

Communicating During Times of Challenging Behaviors

QuickTalker Freestyle (QTF) 101

- ✓ First and foremost, make sure the QTF is charged and accessible for your child to use to communicate!
- ✓ Remember that your child is not an expert with using the QTF yet! They are relying on you to teach them how to communicate, especially during their times of challenge.
- ✓ Ensure all preferred (e.g., toys, favorite places, etc.) and necessary vocabulary is programmed on their QTF in order to self-advocate and reduce frustration.

Put Your Detective Hat On!

- ✓ Try to determine where the behavior is stemming from. Is it due to refusing to do something, lack of access to a preferred object, etc.? Acknowledge it!
- ✓ Interpret how they are feeling (e.g., sad, frustrated) and model how they can communicate that functionally on the QTF.

Show Them How!

- ✓ Model how to functionally request a break, ask for help, or terminate an activity on the QTF in order to reduce outbursts (e.g., “I need a break”, “give me space”, “I need help”, “I don’t like that”, “all done”).
- ✓ Turn the negative into a positive! Model during positive behaviors too (e.g., “Thank you for showing me how you feel!”, “I like how you asked for help!”, “I like the way you are playing!”)
- ✓ Communicate with your child’s SLP, and behavior specialist, if applicable, about other suggestions specific to your child’s needs.



Contact our ableCARE team for assistance with editing and customizing their device to reduce frustration and allow access to essential vocabulary:

Email: ablecare@ablenetinc.com

Phone: 651-294-3101



Contact our AbleNet Medical Data Support Team for questions about data collection:

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Incorporating AAC into Daily Routines

- ✓ **Assess and identify the individual's daily activities.**

Work with families, classroom staff, and anyone who is with the individual daily to establish and identify routines that may provide opportunities for them to communicate with their device.

Examples of Daily Routines

 - Getting dressed
 - Eating breakfast/lunch/snack/dinner
 - Going to a family member's house
 - Going to school
- ✓ **Set the user up for success.**

Make a list of words you can target during the routine. Keep this list handy and use the "search" features to find the words on the user's device if you need to.
- ✓ **Find motivating activities!**

Assess what the individual enjoys doing most often throughout the day.

Examples of Activities

 - Listening to music
 - Playing with toys/games
 - Going to the playground
 - Cooking/making a meal
- ✓ **Make sure to include social interactions.**

Find opportunities where the individual can communicate with a peer or adult at least once a day.
- ✓ **Keep AAC available.**

The individual won't be able to actively communicate if their device is tucked away or turned off. Make sure the device is accessible during all daily activities to provide increased communication opportunities.

References:

- Akinyele, D. (2023). *Practical Tips and Strategies for Embedding AAC into Daily Routines* (Webinar) <https://www.ablenetinc.com/practical-tips-and-strategies-for-embedding-aacin-to-daily-routines-on-demand-registration/>
- O'Neill, T. (2018). *Perspectives of parents of children with cerebral palsy on the supports, challenges, and realities of integrating AAC into Everyday Life* (dissertation). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, Ann Arbor.
- Zangari, C. (2019). Encourage Students to Use AAC by Supporting Communication Partners. *The ASHA Leader*, 24(4), 36–37. <https://doi.org/10.1044/leader.scm.24042019.36>

Modeling Basics for Effective Communication



Modeling is not just a technique—it’s a transformative tool in the communication journey of Speech Device Users. Modeling is pivotal in the communication development of Speech Device Users. Essential for effective speech device use, it’s a shared responsibility of family, caregivers, educators, and SLPs to engage in modeling, aiding the user’s communication journey.

Why Should I Model?

Learning Tool: Modeling demonstrates the effective use of speech devices for expressing ideas, requests, and emotions, which is especially helpful for new or limited-skill users.

Reinforcement: Highlights the value of the user’s voice, empowering and validating their communication.

Reducing Frustration: Helps users overcome initial difficulties with the device by showing how to find words or symbols and form sentences.

Confidence Building: Successful modeling and positive interactions increase users’ confidence, encouraging more frequent device use in various contexts.

Simple Modeling Activity – Learning Colors

Introducing Colors: Start by introducing different colors using the speech device. Model sentences like “This is red” or “Look, a blue sky.”

Asking Questions: Ask questions to encourage participation, such as “What color is this?” while pointing to objects.

Expressing Preferences: Model sharing preferences, like “Blue is my favorite color” or “I like green apples.”

Color Identification Game: Play a game where the child identifies the colors of various objects. Model questions like “Can you find something red?”

Color Sorting Activity: Have a sorting task with colored items. Model instructions like, “Put all the blue things here.”

Tips on Incorporating AAC Modeling into Other Activities

- ✓ Outline the Framework
- ✓ Select an Example
- ✓ Demonstrate Activity

Creative Modeling Activity: AAC Mystery Box



Preparation: Before you start, ensure that the AAC device has the vocabulary that aligns with the objects in the mystery box and the activity. This might include words for guessing, questioning, describing, and reacting.

Introducing the Activity: Begin by explaining the activity to the child using their AAC device. For instance, you might model phrases like “Let’s play a guessing game” or “I have a mystery box.”

Providing Clues: Give clues about the object in the box, using the AAC device to model how to describe it. For example, if the object is a soft toy, you might model phrases like “It is soft” or “You can cuddle it.”

Encouraging Guesses: Prompt the child to make guesses using their AAC device. You can model questions or guesses, like “Is it a toy?” or “Can I play with it?”



Helping: If the child struggles to find the right words, offer support by modeling phrases or showing them where to find words on their device.

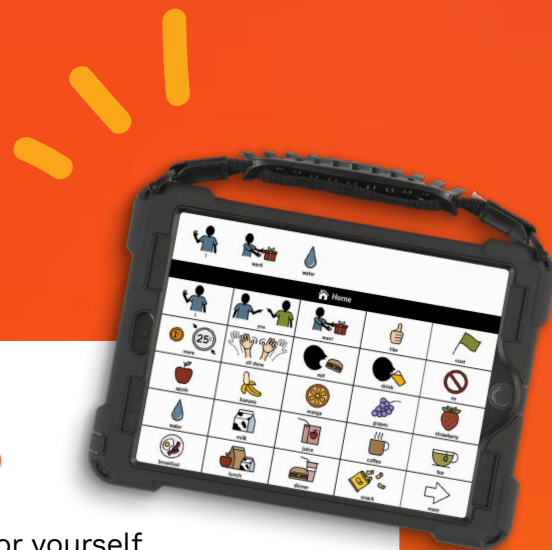
Revealing and Reacting: Once the child guesses correctly or after a few attempts, reveal the object. Model reactions on the AAC device, such as “You found it!” or “It’s a teddy bear!”

Encouraging Expression: After revealing, encourage the child to express their thoughts about the object or the game. Model phrases like “I feel happy” or “I like this game.”



Repeat the Process: Continue with different objects, each time modeling the use of the AAC device for different parts of the guessing process.

Motivating Your Child to Communicate



Exploring the QuickTalker Freestyle (QTF)

- ✓ Take the time to explore the QTF and the speech application for yourself. Your child will be learning primarily from you.
- ✓ Make sure the QTF is fully charged and accessible so your child can communicate during any opportunity!

Customize Your Child's QuickTalker Freestyle (QTF)

- ✓ Consider turning on 'Guided Access' to prevent your child from using the QTF as a tablet. Click here to access the instructions for guided access: <https://quicktalkerfreestyle.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360060865353-Use-and-Setup-of-Guided-Access>.
- ✓ Take pictures of your child's family and favorite things so they recognize the real-life image associated with the icon.

Model, Model, Model!

- ✓ Keep it simple! Focus on modeling 1-3 words at a time. They are learning along with you! No need to overcomplicate it.
- ✓ Model use of the QTF during their favorite times of the day and their preferred activities! We want to pair communication with positive experiences, so keep it fun!
- ✓ Avoid "testing" your child's ability to use the QTF. Instead, model or show them how to navigate and communicate using the QTF while learning together.

Let Them Be Heard!

- ✓ Always honor your child's communication. If they request an unavailable item, acknowledge it and validate that you understand what they asked for.
- ✓ Once your child learns that communication is power, they will learn that they can functionally communicate using the QTF!



Contact our ableCARE team for questions about editing or customizing your QuickTalker Freestyle:

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Tips to Encourage Speech Device Usage Over Summer

- 1 Get Familiar with Your Child's Speech Device:**
In order to assist your child in learning how to use their device, you need to learn how to use it yourself! Explore the device to learn where the words are that your child uses. Work closely with your child's Speech Language Pathologist so that they can support you and your child in learning how to use their Speech Device.
- 2 Model, Model, Model!**
In order for your child to learn how to use their device, they need to see others using it too! They need to hear the language that you want them to use and see where it is on their device in order to use it themselves. When you are talking to them, use the device to say the words you are speaking verbally as well. Get other family members involved to make it fun for everyone!
- 3 Individuals benefit from others using their Speech Device to communicate with them.**
What does your child like to do? Do they enjoy music? A certain toy? Playing outside? Set up the environment for success! Make sure their device is present during those motivating activities and you know where the words that they can use are on the device. Encourage your child to use the device to request (e.g. more swing), respond (e.g. yes/no), ask questions (e.g. can I pick a song?), or comment (e.g. I like my blocks.)
- 4 Be Consistent!**
We know that learning something new takes time and practice. The same can be said about learning to use Speech Device. Set aside time each day to dedicate to focusing on working with your child on using their device. Make sure you have the device available for any communication opportunity that may occur.

