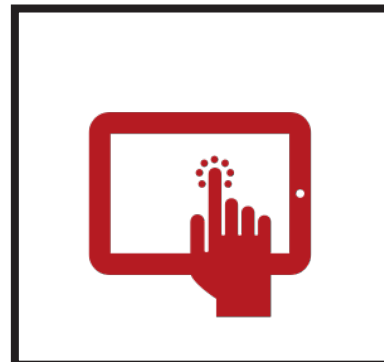




Aided Communication

When we use tools outside of our own bodies to send a message, this is known as aided communication. It takes time to learn to use these tools. Though different, they are just as valid as the spoken word.



Aided communication (aided comm) can be simple or complex— simple as writing with a pencil or complicated as an eye gaze activated computer. Both the “speaker” and the “listener” need to understand the communication aid. All partners need to understand the system used to communicate.

**Aided Comm has 4 integrated parts—
Symbols, Aids, Selection Methods, and Strategies**

1. Symbols are visual and/or graphics: pictures, icons, symbols, print words
2. Aids are (tools) are how the symbols are ‘delivered’: Comm boards, books, computers or devices that have speech output
3. Selection methods are the ways a user chooses the symbols. It can be direct or indirect. Pointing is direct. Scanning is indirect.

4. Strategies are the action plans in place to encourage success. It might only take a few seconds more to create a message on a speech generating device— but it may feel extremely slow to the listener. People used to natural communication expect speed. One of the things that aided communication can teach us is to go slower and relax.

Pros and Cons of Aided Communication

- Tools with pictures or icons are easy to understand but can get lost
- Speech generating devices are tools that provide voice that’s easy to understand but user needs to know how to activate the device
- Tools that use technology can break so it’s best to have a low-tech backup plan.