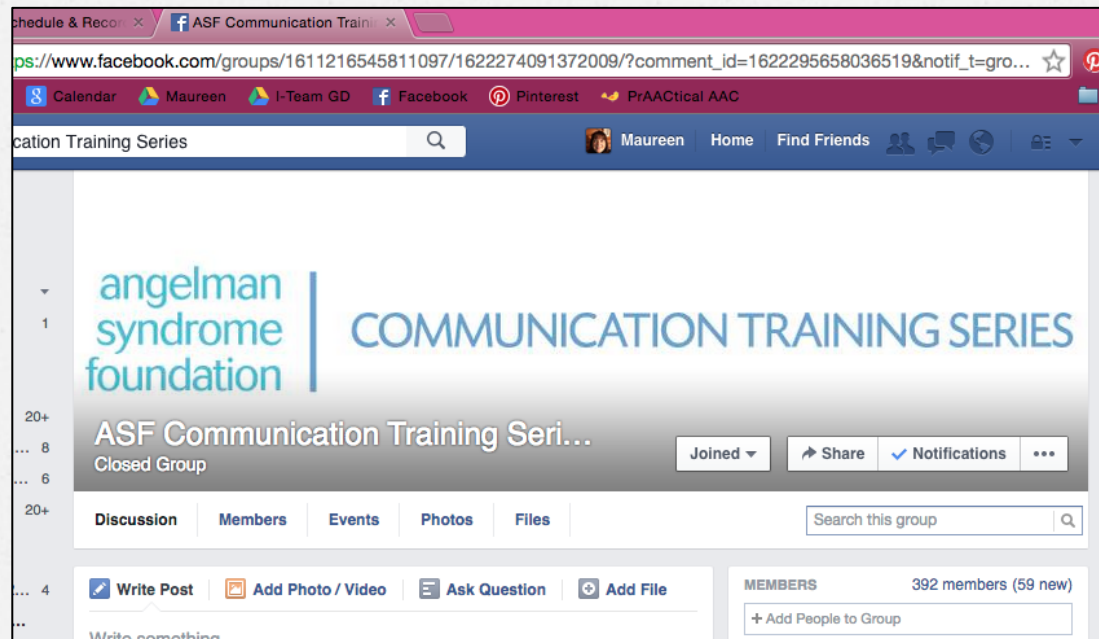
AngelmanSyndromeFdn

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



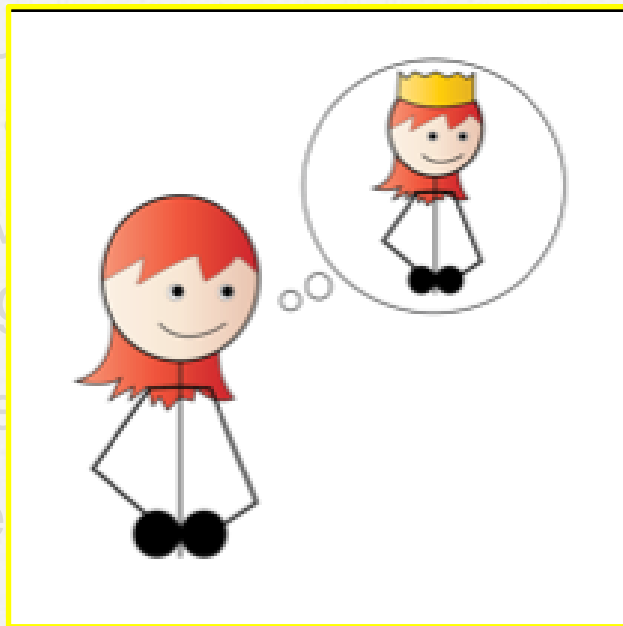
mom

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



“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



Targets	Student's learning outcomes, goals
1. object	Student frequently acts on their environment in physical ways – move, touch, reach, push, swipe, etc – to produce specific actions and reactions
2. range of functions	Student communicates for a variety of purposes, is able to express a range of language functions
3. expanding message length	Student is working to increase the average length of their messages (expressed via symbols, gestures, signs, vocalizations) eg child at a single word level is working towards more two-word phrases
4. broad vocabulary	The student's repertoire of words includes a range of parts of speech, and types of words (eg general, more specific, very specific); student has a good breadth and depth of vocabulary
5. broad applications	Student is expanding the communication environments – new situations, new people, new locations, new activities

Teaching	Instructional approaches; partner's role
1. modeling	Partners incorporate the use of the communication system into the daily routines, demonstrating how the support can be used without any expectation of use by the student
2. one-directive language	Partners use statements, comments and observations as opposed to questions and directives
3. opportunities	Student has reasons, time and opportunity to communicate throughout the day
4. establish routines	Partners establish routines and systems related to activities to improve consistency and predictability when possible
5. predictable role	Partners support communication by inserting expectant pauses, incorporating natural cues, responding logically to communication attempts etc
Tasks	Activities
1. age-respectful	Use materials that are appropriate in form and content for the student's age-matched peers
2. engaging	Incorporate features and practices that promote individual engagement
3. curriculum connections	Include connections to the rich and interesting topics, materials, and activities associated with the grade-level general education curriculum
4. appropriate challenge	Provide materials and activities that are at an appropriate level of challenge – “frustration-free with feedback”
5. variety	Broad repertoire of activities which incorporate “repetition with variety” – where the activity and materials are changed moderately so that some parts are novel and some stay the same

Tools	Communication materials, format and content
1. accessible supports	Specific supports are used to aid in understanding, remembering, and using information
2. different parts of speech	Expressive communication tools include different parts of speech, supports communicating for a range of functions/purposes such as academic participation, expressing wants/needs, sharing information, and participating in social interactions
3. sufficient quantity	Expressive tools include a sufficient quantity of vocabulary overall, utilizing alternative access methods as needed to maximize the available targets
4. range of vocabulary format	Expressive tools include vocabulary in a variety of formats, such as: letters, single words, and phrases
5. organized	Communication tools are organized in clear, systematic, format that promotes learning of linguistic and motor patterns

Testing	Methods of progress monitoring
1. communication assessments	Appropriate speech, language, and communication assessments have been used to identify accurate present abilities and appropriate intervention targets
2. progress checks	Instructional programs are monitored to ensure they are being implemented as intended
3. test testing	Valid and reliable student responses are documented, along with those that are not, so that the student is evaluated using appropriate means
4. school assessments	Student is provided an opportunity to participate in classroom and state-wide assessments with appropriate adjustments to ensure they are represented in the accountability system
5. data collection	The team uses an effective progress monitoring system, incorporating a range data collection formats, and identifying the methods of analyzing and applying the information

Team	Resources for team to implement program elements
1. planning time	The team participates in regular planning sessions to achieve the program expectations
2. documentation	The student's educational program elements are clearly documented and shared to ensure program quality and compliance
3. team members	Team members have the knowledge, skill and disposition necessary to provide an appropriate educational experience
4. IEP	The student's IEP is complete, accurate, and concise, providing a logical progression from present levels to accommodations to services and goals
5. IEP goals	The IEP goals are limited to prioritize the most important learning in the next year, integrate foundational and academic skills, and are discipline-free

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/Tasks



3. Tools



4. Testing



5. Team





AAC jigsaw puzzle



AAC framework



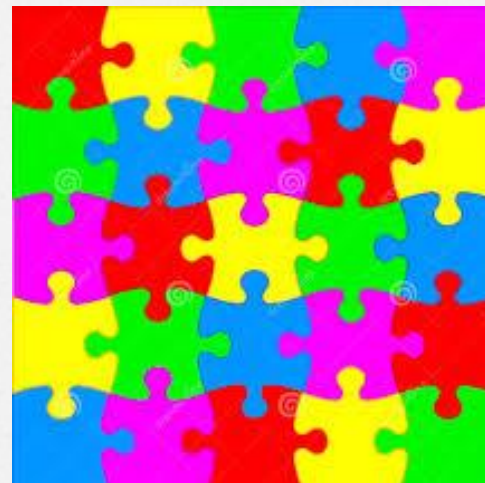


Putting the AAC
pieces together





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.

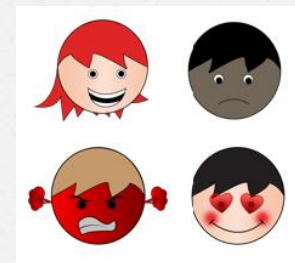
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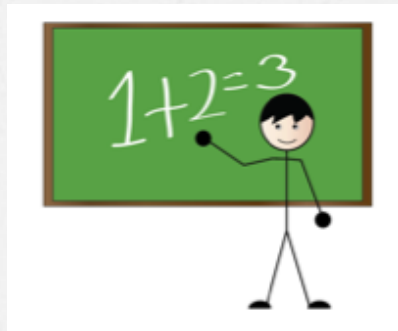
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Teaching

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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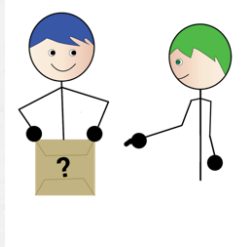
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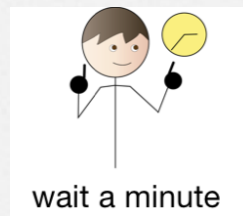
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Tasks

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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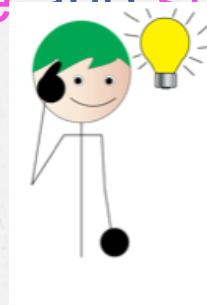
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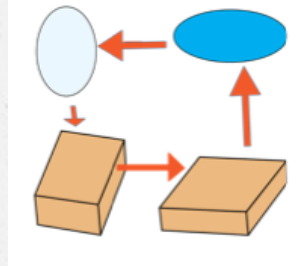
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The student consistently participates in a wide range of **age-respectful** activities that maximize grade-level **curriculum connections**, foster **engagement**, and incorporate a balance of **variety** and **consistency**, **challenge** and **success**.

What are the **Tools**
format and content
guidelines
associated with
effective
communication
materials for
students with
complex
communication
needs, including
AS2

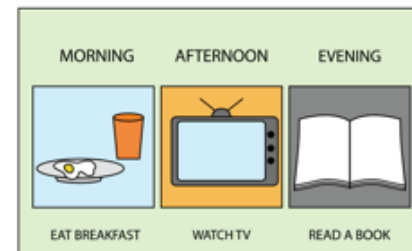


Tools

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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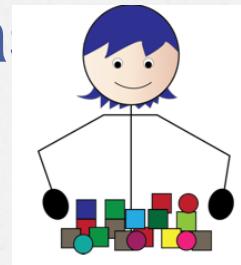
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Testing

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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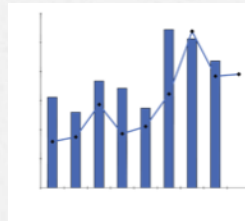
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Team

What are the team resources necessary to implement effective communication programs for students with complex communication needs, including AS?



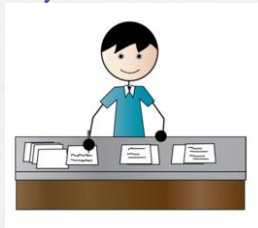
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A knowledgeable and skilled team participates in regular planning sessions, documenting and sharing important program information, and generating a complete IEP that includes flexible, meaningful goals.



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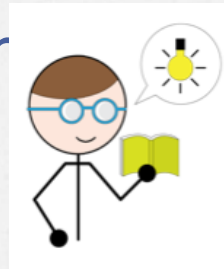
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A knowledgeable and skilled team participates in regular planning sessions, documenting and sharing important program information, and generating a complete IEP that includes flexible, measurable goals.



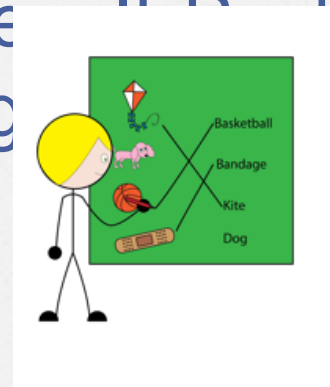
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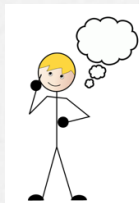
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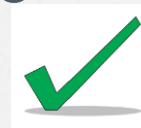
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Framing Our



Thinking...



You might think....

“This information applies to kids who have more advanced communication skills”

“This student has to work on motor/sensory skills before they can do this..”

“Oh no, I am going to have to rewrite the whole IEP!”

“We are doing it all wrong.”

“I am overwhelmed – I’ll never be able to do all this”

You should think...

“There are no prerequisites for these practices – they are good practices for all users of AAC – including my child!”

“Motor and sensory supports are incorporated into the communication system – they do not replace these program practices.”

“Do the ideas and concepts make sense to me? What elements can I find that are similar in the IEP?”

“Awareness is a powerful and necessary first step.”

“This is the start of a full year of learning, so we will just put one foot in front of the other”

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.*



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5 STEPS

Student and
Team
Educational
Profile
System

Graphic
organizer for
learning

5 STEPS KEY QUESTIONS ACTIVITY PROFILE	
Targets	
Teaching / Tasks	
Tools	
Testing	
Team	