

Early Start ATC Referral and Assessment Request: Step-by-Step Guide



What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)?

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) means all of the ways that someone communicates besides talking.

People of all ages can use AAC if they have trouble with speech or language skills. Augmentative means to add to someone's speech. Alternative means to be used instead of speech. Some people use AAC throughout their life. Others may use AAC only for a short time, like when they have surgery and can't talk.

(American Speech Language and Hearing Association)

Why might a child need an Augmentative & Alternative (AAC) Communication Assessment?

A child with a concern in one of the following areas would benefit from a AAC Referral:

- Limited or no verbal speech,
- Lack of progress with communication goals,
- Unintelligible speech.

AAC helps children and adults of all ages, even very young children. As we know, intervention early means better long term outcomes so there is no age requirement to begin to assess a child. Even children with verbal speech can benefit from AAC strategies and supports.

Who is eligible for the AAC Services?

There are no prerequisites to utilize AAC supports. Our program services children from birth to age 22 years of age. Our agency is funded by Low Incidence funds. We will assess any child who meets the following criteria: Orthopedically Impaired, Visually Impaired, Deaf/Hard of Hearing or Severe Communication Impairment. Students with a primary or secondary diagnosis of OI, VI or DHH meet the definition of Low Incidence Disability and is eligible for long term loan of equipment funded through the Low Incidence funds.

Procedures for Requesting an Early Start AAC Referral

Step 1: Complete the referral forms:

Fill out the ATC referral form. Please include the names and contact information for the IFSP team members, and answer the questions as completely as possible. Please have parent sign and date the referral form.

Fill out a Consent to Exchange information form and attach a copy of the Early Start Signed Consent for Evaluation form.

In addition, we will need copies of all current assessments and progress reports as we complete an extensive file review as part of the assessment process.

Step 2: Submit the forms: Please send all signed and completed forms to atc@sonomaselpa.org.

Step 3: Get a response from the ATC: The ATC will respond to the service coordinator by email within 5 business days of receipt of the referral packet to determine the next steps.

Step 4: Assessment: 60 day timeline??

Step 5: NBRC Service Coordinator will schedule meeting to review results: The IFSP team (at a minimum, parent/caregiver & service coordinator) will need to meet with the AT/AAC specialist in order to review the report and recommendations.

Step 6: Ongoing support and trial of AT tools: The AT/AAC specialist will provide support and training around implementation of the equipment and strategies for the IFSP team.