Using AAC to Help Children with Routines

AAC can help children to understand when they are learning how to follow a routine.

AAC may include using signs, objects, photographs or symbols.
Show the cue when you are telling the child what is happening.

What is AAC?

AAC is a term which refers to lots of different types of communication:

- Gesture and signing
- Pictures
- Symbols
- Written words
- Objects
- Sensory cues – this might be something we can see, hear, smell or feel

AAC helps all of us every day. For example we follow road signs or symbols on the road to help us to understand where we are going. We often use photographs of fruit and vegetables to weigh these items in the supermarket.

**AAC stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication**

Augmentative means using a system (like objects or photographs) alongside a person’s talking.

Alternative means using a system as an alternative to spoken communication, for example using a communication book or an electronic device.

Communication is when messages or information is given from one person to another.

AAC can help children to:

✓ Focus their attention when we are communicating
✓ Understand our words when we are talking
✓ Learn new routines and understand what is happening and when
✓ Become more independent
✓ Become less anxious
✓ Build children’s confidence in their communication
How can we use AAC to help children to understand routines and what is happening?

AAC can be used across lots of different routines or activities, including:

**Daily Routines**
- Getting dressed
- Getting ready for bed
- Snack time

**Play**
- Playing outside
- Messy play
- Playing with cars

**Education**
- Lessons
- Activities from school

Choose a cue

Ask your child’s teacher which cue might be best for your child. You could use:

- Objects – use objects around the house that relate to that activity
- Photographs
- Symbols – use symbols if they are available or draw your own pictures
- Songs – make up your own song or find a song to play that’s related to the activity, e.g. ‘this is the way we brush our teeth ..’
- Signing – sign key words

For some children, a now and next board will be useful to show two cues – what is happening now and what is happening next!

Starting ....

- Just before the activity, use the cue and tell your child what is happening – e.g. ‘outside now’
- Make sure your child can see, hear or feel the cue
- Try to be at eye level with your child so they can see you and your face
- Be consistent with your cues as a family – so you are all doing the same thing
- Have your cues available and ready to use – in a box, on a key ring, on a velcro strip or next to the activity

More information

You will find some symbols for home routine and a Now and Next board on the Wyre Forest School’s website here: [https://www.wfs.worcs.sch.uk/page/?title=Now+and+Next+Board&pid=305](https://www.wfs.worcs.sch.uk/page/?title=Now+and+Next+Board&pid=305)

You will find more information and a structured sessions for using AAC for routines online at the National Oak Academy. This includes using visual timetables at home: [https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom/specialist/speech-and-language-therapy](https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom/specialist/speech-and-language-therapy)

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