

# Support AAC users

Understand and support ākongā that use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems to meet their communication needs.

Understand the role of AAC systems

- Ākongā may communicate non-verbally using an AAC system. AAC is a term to describe methods that can help people to communicate non-verbally.
- Non-verbal communication systems use a variety of techniques including sign language, gestures, visuals, written communication, or specialised communication boards and communication technologies.
- Ākongā who use specialised communication boards and technologies communicate by selecting from an increasingly complex range of communication symbols or choices.
- Some digital systems speak words aloud for the ākongā.

Support AAC users under the guidance of the learner's Speech and Language Therapist.

- Make sure that the AAC device is consistently available, within and across settings.
- Model communication using their tool or system.
- Respond to AAC communication promptly, appropriately, and consistently.
- Prompt ākongā to use their AAC system when making requests and expressing themselves.
- Help them to give language to what they are feeling, especially after experiencing challenges.
- Set up opportunities to teach use of the AAC device by scheduling daily practice sessions and embedding opportunities throughout the day.
- Teach peers how to use the AAC device. If possible, give peers their own AAC devices.

See the [Speech, language and communication needs](#) Inclusive Education Guide for more information.

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