

Modeling and Implementing AAC

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I am employed through the TN Talks project but have no other financial or non-financial relationships to disclose.

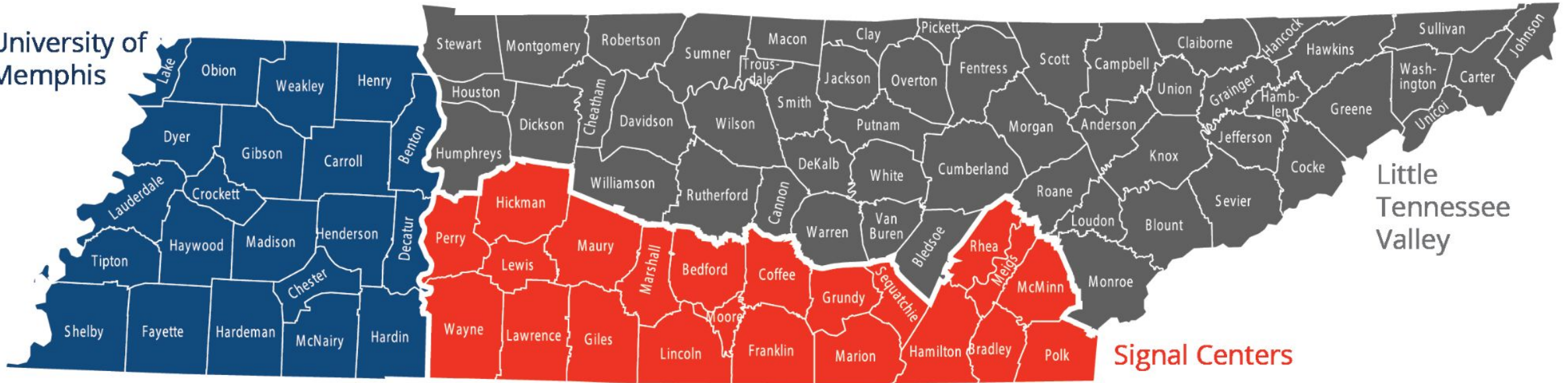
Tennessee Talks



- Grant funded project by the TN Department of Education
- TN-DOE and regional centers are working together to positively impact the lives of students with complex communication needs
- The overarching goal of the project is to:
 - Connect students with appropriate AT-AAC systems for improved life outcomes
 - Provide education and support and build informed AAC school teams

<http://tennesseetalks.org/>

University of
Memphis



Little
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Signal Centers

Definition of AAC

- Augmentative: supplemental support for individuals with impaired communication skills
- Alternative: replacement options in the absence of speech
- Communication: the ability to share our thoughts, ideas, and information with others

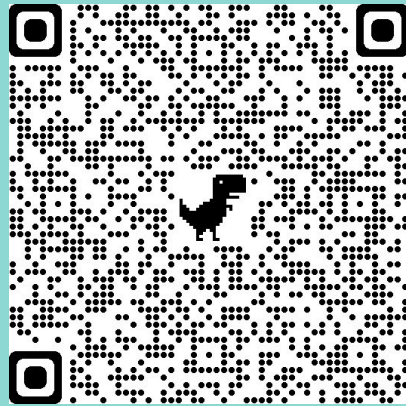
AAC includes strategies and/or tools to foster active communication

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

- AAC is any strategy, tool or device that an individual uses to solve everyday communicative challenges.
- Communication can take many forms: speech, text, gestures or facial expressions, touch, sign language, symbols, pictures, speech-generating devices, etc.
- AAC is one type of assistive technology

<https://www.isaac-online.org/english/what-is-aac/>

National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities (NJC)



<https://www.asha.org/njc/communication-bill-of-rights/>

Communication Bill of Rights

I have the right:

<p>To be given real choices</p>	<p>To say no, refuse & reject choices</p>	<p>To ask for what I want</p>	<p>To share my feelings</p>	<p>To be heard & responded to (even if the answer is no)</p>	
<p>To have and use my speech system all the time</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h2>Communication Bill of Rights</h2> <p>I have the right:</p> </div>		<p>To ask for and get attention & interaction</p>	<p>To be taught how to communicate</p>	
<p>To ask & know about my schedule & world</p>			<p>To have my speech system in working order & to have an alternate</p>	<p>To be a full & equal member of my community</p>	<p>To be treated with respect & dignity</p>

These rights are summarized from the Communication Bill of Rights put forth in 1992 by the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities.

Aided vs. Unaided Communication

UNAIDED Communication: These systems require only your body to aid the communication: examples are facial expressions, sign language, gestures, and vocalization

AIDED Communication: An aided system uses a tool or device: examples are communication boards, tangible objects, computers, Speech Generating Devices



Benefits of Using AAC

Benefits of AAC

- Stronger friendships
- More frequent social interactions
- Increased independence with decision about self
- Ability to communicate medical needs
- Greater family participation
- Increased employment opportunities and community involvement

Challenges without AAC

- Increased social isolation
- Decreased involvement in personal and medical decision making
- Inability to demonstrate knowledge

There is no prerequisite age or skill set to start using AAC. Only the need to have ACCESS to the device and EXAMPLES on how to use the devices.

Debunking AAC Myths

- We are never “too young” or “too old” to learn to communicate
- There is no such thing as too “low functioning” or too “behavioral”
- Physical limitations do not impede access
- We do not always need to “start small and work our way up”
- Use of AAC does not prevent development of verbal speech (studies show the opposite!)

Presume competence!

Multimodal Communicators

Multimodal Communicator- Having multiple methods to communicate your wants, needs, and ideas.

Communicators may use: • Vocalizations • Environmental noises • Word approximations • Gestures • Sign language • Pointing to real objects in the environment or pictures.

AAC users are multimodal communicators like any person who communicates verbally.

If an attempt to communicate is made, it should be honored.

Communication Success

Effective - Message is understood

Efficient- Message is timely and not difficult to produce

Socially Appropriate - Community understands and accepts the message

Presuming Competence

By presuming competence, you are presuming that everyone has something to say and that everyone is capable of learning.

Communication Competence

Communication Reasons

There is more to communication than requesting.

Comments, Questions, Social Exchanges

Words

Give the AAC user a robust vocabulary

- Variety of Words (core words plus nouns, verbs, pronouns, modifiers, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.)
- Learnable consistent symbol set
- Ability to make morphological changes (tenses, plurals, comparatives/ superlatives)







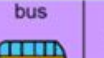
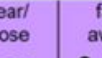





















































Alphabet Access

Presume Competence for literacy skills.
Any degree of spelling is an asset.

What is CORE VOCABULARY?

“**Core** vocabulary refers to the small number of **words** that make up 70-90% of what we say on a daily basis. These **words** are relevant *across contexts* and *can have many meanings*...

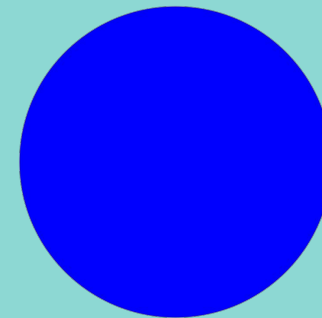
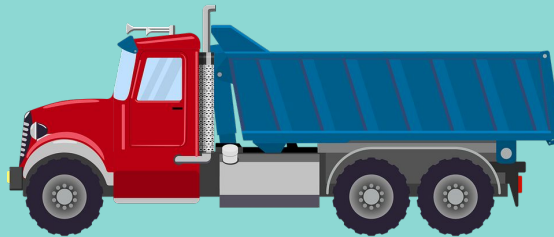
Core vocabulary is powerful because it allows communicators to express a wide variety of concepts with a very small number of **words**.”

 bowling ball	 STRIKE!!!!	 SPARE!	 knock down pins	 put shoes on	 take shoes off	 bowling pin	 bus	 near/ close	 far/ away
 I	 me	to	 don't	 can't	 not	 good	 more	 all	 some
 it	 my/mine	 am are	the	 look / see	 come	 drink	 excited	 happy	 sad
 he/ him	 she/her	could	 can	 eat	 drink	 get	 frustrated	 bored	 in
 they/them	 we/us	 have-has	 do does	 go	 help	 like	 this	 on	 with
 you	 your	 was were	is	 need	 play	 say	 that	 toilet	 out
one	 something	will	would	 take	 feel	 want	work	 here	 there

<https://www.aacandautism.com/>

Fringe Words

- Fringe words are the other 20% of words we use
- Mostly nouns and are more specific to the situation
- Cannot be used alone to form a sentence
- Examples (*milk*, *school*, *blue*, *truck*)



Core and Fringe Words

Both Core and Fringe vocabulary are important.

Core words should be a part of the focus when first introducing AAC, as core words can be used to form a sentence.

Function	Core Word Examples
Sharing Opinions/ News	Like, not like, that good, different, I go, I do, she help, good
Commenting	Look, see it, same, different
Starting a conversation	I like, Who, Where she
Requesting	Make more, get that, in here
Asking Questions	Want some? Why? Where? Can I?
Protesting	Stop, Not help

Availability

1. **Device Present** -The individual can not communicate if the device isn't available. This is includes having it charged and within reach in all settings.
2. **Back-ups** - If the system is electronic, having a paper back-up available when an electronic system in not practical or available.
3. **Team Access** - The team (parents, teachers, therapists) all need access to the device and backup methods to model to the student.

Modeling / Aided Language Input

Modeling IS

- Language learned by having a communication partner use an aided system pointing to symbols as they speak

Modeling is NOT

- A one-time event. (It can take days, weeks, months, and even years for some individuals to learn the symbol to word correspondence.)
- It is not an imitation task.

Modeling / Aided Language Input

- AAC learners learn to communicate just like a typical language learner
 - Listening and watching others
 - Requiring a lot of input before we can expect them to be proficient AAC users

- Model words during real life situations, helps:
 - Learn the meaning of the vocabulary
 - Teaches the location words
 - How to combine symbols to form messages

Receptive Language Skills

It is important to consider the students current receptive language skills

Intact Receptive Language

- Good receptive language, but are not able to express themselves
- May have a motor impairment
- They may need explicit teaching to use expressive language
- May be a shorter period to learn AAC

Disordered Receptive Language

- Student has both receptive and expressive language deficits
- May require longer period to learn AAC as they will need both receptive and expressive language teaching.

When an AAC system is “not working” for a student, the first step should be to look at the frequency of modeling.

A lack of consistent, meaningful modeling is often the problem when children struggle to learn to communicate with an AAC system.

Modeling/ Aided Language Input



Model, Model, and Model Again

Model Often - It may take an individual many times to learn the context and meaning of a word.

Model Again - It may take a long time before they point or select the word to speak.

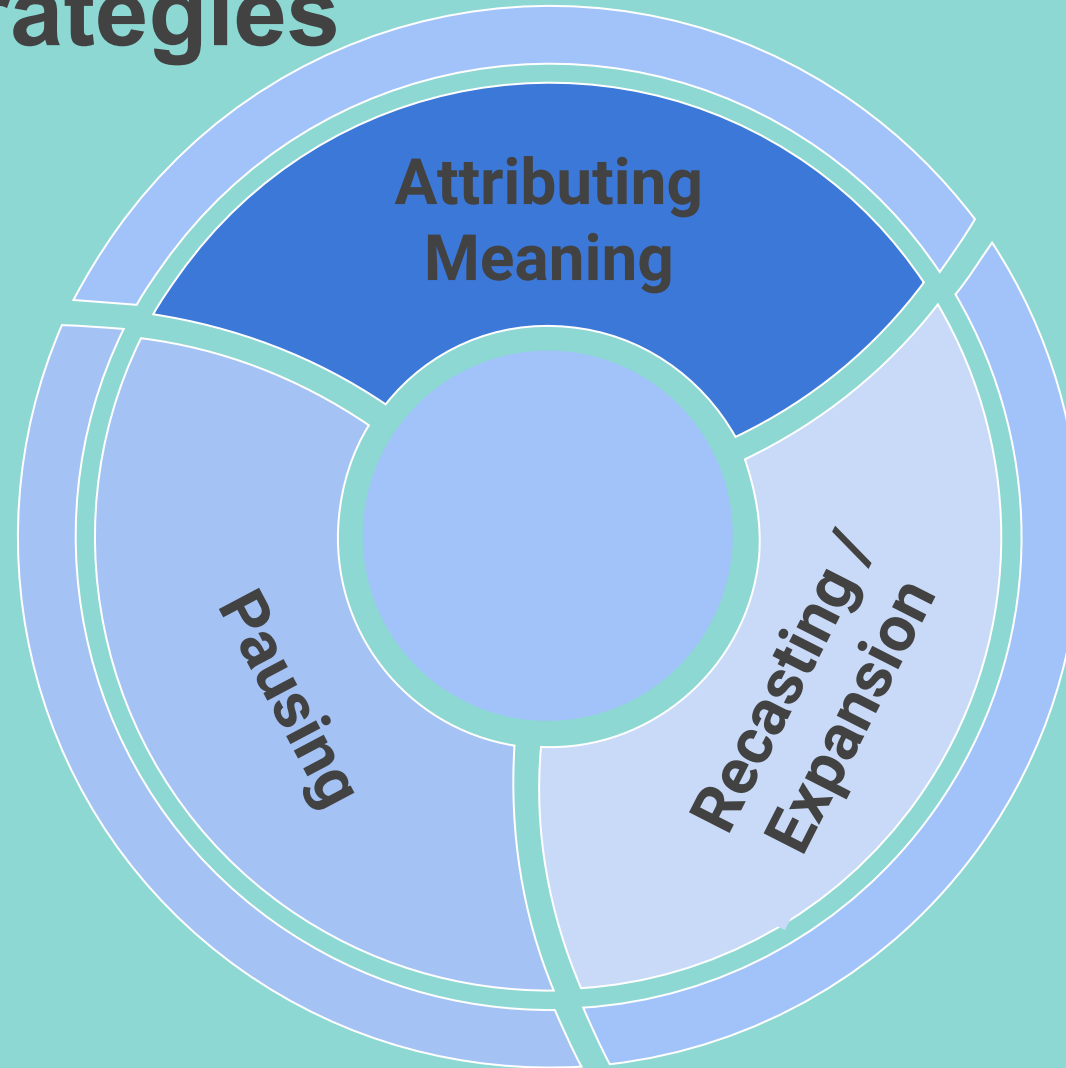
Model without Expectation - Some children may not respond when we model words for them.

Make it meaningful- Pick words and topics that are motivating and meaningful to the individual.

Model ... Pause.... Model then wait for a response. If no response is provided, model the next word and continue the pattern

Model... Pause... Go On

Modeling Strategies



Attributing Meaning to Communication

- An important part of all early communication development.
- Happens whenever an adult assigns meaning to behaviors they observe.
- Behaviors include facial expressions, vocalizations, body movements, and gestures.
 - The child may or may not be using the behaviors with the intent to communicate.
 - However, they learn that they can communicate and control their environment when adults attribute meaning and respond meaningfully to the communication acts.

<http://www.project-core.com/attributing-meaning-to-communication-acts/>



Amanda's AAC Advice:
**Attributing
meaning**

Recasting /Expansions

- Immediately follow the child's utterance
- Incorporate the child's utterance
- Provide an enhanced and/or contrasting version of that utterance by changing one or more sentence components, while maintaining basic meaning

Example: Student - **“COOKIE”**

Communication Partner - **“Oh! You WANT a COOKIE!”** or **“Oh, I'm sorry. NO COOKIE right now! It's NOT time!”**

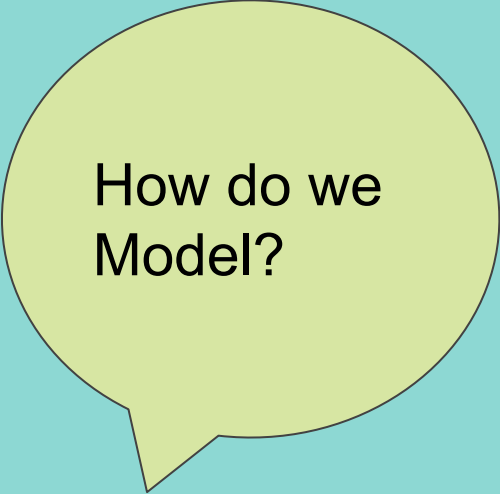
<https://praacticalaac.org/strategy/recasting-a-language-facilitation-strategy/>

Pausing



Give the AAC learner time to respond.


Questions and Tips



How do we
Model?



Am I doing this right?



If I hear that word
again!

When do we add words?

Add words only when needed

- Topic/activity a student will use multiple times.
- When there is no other way to describe or name the item.

How could you use core and fringe words that already exist on a communication device to talk about a weather unit?



Modeling Questions

Should I model every word?

- It is not necessary to model every word.
- Model key words that are motivating to that individual and can be repeated many times in different situations.
- When the AAC learner has started pointing to single words, increase your modeling to 2-3 word phrases. *Try to model one step above the AAC learner's current skill level.*

Modeling Questions

What if they aren't looking?

- Keep modeling as they may be observing you with brief glances or using peripheral vision to watch you model. Even if they aren't watching all the time, incidental learning can happen without focused attention.

What if they don't respond to my modeling?

- Keep modeling remember we model without expectations. Modeling is our way of showing the student how to communicate using AAC.

Do I need to talk while I model on the AAC device?

- The ultimate goal is communication so present the AAC learner with multiple communication inputs, verbal and AAC.

Is it perseverating or a behavior if they press the same button over and over?

- They may be exploring and playing with language, do provide time for the AAC learner to explore their device.
- Look at the environment and make adjustments as you are able to decrease the individual from being overstimulated.

Paper Based AAC

Ignore the behavior

Decreasing environmental stimulation

Use Aiden Language Input - without Demands

Increase Engagement - Motivating Activity- use the preferred word or category

Don't

- Take Away the Device
- Hide Buttons
- Change the System

Modeling with Joint Attention



<https://youtu.be/hrQclfxmRsE?t=39>

Modeling with Core

- Single, highly motivating words
- Think functional core words - words useable in multiple context
- Expand sentence length as the student progresses

1 Word	2 words	3 Words
Go	Go up	We go up
Want	Want more	I want more
Like	Like it	You like it
Help	Need help	I need help

Activities to start teaching core words

- Open - Open a toy box, open favorite food
- On- Turn on a toy, music, or light, Put on clothing
- Help- help opening, fixing, or building, help getting something
- More- Request second, Another turn in a game
- Not + That - refusing a disliked item or food
- Look - look at pictures, look at an object of interest (pet, truck, etc.)
- Like - point to favorite item
- Where - Where are we going, Where is something
- Go - make something go, go somewhere
- On- Stacking items, putting on items, gluing or adding items
- Different - requesting a different activity or toy, when comparing 2 items
- In - cleaning up, putting something in a backpack or bag, scooping sand into a bucket, getting into the car

Activity Suggestions

Books, Crafts, Game - Something Engaging

- Take one core word to focus on
- Model during the activity
- Each time you model the focus word

Game - **My Turn... Your Turn... Turn It On**

Craft - **Tell me, Do, Feel, Some In/Out**

<https://praacticalaac.org/praactical/lets-create-getting-to-the-core-of-earth-day/>

Book- **Up/Down, Like/ Don't Like, etc.**

<https://www.tobiidynavox.com/software/content/core-first-books-and-lessons/>

Modeling Take Away

All forms of communication are used simultaneously with AAC including vocalizing.

Foster 'interactive' communication, don't just elicit responses

Think CORE words 80% with fringe words 20%

Create a plan for carryover in all environments

Carryover at home is CRITICAL to success.

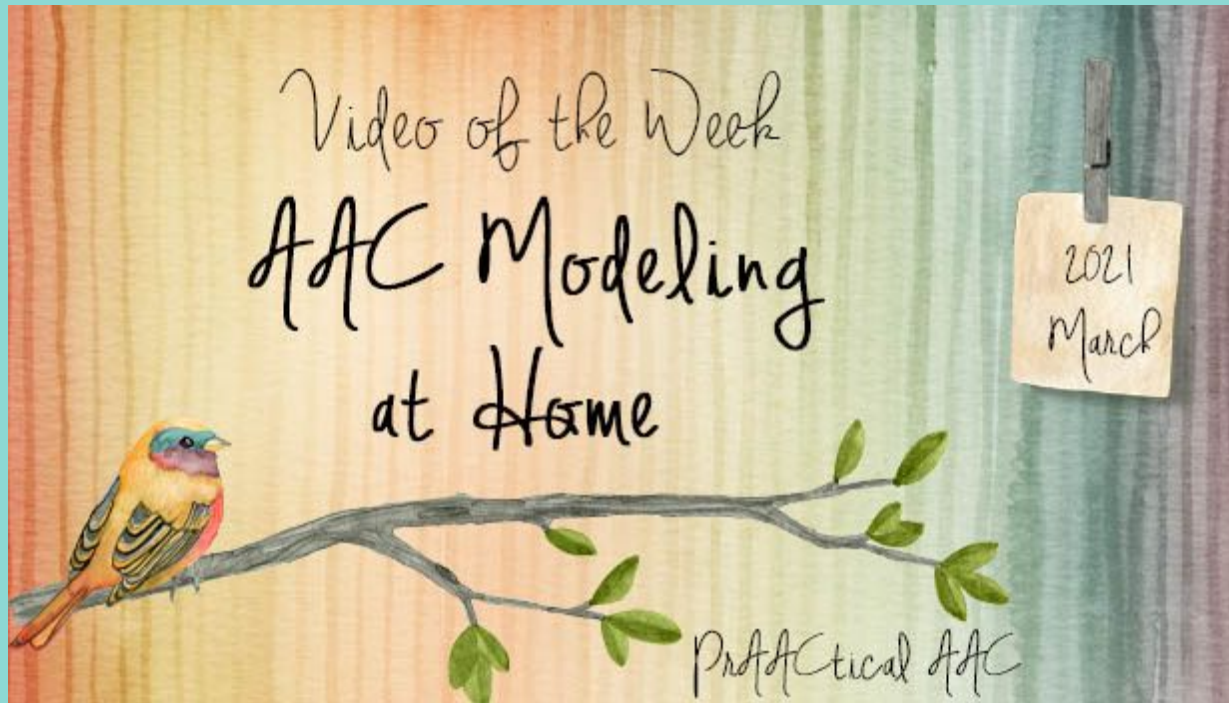
Provide training on chosen AAC interventions for everyone who may be communicating with the child

MODEL.... Pause.... MODEL.

“If you expect the student to use the system to talk to you, then *you* need to use it to talk to *them*.”

L. Burkhart

Modeling PrAACtical AAC



<https://practicalaac.org/video/video-of-the-week-aac-modeling-at-home/>

Integrating core vocabulary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqeAipcciVQ&ab_channel=AssistiveWare

<https://youtu.be/hrQclfxmRsE>

<https://youtu.be/sOY6QQqhH6g>

Just a few additional resources! There are plenty more!



PrAACtical AAC

<https://practicalaac.org/>

See Me? See my AAC - parent blog -

<http://www.kimrankin.com/new-blog/2017/6/4/see-me-see-my-aac>

Speech and Language Kids - great resources

<https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/giving-voice-non-verbal-children-autism-aac-autism/>





Welcome to Tennessee Talks!

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