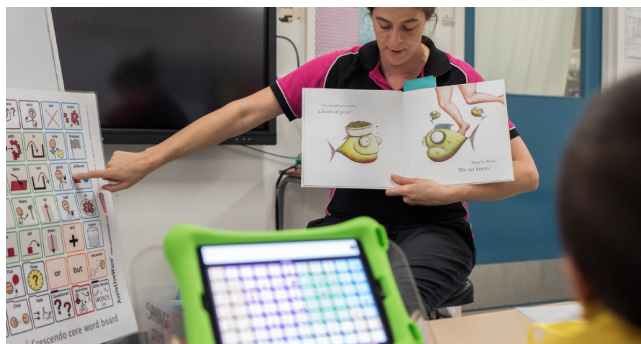## What is modelling?

Modeling means that we **use the AAC system to talk to the AAC user**. All AAC learners need to see what it looks like, to communicate using their AAC system in real conversations. We point to words or press words on the AAC system as we speak.

Modelling without expectation is about **using AAC to communicate with the user without needing or expecting them to respond**. The benefit of this is that you remove the pressure from the user. They can decide whether or not to reply, giving them an added layer of autonomy

Why is modelling AAC so important?

AAC users need to see what it looks like to communicate using their AAC system in order for them to learn how to use it themselves.

Modelling helps AAC users to learn what the words or symbols on their system mean.

In the same way that typically developing children require lots of exposure to spoken language before we expect them to talk, AAC users also need to see others using their AAC system before we can expect them to use it themselves.

How can you model AAC?

Point to the words/ symbols as you say the word at the same time.

Keep it natural and model words that you would use in your conversations including labels, actions, description and question words.

Don't worry about modelling every single word that you say, instead focus on the key words within your sentence.

Try to model 1 or 2 more words than the AAC user is currently using. For example, if your child is using single words, model two. If he/she is using 2-word combinations on their system, try modelling 3-4 word sentences.

If the AAC user is using incorrect grammar or word order, model the correct sentence order back to them, so that they learn how to structure their sentences.

When should you model AAC?

Try to model as often as you can and within your usual conversations and routines. Keep it with your child, so it's to hand when opportunities arise.

You can start by focussing on a few words to model within a favourite activity or game. You'll quickly feel comfortable to move on.

It's useful to model in range of situations and model in lots of different ways such as showing how to comment, ask questions or make choices.

Do not expect the AAC user to copy straight away, they may require lots of modelling in a range of situations before they are able to use it.

Makaton

Makaton is *a unique communication programme* that uses symbols (pictures), signs (gestures) and speech to enable people to communicate.

learn

If you are interested in learning Makaton please contact: makaton@wilsonstuart.co.uk

BY 18 MONTHS babies have heard 4,380 HOURS OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE and we don't expect them to be fluent speakers YET

If AAC learners only see symbols modeled for communication twice weekly for 20-30 minutes, it will take 84 YEARS for them to have the same exposure to aided language as an 18 month old has to spoken language.

statistic from Jane Korsten - QIAT Listserv 2011
photo by Rachael Langley - AAC Specialist

Useful websites

Access to Communication and Technology

https://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/act/

The Pace Centre

https://thepacecentre.org/advice-items/an-introduction-to-augmentative-and-alternative-communication/

PrAACtical AAC

https://praacticalaac.org/stepping-into-aac-home

https://praacticalaac.org/video/video-of-the-week-helping-parents-model-aac-at-home/
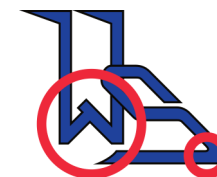
AAC Institute

aacinstitute.org

Scan for Live links and info

Makaton

https://makaton.org/

Singing Hands on YouTube

What is AAC and How I Can Support my Child

Augmentative and Alternative Communication covers a range of strategies and tools which help children communicate. These may be simple letter or picture boards, or very sophisticated computer-based systems