

# AAC Babbling:

## Why Repetitive Selection Matters

### What AAC Babbling Is

AAC babbling refers to repetitive or exploratory use of a communication device, such as pressing the same button repeatedly or selecting icons without clear intent. This behavior, which often appears as “stimming” or self-stimulatory behavior, actually mirrors typical vocal babbling in infants and is a positive sign of language development, not “just play.”

### How AAC Babbling Helps

- 1 **Motor learning:** Repetition helps users learn where words are located and practice physically accessing their device through hand, eye, or switch control.
- 2 **Auditory feedback:** Hearing words repeatedly builds understanding of sounds, words, and meaning.
- 3 **Social interaction:** AAC babbling invites responses from partners, supporting early turn-taking.
- 4 **Language growth:** Exploration lays the foundation for intentional communication and expressive language development.

### How to Support AAC Babbling



#### Allow Device Exploration

- Let users play and press buttons freely without pressure to “be intentional.”
- Exploration builds comfort and confidence with the device.



#### Validate Communication Attempts

- Acknowledge selections as communication:  
“I heard you say ‘cow!’”
- Positive validation reinforces AAC engagement.



#### Encourage Shared Attention

- Share the moment! If they look back at you after selecting a word, expand on it:  
“Yes! That cow lives on a farm!”
- Builds pragmatic language and relational use.



#### Respond to Selections

- Comment on their selections, even if it appears random:  
“The cow goes moo!”
- This links symbol to context and encourages meaning-making.



#### Gentle Redirecting

- If repetitive pressing continues without engagement, model new language or expand to related vocabulary rather than shutting down exploration:  
“Let’s find more animals!”
- Provide a model and a natural way to navigate.



#### Explore Interests

- What feels unintentional may actually be the user expressing their interests!
- Try incorporating preferred words, letters, or sounds into play or conversation.

