

AAC Strategies for Gestalt Language Processors



High-tech speech devices are a great way to engage gestalt language processors (GLP)! Incorporating their current language and language targets on to a speech device can increase their functional communication and development. GLPs learn language in chunks, called gestalts or scripts, and can do this both through verbal speech and on a speech generating device! These strategies are designed to facilitate language development on a speech device by incorporating the natural processing style of these individuals.

✓ Determine Learner's Current Language Script

During engaging, child-led activities, observe your learner to determine phrases or gestalts they frequently repeat. If your learner does not produce intelligible gestalts, but produces strings of sing-song intonation, try doing some detective work by watching videos together and seeing what parts of the video they focus on to discover what they may be saying!

✓ Select Target Language

Children in the initial stages of GLP require more gestalts they can use and mitigate. Select target gestalts that are general, have core vocabulary, and can be used in a variety of contexts. Some examples include “let’s do it, come on, this is fun, what’s next?” Think about the functions of current language scripts and functions that are missing. Targeting not just requesting, but also protesting, commenting, and exclaiming, will increase your learner’s ability to communicate in a variety of situations.

✓ Customize the Device

Program known gestalts and targets into your learner’s speech device based on the language organization system of the device. Learners can use both verbal language and the speech device to communicate! Customize the device with characters and media clips to ensure the device reflects meaningful and personal messages.

Consider recording spoken language or your own voice. Emotive phrases with intonation can allow the user to better engage with the language, as GLPs are drawn to intonation!

Keep established language systems on the device intact, to accommodate the learner’s language development. Their needs will evolve to include core vocabulary, single words, and grammatical supports.

✓ Engage through Modeling

Utilize aided language input to model target gestalts both verbally and on the device in a variety of context. Repetition is key! Emphasize intonations and facial expressions when verbally modeling. Engage in a variety of motivating activities while encouraging the learner to use and explore their speech device. Continue to acknowledge and build upon their gestalts, whether it is verbally or on the device.

Celebrate communication by utilizing these strategies to meet your learner’s unique communication needs and set them up for success with a speech device!