

Aided Language Stimulation Strategies

Aided Language Stimulation (ALS)

Aided Language Stimulation is the process of modelling Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) language in everyday settings. The communication partner talks to the person while also pointing/ selecting keywords on the person's AAC system. ALS helps develop the person's understanding of language and symbols. ALS also enhances the person's expressive language skills.



For information on how to conduct ALS please refer to Everyone Connects Information Sheet titled "Aided Language Stimulation".

Challenges of ALS

ALS is a whole new method of interaction and communication with those learning AAC language. It may be difficult at first for you to learn how to use the AAC system to communicate, where to find the words, how to compose your messages, what to say and when to say it. The more you practice and evaluate the better you become at it. This handout gives you some simple strategies to help you become better at ALS.



Strategies for ALS

1- Accessibility: Ensure that the AAC system the person is using is always accessible and within reach, so that you can model and use it with person at any time, anywhere. If the person is using a high tech AAC system, you may also want to print out hard copies of the main page, or have additional light tech systems for activities and environments that are not suitable for electronics. Below are some examples:



On boogie board



On pillow



Bicycle stand



Bathtub

2– Keywords: You may begin to model keywords only. You could also use core words or high frequency words (i.e. it), for example, instead of selecting or pointing to “I want to kick the ball” you could point to “I kick it”. You may like to start by modelling phrases on the main page of the system, then begin to explore secondary pages.



3– Explore: Take some time to explore the AAC system of the person when they do not need to access it; ideally when the person is sleeping. Explore the way the vocabulary is organised and how to navigate through the system. Locate vocabulary or messages which you think you could model frequently. If it is a light tech system you could stick post-it notes to remind you of the messages you want to model.



4–Start with one activity: You could choose one daily activity or routine during which you want to use ALS. Think of the routine and all its parts, for example, beginning the routine, steps, then ending the routine. Anticipate messages that you may be able to model during this routine. Think of what the person might say or how the person might react, then think of possible ways to respond to the person’s reactions. Imagine and rehearse the activity or routine in your head, then go ahead and conduct it.



Conduct the activity every day for a whole week, be consistent with the messages you are modelling and the structure of the routine. Once you become more confident, think of another activity to add to your week. Continue with this process until you are confident to use ALS all day, every day.

5– Reflect: It is a good idea to video record the interaction so that you can watch yourself and the person interacting. Reflect on the interaction after the activity is finished. Think of what you did well and what you did not do so well. Think of ways to help you continue doing what you did well and ways to help you improve what you did not so well. Think of what you could do differently to improve the interaction and to improve your ALS.



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