Applying for the Toolkit

Getting started

Welcome to the application for the AAC Consideration Toolkit! The Toolkit can be a first step in considering augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems for a student you support. It is free to try with pre-K through transition age students in Minnesota.

The Toolkit includes a selection of AAC devices, which will be shipped to you for trial with the student, along with an 8 week step-by-step plan, suggestions for highly engaging activities and strategies, and forms for data and outcomes collection to help you determine if the student would benefit from AAC or if a formal evaluation for AAC is needed.

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Sections of the application

1 **Student Overview**

Page 2: Share student demographics and team members that will be involved in the AAC Consideration process

2 **SETT Framework**

Pages 3-10: Identify the student's strengths and needs, environments, tasks to be done, and the tools/tool features the student needs.

3 **AAC Feature Matching**

Page 11: Select devices the student will start with when you receive the AAC Consideration Toolkit.

Apply online

Once you've completed this application form, save it for your records and to refer to during the student's trial. Then go to the Minnesota STAR Program's Assistive Technology for All website (mn.AT4all.com) to request the Toolkit for the 8-week trial period. In the search bar, type "AAC Consideration Toolkit" and select a Toolkit that's located near you from the results. As a part of the request process, you will email this application form to an assistive technology specialist at the STAR Program or the host loan agency.

mn.AT4all.com

Questions? **Visit:** mn.gov/admin/star **Call:** 1-888-234-1267 or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY 7-1-1)

MINNESOTA

Student Overview

Any student whose natural speech does not meet their daily communication needs or has minimal or unintelligible speech could be considered to have possible AAC needs. In this section, share the student's demographic information and identify members of their support team.

STUDENT'S DEMOGRAPHICS

While no identifying information about the student will be collected during the application or trial, sharing basic demographic data about participating students will support a better understanding of statewide needs.

Student's age range

Pre-K (ages 3-5)

Elementary (grades K-5)

Middle school (grades 6-8)

High school (grades 9-12)

Transition age (after high school)

County/School district

_____

County

_____

School district

STUDENT'S SUPPORT TEAM

Indicate members of the team that will need to be involved in the AAC consideration process. If your student has significant needs, such as behavioral, physical access, positioning, sensory needs, visual or hearing challenges, these specialists will be integral to the team.

NOTE: The team should identify and utilize local and/or regional professional resources (such as speech-language pathologists, related services personnel, and special education professionals) as a first step. If additional support or resources are needed, teams may access the MN AAC Evaluation Providers list for further assistance.

_____
Team member name

_____
Role

_____
Team member name

_____
Role

_____
Team member name

_____
Role

_____
Team member name

_____
Role

SETT Framework

This SETT framework provides a systematic approach for collaborative teams to gather information about the student in typical environments and the communication tasks required in which to actively participate.

By focusing on the **Student**, their **Environments**, and the **Tasks** required, a better match can be made to identify the AAC **Tools** that will ultimately promote success. If you are unsure of the student's skill level or need, fill in answers to the best of your and your team's knowledge of the student.

S = Student
E = Environment
T = Tasks
T = Tools

S = STUDENT

1. What are the student's communication strengths? Check all that apply:

- Expressive language
- Receptive language
- Social skills
- Technology skills
- Physical skills
- Vision skills
- Hearing skills
- Work skills

Other strengths and interests:

2. What are the student's communication needs? Check all that apply:

- Unable to express wants and needs
- Low intelligibility
- Doesn't initiate
- Echolalic speech
- Only uses single-word sentences
- Can't talk about past or future
- Difficulty being understood by strangers
- Unable to use hands or fingers for selection
- Unable to see symbols and text

Other needs:

SETT Framework (continued)

E = ENVIRONMENTS

1. Where does the student spend time when they are at school? Check all that apply:

Cafeteria

Gym

Library

Bathroom

Bus

Playground

Classroom

Special education

Regular education

> With whom does the student spend time in these school environments? With whom should they communicate?

2. Where does the student spend time when they are at home? Check all that apply:

Kitchen

Living room

Bedroom

Bathroom

Outdoors

Other _____

Other _____

> With whom does the student spend time in these home environments? With whom should they communicate?

3. Where does the student spend time in their community? Check all that apply:

Stores

Restaurants

Public transit

Sports/recreation

Relative's home

Group home

Medical appointments

Worksite

> With whom does the student spend time in these community environments? With whom should they communicate?

SETT Framework (continued)

T = TASKS

1. What does the student need to communicate? Check all that apply:

Gain attention (hey, excuse me, name of person)	Initiate communication
Greet	Ask for help
Request (want, my turn)	Communicate in social interactions
Reject (no, stop, don't like)	Clarify speech
Comment (wow, cool, good,	Repair communication breakdowns
Answer questions	Participate in activities
Ask questions/request information	Advocate for self interest
Take turns	Other _____

2. What is most important for the student to learn to communicate about?

SETT Framework (continued)

T = TOOLS

1. Past tools tried with success: (e.g., Did the student have success with a single switch?)

2. Past tools tried without success:

3. Personal / family / school / group home / aide tool preferences: (e.g., Did the student have success with a smartphone?)

4. What non-electronic, light-tech and high-tech options should be considered for the student with these strengths and needs to communicate the things needed? Include multi-system needs such as a backup to high-tech devices, manual signs, visual supports, etc.

5. What strategies might be used to increase student success? (e.g., specific learning style, personal motivators and preferences)

SETT Framework (continued)

T = TOOLS (continued)

Use the following questions to gather and record more detailed information about the tool features the student may need in an AAC system. This information can help identify a starting point for consideration of AAC devices (see section 3). If you are unsure of the student's need, answer the question to the best of your knowledge or choose "Not known/need to identify".

Note: It's crucial not to limit vocabulary based on perceived ability, as this can impede language development and constrict the range of communication which can be expressed. Students need access to both core and fringe vocabulary.

6. What type of voice output do you anticipate the student will need? Check all that apply:

Not needed (will use non-electronic AAC)

Recorded speech (e.g., for language spoken at home)

Synthesized speech (computer speech)

Amplification (makes voice output louder)

Other _____

Not known/need to identify

7. What vocabulary symbol type do you anticipate will work well for the student? Check all that apply:

Real objects: See an example of real objects.

Photos (real photos that represent identified words, actions, or objects)

3D / Tangible symbols: Learn more about 3D symbols.

Tactile symbols: Learn more about tactile symbols.

Line drawings: Learn more about types and styles of line drawings available at these vendor links: PCS-Boardmaker, SymbolStix, MinSpeak, Lesson Pix, Spark Symbols, Sign language.

High contrast: See an example of high contrast symbols.

Text (alphabet, letters)

Other _____

Not known/need to identify

TIP: If you are unsure of the student's communication ability, including their ability to understand and use symbols to represent objects, actions, concepts and ideas, you can use tools like the ones listed below to assess their level of understanding.

- Dynamic AAC Goals Grid (DAGG-3)

- Continuum of Communication Independence

SETT Framework (continued)

T = TOOLS (continued)

8. What is the maximum number of vocabulary symbols per page that you anticipate the student will be able to physically interact with?

Write in a number, or range of numbers: _____

Not known/need to identify

Symbols can be displayed in groups ranging from 4 to 100 or more symbols.

Please note:

If you don't know the answer to question 8 and/or 9, but can evaluate with the student before submitting this application, use the AAC Genie App on an iPad, Tobii Dynavox's TASP: Test of Aided-Communication Symbol Performance or another tool to identify these answers.

If you don't know the answer to these questions and CANNOT evaluate with the student now, check 'Not known / need to identify' and evaluation during the 8-week trial period can help you identify the best symbol options for the student.

9. What is the smallest symbol size that you anticipate the student will be able to see?

Write in a size (in inches): _____

☐ Not known/need to identify

10. What vocabulary organization do you anticipate the student will need? Check all that apply:

☐ **Core Vocabulary:** Frequently used words: I, me, you, go, know, in, out.
See a visual example of core vocabulary.

☐ **Motor Planning:** Vocabulary always stays in a consistent location. Learn more about motor planning.

☐ **Activity-Based:** Vocabulary is grouped by activity (e.g., math vocabulary, food, greetings).

☐ **Visual Scene:** Vocabulary that is embedded in a scene or photo, rather than in a grid.
See an example of visual scene options.

☐ **PODD: Pragmatic Organized Dynamic Display:** Vocabulary is grouped for how it will be used in various real-life situations. Learn more about PODD.

☐ Other _____

☐ Not known/need to identify

SETT Framework (continued)

T = TOOLS (continued)

11. Select ways that may meet the needs of the student and their support team for storing and producing messages. Check all that apply:

☐ **Preprogrammed Phrases:** Learn about preprogrammed phrases which allow for quick production of frequently used phrases.

☐ **Generative Sentence Building:** Learn about generative sentence building: single words that can be used to make sentences).

☐ **Text to speech:** Learn about text to speech technology that speaks typed words aloud.

☐ **Word Prediction/Grammar Prediction:** See an example of predictive technology that suggests words and accurate grammar.

☐ **Picture Dictionary** to search by vocabulary categories.

☐ **Multi-lingual:** See a multi-lingual example. Note language(s) needed: _____

☐ **Other** _____

☐ **Not known/need to identify**

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12. Select the access methods the student will need. Check all that apply:

Direct selection options:

☐ Touch with finger or other body part

☐ **Keyguard:** Check out a keyguard example.

☐ Adapted iPad settings

☐ **Stylus:** Check out stylus examples.

☐ **Glove:** Check out glove examples.

☐ **Head tracking:** Check out a headtracking example.

☐ Eye gaze

☐ Other _____

Indirect selection/scanning options:

☐ **Partner assisted scanning:** See an example of partner assisted scanning.

☐ **One switch scanning:** See an example of one switch scanning, which can include visual feedback and auditory feedback.

☐ **Two switch scanning:** See an example of two switch scanning, which can include visual feedback and auditory feedback.

☐ Other _____

☐ **Not known/need to identify**

Options for accessing high-tech AAC devices

Students with fine and/or gross motor limitations may not be able to easily access a high-tech AAC device with their hands. There are many ways to assist an individual in accessing a device more effectively. This may be as simple as adjusting how long one presses a button before it is selected, or using a stylus instead of a finger. More complex access methods include scanning, where an individual presses a button with their head or hands to select a message on the device's screen. Individuals may also move their eyes to use an AAC device that reads eye movement.

Read "Addressing Challenges to AAC Consideration" on page 34 of the **AAC Consideration Toolkit Guidebook** to learn more about addressing the unique challenges of your student.

SETT Framework (continued)

T = TOOLS (continued)

13. What characteristics are preferred for the device(s)? Check all that apply:

- ☐ Size _____
- ☐ Weight _____
- ☐ Carrying case, carrying strap or built-in handle
- ☐ Screen cover
- ☐ Waterproof, shockproof
- ☐ Wheelchair mount: See a wheelchair mount example.
- ☐ Floor mount: See a floor mount example.
- ☐ Table mount: See a table mount example.
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Not known/need to identify

14. What additional features are preferred for the device(s)? Check all that apply:

- ☐ Static (does not advance across pages of vocabulary)
- ☐ Dynamic (advances across pages of vocabulary)
- ☐ High durability
- ☐ Long battery life
- ☐ Screen visibility settings
- ☐ Built-in stand
- ☐ Local or cloud back-up of device
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Not known/need to identify

15. What supports will be needed for the device(s) if any? Check all that apply:

- ☐ Training
- ☐ Warranty
- ☐ Insurance funding
- ☐ Phone support
- ☐ Local representative
- ☐ Editing/backing up software
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Not known/need to identify

AAC Feature Matching

Once your application is approved, we will send you the AAC Consideration Toolkit which contains the non-electronic and electronic systems listed below. Take a moment now to select up to three devices you believe will be a match with the student based on what you know today.

Note: The selections you make here are preliminary and are meant to help you prioritize the time during the 8-week trial period. If you determine during the trial that another device or app below may be a good fit, you can always shift and evaluate that device or app with the student.

PRELIMINARY AAC DEVICE SELECTION

Refer to the features you identifed in the SETT Framework (page 3–10) and choose three devices/apps from the list below that have features that match what the student needs.

If you are not familiar with the features of the devices/apps below, compare them with this AAC Consideration Toolkit Feature Matching Table. You can also learn more about each device in the AAC Consideration Toolkit Guidebook (PDF) (pages 9-13) where you'll find links to manufacturers' user guides and videos, and in this Welcome to the Toolkit video.

1. **Non-electronic AAC communication boards** are two-dimensional displays with symbols printed on flat paper surfaces.

   ☐ Communication Boards

2. **Light-tech electronic AAC devices** are battery-operated and have simple functions. Single button options like Talking Tiles or Step-by-Step can speak a single, pre-programmed message (e.g. "I want a drink"). Single overlay displays like the GoTalk can hold a limited number of pre-programmed messages.

   ☐ Talking Tiles
   ☐ Step-by-Step
   ☐ GoTalk 20+ Light Touch

3. **High-tech electronic AAC devices** include iPad with software programs (apps) for communication. Apps have multiple pages and folders (e.g. pressing "School" brings you to a page with school vocabulary, pressing "Food" brings you to a page with food options), and pressing two symbols in sequence can enable the generation of novel utterances.

   ☐ iPad, with:
      ☐ TouchChat HD with WordPower App
      ☐ TD Snap App
      ☐ Proloquo2Go App

Additional guidance

If you need additional guidance matching AAC devices/system features to your student's needs, contact the Minnesota STAR Program and we will connect you with an expert who can help: 1-888-234-1267 or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY 7-1-1)

References

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https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/pragmatics-profile-people-use-aac

Senner, J., & Baud, M. (2013-2023). Speech Generating Device (SGD) Features. TALC Technology and Language Center.
https://talcaac.com/freeresources/

Zabala, J.S. (2020). "The SETT Framework: A Model for Selection and Use of Assistive Technology Tools and More," in Chambers, D. (Ed.), Assistive Technology to Support Inclusive Education (International Perspectives on Inclusive Education, Vol. 14), Emerald Publishing Limited, Leeds, pp. 17-36.

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LEARN MORE: Visit mn.gov/admin/star/linkTBD to find more information about augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and links to the AAC Consideration Toolkit resources.

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