

# Understanding Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)



Imagine if you couldn't tell someone when you were feeling sick, what you needed, or even what you wanted to eat. Wouldn't that be frustrating?

**Communication is a huge challenge for many individuals with autism** because they might be nonverbal or have a limited use of language. For their caregivers, this can be a source of anxiety and frustration.

Thankfully, we have a set of tools known as **the Augmented and Alternative Communication (AAC) that supports individuals with autism**, who may struggle social interaction. AAC refers to all ways to communicate without speech or talking. Some examples of AAC devices are Communication Boards, Picture-Exchange Communication Systems, and even apps on tablets like Proloquo2Go.

For people with autism, AAC can be a game-changer. **By using pictures and symbols, they can finally communicate with others and express their thoughts and feelings.** Not only that, but AAC can also help them learn new words and improve their speech abilities. It's amazing how something as simple as a picture can make such a big difference in someone's life!

During a workshop on 3rd March, our Speech and Language Therapists, Mr. Caleb Lai & Mr. Binu, talked about AAC and why it's so important for individuals with autism. They also emphasized how crucial it is for primary caregivers to play an active role in supporting and developing the communication skills of persons with autism in their daily interactions. They shared some great strategies, with one of the most important being **modeling**.

Here are **three steps to model effectively**:

1. Find a motivating item such as a food, toy, location.
2. Model using the motivating item - point to the picture on the communication board while verbally saying the word
3. Modeling consistently - Modeling consistently at home as briefly as 15 minutes a day as a start could play a huge part in your child's language development, communication, and independence.

## Join our next AAC Workshop

3rd March marked the first session of a series of workshops to introduce Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for parents.

If you found this article to be of value to you, we invite you to join us at our next session in July. Write to [enquiry@saac.org.sg](mailto:enquiry@saac.org.sg) to find out more.

