# Local Services Assistive Technology Resource Pack: AAC

This document aims to suggest physical and online/software resources that local services working with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) may find appropriate to stock or have access to. The majority of these are items that we would consider come under the remit of local teams and therefore our team are unlikely to provide these. We may recommend local teams to have trialled these or similar items prior to referring to the Barnsley Assistive Technology team and be able to provide feedback on this in their referral.

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Our "Local Services Resource Pack" has now been updated and split into four separate guides:

- AAC: A Resource Pack for Local Services
- EC: A Resource Pack for Local Services
- Computer Access: A Resource Pack for Local Services
- Mounting Solutions: A Resource Pack for Local Services

Please visit our website to download a copy of the other Resource Packs in this series:
https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/resources-and-information/

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This document does not cover the wider picture of local AAC service provision, such as care pathways or staffing of local teams. Other information and documentation can be found on our website on the AAC and EC pages: http://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/

**Please note:**

This document is not designed to be an exhaustive list and we intend to update this document on a regular basis to ensure products are as up to date as possible, but this cannot be guaranteed, so please contact suppliers and manufacturers for the most up-to-date information.

We do not also always have first-hand experience of all these products and some are given just as an indication of what is available. We would expect that local teams would use their own clinical judgement to decide whether products are suitable for the individuals you are supporting. Other products are of course available and we are happy to discuss other options with you. Please let us know if you feel anything should be added or if any of the information is incorrect.

Some of the items listed in this resource pack may no longer available to buy on the market. They have continued to be included as you may come across these resources in use by individuals or may have access to them within your local services.

Contact us if you want to know more about any of the items described or are struggling to find suppliers.

If you cannot find the appropriate equipment for the person you are supporting then please ring or email the department and we will be happy to help.

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# Definitions

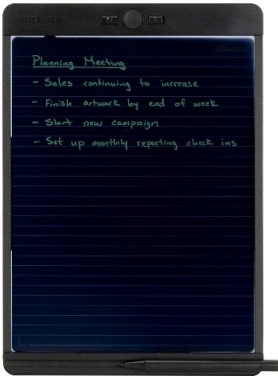Some of the terms used in this resource are explained below:

- **AAC** – stands for Alternative and Augmentative Communication. It is a term used to describe the methods a person may use to support their communication. These may be aided by a tool, device or resource, or the person may use unaided methods, such as their body language and facial expression.

- **Paper based AAC** – This term describes what is also sometimes known as 'low tech AAC'. These are not electronic, made from paper or other materials and contain messages, symbols or letters an AAC user can refer to, to communicate a message.

- **Power based AAC** – This term describes what is also sometimes known as 'high tech AAC'. These are electronically powered devices which run software that speaks out messages when selected or composed by the AAC user.

- **Communication partner** – the person supporting the AAC user and engaging in the interaction with them.

- **EC** – stands for environmental controls. Environmental control devices enable a person to operate appliances and devices in their home, such as the television, radio and mains operated appliances such as a lamp or fan. EC can also be used for attention calling, answering and opening the door, adjusting a bed or armchair.

- **Switch toys** – Toys such as bubble machines, animated toys and sensory toys which can be activated by pressing a switch plugged into them.

- **Access method** – The way a person will control or refer to the device or resource. For example, they may use their eyes to point to the message, or they may press a button (switch) which scans through options to make a choice.

- **Operating system** – the program used in a phone or tablet. For example, apple phones use IOS and Samsung phones use Android. You can find out which version you have in your phone or tablet settings.

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# Paper–based AAC resources

Paper-based AAC strategies are communication tools which can be printed on paper or other materials, such as Perspex. They can be picture or symbol based or text based. They can vary in their complexity from a single page to multiple pages of words and messages. Paper based AAC can be very useful AAC tools alone for some people, and some people may use these as a back up to the other AAC methods they use. One benefit of paper-based tools is their portability and flexibility for use in different environments, such as when outdoors, when a person is laid down or in a standing frame.

We have a useful resource on our website which compliments this section of this resource. The Paper Based AAC guide aims to provide information on a wide variety of mainly paper-based Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools. Environmental supports which facilitate successful AAC implementation are described, followed by suggestions of paper-based and some partner-based AAC tools. This resource can be found here: https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/resource/paper-based-low-tech-aac-a-guide/

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# Boogie Board E Writers

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Direct |
| | |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Good – ability to hold a pen stylus |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Mid |
| Ease of learning | Easy |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

LCD board with Stylus for writing messages or drawing pictures. Image can be erased when finished with.

A wide range of e writers are easily available online: https://myboogieboard.com/pages/products

Boogie Board E-Writer (Amazon)

## Special Features

- A portable AAC solution.
- Available in different sizes
- Some models come with a kickstand or can be displayed using a magnetic attachment
- Some versions enable saving of text via an app
- Protective cases and replacement styluses can be purchased separately

## Suitable for

People who can write or use drawings to support their spoken communication.

## Product specification

- Dependent on model chosen
- Power: Some versions have replaceable batteries
- Priced between approx. £20-£40.
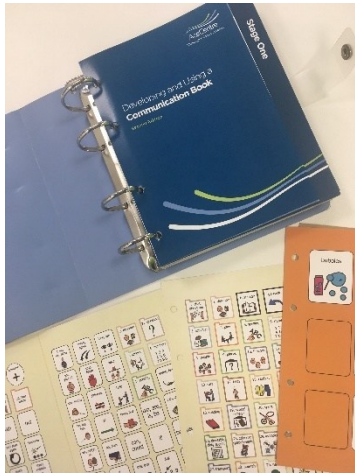
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# Communication Book



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Resource |
| Access Method | Direct or Partner assisted scanning |
| Operating system | N/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical ability required | Varies dependant on access method |
| Cognitive ability required | Good |
| Ease of learning | Mid |
| Support needed | Mid to high |

## Overview

A resource developed by ACE Centre North as a guide for making and implementing a symbol-based communication book. Provides templates for five stages of vocabulary.

[ACE Centre - Developing and Using a Communication Book](#)

## Special Features

- Left page always displays 'core vocabulary' and right pages show topic specific vocabulary.
- The core is based on the development of children's functional language as opposed to syntactical language. The core at Stage Five relates to the functions of language required by children working in the Foundation Stage of Education in England.

## Suitable for

People who require a symbol-based communication book, who can navigate by topic.

## Product specification

- 10 symbols in stage 1.  100 symbols in stage 5.
- Costs £50

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# Look2Talk

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Resource |
| Access Method | Eye pointing |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Minimum |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Varies across levels |
| Ease of learning | Mid |
| Support needed | Mid to high |

## Overview

A resource to help parents and professionals develop a communication book for use with eye pointing. This guide introduces a step-by-step system that brings in symbols and pictures at a speed that suits both the child and the responder. It emphasises the importance of learning together in fun, relaxed activities where the child can take control. Accompanied by a DVD that contains tutorials and real-life example clips.

[ACE Centre - Look2Talk Resource](#)

## Special Features

- A stable core vocabulary, available on each page of the communication binder, that develops through five stages. This core, ranging from just two symbols in Stage Two to 24 in Stage Five, is based on the development of children's functional language as opposed to syntactical language.
- A fringe vocabulary designed to meet an individual's interests, needs and varied environments.

## Suitable for

Children who are developing eye pointing skills.

## Product specification

- Contains binder, instruction book, DVD with tutorials and videos and a CDC with templates.
- Cost is £150 including binder and all materials.
- The templates can also be downloaded for free without the binder.

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# PODD© Communication Books

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Function | AAC | Physical ability required | Varies dependent on access method |
| Category | Software or Resource | Cognitive ability required | Dependent on template used |
| Access Method | Direct, eye pointing or partner assisted scanning | Ease of learning | Mid |
| Operating system | Windows | Support needed | High - – designed to be supported by a communication partner |

## Overview

PODD© stands for Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display. Vocabulary is organised by 'pragmatic' concepts to support navigation to phrases. For example, a person may first choose "something is wrong", then the book guides you to navigate to the page with words and phrases relating to this concept. There are lots of videos of people using PODD© books on YouTube which would be recommended to explore if you would like to understand more how it works. The CD bundle is an add on for Boardmaker and allows you to create communication books from the wide range of templates.

[Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD©) - Inclusive Technology](Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD©) - Inclusive Technology)

## Special Features

- Can be used with direct access, eye gaze or partner assisted scanning. However, the templates are only provided for direct access. Optional gridlines are available but must be copied and pasted onto each page before printing.
- Comes with detailed guides to help select the right template depending on the person's age, setting, comprehension and expressive language level.

## Suitable for

People requiring symbol based AAC. Can adapt access to this if a person struggles with pointing or turning pages. It is a very interactive resource highly supported by a communication partner which could be motivating for some people.

## Product specification

- Cost is approx. £199 alone.
- Requires Boardmaker software to use. Can use version 6 (no longer available for purchase) or version 7.
- Requires Adobe Reader and a CD-ROM drive. Also has A4/USB version: [PODD© Alternative Access (A4 Version) - Inclusive Technology](PODD© Alternative Access (A4 Version) - Inclusive Technology)

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# simPODD® App



simPODD® is an AssistiveWare® product. Used with permission

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Software or Resource |
| Access Method | Direct, eye pointing or partner assisted scanning |
| Operating system | IOS |

| Physical ability required | Varies dependent on access method if using the book. Good if using the app. |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Dependent on page being used |
| Ease of learning | Mid |
| Support needed | High – designed to be supported by a communication partner |

## Overview

Please see page 9 for more details about PODD©. This app enables you to print out the PODD© pages to create a book, and the app can also be used as a power based AAC app.

[AssistiveWare - SimPODD App](#)

## Special Features

- All of the PODD© digital page sets: 15 Preschool, 15+ Preschool, 15 School, 15+ School, 60 Complex Syntax, 60 Expanded Key Word
- SymbolStix library
- Comes with a range of free Text to Speech voices, including children's voices and a range of regional dialects.
- Export your book in just a few minutes
- Print the entire book in one go - instead of page by page.
- Save your PDFs and print them as many times as you want.

## Suitable for

People requiring symbol based AAC. Can adapt access to this if a person struggles with pointing or turning pages. It is a very interactive resource highly supported by a communication partner which could be motivating for some people.

## Product specification

- Costs £13.49 a month for access to app only, and £134.99 a year to print off the pages to create a book.
- School plans are available.

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# E–Tran Frame



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Eye pointing |
| Operating system | n/a |

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical ability required | Minimal - requires sufficient eye pointing skills to use |
| Cognitive ability required | Mid |
| Ease of learning | Mid |
| Support needed | High - requires communication partner to hold up. |

## Overview

The e-tran frame is a Perspex frame with letters on it, which the AAC user will eye point to in order to communicate a message. It uses colour coding, such as the AAC user will first look at the area where the letter is, then to the shape which matches the colour of that letter. A video demonstration of this can be found here: https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/e-tran-frame-kit

## Special Features

- Available in letter or symbol versions.
- The ACE Centre version as seen above has handles for the comfort of the communication partner.
- You could make your own using symbols too, similar to as shown in this video: https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/resource/using-eye-pointing-for-communication-using-an-e-tran-frame/

## Suitable for

An e-tran frame is a good option for people who find it difficult to physically access an AAC system.

## Product specification

Available from a range of suppliers. Prices range from approximately £60 - £90

- https://www.liberator.co.uk/liberator-etran-frame
- https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/e-tran-frame-kit
- https://www.learningspaceuk.co.uk/cerebral-palsy-c202/e-tran-frame-communication-device-p11642

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# Eye link board



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Eye pointing |
| Operating system | n/a |

| Physical ability required | Minimal – requires sufficient eye pointing skills. |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Mid |
| Ease of learning | Mid |
| Support needed | High – requires communication partner to hold up. |



## Overview

An eye link board is a Perspex board with letters on it. The AAC user looks to a letter. The communication partner holding the board then moves the board until their eyes meet to identify the chosen letter. The AAC user then moves on to the next letter to continue their message. This does not use colour coding.

A video demonstration of this can be found here: https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/resource/using-eye-pointing-for-communication-using-eyelink/
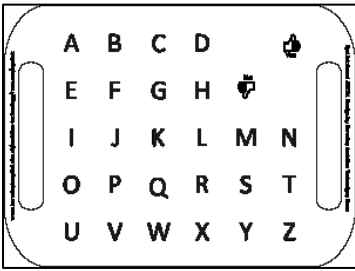
EyeLink Boards - Barnsley AT Team

## Special Features

- Could be created using letters or symbols.

## Suitable for

An eye link board is a good option for people who find it difficult to physically access an AAC system.

## Product specification

- Our website details different ways of making Eye Link boards: https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/resource/eyelink-communication-boards/
- While we have stock of pre-made Perspex boards we are happy to supply these to local teams in our region. When our stock runs out we may be able to supply these at cost if there are no alternative suppliers available - please contact us to enquire.

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# Speakbook

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Eye pointing |
| Operating system | n/a |

| Physical ability required | Minimal – requires sufficient eye pointing skills to use |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Mid |
| Ease of learning | Mid |
| Support needed | High - requires communication partner to hold up. |

## Overview

The Speak book is a binder of pages, which has a window in the middle for the communication partner and AAC user to see through. It enables an AAC user to communicate their message via eye pointing. The communication partner holds up the book and the AAC user then eye points to the letter or phrase in a certain area of the book. The content the AAC user sees is replicated on the side the communication partner can see. It uses colour coding, such as the AAC user will first look at the area where the letter or phrase is, then to the shape which matches the colour of that letter.

SpeakBook - ACE Centre

## Special Features

- Customisable pages of phrases.
- Create your own book after printing out the pages.

## Suitable for

A Speakbook is a good option for people who find it difficult to physically access an AAC system.

## Product specification

- Free to download from the ACE Centre - https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/speakbook

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# Talking Mats



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Resource |
| Access Method | Direct or Partner assisted |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Varies dependant on access method. Could use via partner assisted scanning which would require minimal physical ability. |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Mid |
| Ease of learning | Easy |
| Support needed | High - requires communication partner to lead interaction. |

## Overview

Talking Mats is a tool designed to help individuals with communication difficulties think about and communicate effectively about things that matter to them. This can mean that they can effectively express their thoughts and make decisions. It is made up of symbolised options to communicate about a topic that can then be organised onto a rating scale, or under headings (e.g. good / okay / bad, important / not important, etc). Once the topic has been chosen, the participant is given the options one at a time and asked to think about each one, placing it on the Talking Mat to indicate how they feel about it.

[Talking Mats | Improving communication, improving lives](#)

## Special Features

- Can be used with direct access, eye gaze or partner assisted scanning.
- Create your own symbols if wanting to discuss a specific topic with the individual.

## Suitable for

Talking Mats are a good option for someone with communication difficulties to give their thoughts and opinions, even before they have another reliable AAC method in place.

## Product specification

- Talking Mats bundles can be bought from the Talking Mats website - https://www.talkingmats.com/shop/
- Make your own using any symbol software to reflect the specific topics you want the individual's opinion on.
- Barnsley Assistive Technology have a resource similar to Talking Mats called the Means Reasons and Opportunities for AAC and AT that are specific to assistive technology. These will be available to download on the Barnsley AT website soon.

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# Digital Talking Mats



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Resource |
| Access Method | Direct or partner assisted |
| Operating system | Web app – designed for Google Chrome. |

| Physical ability required | Varies dependant on access method. Could use via partner assisted scanning which would require minimal physical ability. |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Mid |
| Ease of learning | Easy |
| Support needed | High - requires communication partner to lead interaction. |

## Overview

Talking Mats App can be used just like the physical mats (Page 14) but on a tablet or smartphone. Users move pictures on the screen to show their thoughts and feelings.

[Talking Mats - Digital Talking Mats](#)

## Special Features

- The app lets you change topics easily, save your work, and share it, making it more convenient and flexible than using physical mats.

## Suitable for

Talking Mats are a good option for someone with communication difficulties to give their thoughts and opinions, even before they have another reliable AAC method in place.

## Product specification

- Between £5 - £12 a month depending on level, or £36 - £120 a year. Also available as an organisation subscription.
- Can be accessed through a web app, meaning it can be used on any operating system.

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# Battery powered AAC Resources

Battery-powered AAC tools are portable tools which speak out recorded messages. Some can be directly accessed and some can be switch accessible. The messages are recorded by a communication partner. For ones with a larger number of messages, overlays would usually be printed out and inserted into the device.

They generally display a smaller range of communication functions compared to most communication books and powered AAC devices, but this can vary and some are more comprehensive in the number of messages you can record on different levels.  Some also enable additional features, such as basic environmental control or switch toy controls.

The following are examples only. A wider range of battery-operated devices can be found online from a range of communication aid suppliers.

# BIGmack and LITTLEmack

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Switch |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Low to mid |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Low |
| Ease of learning | Easy |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

The Bigmack switch can be used to play a single message, music or sound at the press of a button. It can also be used to activate a switch toy. BigMacks are available from a wide range of sellers. The LITTLEmack is a smaller buttoned version.

BIGmack - Inclusive Technology

LITTLEmack - Inclusive Technology

https://www.liberator.co.uk/bigmack-communicator

## Special Features

- You can plug in an external switch if the individual would find the standard switch more difficult to use
- Can also be used to activate switch toys

## Suitable for

People who can press a switch and are at an early level of communication.

## Product specification

- 2 minutes recording time
- Toy/appliance jack cable included
- 160mmx 55mm x 17mm
- 1 x9v battery included
- Price – approx. £100

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# BIG and LITTLE Step by Step

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Switch |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Low to mid |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Low |
| Ease of learning | Easy |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

The LITTLE and BIG step by step records a sequence of 3 messages that the person can navigate through by pressing their switch at each time. There are 3 recording levels in which to record messages.

[LITTLE Step-by-Step - Inclusive Technology](#)

[BIG Step-by-Step - Inclusive Technology](#)

## Special Features

- The LITTLE step by step plays messages in a sequence after each switch press is made
- The LITTLE step by step choice enables the person to go directly to the preferred message by the amount of switch presses they make. For example, pressing 3 times in quick succession will play just the 3rd message.
- Angled base to support access

## Suitable for

People who can press a switch and are at an early level of communication. This could be useful for people who are learning to communicate more than one message but would struggle to press a range of switches in front of them.

## Product specification

- Three recording levels with a total of 4 minutes record time
- 1x9V battery
- 64mm diameter
- Price is approx. £149

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# Smooth Talker and Smooth Talker Levels



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Switch |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Low to mid |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Low |
| Ease of learning | Easy |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

The Smooth Talker records a sequence of 5 messages that the person can navigate through by pressing their switch at each time**.** It can also be used to control switch toys and basic environmental control. It is available in two versions; standard and 'levels.'

[Smooth Talker with Levels - Inclusive Technology](#)

https://www.pretorianuk.com/simplyworks-smooth-talker

https://www.pretorianuk.com/simplyworks-smooth-talker-with-levels

## Special Features

It includes a range of modes, such as:

- **Sequential** play the messages in sequence, beginning with the first.
- **Random** plays a random message and is great as a speaking dice, for example.
- **Choice** requires two switches and is used to allow the user to exercise a choice between two items.

## Suitable for

People who can press a switch and are at an early level of communication. This could be useful for people who are learning to communicate more than one message but would struggle to press a range of switches in front of them.

## Product specification

- Approx. £109-£170
- Eight minutes of recording and playback time
- Built in rechargeable lithium battery - charge from a USB socket (can be used while charging).
- Input socket for attaching a wired switch, or alternatively use a wireless switch.
- Wireless toy activation using SimplyWorks Toy/Mains Appliance Controllers, or using the 3.5mm toy socket.

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# iTalk2 with Levels

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Switch |
| Operating system | N/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical ability required | Low to mid |
| Cognitive ability required | Low to mid |
| Ease of learning | Low |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

The iTalk2 with Levels allows users to access two recorded messages at a time. It can store up to 6 messages (2 messages on each of 3 levels). It can also be used to control basic environmental control such as music or switch-activated toys.

[iTalk2 with Levels | Liberator Ltd](#)

[iTalk2 with Levels - Inclusive Technology](#)

## Special Features

- Has symbol holder at top for any symbol up to 2x2".
- Switch caps allows pictures/symbols to be easily swopped out on the switches.
- Angled base to support access.

## Suitable for

People who can access two switches and are at an early stage of communication.

## Product specifications

- Price is approx. £289
- 6 minutes of recording time
- 4xAA batteries
- Dimension: 11cm x 9cm x 17cm
- 64mm activation areas
- x 3.5mm in/out switch jack ports
- Volume control

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# iTalk4 with Levels

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Switch |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Low to mid |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Low to mid |
| Ease of learning | Low |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

The iTalk4 with Levels allows users to access four recorded messages at a time. It can store up to 12 messages (4 messages on each of 3 levels). It can also be used to control basic environmental control such as music or switch-activated toys.

[iTalk4 with Levels - Inclusive Technology](#)

[iTalk4 with Levels | Liberator Ltd](#)

## Special Features

- Switch caps allows pictures/symbols to be easily swapped out on the switches.
- Angled base to support access.
- An external switch can be attached to activate a message.
- A Universal Mounting Plate can be used to mount the iTalk4 to various mounting arms.

## Suitable for:

People who can access two switches and are at an early stage of communication and have a small range of messages they want to convey.

## Product specifications:

- Price is approx. £225
- 4 minutes of recording time
- 1x9V battery
- Dimension: 33cm x 10.2cm x 7.6cm
- 64mm activation areas
- 2x 3.5mm in/out switch jack ports
- Volume control

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# Go Talk (series)

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Direct |
| Operating system | N/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical ability required | Depending on device used. Low to use switch access, ability to direct access with other devices. |
| Cognitive ability required | Low to mid |
| Ease of learning | Easy mostly. The Go Talk express may require more learning to set up and use. |
| Support needed | Low |

## Overview

A range of speech output communication devices. The message for each cell can be recorded into the microphone and then plays back when the cell is selected. Overlays can be created using your preferred symbol software and messages can be stored on up to five levels.

https://www.liberator.co.uk/products/low-tech-communication-aids/gotalk

Multi-Message - AAC/Communication Devices & Aids - Hardware

## Special Features

- Most devices have a top row of cells for 'core vocabulary' that stays the same across all levels.
- The Go Talk devices are durable and robust. The batteries last a long time. Volume can be adjusted.
- The devices have an inbuilt keyguard to facilitate direct access and a carry handle.
- The Go Talk Express can be switch activated and has built in auditory cue features.

## Suitable for:

People starting out with AAC or those who only need to convey a small range of messages.

## Product Specification

- Available with one, four, six, nine, twenty and thirty-two cells.
- Prices range from £10 (Go Talk One) to £619 (Go Talk Express 32).
- Powered by 2 or 3 AA batteries.

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# MegaBee



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Eye pointing |
| Operating system | N/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical ability required | Minimum - eye movement only |
| Cognitive ability required | Good ability required including literacy |
| Ease of learning | Mid- needs to be able to understand 2 step process of letter selection |
| Support needed | High - requires communication partner to hold up. |

## Overview

The communication partner presses the coloured buttons as indicated by the user and the screen then displays the message. A video demonstration of this can be found here:

https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/resource/using-a-megabee-for-communication-with-eye-pointing/

https://www.liberator.co.uk/megabee

MegaBee - Electronic hand-held writing tablet

## Special Features

- Dual screens accommodate 20 characters in 2 lines with 260 custom abbreviations available.
- Easy to manage text or picture modes.
- Bluetooth pc connectivity allows large, remote display and text storage options.
- No demands on literacy skills of listener and for some, may be easier to keep track of the message.

## Suitable for:

People who can eye point, have literacy skills and the cognitive ability to use colour coding.

## Product Specification

- Dimensions:16.9inch x 11.8 x 1.5
- Weight: 33.5oz
- Battery length 24hrs on full charge.
- Price is around £760-£780. Available from a range of sellers.

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# SuperTalker

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Direct or switch |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Depends on access method being used. Low if switch accessed. Higher ability needed to directly access. |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Low |
| Ease of learning | Easy |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

A communication aid where up to eight messages can be recorded and added across eight levels with interchangeable overlays (total of 64 messages). A communication partner would need to change the overlays over.

[SuperTalker FT - Inclusive Technology](#)

[https://www.liberator.co.uk/supertalker-ft](https://www.liberator.co.uk/supertalker-ft)

## Special Features

- Keyguard
- Can be used to operate switch toys
- Eight input jacks for single switch access to any location
- Step ahead jack for single switch sequential message playback

## Suitable for:

People starting out with AAC or those who only need to convey a small range of messages. Can be switch accessed to support people who struggle to press a screen.

## Product Specification

- 16 minutes of recording time with variable message lengths.
- Four different grid formats with matching key guards.
- Requires four AA batteries.
- Priced at approx. £385

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# it–Click–On Plus

| Function | Environmental Control, access practice |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Switch |
| Operating system | N/a |

## Overview

The it-Click-On Plus allows you to control one or two appliances with a switch. For example, you could plug a lamp in, and use your switch to turn the lamp on and off. https://www.inclusive.com/uk/it-click-on-plus.html

Please see our resource 'Examples of activities for developing switch use' available on our website for ideas: https://www.barnsleyhospital.nhs.uk/assistive-technology/resource/examples-of-activities-for-developing-switch-use/

## Special Features

This product can be set up to be operated by a switch in different ways:

- In "direct" mode, the appliance stays on for as long as the switch is being pressed.
- In "latched" mode, the first switch press turns the appliance on, and the next press stops it.
- In "timed" mode, the switch press turns the appliance on for a pre-set amount of time.

## Product Specification

- This product contains a Simply Works wireless receiver, so that it can be operated by a Simply Works wireless switch.
- It also has two switch ports for plugging in wired switches.

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# Direct Access, Literacy-based AAC

The following is a range of power based AAC devices and apps that require message formulation by spelling and through direct access (i.e. finger pointing).

Please see our other resources 'Symbol Based AAC App Evaluation' and 'Text Based AAC App Evaluation' for a summary of symbol and text-based apps which have been evaluated on our app evaluation form.

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# Allora 3

| Function | AAC and environmental control | Physical ability required | Good for direct access, low for switch |
|---|---|---|---|
| Category | Hardware | Cognitive ability required | Good- requires good literacy |
| Access Method | Direct or switch | Ease of learning | Easy if literate |
| Operating system | N/A | Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

The Allora 3 is a keyboard and switch accessible, text to speech, communication device. It is designed to meet the needs of people that are literate and that may need to move from direct access to switch access.

[Allora 3 - Jabbla](#)

## Special Features

- Choice of voices.
- Switch accessible
- Keyguard
- Infrared environmental control option.
- SMS text send and receive function.
- Speech recording function.
- Transfer text documents to be read aloud via USB port.
- Abbreviation expansion and word and phrase prediction.

## Suitable for:

Text to speech users requiring direct or switch access.

## Product Specification

- Prices start from £2,550 + VAT.

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# Lightwriter



| Function | AAC and environmental control |
|---|---|
| Category | Hardware |
| Access Method | Direct or switch |
| Operating system | N/A |

| Physical ability required | Good for direct access, low for switch access |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Good-requires good literacy |
| Ease of learning | Easy if literate |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

A text to speech voice output communication aid with varying additional features.

[Abilia - Lightwriter](#)

## Special Features

- Offers scanning as an access option (a variety of switches can be plugged in and used dependent on access needs).
- Keyguard
- Offers calls and SMS texting to Android phones.
- The SL40, now discontinued, offered some environmental control functions.
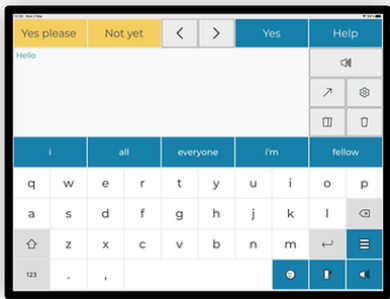
## Suitable for:

People with good literacy skills, those able to manage direct or switch access and those who may progress to requiring switch access in future.

## Product Specification

- Priced approximately at £2800 plus postage.
- If you trade in an older light writer you can get £550 off the price.

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# Predictable AAC app



| Function | AAC and |
|---|---|
| Category | Software |
| Access Method | Depending on tablet being used, can be accessed directly, via a switch, mouse, head tracker or eye tracker. |
| Operating system | IOS Android Windows |

| Physical ability required | Good for direct access and low for other methods. |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Good-requires good literacy |
| Ease of learning | Easy if literate |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

A text to speech AAC app offering various access options and customisable features.

[Predictable | Therapy Box](#)

## Special Features

- Pre-stored messages.
- A range of access methods available depending on the device being used.
- Layout, such as keyboard style and colour scheme, can be customised.
- Can accept ModelTalker banked voices.

## Suitable for:

People with good literacy skills, those able to manage direct access and those who may progress to requiring an alternative access method in future. People who have banked their voice with ModelTalker.

## Product Specification

- Priced approximately at £139.99 – £159.99
- Requires iOS 12 or later
- Requires Android 7 or above
- Tablet not included

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# Speech Assistant AAC app

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Software |
| Access Method | Direct access |
| Operating system | IOS Android |

| Physical ability required | Good |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Good-requires good literacy |
| Ease of learning | Easy if literate |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

A text to speech AAC app.

[A-Soft - Speech Assistant AAC App](#)

## Special Features

- Pre-stored messages.
- A range of voices in full version
- Layout, such as colour scheme, can be customised in full version.

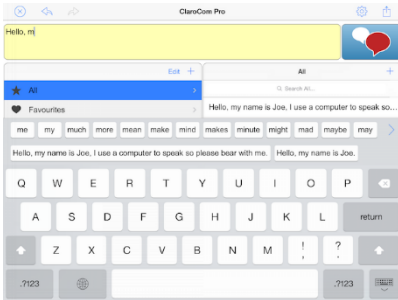## Suitable for:

People with good literacy skills, those able to manage direct access.

## Product Specification

- Priced approximately at £16.99. Free version available on Android.
- Requires iOS 10 or later
- Requires Android 5 or later
- Tablet not included

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# Clarocom AAC app



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Software |
| Access Method | Direct access |
| Operating system | IOS Android |

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical ability required | Good |
| Cognitive ability required | Good-requires good literacy |
| Ease of learning | Easy if literate |
| Support needed | Minimum |

## Overview

A text to speech AAC app.

[ClaroCom AAC App on the Apple App Store](#)

## Special Features

- Pre-stored messages.
- A range of voices in full version
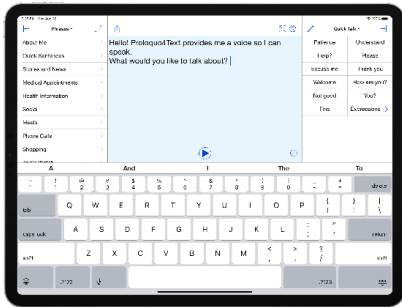- Layout, such as colour scheme, can be customised in full version.

## Suitable for:

People with good literacy skills, those able to manage direct access.

## Product Specification

- Priced approximately at £16.99. Free version available in IOS and Android.
- Requires iOS 9 or later
- Requires android 4.1 or later
- Tablet not included

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# Proloquo4text® AAC app



| Function | AAC and |
|---|---|
| Category | Software |
| Access Method | Direct access Switch control |
| Operating system | IOS |

| Physical ability required | Good for direct access and low for switch access |
|---|---|
| Cognitive ability required | Good-requires good literacy |
| Ease of learning | Easy if literate |
| Support needed | Minimum |

Proloquo4Text is an AssistiveWare® product. Used with permission

## Overview

A text to speech AAC app which offers voice banking and a range of message features.

[AssistiveWare - Proloquo4Text](#)

## Special Features

- Pre-stored messages.
- A range of voices including Acapela My Own Voice banked voice.
- Make typing quicker with advanced, self-learning PolyPredix™ word prediction
- Show what you typed with the full screen view and flip text features
- Type once, then say it again with history and sentence prediction
- Use keyboard shortcuts for quick access when using an external keyboard
- Optimized for Switch Control and VoiceOver

## Suitable for:

People with good literacy skills, those able to manage direct access and those who may progress to requiring switch access in future. People who have banked their voice with Acapela.
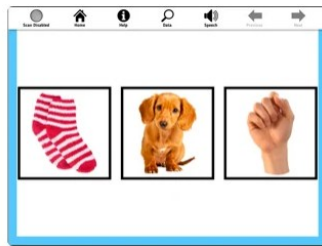
## Product Specification

- Priced approximately at £99.99.
- Requires iOS 12.4 or later
- Tablet not included

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# AAC Screening, Assessment and Evaluation

This section details assessment and software that can assist professionals in assessing people who may benefit from AAC, to evaluate their use of AAC and help to set goals once AAC has been provided.

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# AAC Evaluation Genie

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Assessment |
| Access Method | Direct or switch |
| Operating system | iOS |

## Overview

AAC Evaluation Genie is an informal diagnostic tool that is intended to assist professionals with identifying skill areas that relate specifically to the language representation methods commonly found on augmentative communication systems. 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.

https://humpsoftware.com/aacgenie.html

## Special Features

There are 14 subtests that can be administered with screening options available for each subtest.

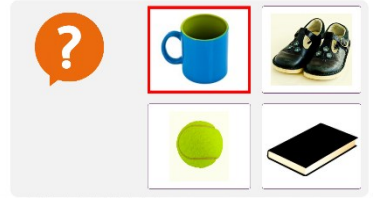| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Visual Identification | Visual Discrimination | Noun Vocabulary |
| Function Vocabulary | Verb Vocabulary | Category Recognition |
| Word Association | Category Inclusion | Category Exclusion |
| | | |
| Pixon Core Vocabulary | Unity Core Vocabulary | Unity Icon Patterns |
| Picture Description | Word Prediction | |

## Suitable for:

An assessment tool to determine the appropriate level of AAC.

## Product Specification

- Requires iOS 11 or later.
- Approx. priced at £10.99

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# Carla

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Assessment |
| Access Method | Direct, switch or eye gaze |
| Operating system | Windows |

## Overview

A compact and complete comprehension assessment tool with automated recording which can be used with a range of individuals.

https://www.jabbla.co.uk/vocab/carla/

## Special Features

- Compatible with any Windows PC, laptop or tablet making it familiar to use and attractive to children.
- Can be used with a full range of access methods such as eye gaze, mouse pointers, switch scanning and touch screen displays.
- Visually appealing and motivating using photo images for target words. With bright graphics and sound rewards.
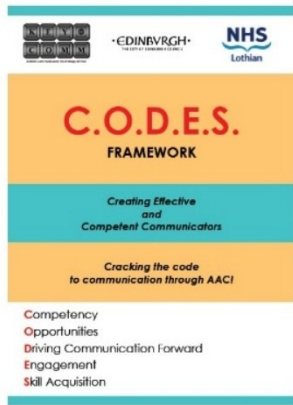- Ability to use your own images in the assessment.

## Suitable for:

Assessing the comprehension levels of children who have a reliable access method.

## Product Specification

- Requires Mind Express software (free demo available)

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# CODES Framework



| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Implementation Resource |
| Operating system | N/A |

## Overview

The C.O.D.E.S. Framework has been developed by Keycomm Resource Centre to help monitor progress of an individual using an AAC system. It is not an assessment tool, but a framework for measuring effective communication post assessment following discrete guidelines and identifying skill development over time. There are now separate versions for children and adults.

https://codesframework.wordpress.com/

## Special Features

- Easy-to-use and update proformas that encourage joint planning, meaningful target-setting and collaborative working amongst professionals.
- All resources can be provided in hard copy and electronically.
- Training and support are readily available.

## Suitable for:

Adults and children using AAC at any stage.

## Product Specification

- Price - The C.O.D.E.S. Framework currently costs £45 including postage and packing.
- An Activity Toolkit costs £25.00 including postage and packing.
- Buy both packs together for a discounted price of £60 including postage and packing.

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# The Communication Matrix

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Goal Setting |
| Operating system | N/A |

## Overview

The communication matrix offers a way of profiling a person's skills according to the answers to questions provided by parents or professionals. It is designed to assess the progress of people of all ages and stages of communication, and takes different communication methods into consideration.

https://communicationmatrix.org

## Special Features

- The assessment is completed via a series of questions which are filled in via an online form
- Following the assessment, a skills matrix is produced
- The matrix provides an overview of which skills are 'not used' 'emerging' or 'mastered'.
- The assessment can be completed by professionals or with parents/carers

## Suitable for (as stated on the website):

"The free matrix tool assesses the progress of individuals of all ages who function at the earliest stages of communication, and who use any form of communication"

## Product Specification

- Web based and accessible via the following link: https://communicationmatrix.org/
- Create a log in the first time then access any assessments through the same log in
- A free account enables the user to complete five saved assessments in 12 months. There is an option to pay for custom reports and webinars
- For access to 100 saved assessments, there is an option to pay for an account. The details are on the website

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# Frenchay Screening Tool

| | |
|---|---|
| Function | AAC |
| Category | Assessment |
| Access Method | Direct or partner assisted scanning |
| Operating system | N/A |

## Overview

The Frenchay Screening Tool for AAC is designed to assess people's abilities such as physical access and visual acuity, to support the AAC assessment.

https://www.nbt.nhs.uk/bristol-centre-enablement/services-at-centre/bristol-communication-aid-service/bcas-products

## Special Features

The parameters the Frenchay Screening Tool for AAC assesses includes the following:

- Physical access
- Visual acuity
- Visual processing
- Visual contrast sensitivity
- Identifying different types of symbols
- Focusing thoughts

- Identifying different fonts and words
- Categorisation
- Word-picture matching
- Reading and spelling (with and without symbol support)
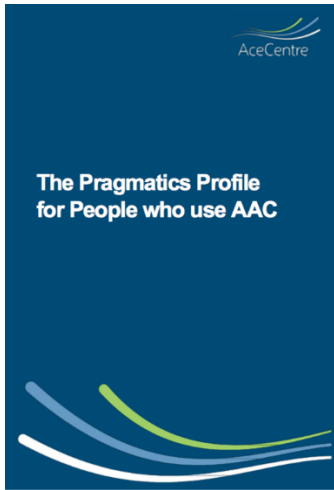- Alphabetical encoding

## Suitable for:

Adults and children using AAC at any stage, but may be most helpful during the initial assessment stage.

## Product Specification

- Presented in a sturdy stand-alone ring binder. Uses photos and PCS symbols.
- Assessment forms can be downloaded.
- Price is approx. £85-£99 plus £10 p&p and VAT.

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# The Pragmatics profile for people who use AAC

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Assessment |
| Operating system | N/A |

## Overview

A free assessment tool which can be downloaded from the ACE centre website. The resource has been adapted from the original Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills by Hazel Dewart and Suzie Summers.

https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/pragmatics-profile-people-use-aac

## Special Features

- Free download from the ACE centre website
- Can be downloaded and printed out to complete by hand if preferred
- Option for auto entry directly onto an electronic copy with Microsoft Word

**Suitable for (as stated on the ACE centre website):** 'Individuals who have used AAC in the past, are currently using AAC, or where you feel that an individual is using informal modes of AAC and you wish to introduce more formal methods'

## Product Specification

- Free to download from, https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/pragmatics-profile-people-use-aac
- Reference: Martin, S., Small, K., and Stevens, R. 2017. The Pragmatics Profile for People who use AAC (First Published 26 Sep 2017). Available at:https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/pragmatics-profile-people-use-aac/.

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# One Switch Progression Guides

| Function | Access practice |
|---|---|
| Category | Resource |
| Operating system | N/A |

## Overview

A teaching and assessment document detailing every stage of switch skills acquisition from cause and effect to confident scanning. The Switch Progression Guides will help you assess a learner's baseline, set achievable learning milestones and provide you with all the help you need to teach these important skills in a way which is both meaningful and motivating.

## Special Features

- The booklets provide advice on which software and hardware works best and how to set them up to personalise the learning experience.

## Suitable for:

People learning to use switches to access a computer, with a view to developing switch access for environmental controls or AAC.

## Product Specification

- Guidebooks are free to download from: One Switch Progression Guides | HelpKidzLearn
- Activities/games included in the guidebooks require a HelpKidzLearn subscription. Pricing for subscriptions can be found at: Games and Activities Pricing | HelpKidzLearn

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| Function | Access practice |
|---|---|
| Category | Resource |
| Operating system | N/A |

## Overview

Switch Heroes is a series of seven books written to help switch users, their family, and carers during their switch development journey. The books have child-friendly characters t o help support learning. The framework is meant to help monitor and track progress, while being flexible to meet each switch user's unique needs.

## Special Features

- There are seven books total which go through the different stages of switch development.

## Suitable for:

People learning to use switches with a view to developing switch access for environmental controls or AAC.

## Product Specification

- Books can be purchased at: Switch Heroes – Jiao.
- Other switch stage resources: Webinar - The 7 stages of switch development

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# I–ASC Resources

| Date | Name and role | Identified AAC-related skills (in CYP &/or support team) | Identified AAC-related needs (in CYP &/or support team) | Specific concerns |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| xx/xx/xx | Class teacher | She is very sociable and uses all ways possible to get her messages across to people.  She really tries to use her AAC system in very creative ways. | Finds keeping her concentration quite a challenge.  The system she has is very limited in terms of vocabulary available. This means she gets a bit fed up with trying to get people to understand her. | The system she has does not meet her own conversation expectations. |
| xx/xx/xx | Parent | She is keen to chat with people and for them to get her. She uses all sorts of ways to get her point across – her face, her body, her voice…and sometimes even her symbols.  She remembers things too, in a way that I am always surprised by! I had long forgotten them. | We understand her and know intuitively what she might want or be trying to say, I worry that not everyone will 'get her' – we need something that is clear for everyone. | The system needs to show her personality and capacity. |
| xx/xx/xx | Speech/Language therapist | She has loads of skill in terms of communicative functions – she can clearly get across: happiness, annoyance, the need for something, humour, rejection of something, a desire to know more, an interest in something. | The current AAC system does not support her to be language-specific in these sorts of requests. It does not give her linguistic competence or the chance to develop it. | The system needs to offer on-going vocabulary and sentence complexity. Otherwise, we may not be offering Jemma sufficient language development opportunities/access to the curriculum. |

Manchester Metropolitan University
Identifying Appropriate Symbol Communication aids for children who are non-speaking: enhancing clinical decision making NIHR HS&DR Project 14/70/153
I-ASC website: iasc.mmu.ac.uk

| Function | AAC |
|---|---|
| Category | Implementation Resource |
| Operating system | N/A |

## Overview

Following a research project completed by the team involved in the I-ASC study, they have put together a bank of free resources to support the AAC assessment process. About the research - https://iasc.mmu.ac.uk/research-findings/#project-overview

https://iasc.mmu.ac.uk/resources/#summary-of-i-asc-resources-how-to-use-them-in-aac-assessments

## Special Features

- There are a range of resources such as:
  - I-ASC Lucy Gets a Communication Aid A mini book aimed at children who might benefit from a story support. It describes a communication aid assessment process and could be used describe and discuss the communication aid assessment process with children and be a support in obtaining their views on communication aids. The lead character is female.
  - I-ASC AAC log blank A template for gathering information about how a child currently communicates, what communication needs they have and planning for AAC supports.
  - I-ASC Communication system maintenance and back-up plan Resource to clarify roles in relation to supporting the system set up and use following the recommendation.
  - I-ASC Communication system trial evaluation template for evaluating a trial of a communication system

## Suitable for:

Designed for use with children but could be adapted with adults and children using AAC at any stage.

## Product Specification

- Free to download from https://iasc.mmu.ac.uk/resources/#summary-of-i-asc-resources-how-to-use-them-in-aac-assessments

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# Acknowledgements

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- Jabbla UK
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- The Communication Matrix Foundation
- Kent Displays
- Abilia
- Logan technologies
- KeyComm
- Therapy box
- Asoft
- Clarosoftware
- Humpsoftware
- The ACE Centre
- Talking Mats

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## Changelog

| Date | Change | Owner |
|---|---|---|
| 9/2/2018 | Original version of Local Services Resource Pack. | Jenny Scott |
| 11/3/2022 | Version 5. Content updated. | |
| 8/11/2024 | Version 6. Local Services Resource Pack split into sections: AAC, EC, Computer Access and Mounting Solutions. Content updated. New trust branding applied. Publishing information and Changelog added. Equipment and hyperlinks updated. | Vicky Johnson and Kate Welland |
| 17/3/25 | Desktop publishing, accessibility via headings and overall review. Published | Simon Judge |
| | | |

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