



Augmentative and Alternative Communication Inventory Guidance Document

Step 1: Information Gathering Phase

- Part I -- Present Communication Modalities**
- Part II -- Communication History**
 - Student record review may be needed to determine AAC systems attempted
- Part III -- Student Considerations and AAC Feature Analysis**
 - A copy of the *AAC Feature Analysis* will need to be provided for all members
 - Chart paper to list the results of the *Feature Analysis*

Step 2: Decision Making Phase

- Part IV -- AAC System Information**
 - Chart paper to list advantages and disadvantages of AAC systems identified
- Part V -- System(s) Selected for Implementation**
 - An individual from the division who is able to make resource decisions may be required
 - An individual from the division who knows the AAC devices available in the division may be required

Step 3: Trial Implementation Phase

- Part VI -- Obtaining/Creating the AAC System/Device**
- Part VII -- Trial Implementation Period and Next Team Meeting Date**
- Part VIII -- Plan for Implementation of the System**

This document lists the steps of the Inventory and materials you need to complete it.

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Augmentative and Alternative Communication Inventory Guidance Document

Step 1: Information Gathering Phase

Teams must first gather information about the student before any decisions can be made. While many team members may believe they know enough about the student to make a decision, it is important to employ the activities of the Information Gathering Phase so requisite information is obtained about the student and all team members are operating from the same level of information.

During the Information Gathering Phase, the team, with input from all members, will complete **Part I**, **Part II**, and **Part III** of the *Augmentative and Alternative Communication Inventory*.

- **Part I -- Present Communication Modalities**

- How does the student presently communicate?** Check the mode or modes of communication the student presently uses to **effectively** communicate. Be thorough and indicate any successful modes utilized. For example, a student may successfully gesture to indicate he wants something to eat, but also use pictures to make choices. Be sure to consider communication in all environments in which the student participates. For example, if a student uses a mode at home that is not used in the school, provide documentation in this section. Later, as the team makes a determination about the AAC to implement, the team will utilize this information about current effective modes.
- Though the student may not use a system effectively to communicate, does he/she presently demonstrate emerging skills in any of the following?** From the checklist provided, indicate whether the student is demonstrating emerging skills with any of the modes. For example, the student may be beginning to demonstrate the skill or may be able to recognize the icon. This information will help the team determine which of the current modes may be expanded upon and considered for an AAC system.

- **Part II -- Communication History**

- Describe any communication system that is currently used or has been attempted previously. This includes any low- or high-tech system (e.g., object exchange, picture exchange, speech generating device). Provide the date when it was tried, the system, a description of the system, and the results. The team should thoroughly discuss any previous attempts and determine whether significant changes in learning have occurred since the original implementation and whether previous systems should be considered again. The information from this question will provide concrete information about what has and has not worked well and will inform the team of systems to implement or avoid.

- **Part III – Student Considerations and AAC Feature Analysis**

- Use the *Augmentative and Alternative Communication System Feature Analysis* document and the corresponding *Guidance Document* to complete this section. On the *Feature Analysis*,

FIRST each team member is to independently review each STUDENT consideration moving from the top of the table to the bottom. (The sections color coded in GREEN are to be reviewed for every student. The team can determine whether the RED and ORANGE sections should be considered based on the characteristics of the student.) Highlight the considerations that reflect the student's strengths and needs and WILL impact the AAC system selected. This requires careful consideration and for the team to really determine what are critical features of communication system. SECOND, each team member is to independently review the TEAM considerations, highlighting those that reflect the team's strengths, needs, and resources and WILL impact the AAC system selected. THIRD, the team is to discuss the considerations identified. Again, this takes careful consideration to identify issues related to system customization, maintenance, and resources.

Once the considerations are identified, list the AAC systems that may be appropriate for the student. Use the space provided to list the potential AAC systems identified through this process. At this point, these are just possibilities – no decision has been made yet. These options will be discussed by the team in more detail in the next section.

- ✓ The first step of the AAC Inventory has now been completed. At this point, the team should have enough information gathered to be able to discuss AAC system options as a team and to start making decisions.

Step 2: Decision Making Phase

During this phase, the team will take into consideration all information gathered in Step 1. From the options identified in Step 1, advantages and disadvantages will be discussed and through this dialogue, the team will now identify an appropriate AAC system or systems.

During the Decision Making Phase, the team, with input from all members, will complete **Part IV** and **Part V** of the *Augmentative and Alternative Communication Inventory*.

● Part IV – AAC System Information

- From information gathered in Step 1, list the AAC systems that may be considered. This section is designed for the team to brainstorm systems prior to making an actual selection. Do not critique the suggestions at this time. List all suggested systems and strategies, including those currently in use, on chart paper for all to see.
- Next, list the advantages and disadvantages of each system identified. This information will be used to help the team ultimately select the AAC system(s) to implement.

As the team identifies the advantages and disadvantages, they are encouraged to strongly consider:

1. Student characteristics
2. Future communication needs of the student
3. Device features
4. Ability of the team to support implementation and continued use

Additionally, many vendors provide matrices listing the features of their devices. When researching devices, visit vendor websites and/or use internet searches for comparison charts.

● Part V -- System(s) Selected for Implementation

- Once the team has held a thorough discussion and has identified all advantages and disadvantages for each of the systems, select the systems that best match the student and his/her needs. Limit your selections to a reasonable number by selecting two options. List the best choice first. This will be the system the team will implement first. The second choice is to be

implemented in the event that the first is not successful or cannot be obtained in a reasonable time period.

When selecting the top two choices, consider those that can be implemented in a reasonable time period (e.g., the system can be obtained, programming and support is available, training can be provided) to ensure the student receives a communication system as quickly as possible.

- ✓ The second step of the AAC Inventory has now been completed. At this point, the team should have made a decision of two appropriate AAC systems.

Step 3: Trial Implementation Phase

Once two AAC systems are selected, the team will develop a plan for implementation. The initial implementation will act as a trial to determine applicability and whether the system is effective for the student.

To complete the Trial Implementation Phase, the team, with input from all members, will complete **Part VI**, **Part VII**, and **Part VIII** of the Augmentative and Alternative Communication Inventory.

- **Part VI -- Obtaining / Creating the AAC System / Device**

- Before implementation can begin, the system will need to be obtained or in some cases created (e.g., picture exchange). Identify how the AAC system / device will be obtained or created by listing who is responsible, the date by which it will be obtained / created, and steps required.

- **Part VII – Trial Implementation Period and Next Team Meeting Date**

- As the next critical step prior to the implementation, the team will identify the time period for the implementation trial and determine a meeting date to reconvene after the student has had an opportunity to use the AAC system. This date should be approximately 3-5 weeks from the date of the planning meeting, providing ample opportunity for the student to use the system but ensuring the team comes back together in a reasonable time period to assess student progress.

- **Part VIII - Plan for Implementation of the System**

- There are multiple steps involved in implementation. Use the table provided to list steps required for implementation. Use additional paper if needed to ensure a thorough plan. The team may use this table to make revisions in the implementation plan as the student progresses.
 1. Identify the lead team member responsible for implementation of the AAC system. This person ensures implementation occurs, reviews and analyzes data, communicates with team members, and provides guidance throughout the process.
 2. Identify those team members who require training and list according to priority. During the trial implementation phase, this may be a limited number of people. In the event the AAC system is selected for permanent use, other team members will require ongoing training and support.
 3. Identify the type of training required for successful implementation of the AAC.
 4. Identify the person who will provide training and support to team members on use of the AAC system.
 5. Identify the date training will begin.
 6. Describe how the system will be implemented across the student's environments and activities.
 - i. List the setting, activity, or time of day when the AAC system is to be implemented.

- ii. List the skill the student is to demonstrate through use of the AAC system (e.g., request, comment).
- iii. List the person(s) responsible for teaching the student to use the system in the context of the environment.
- iv. Provide a description of how the AAC system will be implemented and describe any instructional strategies or supports to be provided in order to facilitate the student's use of the system.
- v. List the type of data and documentation to be collected during the implementation period so an informed decision can be made at the conclusion.

Implement the system as described in the plan during the trial period. It will be important to implement the system for 3-5 weeks to give enough time for team members to teach the student how to use the system and collect data on the effectiveness of the system.

After the trial implementation the team is to convene to review data collected, discuss results, and determine next steps. At this point the educational team may conclude:

- This system is a good match and will be made permanent for the student. The team should move forward into complete implementation across all settings.
- This system is a good match and will be made permanent for the student. The team should move forward into complete implementation across all settings AND a second system introduced so the student has a primary and secondary communication system.
- This system is not a good match and a different AAC system will be implemented.

If the team determines the system is a good match and the AAC becomes permanent, further discussions will need to take place so complete implementation can occur. The implementation plan developed for the trial period can be modified. School districts are required to provide the services required for implementation of the AAC. Therefore, teams should discuss the following: training of the student, members of the family, and school staff on how to use the AAC system; technical assistance about its operation or use; modification or customization of the AAC system; and other supports for the school personnel that might be necessary for the AAC system to be appropriately used.

If the team determines the system is not a good match, the team should refer back to the AAC *Inventory*. The team can determine whether to implement the second system identified or consider a different system. Further, the team is to develop a new implementation plan.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication Inventory Development

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