

# What is AAC?

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AAC is a term often used by Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) as a form of communication that may be considered for a client. But what is it and when do you use it? AAC stands for Alternative and Augmentative Communication, with *augmentative* meaning to add something to their speech and *alternative* meaning to be used instead of speech. We all use various forms of AAC but in terms of speech therapy, it may be used for clients who are non-verbal or have significantly unintelligible verbal speech. There are many different types of AAC, some of which may surprise you! Here are the following types and examples of each:

No-Tech/Low-Tech	High-Tech
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gestures/ facial expressions</li><li>• Sign language</li><li>• Writing</li><li>• Drawing</li><li>• Spelling words by pointing to letters</li><li>• Pointing to pictures/photos/written words</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using an app on an iPad or tablet to communicate</li><li>• Using a computer/tablet with a “voice” (speech generating device)</li></ul>



If you look at the no-tech/low-tech options, you see many things that you use daily to add to or **augment** your verbal speech. The gestures/facial expressions you use when you are talking to someone, writing an email/text, and using pictures to supplement your texts are just a few examples of augmentative forms of communication. For someone who is non-verbal, they may use one or a combination of these strategies to communicate depending on their abilities. Sign language or pictures put onto communication boards may be a strategy tried for someone who is non-verbal or has great difficulty being understood by others. For example, they point to a picture of water to get a cup of water.

High-tech options use a vocabulary application (there are many types) on an iPad/tablet/computer system where you push a button to share what you need/want. These methods have voice output with them. To get set-up with something like this, your SLP may have some programs within their personal or company's resources to trial. They can also help you work with a company that sells these types of devices. Here at SunnyDays Therapy, we have connections with multiple companies such as, TalkToMe Technologies, Saltillo, Prentke Romich Company, Tobii Dynavox, Forbes, MN STAR Program, and PACER Center. Of course, if there is someone else you have heard of and would like to work with, we can venture those options as well.

Contact one of our Speech-Language Pathologists at 952-223-2506 if you have more questions regarding use of AAC or feel this may be a good option for you or your loved one.