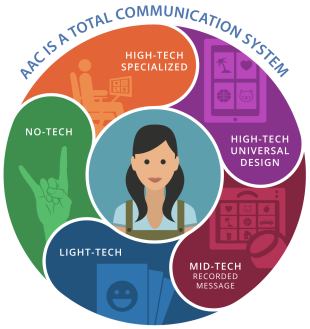

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Below are things for you to consider!

Prerequisites and AAC "Readiness"

Kangas, K. A., & Lloyd, L. L. (1988). Early cognitive prerequisites to augmentative and alternative communication use: What are we waiting for? Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 4, 211-221. Journal of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Volume 4, 1988 - Issue 4.

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07434618812331274817

From Abstract:

Despite this lack of evidence, some interventionists persist in demanding cognitive prerequisites. As a result, a learner may be forced to learn inappropriate and non-functional series of tasks aimed at teaching presumed cognitive prerequisites, or a learner may be prohibited from receiving any communication instruction at all.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Retrieved February 6, 2018, from http://www.asha.org/content.aspx?id=8589942192

From Decision Making About AAC Systems and Interventions - Who Can Benefit from AAC

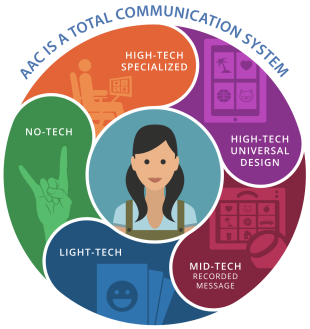
The currently accepted evidence in the literature suggests that no specific skills are prerequisite for successful use of AAC in the broadest sense. AAC is an intervention approach that can be the beginning of communication development for an individual. A number of AAC options are available to begin the intervention process.

Parent Perspective of "Readiness"

Mintun, Bonnie. (2005). The Central Role of Expectations in Communication and Literacy Success: A Parent Perspective, Journal of Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits, Fall 2005, Vol. 2, Num. 1 pp. 31- 44.

https://www.atia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ATOBV2N1.pdf

From Abstract:



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In many cases, sophisticated technology may be just what people with the most complicated impairments need. … the competencies she has demonstrated with it are way beyond anything she had been able to show with less complex technology. … [Her] experiences should serve as an example for many underserved people who could benefit from AAC, including individuals with apparently severe and profound cognitive disabilities.

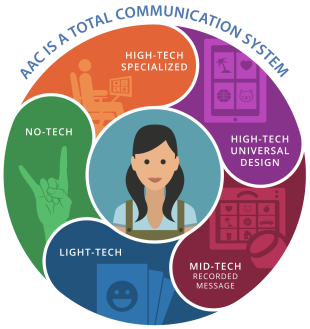
Presume Competence: A guide to successful, evidence-based principles for supporting and engaging individuals with autism Version 1.0, Revised 10/10/2015
John P. Hussman, Ph.D. Hussman Institute for Autism http://www.hussmanautism.org

Defining the 5 categories in the Total Communication Toolbox

High Tech Universal Design Tools
Definition of “universal design”
Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University:
The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
Origin of the term “universal design”
http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/

Universal Design for Learning
http://udlguidelines.cast.org
Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

AAC high tech universally designed communication tools are those that are so 0



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These AAC tools have dynamic screen displays. This means that language symbols can be linked to other pages or overlays. Touching the symbol can automatically open expanded, related vocabulary. Touching the symbol can also produce synthesized (computer generated) speech.

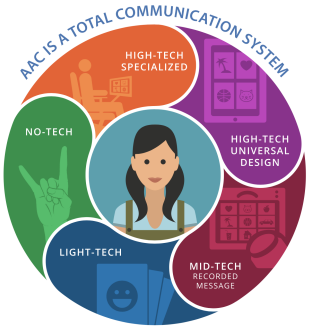
Light Tech Tools
Sometimes called “low tech,” these are “inexpensive devices that are simple to make and easy to obtain.” (From Assistive Technologies: Principles and Practice, by Albert M. Cook PhD PE and Janice Miller Polgar PhD OT, 4th edition, 2017.)

These tools don’t use electricity or batteries and can be made of common materials like magazine pictures and cardboard. A light tech system can be elaborate, like a laminated flip book of vocabulary or it can be basic, like symbols drawn on a piece of paper. Light tech can be used with eye gaze as a means to select and through partner assisted scanning, in which another person helps by listing or "scanning" through possible choices.

Ten Tips for Partner Assisted Scanning
https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/deaf-blind-model-classroom-resources/partner-assisted-scanning

Every high or mid tech AAC user should have a light tech back-up system, in case their primary system is not working.

Mid Tech (Recorded Message) Tools -
These tools have an auditory component, using digitized or recorded speech. Words or messages are recorded verbally and are heard when buttons are activated. These voice output devices come in many shapes and sizes.



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Multiple level mid tech tools have static (fixed) displays, in which symbols or pictures are arranged on individual pages. One page must be physically removed and replaced by another to have access to additional vocabulary.

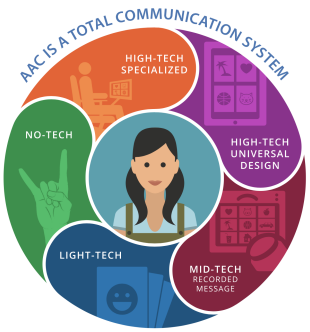
High Tech Specialized Tools -
These tools are also called “designated devices” or speech generating devices (SGDs). They have dynamic screen displays in which language symbols can be linked to other pages or overlays. Activating the symbol can automatically open expanded, related vocabulary as well as produce synthesized (computer generated) speech.

Though these tools have touch screens like High Tech Universally Designed tools, they also have other access options besides touch or “direct select.” They can be indirectly activated by switches, joystick or other mouse control, head tracking using infrared sensing and eye gaze technology.

These tools are available in various sizes to accommodate physical or visual impairments, as mentioned in the video. A customized keyguard (plastic grid over the screen) allows someone to touch one key without accidentally activating others. There are more and more sources for custom key guards.
https://bltt.org/keyguards/

Individuals who have Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), an impairment caused by the brain, not by the eyes, can use features like variable screen lighting, specific colors and customizable symbols.
Cortical Visual Impairment: The Everyday Impact on People who use AAC – June 6, 2017. Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzy, Ph.D. and Sarah Blackstone, PhD, CCC-SLP
https://www.isaac-online.org/english/news/webinars/archived-webinars/cortical-visual-impairment/

No Tech Tools -



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In our definitions of AAC tools, even a pencil and paper are considered a kind of communication technology. Therefore a no technology tool would be the use of our own bodies, as in sign language, gestures and facial expressions. The no tech category is important and very useful, in that non-verbal communication is known to be such a significant and expressive element of human interaction. For all of us, it is likely that over 70% of our face to face communication is nonverbal.
http://www.marquette.edu/hr/documents/the-art-of-communication.pdf

No Tech tools can be used alone, but should be used - when possible - along with all of the other categories of tools in the toolbox. Using gestures, eye contact and facial expressions greatly enhance interactions that involve the use of AAC.
"When communicating with anyone, it's important to remember that your communication device is only an aid."
SNOOPI BOTTEN, Jumping Out in Front of Your Communication Device, Being Noticed for Who You Are: Six Steps for Augmented Communicators.
http://www.theflameofhope.co/JUMPING%20IN%20FRONT%20OF%20AAC.html

The Richness Of Nonverbal Communication
Resource: Hearing Them Into Voice
By Sharon M. Rogers, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
An assessment tool that measures current non-verbal communication proficiency in children and adults who do not speak.
http://www.drsharonrogers.com/hearing-them-into-voice