



## Related Skills

When looking at someone's communication, there are other basic skills to take into account.



### What skills play a role in helping us learn to communicate?

- **Attending is paying attention.** Communication depends upon each person noticing and focusing on each other—we have to focus on others before communication can happen. An example is: glancing or smiling at someone who says “Hi”.
- **Cause and Effect** refers to the idea that an action causes a reaction. It is a basic step in development. We know we can cause something to happen with our words or actions. It is important that we realize we can influence our environment. If not, it is hard to see the reason for talking. An example is: saying or signing “more” to get more chips.
- **Imitation** is being able to copy what someone does or says. This is an important skill in the development of communication. It is a form of early turn taking. If we can't imitate, we have a tough time learning facial expressions. It is hard to learn words. By imitating, we learn how language works. An example is: saying or signing a word that has just been said.

- **Joint Attention** means sharing attention with someone. This helps us learn to share a topic in conversation. It is important for social relationships. An example is: You look at the coffee mug and then look at me. I understand and give you the cup of coffee. We are both thinking about the coffee. We are sharing our attention to something in the environment.
- **Comprehension** means how much someone understands. If someone can't speak it does not mean that they can't understand. The person can show us what they understand by what they do. For example: if you talk about the snow, do they look out the window? Do they get excited when you mention their favorite restaurant? This a way to see if the person is understanding what we say.

### Are these skills prerequisites for AAC?

- No! If someone is breathing, we can work on communication
- But they may help us decide what strategies to use when teaching AAC