

What is AAC Competency

How can it help us





What are the competencies

Being a successful AAC user requires many skills. Over time (since 1989) 4 main domains of AAC competency have emerged.

We use these competencies to guide us on where to go and as a roadmap to set goals.



Linguistic Competency

Expressive & receptive
language

Expanding vocabulary

Using word combinations,
grammar, syntax

Understanding of the “code”

Expanding (lengthening)
utterances



Social Competencies

General social skills

Initiating an interaction

Maintaining an interaction

Ending an interaction

Intent- can you create the message you want to send

Use your device to say “hi” or introduce yourself



Operational Competence

Access and use the AAC system

Access the command buttons- clear, back, home

Add a word or icon

Charge your device



Strategic Competency

The special set of skills our kids need to be an AAC user

Repairing communication breakdowns

Getting attention

Checking for comprehension

Checking for comprehension

Getting attention



How do we use these to shape our approach

1. Look at each setting your child is in- school, home, therapies- and determine what we can encourage in each environment so we are hitting all of these skills
2. Independent communication requires all of these skills, the more that we can give our kids the more independent they will become
3. When we are thinking about what to teach our kids, make sure we are hitting different aspects of device use



Ideas for things to teach

Social

1. Practice responding to simple questions
2. Practice greetings with device
3. Practice having a short conversation

Linguistic

1. Practice putting more words together (2 or 3 word combinations)
2. Practice communicating for different reasons (requests, preference, asking questions)
3. Play around and explore the device



What can we teach

Strategic

1. Practice determining when someone doesn't understand you- hmm let's try again
2. Practice and model saying things in different ways

Operational

1. Show your kids how to change the volume
2. Point out when the device needs to be charged
3. Practice with clear and go back



Light, J.C., Beukelman, D.R., & Reichle, J. (Eds.). (2003). Communicative competence for individuals who use augmentative and alternative communication. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Sarah W. Blackstone and David P. Wilkins (2009). Exploring the Importance of Emotional Competence in Children With Complex Communication Needs. In: Perspectives on Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 18, 78-87.