



# Week 18: AAC on the Go (continued)



## AAcTion Steps

[StepInAAC.org/A-Week18](https://StepInAAC.org/A-Week18) (Online / PDF)

Core words: where, do, over

Communication function: Social Exchanges & Exclamations



## Sign Posts (videos)

[StepInAAC.org/P-Week18](https://StepInAAC.org/P-Week18) (YouTube playlist)

18-1: Social Power with AAC: Slang & Age-Relevant Words

Video: [StepInAAC.org/V18-1-SocialPowerSlang](https://StepInAAC.org/V18-1-SocialPowerSlang)

Handout: [StepInAAC.org/H18-1-SocialPowerSlang](https://StepInAAC.org/H18-1-SocialPowerSlang)

18-2: Language Walk-Through: At an Appointment

Video: [StepInAAC.org/V18-2-LWT-Appointment](https://StepInAAC.org/V18-2-LWT-Appointment)



## Travelog (newsletter)

[StepInAAC.org/N-Week18](https://StepInAAC.org/N-Week18) (Online / PDF)

Topics:

- What does Successful AAC Look Like?
- Communication Bill of Rights: Wants & Needs
- More to Explore

**Question of the Week:** "We've been at this AAC thing for a while now. What should I look for to know if my child is doing it right?"



# AAction Steps Week 18

## AAC on the Go

Part of taking AAC on the go means using it with and around other people. This week, let's model ways to connect with other people using the words on our communication board while we are outside of the home. This might mean the grocery store, the park, or school drop off. Focus on modeling natural things to say and going with the flow. Remember, it's okay if you're not perfect. We are all learning together!

### Hands-on Activities

#### Day 1

**PRACTICE:** Be ready with some easy phrases that you can say anywhere. "WHERE did you get that?" "DO you like it?"

#### Day 3

**FIND:** Find times to use "WHERE" during self-talk today, instead of a direct question. "I wonder WHERE I put that?"

#### Day 2

**SAY:** Look for times to make a comment like, "You DO you!" or "Come on OVER!" or "Look at you!" AAC can be casual & informal.

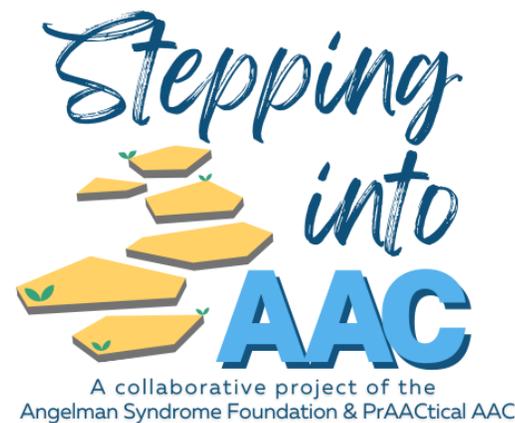
#### Day 4

**LOOK:** While you are out, point out things to your learner. "Look at that!" or "What's OVER there?" "DO you want to check it out?"

where

do

over



#### Day 5

**SHARE:** Think about how you might tell others about AAC. Practice with a family or friend. "A lot of people learn by doing. By showing how to use this board, I'm helping them learn."





# Social Power with AAC: Slang & Age-Relevant Words

A collaborative project of the Angelman Syndrome Foundation and PrAACtical AAC

**Age-relevant language is motivating language...  
motivating for your AAC learner, for their siblings, friends, classmates and  
others in the community with whom they interact!**

Fun words and casual phrases make it easy to connect with others in a comfortable way.

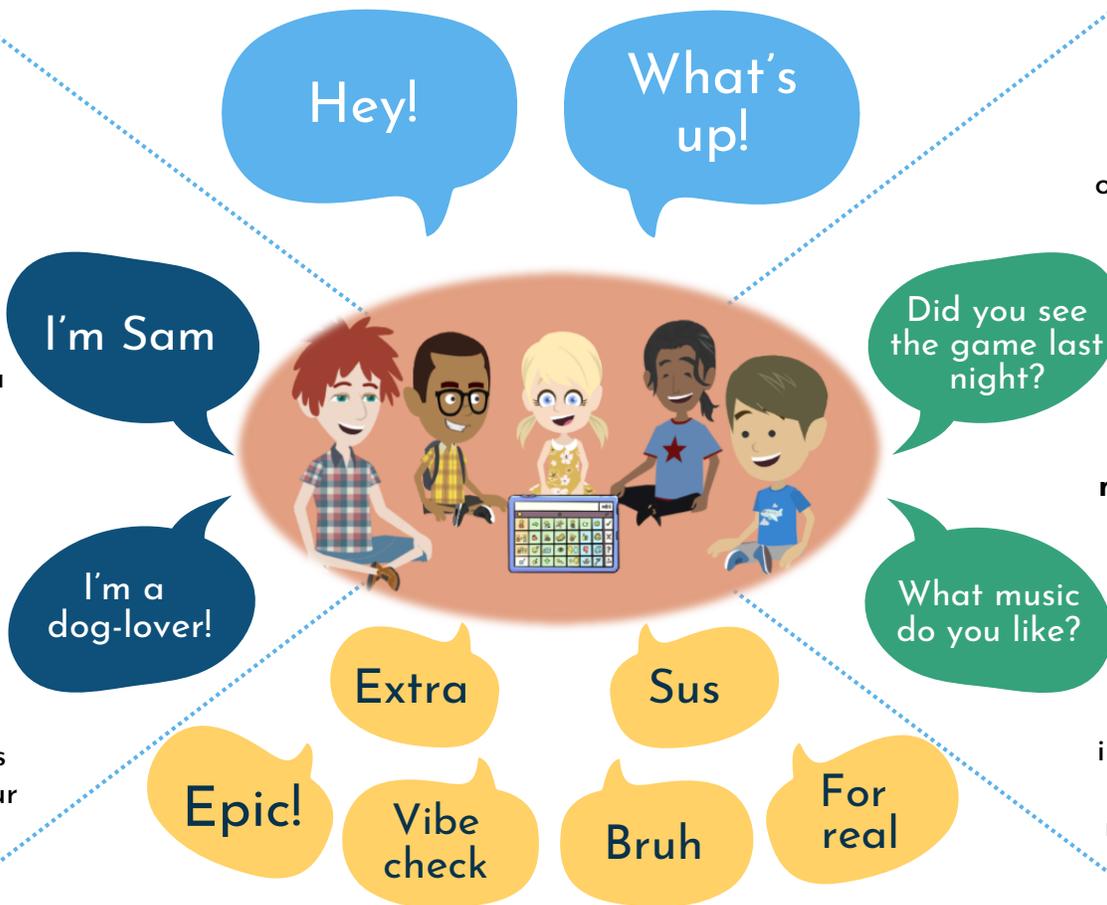
“Hello, Hi, or How are you?” may be pre-programmed in AAC.  
But, **NOTICE** how peers and friends greet one another.  
**Add phrases that will get your learner excited to initiate with others!**

Think about how your learner would want to introduce or share about themselves.

For example, a “My name is \_” button may be ready for customization.

But, “I’m\_” sounds more natural.

What messages are right for your learner?



Think beyond “How are you?” or “How was your weekend?”

Consider interesting chat phrases to keep the conversation moving forward

For example, add partner-focused questions related to their interests whether sports, animals, music, activities, etc

**Embrace the opportunity for siblings, peers & friends to lead the way offering suggestions for slang to add to your learners AAC!**  
Then let your learner choose. And know that it will change with the times.



# Links & Attributions

Social Power: Slang & Age-Relevant Words



**Stepping Into AAC homepage:**

[stepinaac.org/Welcome](http://stepinaac.org/Welcome)



**Video :**

[stepinaac.org/V18-1-SocialPowerSlang](http://stepinaac.org/V18-1-SocialPowerSlang)



**Handout:**

[stepinaac.org/H18-1-SocialPowerSlang](http://stepinaac.org/H18-1-SocialPowerSlang)



**Stepping Into AAC, Week 18 bundle:**

[stepinaac.org/WB18](http://stepinaac.org/WB18)



**Content for this Video & Handout informed and inspired by the work of :**  
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AAC Graphics created by:

**Drawn to AAC:** [www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Drawn-To-Aac](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Drawn-To-Aac)



## Inside this Issue

### COMMUNICATION BILL OF RIGHTS

Addressing wants & needs

### QUESTION OF THE WEEK

"We've been at this AAC thing for awhile now. What should I look for to know if we are doing it right?"

### MORE TO EXPLORE

References, links to videos, resources

## WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL AAC LOOK LIKE?

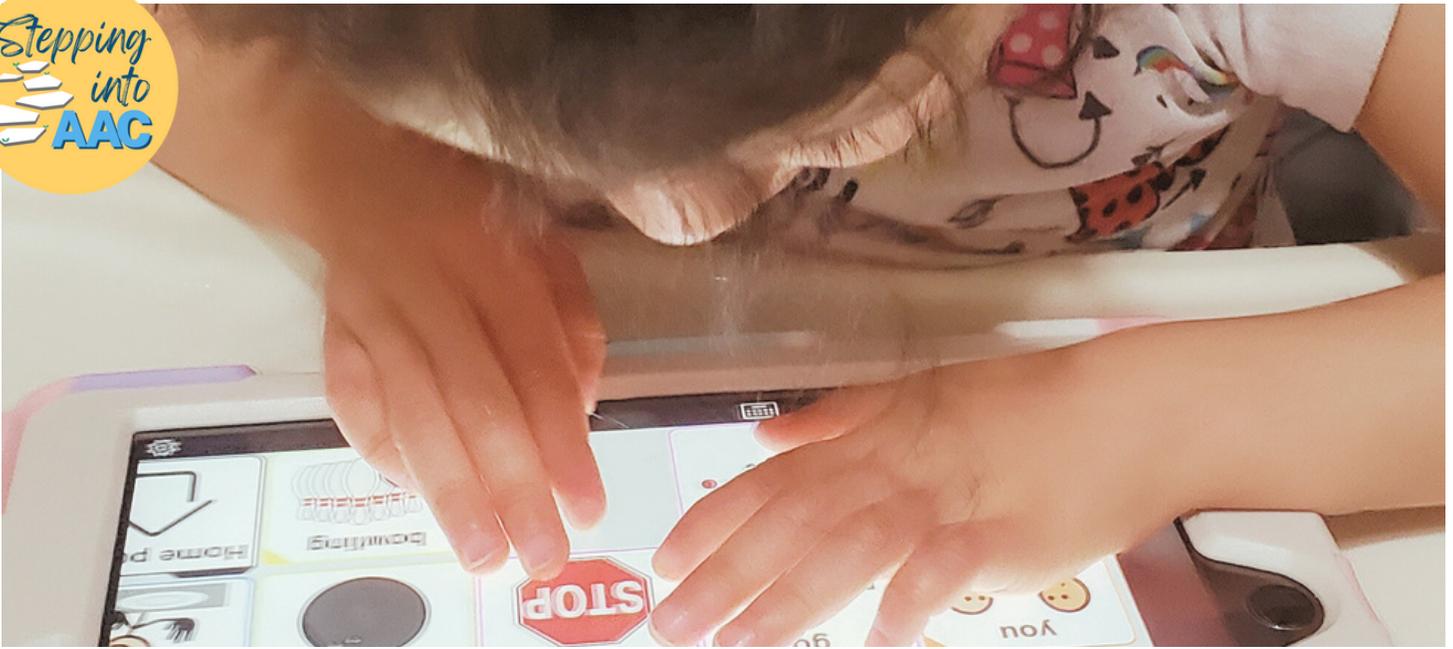
*Progress, Not Perfection*

suc·cess

/sək'ses/ noun: the accomplishment of an aim or purpose.

Ask a bunch of people what success means to them & you're likely to get a whole range of different answers. Like in the rest of life, successful AAC use is highly variable. It may be challenging to see the forest through the trees when it comes to gauging what successful AAC looks like. You may see your learner blossom in some areas, but they may be taking a little longer to show progress in other areas. Regardless of their array of skills, it may be helpful to look at the overall picture of your child's journey. Think back to where they started and see how far they've come.





# WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL AAC LOOK LIKE?

*continued*

For beginning communicators, successful AAC use includes skills and habits that put them on the road to saying whatever they want to say. Things like using some aspect of their AAC system to:

- Engage with familiar people to connect and get their needs met;
- Actively participate in things going on around them at home, in school, and other familiar places;
- Better understand the world around them;
- Express their opinions and preferences.

Each child's journey is different. Some signs of successful AAC may include an engaged and motivated AAC learner. Maybe they're showing signs of understanding the importance of communication as something meaningful in their day-to-day life. Are they showing progress in specific areas? Maybe your child's progress looks like a glance over at a communication board or device while someone else is modeling, while another child may show progress by consistently using a target word in appropriate context ("eat").

Successful AAC for beginning communicators also involves exploration and experimentation. Typically developing babies engage in vocal play and verbal imitation. By making funny sounds, blowing raspberries, and repeating what they hear, infants are learning how to use their vocal instrument for communication. AAC users often do that same kind of thing with their communication boards, AAC apps, and speech generating devices. For some individuals, the process of explorative AAC use may continue for several years, and that is perfectly fine.



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on Page 3*

# WHAT DOES SUCCESSFUL AAC LOOK LIKE?

*continued*

So how can we continue to keep AAC momentum going? Here are some things to consider.

## **Continue to ensure that your learner has access to AAC at all times.**

Beginning AAC users must have access to their communication board, book, or device at all times. Express the importance of this concept to those in your child's life, so that when you aren't in the same room as your child, someone else is ensuring that they have access to their voice.

## **Continue to validate all forms of communication.**

Independent AAC use takes a long time. Until they become more independent with their AAC use, continue to accept and validate other forms of communication when they arise.

## **Continue to provide engaging and motivating interactions.**

The more opportunities your child has for fun, engaging, and meaningful interactions will be the more opportunities they have for using AAC. It's this consistency over time that helps drive progress.

## **Continue to educate those in the learner's life.**

Identify those individuals that your child is with most often & continue to demonstrate AAC strategies that have been successful for your child. Consistency across communication partners & environments further ensures opportunities for AAC use & progress.

Provide explanations & simple demonstrations of implementation & response strategies. Do what you can to ensure that your AAC team is cohesive & invested in your child's success. Next week, we will get further into the discussion of AAC team involvement.

One last thing about momentum in supporting early AAC use: It waxes & wanes. When life gets hectic, sleep problems make things difficult, or illness disrupts the regular routine, it's not unusual to let the extra effort you've been putting into AAC fall away. This is something that happens to almost all families, so don't get overly concerned if you find yourself in that situation. When that happens, get through the rough patch & then re-engage with the AAC supports you've been providing.

Sometimes you can pick up where you left off, but it can also be helpful to backtrack & repeat a few of the previous weeks of your Stepping Into AAC journey. It's not how many times we fall down but the number of times we exercise our resilience muscles to get back up that matters the most.



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COMMUNICATION BILL OF RIGHTS

Another week means another highlight from the Communication Bill of Rights document from the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities!

## **The right to request desired objects, actions, events, and people**

We commonly find that learners pick up quickly on the language function of requesting, as it often comes with an immediate exchange of tangible objects. Having the right to request means that those requests are honored, when possible, and acknowledged when those requests are not possible.



## **The right to refuse or reject undesired objects, actions, events, or choices**

All too often, we have seen our learners communicate their rejection of an object or activity only to have their protest ignored. Will there be instances where removing a protested object or leaving a non-preferred activity won't be possible? Absolutely. However, acknowledging your child's refusal or rejection is what matters. Khalil constantly asks for his younger cousin, Kela, to leave the moment she comes over. While Khalil's mom can't just send Kela away, she acknowledges his communication by saying, "It looks like you're not up for company today. I understand that. If you need a break, you can hang out in the other room." Our learners need to know that they have the ability to advocate for themselves & it is their right to do so. Modeling the appropriate vocabulary for your learner to understand how to protest or reject when needed can help them develop self-advocacy skills.

This will be our last highlight of this important document. While we have covered most of the portions of the Communication Bill of Rights document, we have not explored the rights in their entirety. If you need to revisit the Communication Bill of Rights document in its entirety, check out the supplemental materials in Week 12.

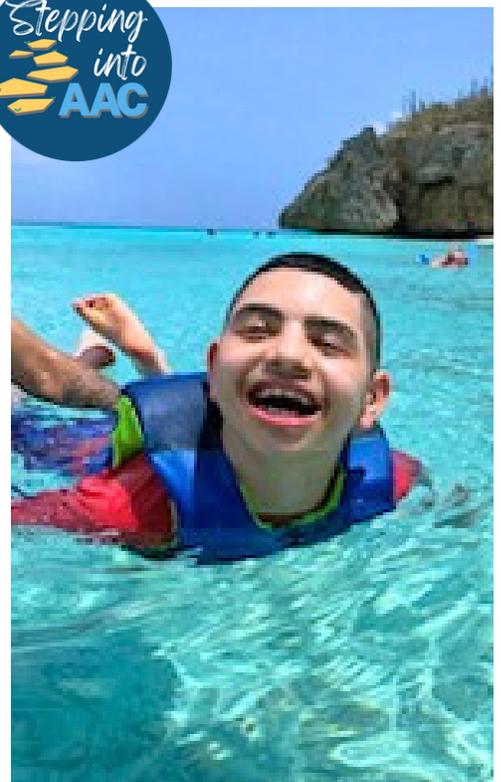
## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

*"We've been at this AAC thing for awhile now. What should I look for to know if my child is doing it right?"*

We're on week 18 of Stepping Into AAC & you're starting to wonder... "Are we doing this right?". Success may look different for each learner. For example, your child's AAC system implementation strategies are working if your child shows increased engagement with their AAC system & seeks out their system for use during interactions.

Perhaps success looks like your child consistently using target words & growing in their vocabulary. They may show progress by starting to use their AAC system with other communication partners. Maybe they're even using it with new communication partners who may not be part of the AAC team. Additionally, if your child starts using their AAC system in various communication environments, you can be reassured that progress is being made.

If you are consistent with providing AAC access to your child at all times, in addition to using AAC strategies in meaningful, low-pressure interactions, you should begin to see progress in different areas of their communication. You may see your child taking more communication risks, speaking to new communication partners, & increasing their use of language.





# MORE TO EXPLORE

[AAC Devices & Apps Without an Evaluation: A Few Questions to Ask](https://stepinaac.org/AAC_Apps_Devices): Sometimes children get AAC apps without having an evaluation. Here are some things to think about when that situation arises.

[https://stepinaac.org/AAC\\_Apps\\_Devices](https://stepinaac.org/AAC_Apps_Devices)

**ARTICLE**



## VIDEO



[Video of the Week: Important Considerations in the AAC Selection Process](https://stepinaac.org/Video_AAC_Selection):

SLP and AT Specialist Chris Bugaj reviews some ideas for AAC support selection in this week's More to Explore video: Necessary Components of Successful AAC.

[https://stepinaac.org/Video\\_AAC\\_Selection](https://stepinaac.org/Video_AAC_Selection)



Print all materials  
from week 18 here:

**STEPINAAC.ORG/WB18**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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