

Student Activity Day: AAC

This AAC Activity Day package is designed to help support consultants and districts to facilitate group events to support the use of AAC. The resources have been compiled with the input of AAC SLPs who have run these kinds of events and who have shared their plans, materials and resources. We are most grateful for the contributions of the following AAC Specialists outside of SETBC whose selfless sharing of resources has made the development of this package possible: Ann Marie Foxe, Corinna Duffitt, Betsy Neilly, Tammy McEachern-Hughes, Sue Rampone, Heather MacNaughton, Monica Francella and Rosemary Park.

Objectives:

1. To provide real time natural communication opportunities with like peers;
2. To provide a more facilitated, motivating, AAC-friendly environment, outside of the fast-paced classroom;
3. To increase communicative competence;
4. To provide targeted communication practice of specific individual communication objectives in a group setting;
5. To provide an opportunity for device users, SLPs and EAs to learn new strategies to support the development of AAC (moving beyond requesting, literacy development, advanced device skills and activities to promote acquisition of vocabulary);
6. To develop flexibility in the use of core vocabulary;
7. To increase independence in device use;
8. To provide opportunities for peer mentoring;
9. To decrease social isolation and build communities and friendships in AAC circles.

Do:

1. Enlist a team to support the event.
2. Start planning at least 5 weeks before the event.
3. Consider the access needs of your participants in site selection.
4. Consider transportation.
5. Determine theme for the day (e.g.: Christmas, Valentine's Day, Camp, core vocabulary focus, technology sharing) or a multiple day focus (e.g.: Lunch Bunch, Talk Time, Cool Communicators).
6. Pre-plan activities to target (based on your expected participants) and have alternatives to do as a back-up or as time permits.
 - Get input on activities from SLPs, AAC users, support workers.
 - Focus on a goal for the day.

- Recognize that small group activities with ≤ 5 users reduces wait time.
 - Have simple and clear directions readily available in print for group leaders.
 - Consider providing the activities in advance to supporting SLPs / case managers so they can practice.
7. Determine the vocabulary needed for the activities
 - Plan to use core vocabulary.
 - Identify any fringe vocabulary that might be needed at least 2 weeks in advance and ensure that support personnel have it readily available for programming and advance practice (for easy access, this can be placed in an Adobe Connect Meeting room or DropBox).
 8. Have the communicator accompanied by at least one of the following: the SLP, support worker or teacher; and parent if appropriate.
 9. Clarify the rules for accompanying personnel in advance. It is not their job to talk. (Consider sending out this role description with the event flyer.)
 10. Encourage networking but not at the expense of AAC users.
 11. Arrive early to help troubleshoot devices by appointment.
 12. Start with a small group for the first time.
 13. Involve the community, volunteers, training EA training programs, expert users and media
 14. Be flexible.
 15. Invite administrators and guests.
 16. Provide photos following the event so communicators can share about it in their own communities (DropBox works well for this).
 17. Request feedback from supporting personnel and communicators on the success of the day.

Don't:

1. Rush! Take time to let people get to know each other.
2. Try to do everything in one session.
3. Over-plan.
4. Censor.