

# Enabling Person-Directed Planning for **AAC Users**



An Initiative of the Ministry of Community and Social Services'  
Person-Directed Planning Fiscal Innovation Fund

# Table of Contents

■	What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)?	3
■	Using this Guidebook	4
■	Planning Facilitator Guidelines	5
■	Considerations for Planning Facilitators	6
■	Planning Facilitator Guidelines Pre-Phase 1	7
■	Planning Facilitator Guidelines Phase 1	10
■	Planning Facilitator Guidelines Phase 2	13
■	Planning Facilitator Guidelines Phase 3	15
■	Planning Facilitator Guidelines Phase 4	16
■	Planning Facilitator Guidelines Phase 5	18
■	Appendix A	19
■	Appendix B	20
■	Appendix C	23
■	Appendix D	24

# What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)?

## Online Workshop #1:

# Overview of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Facilitated by Karen MacKenzie-Stepner - Speech-Language Pathologist, REENA

Available at the following link:

[www.connectABILITY.ca](http://www.connectABILITY.ca)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Prior to using this Guidebook, planning facilitators who are unfamiliar with AAC should review the *Overview of AAC – Online Workshop 1*.

# Using this Guidebook

## Online Workshop #2:

# Developing Person-Directed Planning (PDP) Partner Communication Strategies with AAC Users

Facilitated by Aaron Spodek - Project Coordinator -  
Enabling Planning Through AAC Initiative, REENA  
Available at the following link:

[www.connectABILITY.ca](http://www.connectABILITY.ca)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Prior to using this Guidebook, planning facilitators should review the *Developing PDP Partner Communication Strategies with AAC Users – Online Workshop 2*.

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Developing partner communication strategies with PDP recipients who use AAC

### Pre-Phase 1

- Set up initial meeting with planning recipient (1 – 2 hrs.)

### Phase 1

- Conduct initial meeting(s) (2 – 4 hrs.)

### Phase 2

- Gather information on planning recipient's use of AAC (8 – 10 hrs.)

### Phase 3

- Develop preliminary partner communication strategies (5 – 8 hrs.)

### Phase 4

- Obtain feedback on preliminary strategies (1 – 2 hrs.)

### Phase 5

- Get approval on final *PDP Partner Communication Strategies* (3 – 4 hrs.)

**TOTAL = 20 – 30 hrs.**

# Considerations for Planning Facilitators

## Considerations for using this Guidebook:

- For implementation in the **PRE-PLANNING STAGE** of the PDP process
- Designed for planning recipients **“CURRENTLY USING” AAC** (i.e. within the past 6 months)
- If the planning recipient would benefit from using an AAC system/method that has not been used in the past 6 months, the planning facilitator should **CONSIDER A RE-REFERRAL TO THE INITIAL AAC PRESCRIBER.**

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Pre-Phase 1

### Objective:

**SET UP THE INITIAL MEETING WITH THE PLANNING RECIPIENT  
AND THEIR KEY COMMUNICATION PARTNERS (1 – 2 hours)**

### Tasks:

- ① **Review all information received in the referral or indicated in the initial contact to determine:**
  - If the planning recipient uses AAC
  - The type(s) of AAC used by the planning recipient
    - Use the *Types of AAC Checklist* included in **APPENDIX A**
  - If there are any relevant assessments or reports
    - Use the *AAC Assessments/Reports Checklist* included in **APPENDIX A**

For detailed instructions and examples of completed **APPENDIX A** checklists, download the *Screening Tools for Information on AAC Usage Kit* available at [www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca)

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Pre-Phase 1

### Tasks:

- ② **Make contact with the planning recipient to set up the initial meeting**
  - Explain the purpose of the initial meeting:
    - To gather preliminary information on the planning recipient's use of AAC
    - To provide an overview of the 5-phase process for developing ***PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES***
    - To initiate the 5-phase process
  - Set the meeting at a location or venue of the planning recipient's choice
  - Encourage the planning recipient to invite key communication partners (and facilitators)



# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Pre-Phase 1

### Tasks:

#### ③ Ensure that the planning recipient consents to attend the initial meeting

- If the planning recipient does not communicate via telephone, TTY, videophone, e-mail, etc..., consent should be sought via an in-person meeting.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is held prior to the initial meeting, and is meant solely to obtain consent from the planning recipient to participate in the initial meeting.

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 1

### Objective:

**CONDUCT THE INITIAL MEETING(S) WITH THE PLANNING RECIPIENT AND THEIR KEY COMMUNICATION PARTNERS** (2 – 4 hours)

### Tasks:

① **Provide an overview of the principles of PDP and the various topics included in a person-directed plan**

- **PRINCIPLES** - pg. 5 - *Creating a Good Life in Community*
- **TOPICS** - pgs. 13 – 20 - *Creating a Good Life in Community*

② **Explain the 5-phase process for developing *PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES***

- Contextualize the process within the **PRE-PLANNING STAGE** of PDP
- Describe the benefits of having partner communication strategies in-place for the **PLANNING STAGE**

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 1

### Tasks:

- ③ **Gather general information on the planning recipient's current use of AAC**
  - Use the *Current AAC Usage Checklist* included in **APPENDIX B**
  
- ④ **Obtain preliminary context-specific information on the planning recipient's use of AAC**
  - Use the *Preliminary AAC Information Checklist* included in **APPENDIX B**
  
- ⑤ **If unable to complete APPENDIX A checklists in PRE-PHASE 1, complete them at this point**

For detailed instructions and examples of completed **APPENDIX B** checklists, download the *Gathering Preliminary AAC Information Toolkit* available at [www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca)

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 1

### Tasks:

**⑥ Identify 3 – 4 communication contexts in which the planning recipient uses AAC most frequently**

- Request permission to interview key communication partners / facilitators in each context
- Request permission to observe the planning recipient communicating in each context

**⑦ Obtain written consent from the planning recipient (or designate):**

- For release of additional assessments and relevant documents
- To interview key communication partners / facilitators
- To observe the planning recipient in the 3 – 4 communication contexts identified above

**⑧ If the planning recipient (or designate) refuses consent, propose alternative options for gathering context-specific information on their use of AAC.**

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 2

### Objective:

**GATHER CONTEXT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON THE PLANNING RECIPIENT'S USE OF AAC (8 – 10 hours)**

### Tasks:

**① Obtain all additional assessments and relevant documents**

- Review all collected documents
- If clarification is needed, contact the person who originally completed the documentation
- Review notes from the initial meeting(s) with the planning recipient

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 2

### Tasks:

#### ② Contact key communication partners for each of the communication contexts identified in **PHASE 1**

- Interview communication partners using the *Communication-Context Interview/Observation Checklist* included in **APPENDIX C**
- Set appointments for direct observation of the planning recipient
- Where applicable, contact and interview primary communication facilitators for each identified communication-context

#### ③ Observe the planning recipient in each of the 3 –4 communication contexts identified in **PHASE 1**

- Use the *Communication-Context Interview/Observation Checklist* included in **APPENDIX C**

For detailed instructions and examples of completed **APPENDIX C** checklists, download the *Gathering Context-Specific AAC Information Toolkit* available at [www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca)

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 3

### Objective:

**DEVELOP THE PRELIMINARY PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES** (5- 8 hours)

### Tasks:

- ① **Analyse information gathered in Phase 2 in relation to suggestions listed in the *CONSIDERATIONS MATRIX***
  - *Considerations Matrix* included in **APPENDIX D**
- ② **Develop preliminary partner communication strategies for each of the topics listed in the *PDP Partner Communication Strategies Template*.**
  - Template included in **APPENDIX D**

For detailed instructions and examples of completed **APPENDIX D** templates, download the *AAC Considerations Matrix for Person-Directed Planning Toolkit* available at [www.connectability.ca](http://www.connectability.ca)

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 4

### Objective:

**OBTAIN FEEDBACK ON THE PRELIMINARY PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FROM THE PLANNING RECIPIENT AND THEIR CIRCLE OF SUPPORT (1 – 2 hours)**

### Tasks:

① **Set up the meeting**

- Explain the purpose of the meeting
- Send the preliminary strategies to the planning recipient and members of their *circle of support* for review prior to meeting
- Encourage the planning recipient to include all persons interviewed in **PHASE 2**



# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 4

### Tasks:

- ② **Conduct the meeting**
  - Present the preliminary **PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES** to the planning recipient and members of their *circle of support*
  - Document all feedback and suggestions
  
- ③ **Set a follow-up meeting for review of the revised PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

# Planning Facilitator Guidelines

## Phase 5

### Objective:

**GET APPROVAL ON THE FINAL *PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES*** (3 – 4 hours)

### Tasks:

- ① **Revise the preliminary *PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES* based on feedback from **PHASE 4****
- ② **Present the final draft to the planning recipient and members of their *circle of support***
- ③ **Gather consensus around the final draft**
- ④ **Establish the final draft of the *PDP PARTNER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES* as the ground-rules for communication throughout the *Planning Stage***

## Appendix A

# Types of AAC Used Checklist

**Does the Planning Recipient use any type(s) of AAC listed here?** (Checkmark all answers which best describe the planning recipient)

Unaided AAC	Y / N	Examples
Facial Expressions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Body Movements	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Vocalizations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Gestures	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Manual Signs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Sign Language (ASL)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Aided AAC	Y / N	Name of System
Picture Communication Board / Book	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Alphabet Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Speech Generating Device (SGD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Text Generating Device	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

## Appendix A

# AAC Assessments / Reports Checklist

**Does the planning recipient have any of the following assessments / documents?**

Assessments / Documents	Y / N	Who completed it? (Obtain contact information)
Ministry of Education Speech and Language Pathologist's (SLP) Assessment Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Ministry of Education Psychology Assessment Reports	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Most recent Individualized Education Plan (IEP) / Transitional Plans from Ministry of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
3rd Party Assessments / Treatment Reports (E.g. Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, etc...)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Reports from AAC Prescriber / Clinic	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Informal family documentation on communication skills and challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Informal individual / family documentation on current life activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other (Specify)		

## Appendix B

# Current AAC Usage Checklist

### Information regarding the planning recipient's current use of AAC

AAC	Recipient Specifications	Comments
Frequency of usage	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Never	
Method of use	<input type="checkbox"/> Independently (in response) <input type="checkbox"/> Independently (spontaneous) <input type="checkbox"/> With assistance (facilitator)	
Consistency of use	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses consistently throughout the entire day (no fatigue noted) <input type="checkbox"/> Use of AAC is limited to very brief periods, followed by rest (fatigue noted)	
Optimal AAC use	<b>Uses AAC better:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> In the morning <input type="checkbox"/> In the afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> In the evening	
Size of vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 10 items <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 100 <input type="checkbox"/> 100 - 500 <input type="checkbox"/> 500+	
Concept of time (present / future)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

# Preliminary AAC Information Checklist

## Context-specific information regarding the planning recipient's current use of AAC

Communication Context	Frequency of AAC Communication Attempts	Key Communication Partner (Obtain contact info)	Use of Communication Facilitator?	Key Communication Facilitator (Obtain contact info)
Home	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Never		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
School / Day Program	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Never		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Vocational Training Program / Job	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Never		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
After-School Program / Evening Recreation Program	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Never		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Social Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Never		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Never		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

## Appendix C

# Communication Context Interview / Observation Checklist

**Communication Context:** .....

**Name of Primary Communication Partner / Facilitator:** .....

**Date:** .....

AAC	Recipient Specifications	Comments
Frequency of Use	<input type="checkbox"/> All of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Very seldom <input type="checkbox"/> Not in use	
Receptive Use	<input type="checkbox"/> To focus attention <input type="checkbox"/> To assist comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> To verify message	
Expressive Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Answers yes / no questions <input type="checkbox"/> Requests objects (e.g. food, toy) <input type="checkbox"/> Requests needs (bathroom, help) <input type="checkbox"/> Responds to others <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Requests information <input type="checkbox"/> Expresses feelings <input type="checkbox"/> Makes social statements	
Method of Use	<input type="checkbox"/> Independently (in response) <input type="checkbox"/> Independently (spontaneous) <input type="checkbox"/> With assistance (facilitator)	
Size of AAC Vocabulary	<p><b>RECEPTIVELY</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 10 items <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 100 <input type="checkbox"/> 100 - 500 <input type="checkbox"/> 500+ <p><b>EXPRESSIVELY</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 10 items <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 100 <input type="checkbox"/> 100 - 500 <input type="checkbox"/> 500+	<b>EXAMPLES OF ITEMS:</b>
Relevance of Vocabulary to Context	<input type="checkbox"/> Very relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely relevant <input type="checkbox"/> Not relevant	

## Appendix D

# Considerations Matrix

Does the planning recipient use AAC to...?	Communication Factors to Consider	Strategies for facilitating communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Answer yes / no questions only	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The consistency of the yes/no response (i.e. does yes always mean yes?)</li> <li>2. How complex can the questions to the planning recipient be (i.e. receptive language ability)?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the yes/no response is not totally accurate, observe to see if it is supported by a body movement or facial expression, which increases its accuracy.</li> <li>2. If the yes/no response is 100% accurate for a certain type of question, try to phrase all questions in that format (i.e. if the individual does better with “do you” questions, try to use those).</li> <li>3. When asking yes/no questions, begin with the more general and then narrow it down to the specifics (helps to avoid “leading” the recipient in a specific direction)</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/> Answer yes / no questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The consistency of the yes/no response (i.e. does yes always mean yes?)</li> <li>2. How complex can the questions to the planning recipient be (i.e. receptive language ability)?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When asking yes/no questions, begin with the more general and then narrow it down to the specifics</li> <li>2. Structure the questions so that you are not leading the planning recipient.</li> <li>3. Ask opposite forms of the same question to verify that the response given is valid (i.e. Do you want to live at home? Do you want to move?)</li> <li>4. Phrase the questions in the “positive” (i.e. avoid the word not)</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/> Request objects (e.g. asks for objects, food, toy)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Need to determine if the current vocabulary is diverse enough for the planning recipient to communicate about different topics covered in the planning process.</li> <li>2. Need to determine the planning recipient’s ability to interpret more abstract representations of an object (i.e. line drawing vs. digital photo)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider vocabulary when phrasing questions.</li> <li>2. Phrase questions as concretely as possible.</li> <li>3. Try to phrase questions in a “what” question form at</li> <li>4. Use a slow rate of speech and short phrases.</li> <li>5. If the planning recipient uses AAC as a choice making system, show two objects/ symbols and ask, “Which one do you want? Look for an indicator (i.e. eye gaze, reaching) that the selected one is preferred over the other and comply.</li> <li>6. Discuss with planning recipient’s communication facilitator whether or not specific vocabulary words/concepts can be added to the AAC vocabulary.</li> <li>7. If the AAC vocabulary is limited, try phrasing the question in a yes/no format first – then try to use the current vocabulary for further clarification.</li> </ol>



# Considerations Matrix

Does the planning recipient use AAC to...?	Communication Factors to Consider	Strategies for facilitating communication
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Request needs (e.g., asks for bathroom, help, etc; indicates wanting more; indicates desire to end activity)</p>	<p>1. Need to determine if the current vocabulary is diverse enough for the planning recipient to communicate about different topics covered in the planning process.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider vocabulary when phrasing questions.</li> <li>2. Phrase questions as concretely as possible.</li> <li>3. Try to phrase questions in a “what” question format.</li> <li>4. Use a slow rate of speech and short phrases.</li> <li>5. Give planning recipient time to respond to questions and comments.</li> <li>6. Use natural consequences to planning recipient’s responses (i.e., act on his/her response even though you are aware it is really not the preferred choice).</li> <li>7. Use verification strategies to check accuracy of responses.</li> </ol>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Respond to others (e.g. responds to greetings, responds to personal questions, responds to other’s comments)</p>	<p>1. Be mindful of your facial expressions and body language so as not to influence the response in a specific direction.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider vocabulary when phrasing questions or comments</li> <li>2. Phrase questions and comments as concretely as possible.</li> <li>3. Try to phrase questions in a “what” question format.</li> <li>4. Use a slow rate of speech and short phrases.</li> <li>5. Give planning recipient time to respond to questions and comments.</li> <li>6. When asking questions, begin with questions about immediate environment (here and now questions- activities that the planning recipient is currently involved in)</li> <li>7. Limit verbal prompting to elicit the planning recipient’s communication</li> <li>8. Acknowledge the planning recipient’s communication attempts by imitating and expanding on their message.</li> </ol>

# Considerations Matrix

Does the planning recipient use AAC to...?	Communication Factors to Consider	Strategies for facilitating communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Comment (e.g. describes action, location, attributes, past events, future events)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide the planning recipient with ample time to make comments.</li> <li>2. Be mindful that some planning recipients may have a consistent repertoire of comments they need to communicate before proceeding with planning.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limit the use of verbal prompting in the form of questions.</li> <li>2. Make nonverbal cues (i.e. facial expressions) more explicit</li> <li>3. Encourage the planning recipient to make comments related to the discussion at hand.</li> <li>4. Use direct verbal and indirect verbal prompts (i.e. Point to the picture / what can you say about that?)</li> <li>5. Facilitate conversations that are as normal as possible. Don't be rigid.</li> <li>6. Build on what the planning recipient gives you on their side of the conversation.</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/> Request information (e.g. Asks for information about objects (What?), people (Who?) , actions (What's ___ doing?), location (Where?), time (When?) and cause (Why?))	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage planning recipient to ask as many questions as they would like.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give planning recipient time to formulate their questions</li> <li>2. Provide an initial response that directly answers the question, then expand on topic</li> <li>3. Acknowledge when you do not have a direct response for the planning recipient's question. Do not "beat around the bush".</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/> Express feelings (e.g. indicates likes/dislikes, emotion, confusion)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Need to determine if planning recipient is able to distinguish emotions of others or only their own.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide the planning recipient with verbal acknowledgement of their emotion</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/> Make social statements (e.g. demonstrates politeness, shows assertiveness)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be mindful that many of your planning recipients will have difficulty making these statements.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge each social communication attempt that the planning recipient makes</li> <li>2. Make conversations as natural as possible</li> <li>3. Do not switch topics of conversation quickly. Always provide a verbal or visual cue that the topic of conversation is changing.</li> </ol>

# PDP Partner Communication Strategies Template

Planning Category	Communication Strategy
1. Getting to Know You	
2. About Your Relationships	
3. Your Gifts Talents and Abilities	
4. How You Communicate	
5. Your Participation and Contribution	
6. Your Needs	
7. Goals	
8. Setting Your Goals	
9. Vision	