

QuickTalker Freestyle: Get Started Guide

If you are unsure where to start with your client's QuickTalker Freestyle and AAC Journey, follow this helpful checklist to get started!

SPEECH APPLICATION SET UP

Setting up your Speech Application with best practices in mind will set the client up for success with beginning their AAC Journey! Here is a checklist of things to consider.

1. Consider Vocabulary Access

When setting up an AAC device, it's essential to provide access to a robust vocabulary system that includes both core and fringe words. Core vocabulary—high-frequency words like “go,” “want,” and “more”—supports flexible communication across contexts, while fringe vocabulary allows for personalization and topic-specific expression. Ensuring users have access to more words rather than fewer promotes richer language opportunities, supports the development of grammar and sentence structure, and encourages spontaneous communication. A robust system lays the foundation for lifelong language learning by empowering users to express a wide range of thoughts, needs, and ideas.

[Click Here to learn more about Core vs. Fringe Vocabulary.](#)

2. Grid Size Selection

When selecting a grid size for an AAC system, it's important to base the decision on what the user can see and physically access, considering their vision and motor abilities—not their age, cognitive level, or current language skills. A larger grid that the user can navigate supports long-term consistency and helps develop motor memory, which is crucial for efficient communication. Using a smaller grid with fewer icons may seem simpler to start with, but it often requires more hits or activations to reach a desired word, increasing effort and reducing communication speed. If a larger grid feels visually overwhelming at first, best practice is to mask or temporarily hide buttons instead of deleting or reducing them. This allows for gradual introduction of vocabulary while maintaining a consistent layout to support learning.

[Check out this article on our SupportHub for more tips on selecting Grid Size!](#)

3. Basic Personalization

Personalizing an AAC system is essential to make communication meaningful and motivating for the user. Start by programming fringe vocabulary including “About Me” phrases, names of family members, friends, pets, and favorite places to go. Be sure to include preferred items such as favorite foods, toys, TV shows, music, or activities, as these are often the topics users are most eager to talk about.

For more information and instructions on how to program your specific speech application, visit our [Speech App page on the SupportHub](#).

Don't forget to back it up! After adding customizations, make sure you save your changes by backing up the speech app!

4. Allow Exploration

When introducing a new AAC device, it's important to remember that learning the system takes time—for both the user and their communication partners. Encourage open exploration by allowing time to press icons, navigate pages, and search for words **without the pressure to use the device perfectly right away**. This hands-on discovery helps build familiarity and confidence. Caregivers should explore alongside the user to better understand the layout and vocabulary. A helpful tip is to locate the Word Finder tool in the AAC system, which shows the exact pathway to a desired word—making it easier and faster to find vocabulary and model language effectively.

BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION

Now that you have your App set up- what's next? Here is a helpful checklist of things to keep in mind when beginning to implement AAC, these strategies are what really make the impact for teaching the user how to use the system you have provided.

1. Make AAC Readily Available

Having an AAC device consistently available is essential to support communication and provide ongoing modeling opportunities throughout the day. When the device is always within reach, users are more likely to engage and build their language skills in real-life situations. To ensure the device is always ready, create a simple daily charging routine—such as plugging it in each night before bed and placing it in the same location, like a charging station near the door or in the user's bedroom. Consider keeping a backup charger at school or in a travel bag and set reminders if needed to build the habit.

2. Modeling

When beginning to implement an AAC system, modeling is one of the most powerful tools for teaching language. Pair your spoken words with 1–2 **key words** on the device to show how language can be expressed. You can also model by labeling a child's physical communication attempts—if they reach for a toy, model “want” or “play” on the device. Incorporate modeling naturally into everyday routines like “eat banana” or “go outside,” and be sure to include both core vocabulary (e.g., go, want, more) and fringe vocabulary (e.g., specific foods, toys, or people). Model a **range of communication functions**—not just requesting, but also protesting (“no”), commenting (“fun”), or asking questions (“where?”). Most importantly, **follow the child's lead and interests**—modeling works best when it's meaningful and connected to what the child cares about.

3. Communication Partner Training/Support

When introducing an AAC system, providing communication partner training and caregiver support is key to successful implementation. Begin by offering simple, practical strategies such as modeling a few words on the device during daily routines (don't try to jump to building sentences right away!), responding to all communication attempts, and allowing plenty of **wait time** for the AAC user to respond. Encourage caregivers to explore the device themselves and become comfortable using it alongside their child. Share short videos or handouts that demonstrate modeling and core vocabulary use, and provide reassurance that perfection isn't expected—**consistency and effort matter most**. Regular check-ins and collaborative problem-solving help build confidence and ensure that everyone feels supported in helping the AAC user develop communication skills.

Check out our [SupportHub](#) for a collection of resources curated for Parents/Caregivers as well as Educators!

4. Be Persistent – don't give up!

Just like babies are exposed to thousands of hours of spoken language before they begin to speak—often hearing 4,000 to 6,000 hours of language input by the time they say their first words around 12 to 18 months—AAC users also need extensive exposure to language on their device through **aided language input**. This means **consistently modeling** words and phrases on the AAC system throughout daily routines and interactions, giving the user time and support to develop understanding and eventually begin using the system expressively. Language development takes time, practice, and patience!

Need additional support? Contact the SLP Empowerment Team



[Schedule a virtual meeting](#)



[Send an email](#)