

# Helping children learn to use AAC through play

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) means enhancing a spoken message by using other strategies. This can be by using a picture or object (aided AAC), or using gestures and tone of voice (unaided AAC).

Children learn best in natural settings and play. AAC plays an important role in helping this learning.

## AAC sets up expectations

- Key Word Sign and Gesture can be used to tell children about the activity or game you are playing, or about to play.
- Objects, photos or pictures can also cue to what to do, or how to play, for example a bucket when it's time to play in the sandpit, or a waterwheel when it's time for water play.

## AAC gives structure

They help children to know what will happen next, for example

- First-Then boards and visual schedules.
- activity specific aided language boards.

## AAC can help expand a child's range to new things

They give ideas of how to play with toys, such as

- play scripts that set up each step of play, for example car - garage- petrol- school.
- photos of what to build with blocks.
- photos of different things to make with the playdough.

## AAC helps children play together

- Turn-taking cards can help with taking turns.
- Activity specific aided language boards can be used for following the rules of a game.
- Visuals can help set up how to behave.

## AAC teaches independence

Work toward children following the visual schedule without your help by reducing your verbal prompts.

## AAC encourages expressive communication

AAC helps with communicating choices, such as

- choice of paint or coloured pencils for art time.
- choice of bubbles or ball for outside play.

It also helps with commenting and describing, for example

- core boards with symbols to say lots of things, such as “uh oh”, “more”, “like”, and “go”.
- activity specific aided language boards with symbols for things to say in each activity.



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