

## MAY IS SPEECH AND HEARING AWARENESS MONTH

### Spotlight on AAC

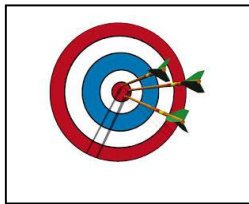


**“Augmentative and Alternative Communication**, also referred to as **AAC**, is any device, system or method that a person with a communication impairment uses to improve their ability to communicate. All forms of communication (other than oral speech) fall under the umbrella of AAC (eg. body language; pointing; gestures; writing; speech generation devices). An AAC system may be used to ‘augment’ or clarify the speech of a person or it may be used to provide a completely ‘alternative’ mode of communicating.

We in Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board believe that all students have a voice. We strive to provide communication learning opportunities for all students, including those with severe communication impairments. Through the use of AAC in our classrooms, students with communication impairments are provided with the opportunity to develop communication skills for social interaction, curriculum access, and well-being.

## AAC in the Classroom

Communication skills are taught with the goal of improving a child's participation in all aspects of school life. Speech-language pathologists and classroom teachers collaborate to select and implement communication goals that increase the quality and quantity of a child's participation in regular learning activities and routines, not just requests for wants and needs.



Create **Target Activities** that are short in duration but occur 3-4 times per week. Facilitate communication initiations by the AAC user. Include a variety of activities e.g., art, reading, lunch, and allow choices throughout the activity. The AAC user needs a reason to perform the activity. The activity must be motivating, functional, interactive and age-appropriate. Vocabulary needed to participate in the activity must be available in the AAC system. Pre-planning is necessary to ensure the communicative environment is set up for the AAC user's participation.

(Taken from "Judi Cumley and Mary Wirkus", Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative (PP Presentation))

**COMMUNICATION** is the **GOAL** of any Activity

Links:

The International Society for **Augmentative and Alternative Communication** (ISAAC) [www.isaac-online.org](http://www.isaac-online.org)

PrAACtical AAC | Supports for language learning (<http://practicalaac.org>)