

Rett U Web Chat

What is a Communication Partner?

- What is a communication partner?
- Why are communication partners important?
- Ways to build Communication Partner skills
- Q & A

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What Is a Communication Partner?

- Anyone can be a communication partner.
- We can all have a role in supporting AAC.
- Important job. What we **do** counts; what we **think** is important; how we **respond** matters.
- Communication partners wait, listen and respond.
- Communication partners must use every interaction as an opportunity **to grow** language and communication.

(<https://www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/build-communication-partner-skills>)

What makes a good communication partner?

- **Presuming potential-**a good communication partner supports the AAC user in their learning and believes they have the potential to do so.
- **Flexibility-**Ready, willing and able to switch things up depending on the situation and what the AAC user needs.
- **Persistence-** on both sides. We don't give up on our AAC user and we assist them in persisting even when it is hard. (Important skill that our AAC users need.)
- **Consistency-** We use the AAC users' communication system faithfully and consistently
- **Engaging and interacting-** make it fun and engaging, converse, make it real.
- **Always available-** The AAC system that is but it is part of the communication partner's responsibility to make sure their AAC user has a way to communicate.
- **Understand all aspects of communication-**there may be times when soft-tech is better used, and a good communication partner recognizes this as well as their nonverbal language.
- **Respect**

Why are communication partners important?

AAC Modeling Intervention Research Review

Samuel C Sennott, Janice C Light, & David McNaughton

- Everyone should be modeling language but having one specific person trained on the AAC user's device is imperative.
- Strong positive correlation between number of words a child hears and the child's language development
 - Typically developing child hears approximately 26 million words between birth and age 4
 - Children with Complex Communication Needs (CCN) rarely observe adults modeling language using their AAC device.
 - Most language is spoken to CCN students which differs in modality to the AAC system they use
 - CCN students are less likely to participate in interactions where they have the opportunity to use their expressive communication system.
 - Less opportunity and sparseness have serious consequences on development of early language and communication skills.

Why are communication partners important?

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- Leads to meaningful linguistic gains across 4 domains
 - Pragmatics (conversational language)-increased communication turns
 - Semantics (the meaning of words)-increase in receptive and expressive language use
 - Syntax (arrangement of words)-multi symbol turn increases
 - morphology (study of forms of words) -increase in target morphology structures.
- CCN students need to be immersed in an environment “speaking AAC” just as people who are learning a foreign language are immersed in the language they are learning
- 10 studies including both single case design and one group design were reviewed and all showed positive results across a range of contexts and changes in communication performance from baseline.

Question and answers

- Rettuniversity.org
- Rett U book club
- Rett U course

- If you would like more information or to set up a consult
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