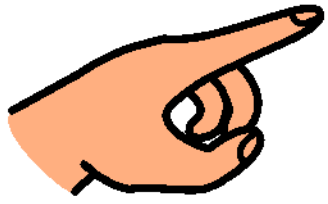


Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Options

People with little or no speech or speech that is difficult to understand may communicate in different ways. They may use sign language, gestures, an alphabet board and/or a communication device. These different ways to communicate are called Augmentative and Alternative Communication or AAC for short. AAC can be broken into 3 categories: no tech, low tech and high tech. Some people may use many AAC methods to get their messages across.



No Tech

Types of AAC

High Tech

Low Tech



No Tech / Unaided AAC

This type of AAC doesn't need any extra 'stuff'. It just needs you! It includes Key Word Sign, AUSLAN, facial expressions, gestures such as waving and pointing, and body language.

Benefits	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nothing extra is needed• Communication is possible anywhere and anytime - even in the swimming pool or at the beach!• It's something everyone uses to communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You might not be able to communicate everything you want to e.g. all the words you want to say in a sentence• The other person needs to be able to correctly interpret what you're trying to communicate


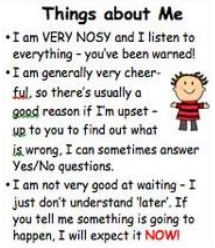

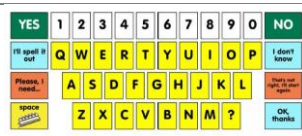

Low Tech / Light Tech / Non-electronic AAC

Low tech communication systems are made of paper and therefore do not require batteries. Low tech systems can be made up of pictures, words and/or letters of the alphabet.





Benefits	Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They can be customised• They are durable and can be easily taken to places like the beach and swimming pool• There's no technology that will need troubleshooting or charging• Cheaper to make, repair or replace• You don't need to have a perfect pointing finger...you can even use your whole hand or fist!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be bulky• There's no 'voice' with this system – the communication partner needs to add the voice• They require the conversation partner to be paying close attention• Can be time consuming to form a message• Require more time to add new words• Difficult to provide an endless amount of vocabulary

There are many different types of low tech AAC. These types all have different uses.

Examples of Low Tech AAC

Type	Use	Example
Community Request Cards	Small cards with specific simple messages on them. Usually things the person requests or asks frequently. For example “can I please have a regular caramel latte.”	
Communication Passports	A small, easily understood book used to present information about a person’s communication needs.	<p>Things about Me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am VERY NOSY and I listen to everything - you’ve been warned! • I am generally very cheerful, so there’s usually a good reason if I’m upset - up to you to find out what is wrong. I can sometimes answer Yes/No questions. • I am not very good at waiting - I just don’t understand ‘later’. If you tell me something is going to happen, I will expect it NOW! 
Communication Board	A single board containing symbols and/or words that allows a person to communicate different messages.	
Alphabet Boards	Used like a keyboard, these boards allow people to spell their message or parts of their message (such as the first letter a word starts with).	
Communication Book	A book of symbols and/or words. They are often organised into categories, and may have a food page, places page, people page etc.	

Examples of High Tech

Type	Use	Example
Single Message & Sequenced Message Devices	Devices that have a button and allow you to record speech. When the button is pressed the pre-recorded message is played. For example “Bingo!” Some can hold one message or a sequence of messages. You can get them in different sizes and colours.	
Static Display	The buttons and pictures don't move. The button is pressed to produce a pre-recorded word or phrase. You can have different pages with different words.	
Dynamic Display	A device or tablet with communication software or an app installed. The app or software has pictures and/or words. The pictures can also represent folders which take you to new words.	
Text-to-Speech	These devices have a keyboard so messages can be typed, then the software reads the message aloud for the listener. There are apps for this or devices specifically made for communication.	

Where To Start?

- National Equipment Database (NED): www.askned.com.au
- ILC WA Website: <https://ilc.com.au/ilcresources/>
- Equip Myself App: <https://ilc.com.au/equipmyself/>
- ATChat: <https://www.facebook.com/atchatwithus/>

For information and advice on communication options contact ILC WA's Assistive Technology Service on 9381 0600 or help@ilc.com.au