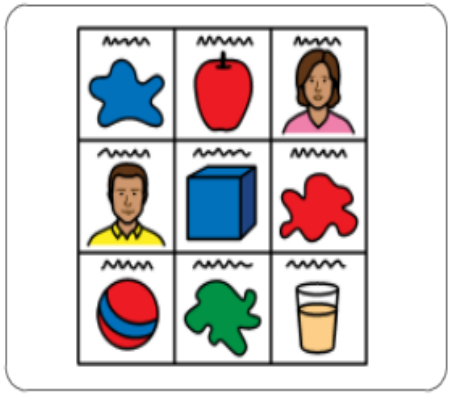
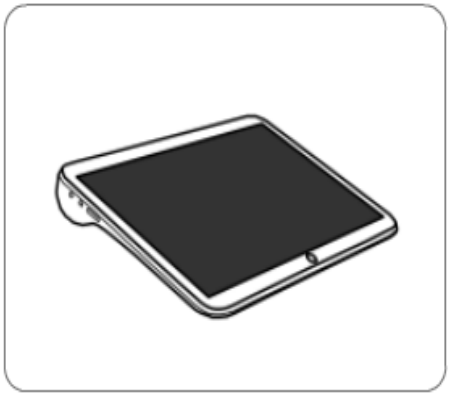
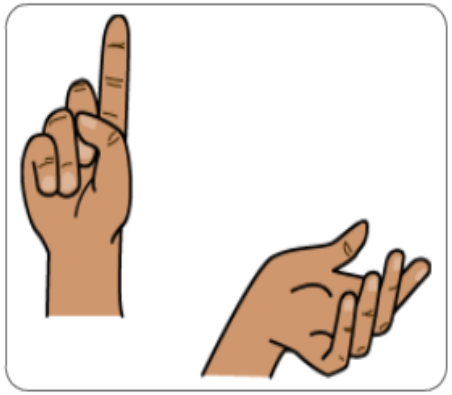
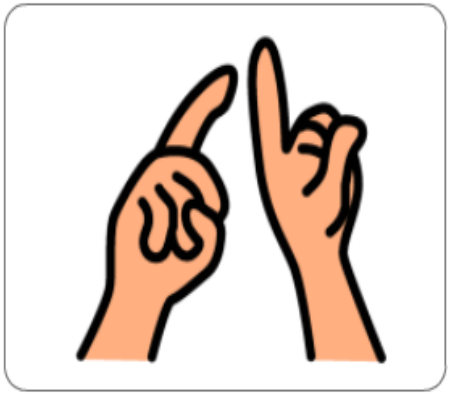

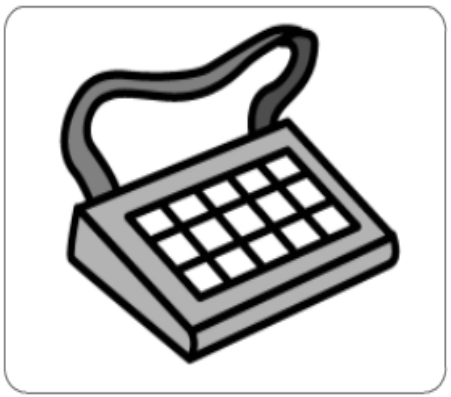

I CAN Centre: AAC Assessment

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Assessment: Direct Selectors

Presented by:

- Corinne Tuck, OT
- Rielle Dufour, SLP

Alberta Health Services

Objectives:

- Become familiar with the potential components of an AAC Assessment
- Focus on dynamic AAC skills assessment including targeting, linguistic and non-linguistic factors
- Become familiar with how to interpret assessment information to make clinical decisions around low-tech, mid-tech and high-tech communication systems through feature matching

AAC Assessment

- AAC assessment and decision-making is complex…
- We do the best that we can until we know better then we do better… That's our disclaimer.
- This presentation will demonstrate considerations to make when assessing for different systems

AAC assessment questions frequently heard:

- How do you pick between iPad apps?
- How do you pick between low-tech?
- How do you just know the right system?

I CAN Guiding Principles

- Work collaboratively with other professionals as often as possible, really….
- Aim for the outcome to be functional communication in all environments - this means no-tech, low-tech, mid-tech and high-tech systems should be explored/considered
- As often as possible provide access to as many symbols as the person can physically and visually handle
- Try to assess for a robust communication system that can support a variety of communication functions
- Try to find a communication system that will meet current communication needs and also grow with them
- Don’t assume you know what they can do or what would work best for them…. Try everything out/test your theories!

Assessment Process

Gather Information/ Intake

- SETT
- Likes/Dislikes
- Current communication Inventories

Dynamic AAC skills assessment

- Targeting
- Symbolic knowledge/linguistic skills
- Non-linguistic indicators

Interpret Assessment Results

- What do we know now?

Feature Match

- Apply Assessment results to "match" client with potential systems

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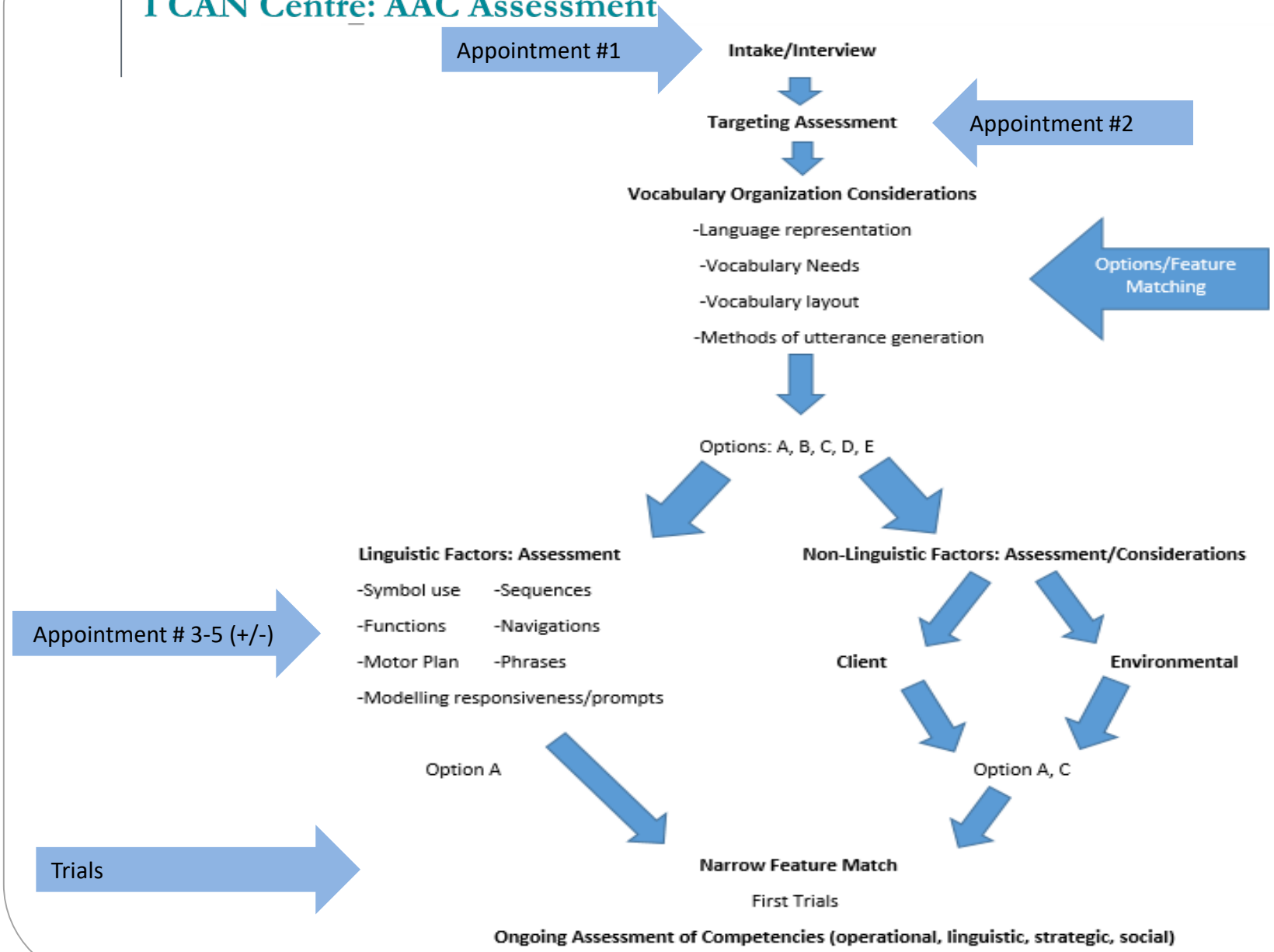


Gather Information/ Intake

- SETT
  - Likes/dislikes
  - Communication Signal Inventory

S.E.T.T.

The SETT framework provides a way of guiding initial AAC discussions

Student – Know your client.

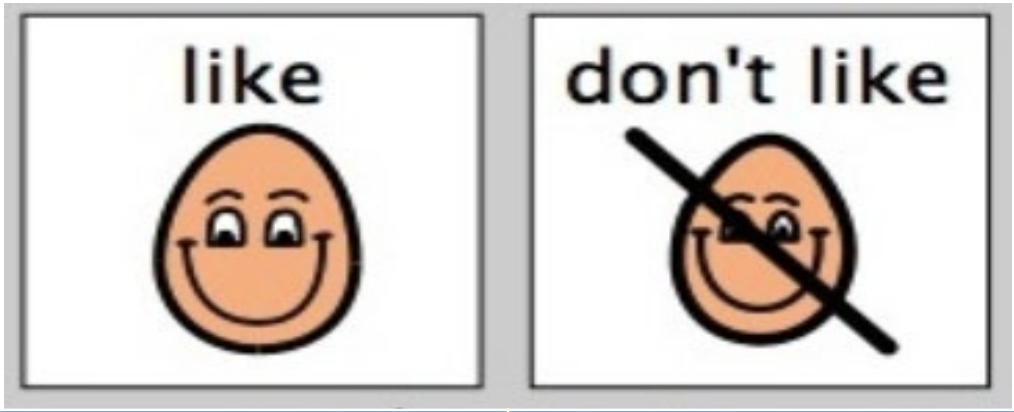
Environment – Know your “community”.

Tasks – Clarify the Assistive Technology (A.T.) need.

Tools / Strategies – Answer the A.T. question by exploring current tools and possible future tools.

www.joyzabala.com
http://assistedtechnology.weebly.com/sett-framework.html
https://www.gwaea.org/educators/special-education/special-ed-services/assistive-technology

Likes/Dislikes

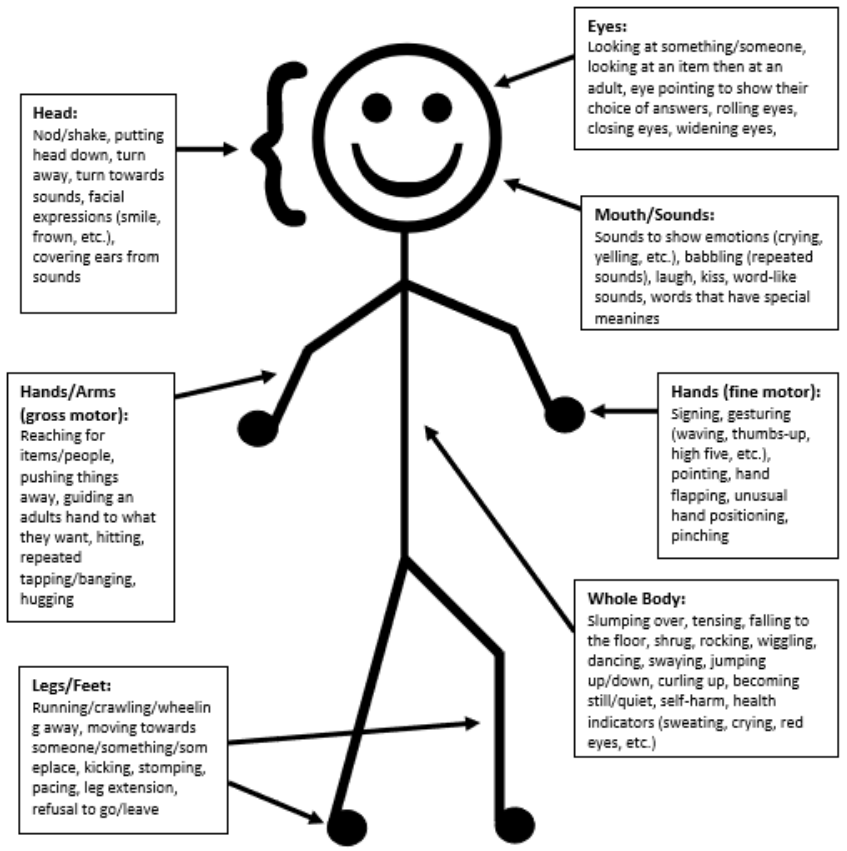


Likes	Dislikes

Communication Signal Inventories

Recognizing Communication Signals

For individual's that are not able to communicate in conventional ways such as speaking, it is important to recognize the ways that they are able to communicate. While familiar communication partners understand each and every way that the individual communicates, it can be difficult for unfamiliar partners to read the more subtle signals. This tool is designed as a support for teams to determine an individual's current communication skills and provide all those involved with the individual the same information.



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Communication Signal Inventory

Adapted from Cynthia J.Cress, Ph.D., CCC-SLP (2017)

What the person does	What it means	What you do	Communication Strategy/Response

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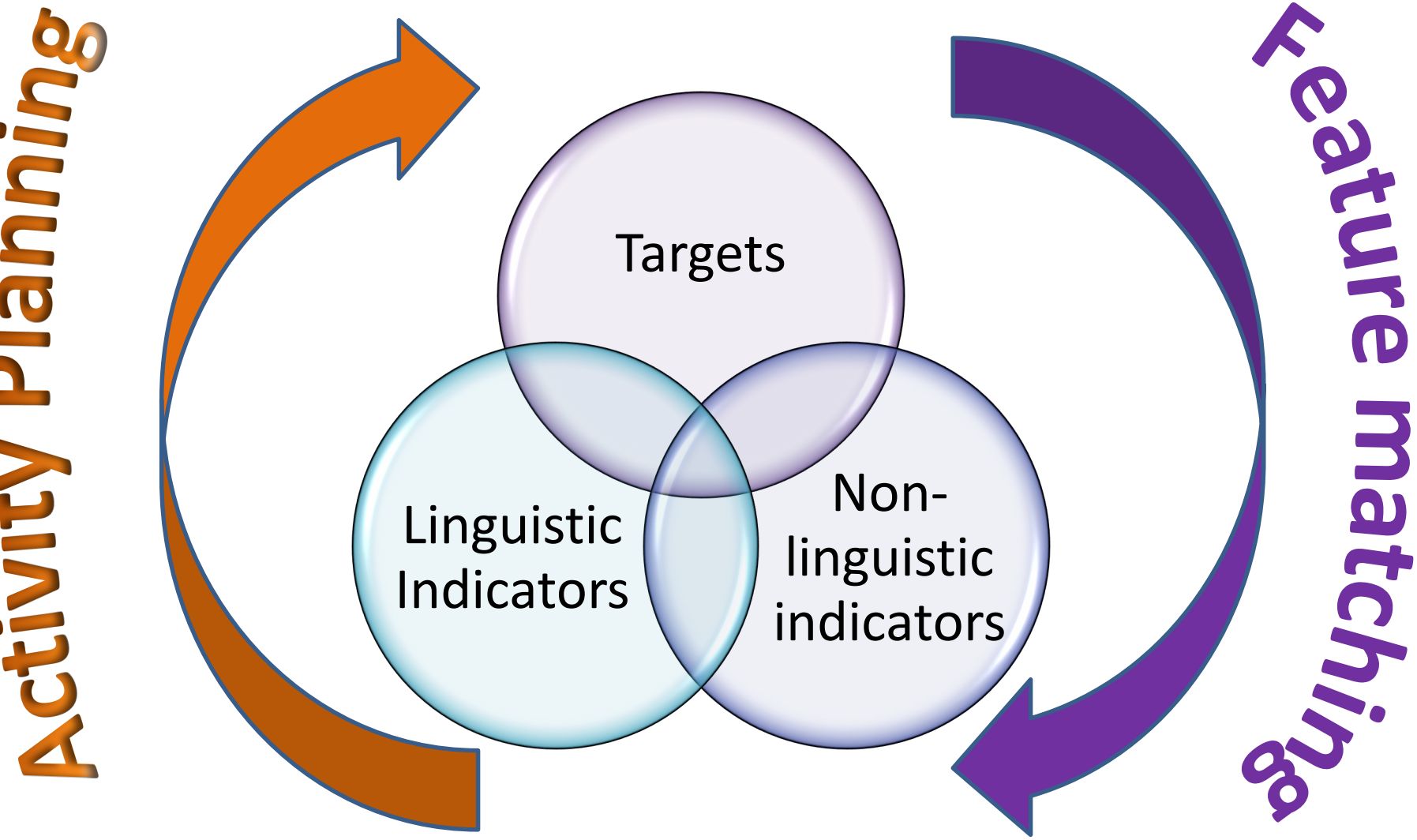
Dynamic AAC skills assessment

Alberta Health Services


Activity Planning
Targets
Linguistic Indicators
Non-linguistic indicators
Feature matching

Dynamic AAC Skills Assessment

Targeting
- Size of symbols
- Numbers of symbols
- Type of symbols
- Presentation Method

Linguistic Indicators
- Symbol Use
- Communication Functions
- Sequencing/Combining
- Navigation
- Responsiveness to modeling
- Motor Planning
- Phrase-based

Non-Linguistic Indicators
- Attention
- Engagement
- Impact of voice output
- Behavior
- Portability
- carrying

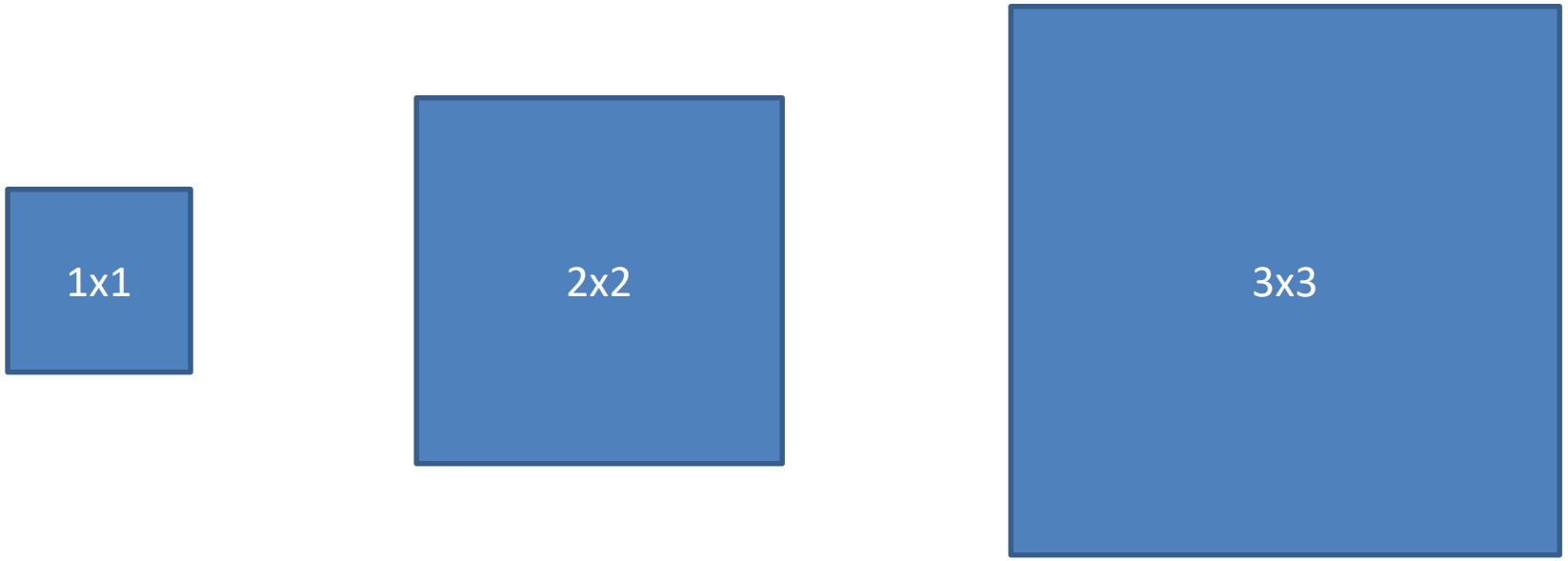
Targeting

- Size of symbols
- Numbers of symbols
- Type of symbols
- Presentation method

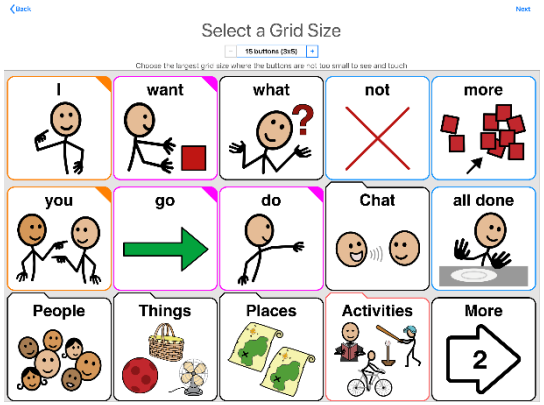
Why start here?

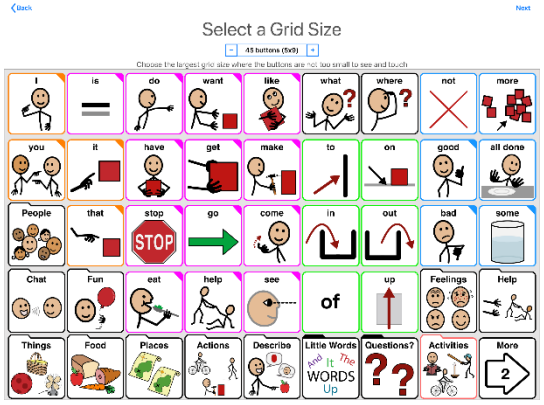
- We want to know what the child can physically see and touch
- This will lead to potential options to try

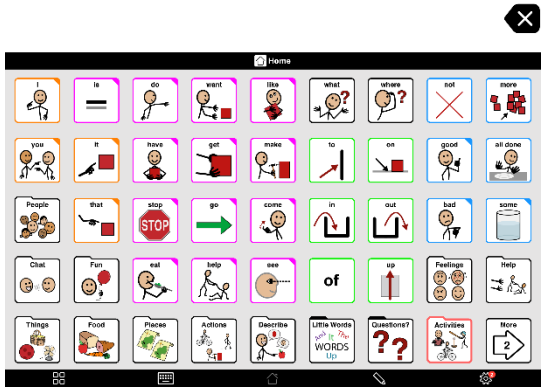
Size of symbols

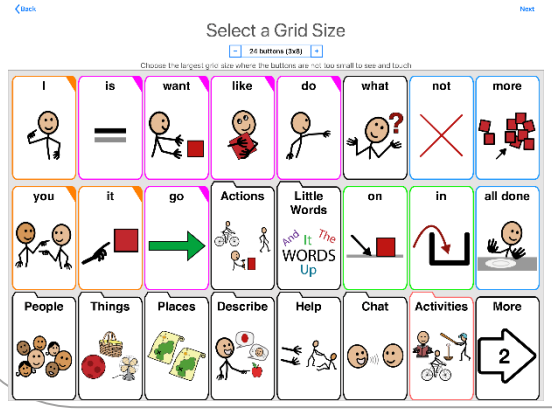


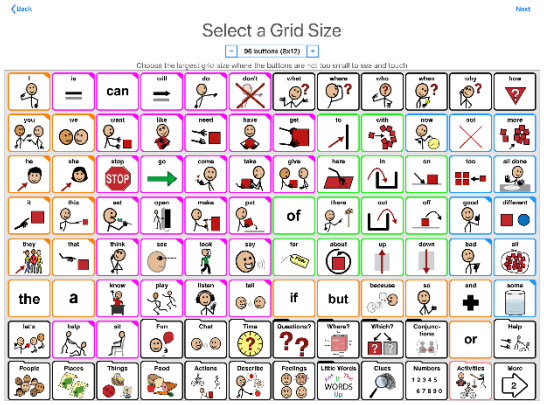
of Symbols (and spacing)





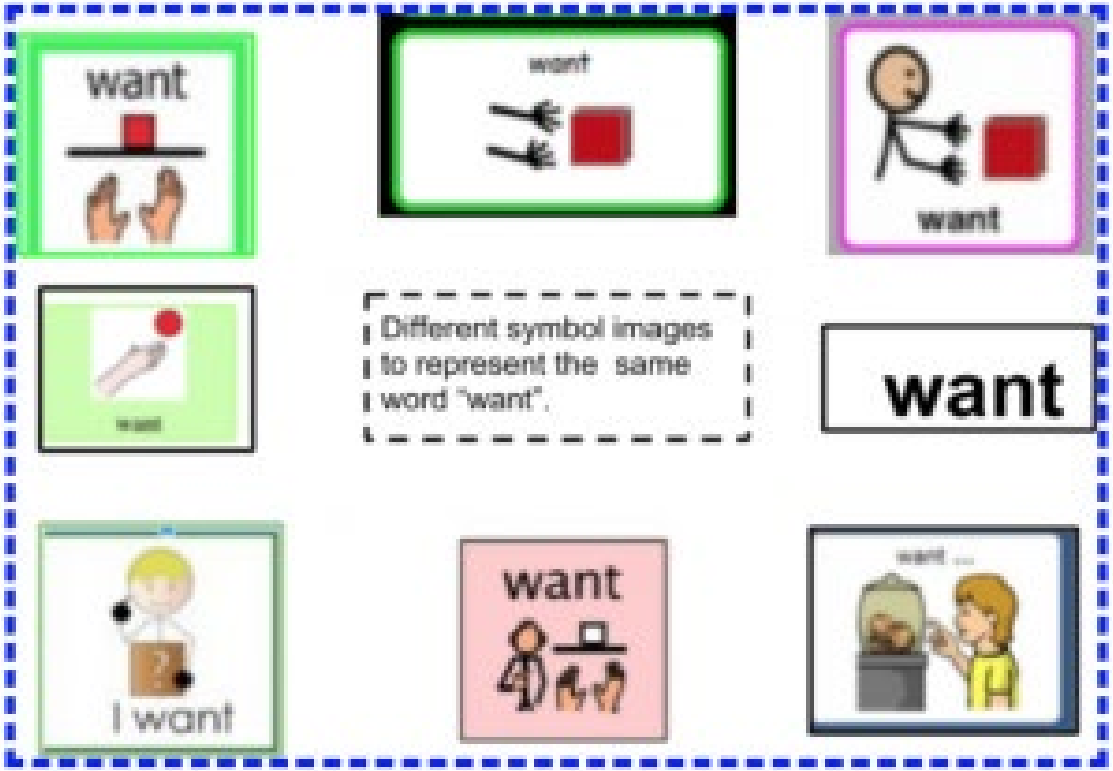






Type of Symbols

- PCS
- Symbolstix
- Widgit
- Minspeak
- Smarty Symbols
- …..



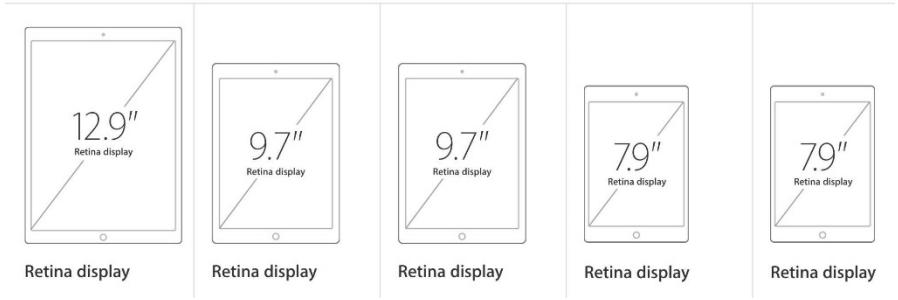
Presentation Method:

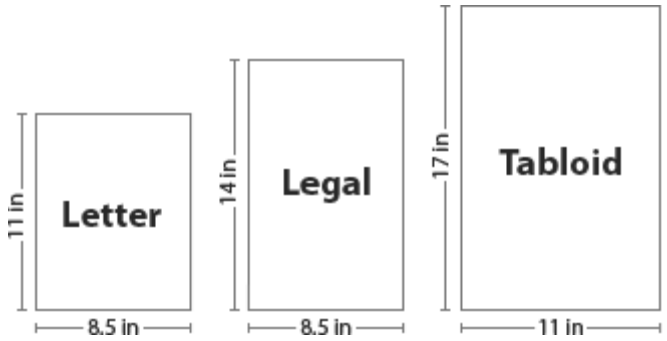
- Paper-based
  - Single board
    - Letter-sized, legal-sized, etc.
  - Book
    - Binder rings, binder, etc.
- Screen-based
  - Size of screen- 8” or 10” or 12”

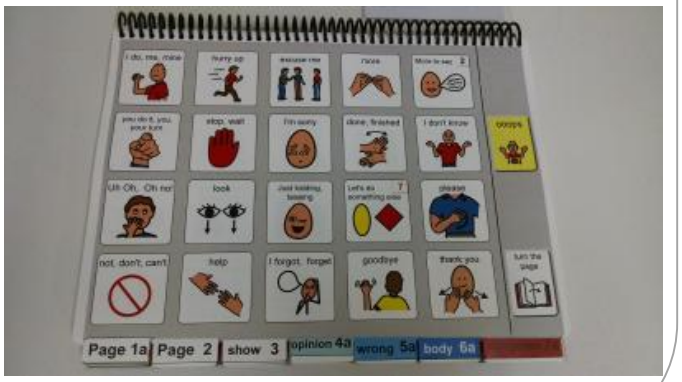
Why both?

- Want to see if there are differences between the two
- Want to see which would give access to more vocabulary through touch
- Low-tech back-up is recommended - EBP

Presentation Methods







Keep in mind:

- Least dangerous assumption
- Least restrictive option

"We should choose the grid size based on what the AAC learner can see and touch. We should not choose the grid size based on cognitive skills, receptive language or what we think the AAC learner can do. We often underestimate the learner's potential. This can result in starting with an AAC system with too few words".

https://www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/choosing-a-grid-size

Targeting Rule of Thumb: Low Tech

Consider the number of cells that were touched with at least 50% or more accuracy on the TASP

Refined finger point does not matter as much-smart partner determines accuracy

Go with the paper board that has the smallest size of cells with the greatest number of cells that the child can touch with the greatest accuracy

Is child able to touch all areas of the board? Check all quadrants.

Targeting Rule of Thumb: High Tech

Primary hand used has sustained isolated finger point?

Number & size of cells that were touched with greater than 50% accuracy on AAC Genie

Number of cells touched independently, reliably and accurately with an isolated finger point on a screen with AAC App

Is child able to touch all areas of the screen? Check all quadrants.

Standardized Assessments

- Test of Aided Communication Symbol Performance (TASP)
  - Low-tech (paper-based)
- AAC Genie app
  - High-tech (screen-based)

Informal

- Try out different size symbols
- Increase number of symbols per page

Standardized: TASP

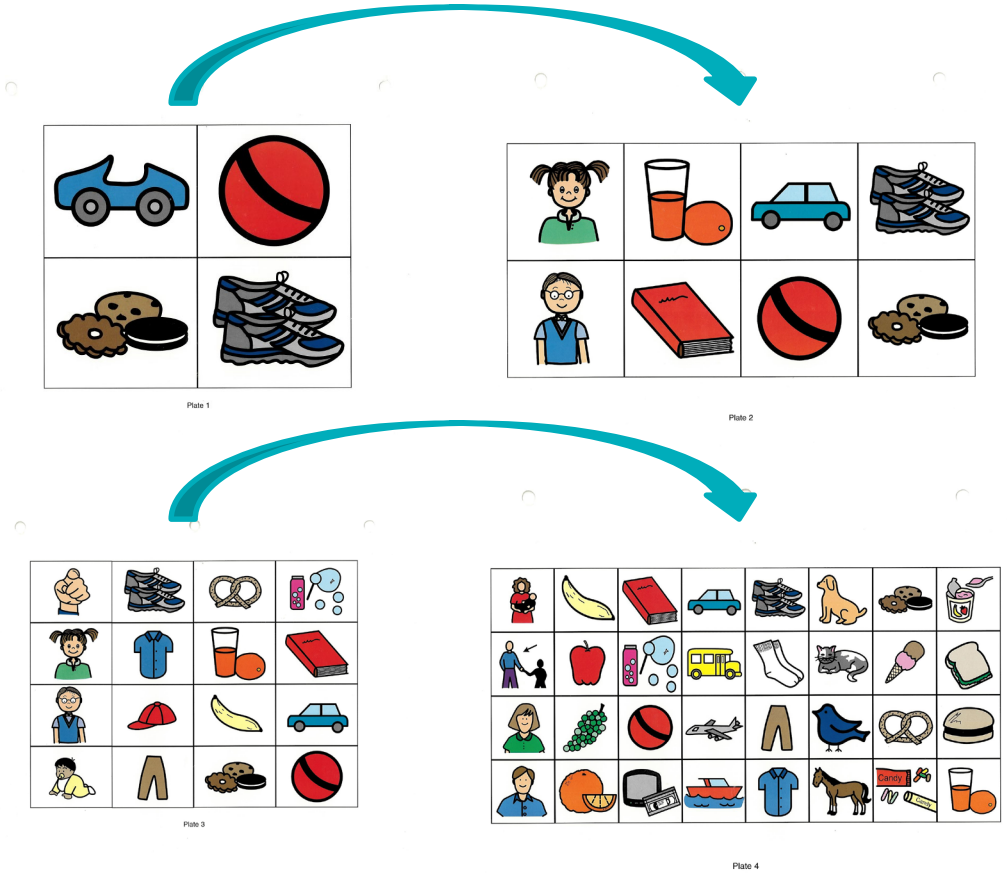
I CAN Centre for Assistive Technology

- TASP helps assess symbolic skills quickly and easily. It provides a starting point for designing or selecting an appropriate AAC device page set.

- Includes subtests, which can be administered over a period of sessions to test understanding of:
  - **Symbol size and number**
  - Grammatical encoding
  - **Categorization**
  - Syntactic performance

Why categorization?
- Many systems organize vocabulary categorically
  - Not meant to exclude someone from AAC – meant to identify potential goal areas or areas of strength

TASP: Symbol size and number



Standardized: AAC Genie app

- The purpose of AAC Evaluation Genie is not to identify a particular speech generating device, but rather build a framework for selecting an appropriate augmentative communication device for ongoing evaluation and / or device trial.

Subtests:

- **Visual identification and discrimination,**
- Recognition of nouns, functions, verbs,
- **Category recognition, inclusion and exclusion**
- Word associations, core vocabulary, picture description and word prediction

Unity ® , Pixon ® and SymbolStix ®

$17.99

AAC Genie app

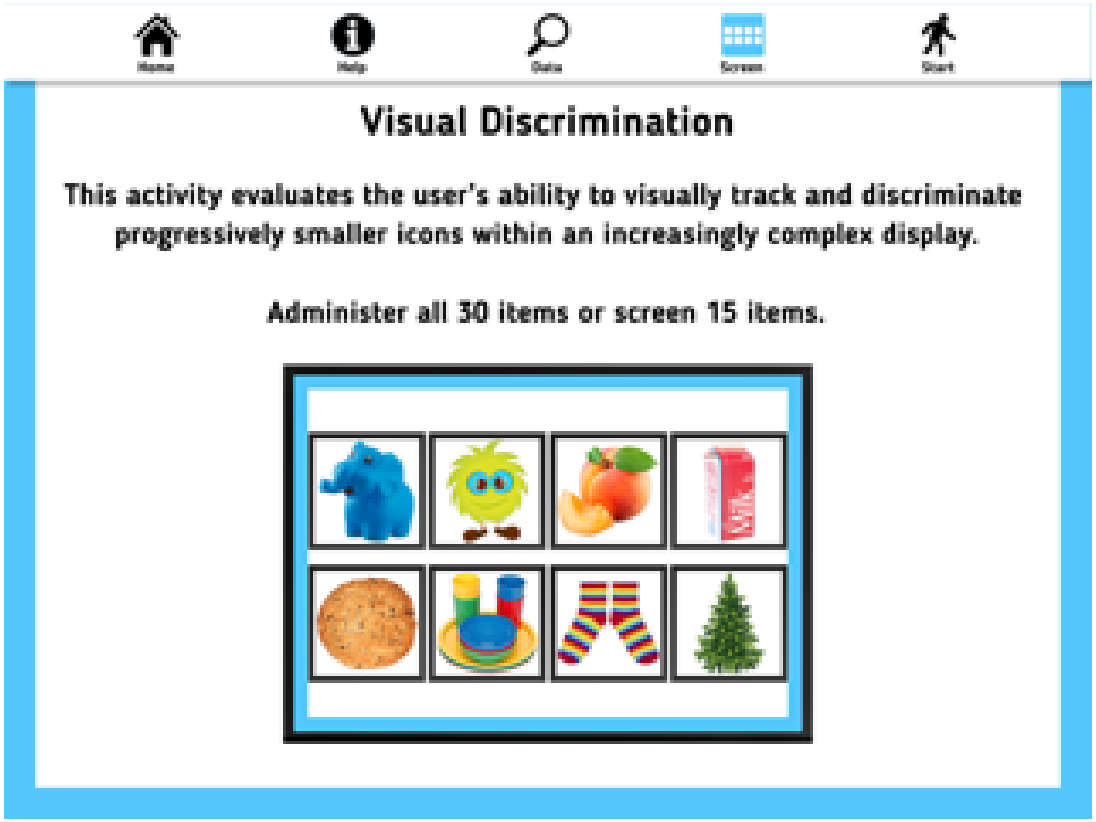
Areas we typically assess:

- Discrimination (symbol size and number)
- Identification (symbol size and number)
- Categorization

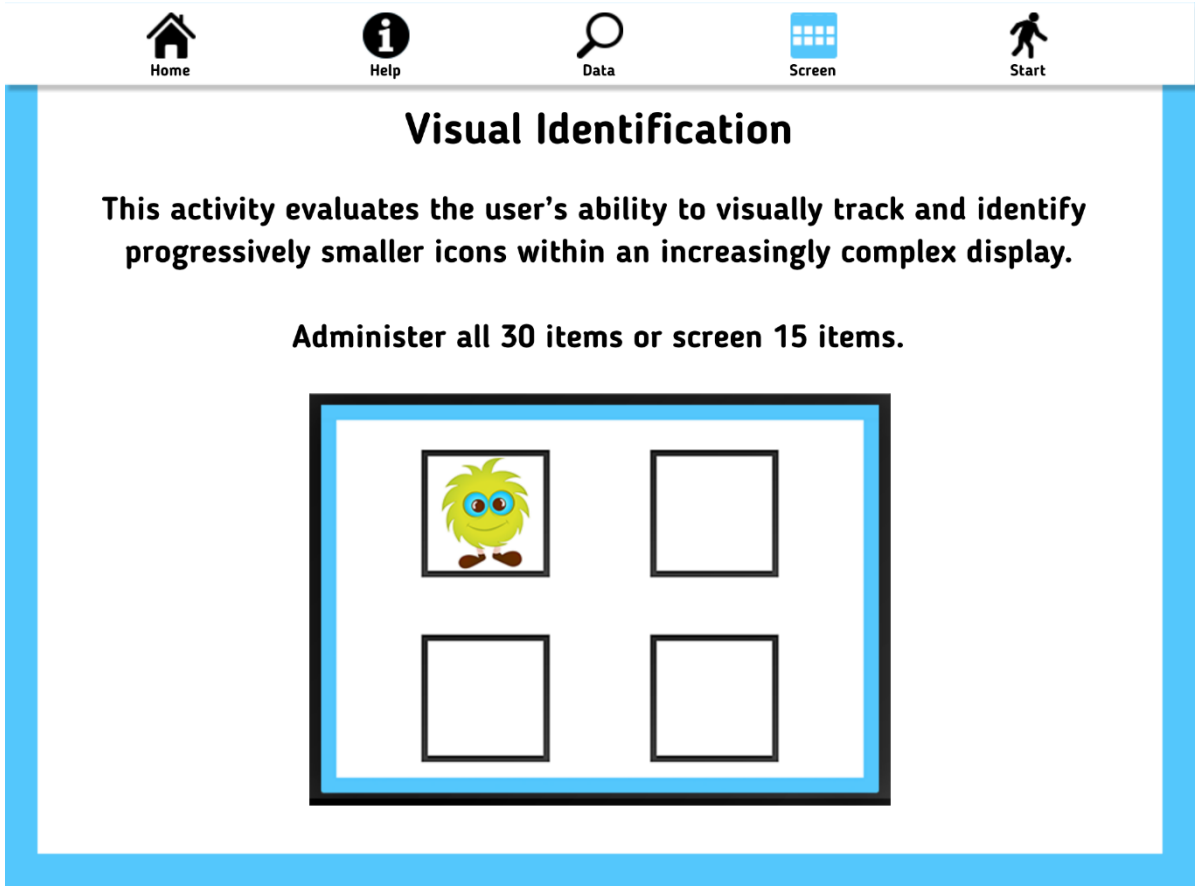
Tips

- Use the “screen” option to reduce the amount of time to assess
- Start with discrimination- if they are struggling drop down to identification – most likely don’t need to do discrimination and identification
- Think about assessing on a mini and regular-sized iPad for differences in targeting

Discrimination:



Identification:



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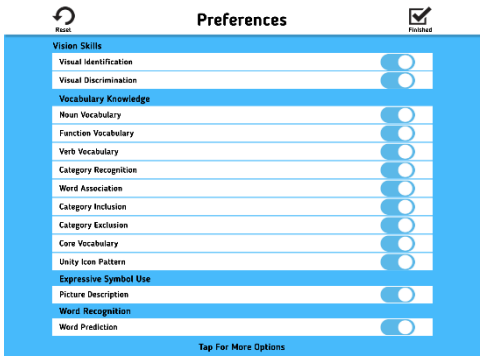
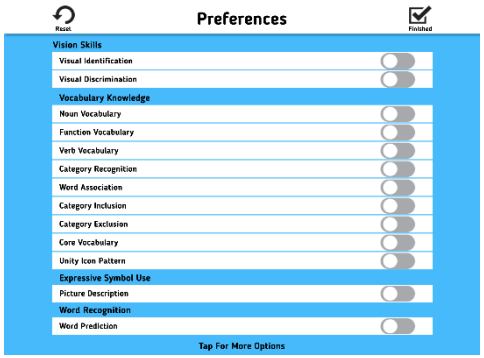
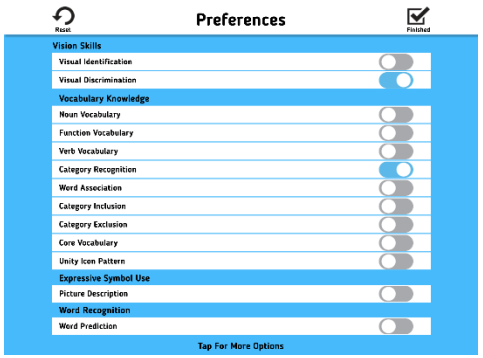
AAC Genie Settings:

- Add new user
- Go to settings
  - Reset
  - Reset all off
  - Select the items you want to assess
  - “Finished”
- Go to start
  - Select “all→ screen”
  - Start







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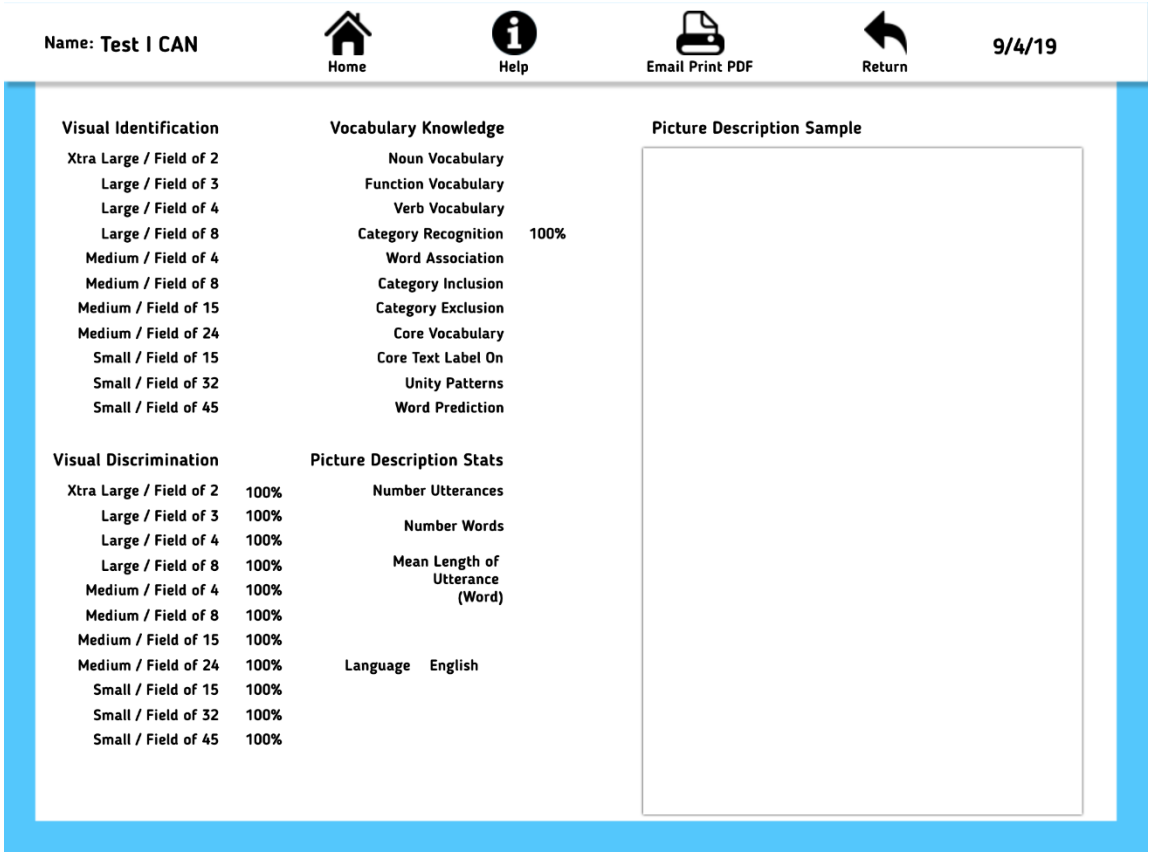
Data:

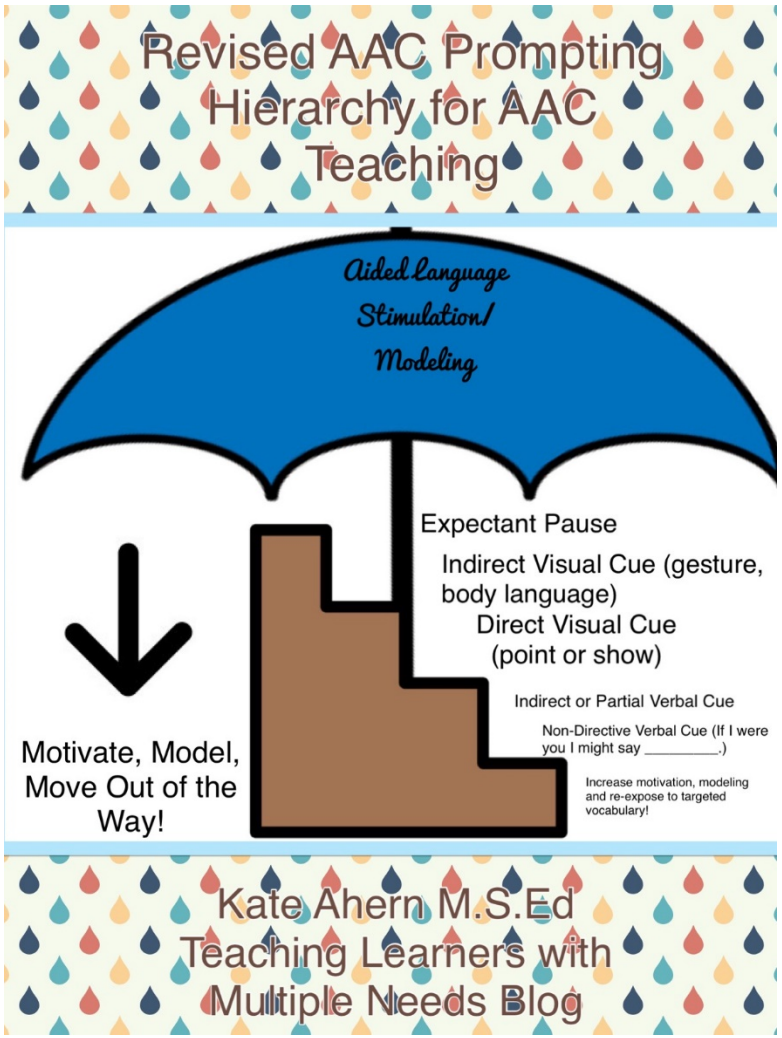


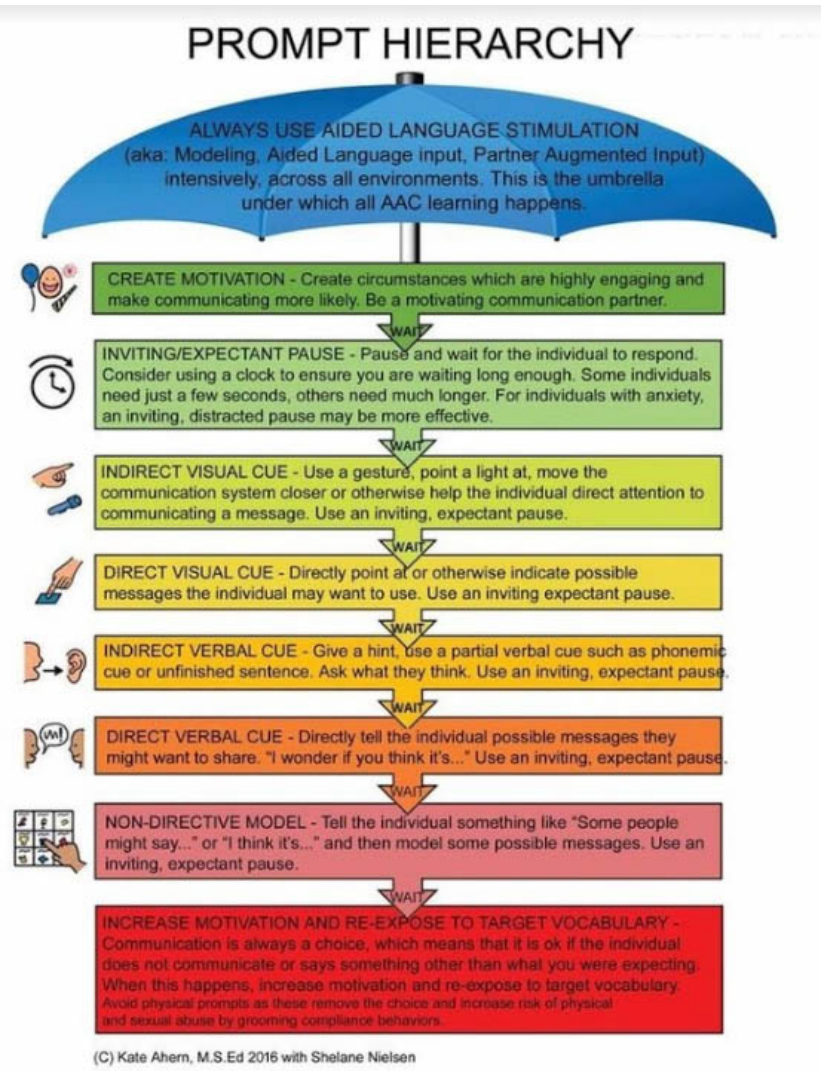
Informal: Targeting

- Take a “best first guess” as to number of symbols and presentation method
- Gradually increase/decrease number/page
- Use MOTIVATING activities and communication temptations
- Model and wait expectantly
- Use a prompt hierarchy

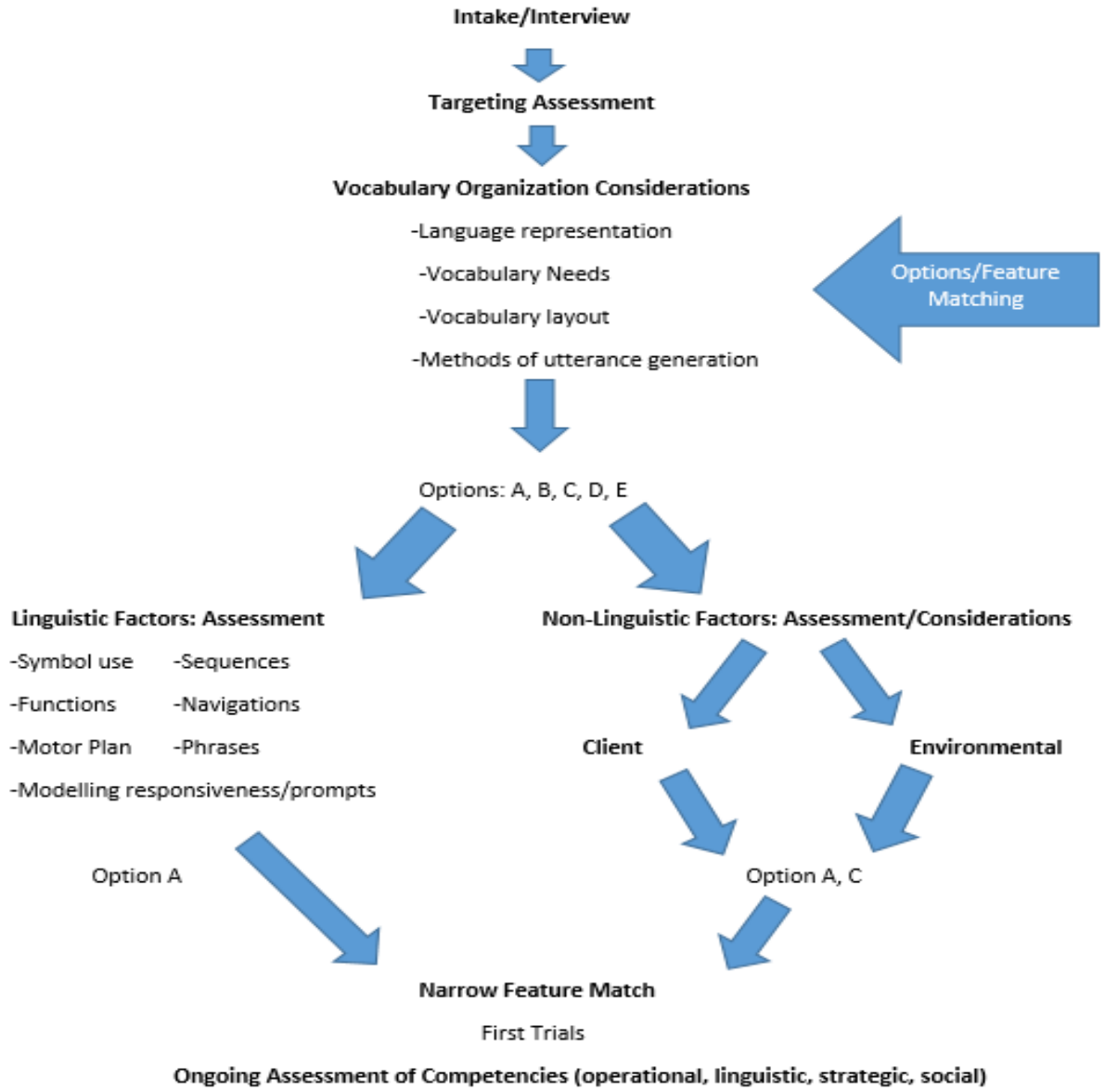
Thank you “likes/dislikes” list ☺

I CAN Centre: AAC Assessment





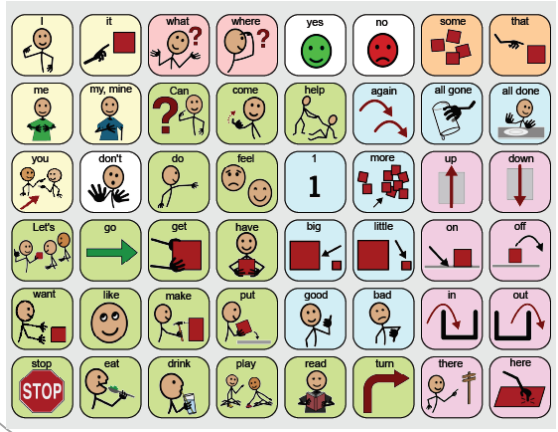
I CAN Centre: AAC Assessment

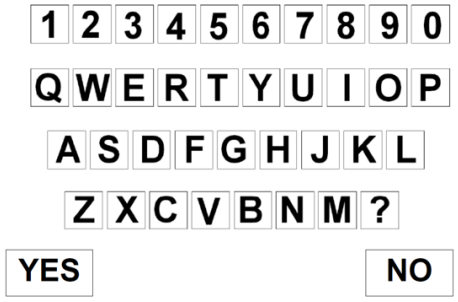


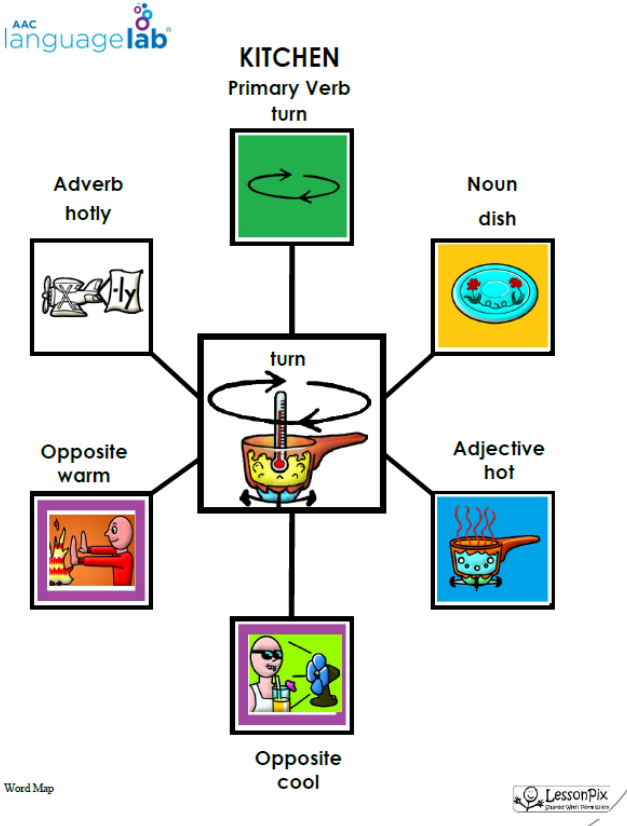
Vocabulary Organization Considerations

Language Representation:

- Single meaning pictures (PCS, Symbolstix, Widgit)
- Semantic compaction (Minspeak-Unity)
- Alphabet-based







Which vocabulary layouts would be most supportive of SNUGs? Which would be least supportive of SNUGs?

Vocabulary Layout:

Systems may be comprised of a single layout or multi-types

- Text-based/keyboard
- Core word based
- Topic/Context based
- Pragmatically organized
- Categorically organized
- Visual scene Displays

Vocabulary Needs:

- Robust vocabulary
- Core Vocabulary
- Fringe Vocabulary
- Personal “key” vocabulary (ease of editing?)
- Phrases
- Keyboard layout- QWERTY, ABC, etc.
- Custom vocabulary

Method of Utterance Generation

- Spontaneous Novel Utterance Generation (word by word)
- Pre-stored Sentences/phrases
- Spelling

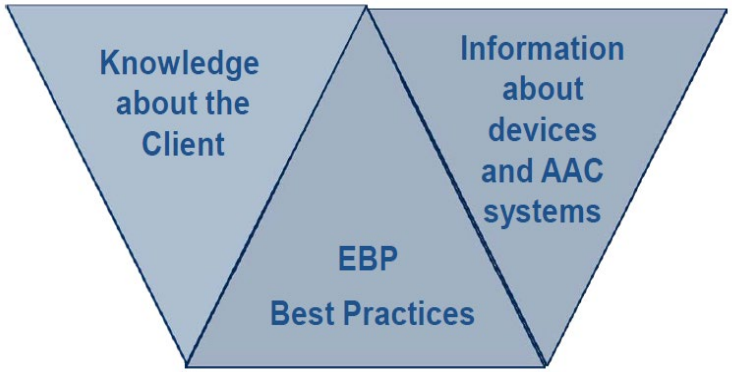
Tip to learn the systems:
- Try out the same phrases in each
  - How static vs. dynamic?
  - How many "hits"?

Not sure which system?

- Consider the most efficient way for them to access the most vocabulary
- Time to assess the different layouts
- Talk to the family:
  - Explain types (core-based, topic-based, visual scene, etc.)
  - Explain dynamic vs motor planning
  - Explain pros and cons of each
  - Ask for their input

Feature Matching: What is it?

Feature Matching is "the systematic process by which a person's strengths, abilities and needs are matched to available tools and strategies" (Shane & Costello, 1994).



"Using a Clinical Approach to Answer "What Communication Apps Should We Use" Gosnell, Costello& Shane, AHSA Perspectives, July 2011

Why feature match?

- Not all systems have the same features
- Not all individuals need the same features
- Help organize what you know about the client and potential systems to support them

Do a quick "mini" Feature Match

(Use SETT, Targeting and Vocabulary Organization Information)

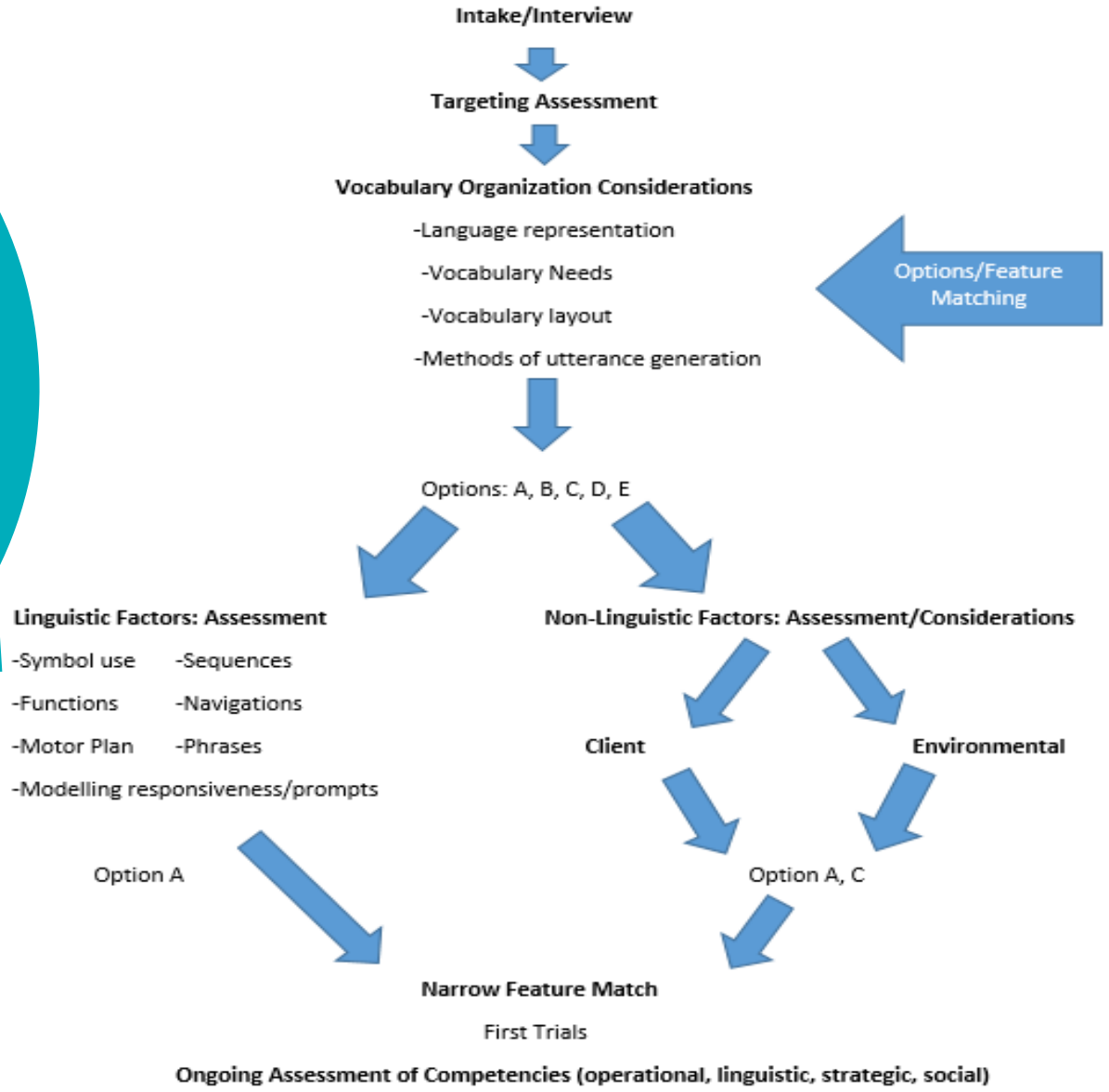
I CAN Centre: AAC Assessment

Potential Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Systems for trial based on current number of cells a client can see and touch and potential community availability of devices. This list is not exhaustive, please speak with your team for alternative solutions.

# of cells/targets the client can see/touch →	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-80	81-100	101+++
LOW-TECH									
LAMP (Minspeak)								84	
*Leveled Core (PCS, SS)		Level 1; 12	Level 2; 23	Level 3; 39	Level 4; 48				
PIXON (PIXON)		20	32		50				144
PODD one page opening – early functions (PCS)	9	12							
*PODD one page opening-expanded functions (PCS)	9	12, 16, 20							
PODD two-page opening (PCS)				36 keyword 40 keyword	48 Expanded key word		70 expanded keyword	90+, 100+ Complex syntax	
*Project Core (PCS, SS, Widgit)	4, 9			36					
Proloquo2go (SS)							77		
*Snap+Core First (PCS)	2, 4, 6, 9	12, 16	25	36	49		63, 80		
Super Core (Widget, SS)		12, 20	30		50				
UNITY (Unity)	4, 8	15	28	36	45	60		84	
*WordPower (PCS, SS)					42 basic flip book	60 basic flip book		88, 96 Single boards	108 flip book
MID-TECH									
GoTalk	9	20							
SuperTalker	1, 2, 4, 8								
HIGH-TECH									
iPad mini (7.9") or regular (10.2")									
• Grid with PODD		PODD 15				PODD 60			
• LAMP (Minspeak)								84 1-hit 84 transition 84 FULL	
• Proloquo2go – Crescendo (SS)	9	15, 16, 18, 20	25, 30	32, 36	45, 49	60	64, 77	81, 96, 100	112, 121, 128, 144
• Snap+Core First (PCS)	1, 2, 4, 6, 9	12, 16	25	36	49		63, 80		
• Sonoflex (SS)				32					
• TouchChat with wordpower (SS) * keyguards	4 basic Myquickchat 4, 8	Vocab PC 12 MyQuickChat 12 Multichat 15 WordPower 20	WordPower 25 touch and scan		WordPower 42 WordPower 42 basic WordPower 48	WordPower 60 Word power 60 basic	WordPower 80		WordPower 108 WordPower 108 with keyboard WordPower 140
• GoTalkNow; custom vocabulary	1, 2, 4, 9	16	25	36					

I CAN Centre: AAC Assessment

Run assessment appointments to determine Linguistic and Non-linguistic considerations (Typically 3+ appointments) with your initial options



Linguistic Factors: Assessment

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Assessment Activities

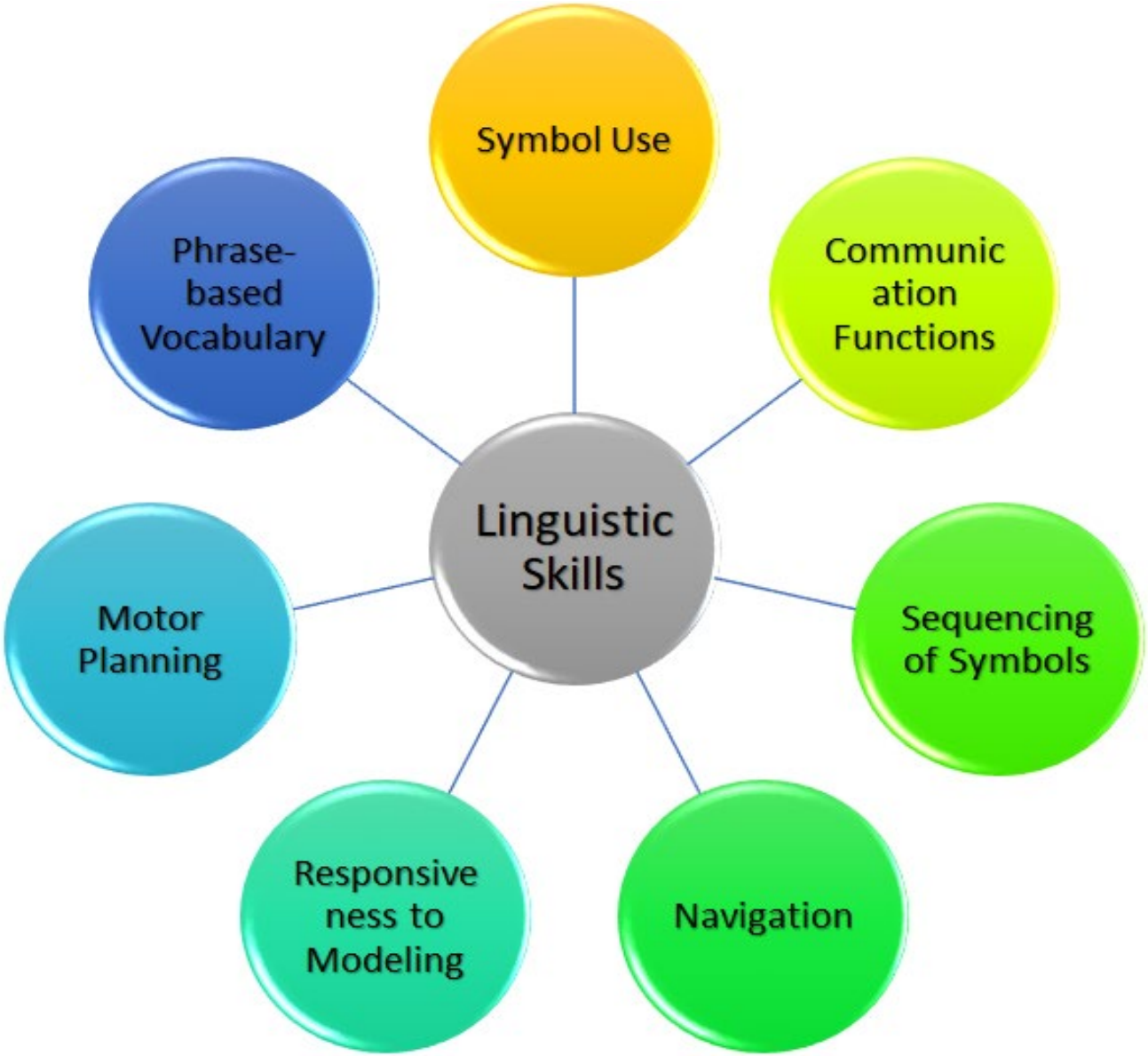
Always try to tie the activity to what the child is motivated by/enjoys

- Crafts: paper dolls of favourite characters, colouring pages of favourite shows (offer colour choices); make a scrapbook of family photos
- Sensory: calm-down preferences (cuddles, hugs), tickles, air/wind, tactile preferences
- Toys: wind-up, switch-activated, cause/effect
- iPad: funny videos, favourite show clips, cause/effect apps
- Books: choose simple and engaging books, use funny voices, find “core” words in the book and point them out

Assessment appointments:

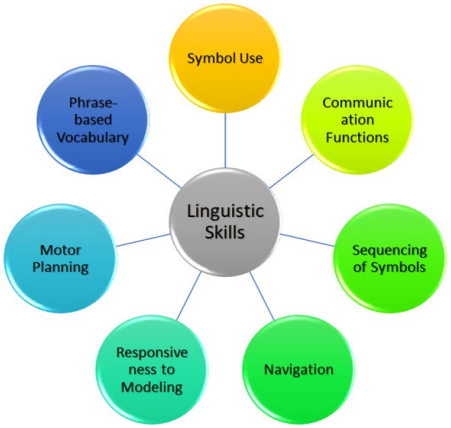
- Have your initial systems ready
- Use motivating play-based activities
- Use communication temptations
- Use your prompt hierarchy- what level of support do they need ?
- Swap systems in and out and assess linguistic and non-linguistic factors

I CAN Centre: AAC Assessment



Why these skills?

- Most language sets vary across these factors
- By assessing someone on the same factors across systems you can see how their skills in these areas are impacted by the different layouts



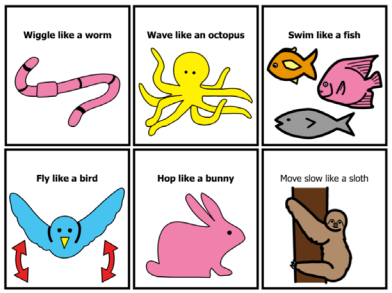
Symbolic use/understanding

- Assess current use (with modeling) of:
  - Core
  - Fringe
    - Try a motivating activity and see if they will touch a “fringe” symbol to request more i.e. “bubbles”
    - Try a motivating activity and see if they will touch a “core” symbol to request more i.e. “more” “go” “want”
    - What happened with core? fringe?

Communication Functions

- For assessment purposes; requesting, choice-making and directing activities are typically easiest to start with
- Then move on to other communication functions for more information as needed

Action Words/Verbs
Simon Says:



Prepositions
Into the box we go:

Sequencing/Combining of Symbols:

- Model "_____"
- Model "_____+ _____"
- Model "_____+ _____ + _____"

THEN

- Use your prompting and multiple trials to see what they can do

Navigation:

- Model /1 navigation/ + _____ (a word)
- Model /2 hit navigation + _____ (a word)

THEN

- Use your prompt hierarchy- what level of support do they need to navigate?

Phrase-based vocabulary:

- Open to a phrase-based page
- Model use of the phrases within an activity

THEN

- Use your prompt hierarchy- what level of support do they need to communicate with phrases

Motor Planning:

- Model on a more “static” display and a more “dynamic” display
- Look for:
  - Can they remember the location of a cell and/or sequence with only a few repetitions?
  - Can they imitate sequences quickly?
  - Can they complete any sequence on their own quickly?
  - Do they have lots of mis-hits because of screen changes (dynamic)? Do they look confused/lost when the screen jumps?
    - Do they “mis-hit” their second button because the screen already jumped?
  - Do they get “stuck” on the pathways/sequences for something that was previously modeled?

Organize the information:

Tool/Strategy	Describe	Access	Observations
iPad mini with T/C	WP 60 basic SS- during bubbles	Direct: Primarily isolated finger point with R. hand- often hit buttons multiple times	Symbol use: Was able to use some single symbols Core: Used: Go, more, stop independently (model then spon.) Fringe: Used “bubbles” and “bubble wand” Communication Functions: Requested and stopped activity. Requested more and items. Directed clinician to “go” Combining: Modeled “I + want”- client multi-hit on I and was frustrated Navigation: Modeled pathway for “groups + toys/games + bubbles” with expectant wait- poor attention to navigation Receptiveness to modeling: Highly receptive to single word and just expectant wait Phrase-based: not assessed Motor Planning: Multiple hits on buttons noted

Non-Linguistic Factors: Assessment and Considerations

These are ongoing factors that continue to be collected throughout the entire process.

Non-Linguistic Factors

Client specific factors/considerations	Environmental/other considerations
Attention	FAMILY!!!
Impact of voice output	Ease of editing/programming
Durability needs	Environmental considerations
Portability/positioning	Cost
“Locking features”	Training/implementation supports
	Other AT/academic needs

Client specific factors/considerations

Adjust throughout assessment

Attention/Engagement

- Things to consider:
  - What prompts help them attend
  - Are there visual attention getters that could help
  - If they are constantly looking away- why? Visually overwhelming? Screen light? … adjust.
  - If attention is extremely poor- would a system with fewer dynamic screen “jumps” be a better fit?
  - What attention strategies work best for that client?

Voice output

- Things to consider
  - Hearing loss- try out different voices, digitized vs synthetic, FM
  - Does voice output help them with their verbal speech?
  - Consider volume
  - Would they benefit from an amplified case ?

SETT- **E**nvironments provides lots of information

SETT- and during dynamic assessments

Behaviour/Durability?

- Do they see the device as their voice?
- Device behaviors (ex iPad=videos, NOT communication)
- Do they have a history of breaking devices – is it safe to loan equipment – how can we make it more safe?
- Are they constantly “on the go” – how durable do they need the case or screen to be?

SETT, Targeting, ongoing

Portability/Positioning

- What position is the child going to use the device in most often?
- Targeting abilities may change in different positions
- If there are big discrepancies, go for the position that is most reliable to start

SETT (presentation methods…), Dynamic AAC assessment

For individuals who walk:

- Can they safely carry the device?
- If not safe for child to carry, who will carry it?
- How light does it need to be?
- Consider overall size and weight
- How will they carry it? (in hand, cross body strap, shoulder strap, waist strap)
- If they refuse to carry it, you need to make a plan to get them to carry it and work on this

Locking features-

- Most kids need to be locked out of the editing features
- Most children should have guided access turned on for iPad based systems
- How tech savvy is the child? Are they constantly trying to get out of the communication app?
- Need to consider locking as a feature – some systems better than others

Environmental/ other considerations

The individuals' needs are the priority but these factors should be considered

Environmental/Other

Family

- The family will be supporting the system
- What do they prefer, what do they feel works better for the child

Ease of editing

- Do they need to personalize quite a bit?
- Can the family support the editing in the program?

Environmental considerations

- Do they have siblings using talkers? Does their school district have training on certain systems
- If the environment doesn't support it- higher likelihood of abandonment

Cost

- What makes the most sense for the family financially?

Training/Implementation supports

- What supports/services do they have to support implementation?

Other AT/academic needs

- Is this tool only for communication?
- Do they need to save/send what they wrote on the device to anyone, etc.

Feature Match: Trials and Data Collection

Alberta Health Services

Organize your assessment information

Compare your Dynamic AAC ax notes for each system tried

Tool/Strategy	Describe	Access	Observations
iPad mini with T/C	Multichat 15	Direct	…….
iPad regular with T/C	WP 25, 42 Basic SS	Direct	…….
iPad regular with proloquo2go	Crescendo 15, 20, 30	Direct	…….
iPad mini with Proloquo2go	Crescendo 20, 30	Direct	…….
Paper-based Wordpower flip-book	Wordpower 42 Basic ss	Direct	…….

Review and make notes on Non-linguistic factors

Client specific factors/considerations	Environmental/other considerations
Attention	FAMILY!!!
Impact of voice output	Ease of editing/programming
Durability needs	Environmental considerations
Portability/positioning	Cost
“Locking features”	Training/implementation supports
	Other AT/academic needs

Discuss as a Team (school, family, etc.) to decide on trial options

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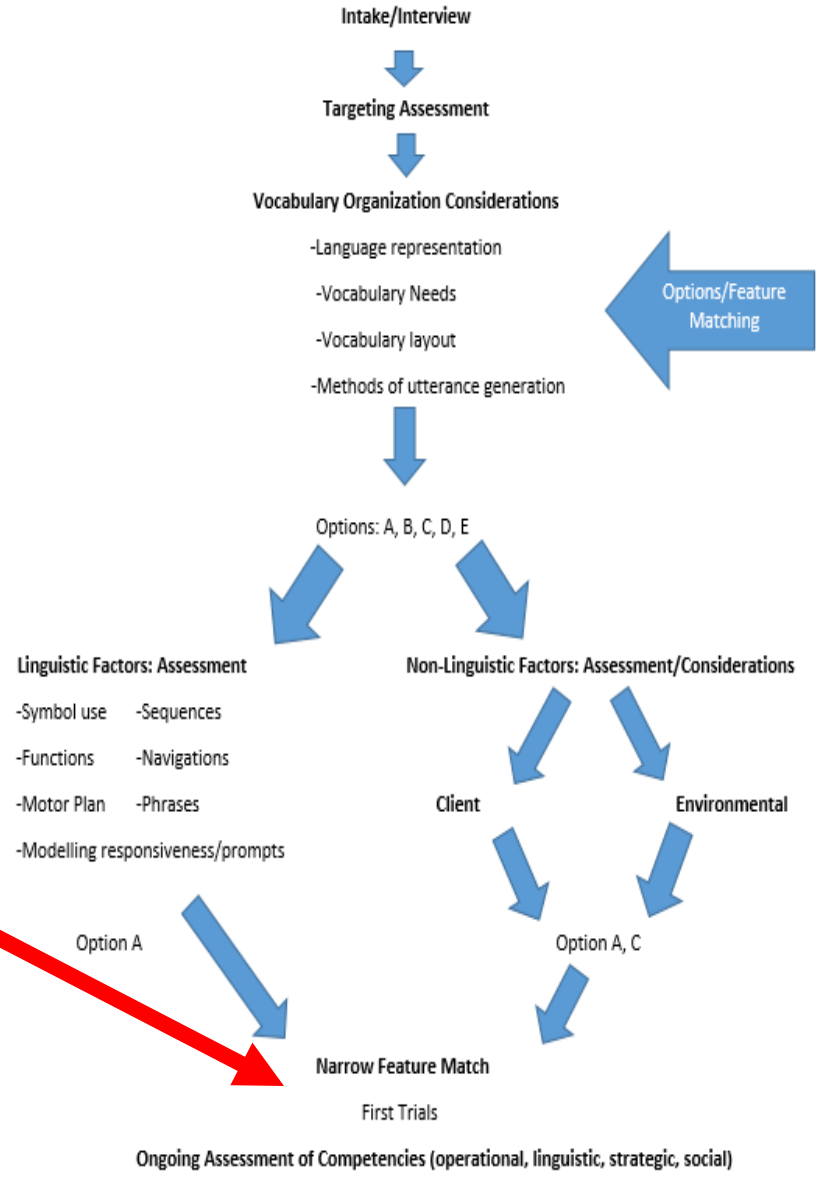
Narrow your Feature Match further to decide on trial options



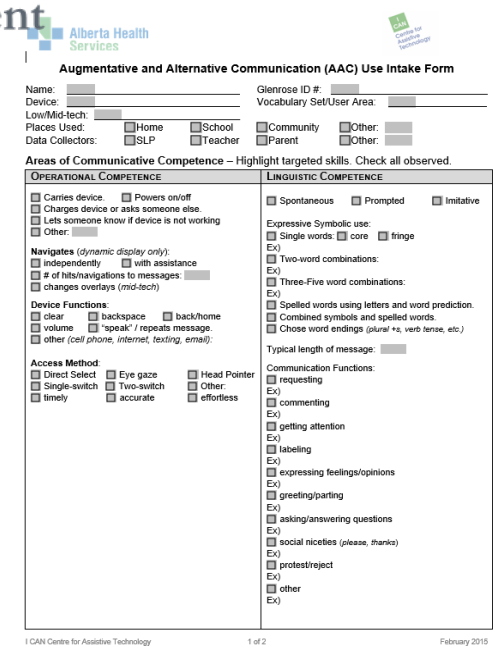
Run Trials

- Try to loan or run a trial of the systems both at home and school/community as possible
- Length of time:
  - Often varies.
  - Ensure you check-in regularly for extended trials
    - A check-in could be a phone call, a review of the data collected to date, email to the family/team, etc.

I CAN Centre: AAC Assessment

Collect Ongoing Data:

- Language Samples
- Core Competencies (Operational, Linguistic, Social, Strategic)



Alberta Health Services

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Use Intake Form

Name: _____ Glenrose ID #: _____
Device: _____ Vocabulary Set/User Area: _____
Low/Mid-tech: _____
Places Used: ☐Home ☐School ☐Community ☐Other: _____
Data Collectors: ☐SLP ☐Teacher ☐Parent ☐Other: _____

Areas of Communicative Competence – Highlight targeted skills. Check all observed.

OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE

☐ Carries device. ☐ Powers on/off
☐ Charges device or asks someone else.
☐ Lets someone know if device is not working
☐ Other: _____

Navigates (*dynamic display only*):
☐ independently ☐ with assistance
☐ # of hits/navigations to messages: _____
☐ changes overlays (*mid-tech*)

Device Functions:
☐ clear ☐ backspace ☐ back/home
☐ volume ☐ "speak" / repeats message.
☐ other (*cell phone, internet, texting, email*):

Access Method:
☐ Direct Select ☐ Eye gaze ☐ Head Pointer
☐ Single-switch ☐ Two-switch ☐ Other:
☐ timely ☐ accurate ☐ effortless

LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

☐ Spontaneous ☐ Prompted ☐ Imitative

Expressive Symbolic use:
☐ Single words: ☐ core ☐ fringe
Ex)
☐ Two-word combinations:
Ex)
☐ Three-Five word combinations:
Ex)
☐ Spelled words using letters and word prediction.
☐ Combined symbols and spelled words.
☐ Chose word endings (*plural +s, verb tense, etc.*)

Typical length of message: _____

Communication Functions:
☐ requesting
Ex)
☐ commenting
Ex)
☐ getting attention
Ex)
☐ labeling
Ex)
☐ expressing feelings/opinions
Ex)
☐ greeting/parting
Ex)
☐ asking/answering questions
Ex)
☐ social niceties (*please, thanks*)
Ex)
☐ protest/reject
Ex)
☐ other
Ex)

I CAN Centre for Assistive Technology 1 of 2 February 2015

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Number of communication partners: _____

Typical communication partners:
☐ peers ☐ educators ☐ family
☐ friends ☐ service providers

Conversation:
☐ initiates ☐ maintains ☐ ends
☐ takes turns ☐ shifts topics ☐ jumps in

STRATEGIC COMPETENCE

☐ Values and takes ownership of device.
Describe: _____

How does student repair communication?
☐ gestures/act it out ☐ repeats with device
☐ adds more info ☐ asks for help
☐ other:

☐ Uses device with certain people or situations?:

Do others use **aided language modeling** with the client? ☐Yes ☐No

Prompting: Describe prompting required by the child at beginning and end of trial:
☐ Expectant Wait (partner makes a general statement, then waits expectantly)
☐ Indirect verbal prompt ("What do we need?" "Whose turn is it?" "You want _____")
☐ Verbal Prompt (Partner suggests the child say something specific, "say ____")
☐ Partner Modeling (Partner demos target phrase/words on the display or device; client copies.)
☐ Indirect Visual Prompt (Partner uses gesture, a light, or moves system closer to direct attention)
☐ Visual Prompt (Partner directly points at or indicates possible messages individual may want to use)
☐ Physical Prompt (Partner touches client, or uses **hand over hand** / **hand under hand** support.)

Notes:

Thank you for taking the time to provide this valuable data which will be utilized to make a recommendation regarding the appropriate assistive technology for this client.

Document1
I CAN Centre for Assistive Technology
www.albertahealthservices.ca/cancentre.asp 2 of 2 February 2015

Data Collection
Name:
Device:
Language Set:

Date e.g. 2017 Dec 20	**Activity/Context** e.g. While we were out at the grocery store, I dropped a jar and it broke	**Words/Phrases** e.g. Parent: I selected "oops" and "I + don't + like + that", child said "you + silly" and "bad + bad".


IS THAT YOUR FINAL ANSWER?

If you have considered targeting, linguistic and non-linguistic factors…likely you have found a "good fit".

AAC assessment is continuous:

- Even when you have a system in place we need to constantly be re-assessing and making modifications as the individuals' needs change over time
  - For example:
    - Can we increase the # of cells per page as the persons physical access improves?
    - If the individual has become literate how can we make modifications to their system to allow easier/more efficient access to text?
      - Keyboard on the main page
      - Make word prediction available
      - Is there another language set that is text-based?
      - Can we turn symbols "off" and move to text-only?

Remember:

- Work collaboratively as a team (SLP, OT, individual, family, etc.)
- Provide access to as many symbols as the person can physically and visually handle
- Provide access to a robust vocabulary that allows for communicating a variety of purposes
- AAC assessment is dynamic

Thank you!