



The Whistle Stop



About Language Express

Language Express provides free speech and language assessment and therapy services for children from birth to school entry in Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville counties. If you have concerns about your child's speech and language, don't wait and see! We can help your child and provide useful ideas for you and your child's caregivers or teachers.

When To Get Help:

- If your child is not meeting all of the communication milestones for their age.
- If your child is stuttering.
- If your child's play or social interaction seems different from other children the same age.
- If your child's voice doesn't sound right.
- If your child has a diagnosis such as hearing loss, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or developmental delay.

Language Express accepts referrals for children from birth until Sept. 1 of the year they turn 4.

Visit our [milestones page](#) or complete the [Language Express Communication Checkup](#) to see if your child's development is on track and to make a referral. You can also call us for more information or to make a referral.

1-888-503-8885

What is AAC?

AAC stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. AAC "includes all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas." (American Speech and Hearing Association). There are many different forms of AAC:

Unaided AAC AAC that does not use tools/materials	Aided AAC AAC that uses tools/materials – can be high-tech or low-tech
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language • Gestures • Facial expressions • Body language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication devices and apps • Picture symbols • Choice boards • Eye gaze boards • Typing and texting • Pen and paper

Who is AAC for?

AAC is for everyone! We use gestures, texting, typing, facial expressions, writing, etc. every day.

AAC can be a powerful tool for people who:

- Are non-speaking
- Have limited or inconsistent access to speech
- Have difficulties with speech clarity
- Have difficulties with auditory processing or understanding language
- Can't meet all of their communication needs using speech

This includes children! Even very young children can benefit from AAC. Some people wonder if using AAC will discourage a child from learning to talk - research shows¹ that this is not the case! Having access to AAC can reduce frustration, allow for more successful communication, and support language and literacy development.

¹<https://www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/roadblock-aac-will-stop-a-person-from-learning-to-speak>



All methods of communication should be valued and respected.

Ways to Use AAC at Home, Childcare, and School:

- Use gestures and facial expressions while you are talking
- Respond to all ways that your child is sending messages (facial expressions, pointing, bringing you an object, pointing to pictures), without requiring them to use speech.
- Make your own communication board: you can use photos or pictures to represent words or thoughts your child might want to communicate.



» The Connectability Visuals Engine (<https://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/>) has great templates for this.



If your child has an aided AAC tool (e.g., communication binder or device):

- Always have it available: AAC users need access to their AAC all the time. This means within reach or always in the same place.
- Model, model, model: children learn how to use their AAC system from seeing their caregivers using it to communicate with others (just like how children learn to talk!). Point to words as you talk with your AAC user in your daily activities.
- If you think your child would benefit from more robust AAC options, you can self-refer to Language Express at www.language-express.ca or by calling 1-888-503-8885, or to your local Augmentative Communication Service:
- KidsInclusive Augmentative Communication Services: [How to Refer - KidsInclusive](#)
- CHEO Clinic for Augmentative Communication: [Clinic for Augmentative Communication - CHEO](#)

Let's Read About it!

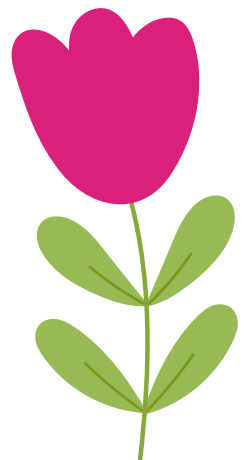
Here are some books you can read with your child about AAC:

A Day with No Words, by Tiffany Hammond

Artie is Awesome, by Deidra Darst

Eddie the Elephant has Something to Say, by Allison Johns

A Voice of Her Own, by Sarah Yong and Lois Yong



Resources:

The AAC Coach www.theaaccoach.com

AssistiveWare www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/what-is-aac