AbleNet | QuickTalker Freestyle

AAC Myth-Busting Analogies:
Supporting Conversations

Myth	Helpful Analogies
There Are Prerequisites to Using AAC Devices	Just as we don't expect a child to read before giving them books, we don't wait for certain skills before introducing AAC. We give them to tools first. Access to communication tools, paired with consistent support, allows children to build and strengthen their ability to express themselves over time.
Sustained Attention is Required for AAC Use	Language learning is like hearing background music at a party — even if you're not focused on the speakers all the time, you're still absorbing the melody. Kids don't need perfect attention to start learning AAC, they just need repeated exposure.
Children Need Finger Isolation/ Fine Motor Skills to be Given Access to AAC	Learning to use AAC is like how a child learns to eat. At first, they use their whole hand to grab food, then they develop a pinch, and eventually they learn to use utensils. We don't expect a child to wait to eat until they've mastered a fork and spoon. AAC works the same way—we start with tools that match your child's current motor skills, like larger buttons or switches, and adjust as their skills grow with practice and support. We don't wait until a certain milestone to offer communication supports.
AAC Will Make My Child Dependent and Stop Talking	Using AAC as a support is like using subtitles in a movie. The subtitles can support comprehension, but they don't stop a person from hearing the movie if they are able. AAC supports speech- it doesn't replace it.
AAC Devices Are Too High-Tech for Young Children	High Tech AAC is like a light switch. Young children don't need to understand electricity to flip a switch and light up a room. In the same way, they don't need to fully grasp every detail of an AAC device to start using it meaningfully. With the right support, even little ones can learn that pressing a button can "turn on" communication.
You Must Be a Certain Age to Start Using AAC	Starting AAC is like planting a garden — the earlier you plant seeds, the more time they have to grow. There's no such thing as 'too young' to start learning to communicate.
AAC Will Slow Down or Stop Speech Development	AAC is like training wheels on a bike. They don't prevent a child from learning to ride—they provide the stability and confidence needed to practice. Similarly, AAC gives children a way to communicate while they're developing speech. In fact, it often helps them build the foundation for spoken language even faster.
AAC Use Should be Discontinued if Progress Isn't Seen	Learning to use AAC takes time. We wouldn't hand someone an instrument and expect them to play perfectly right away. The same goes for AAC. Just like with any new skill, a child may not know how to do something at first—but with time, demonstration, and encouragement, they can begin to master it with confidence.