AAC Glossary of Terms – What Does it All Mean?

AAC or Augmentative & Alternative Communication = any tool or system that is used to improve someone's ability to communicate. This can include using a voice output communication aid, pointing to pictures in a communication system, using eye gaze to look at a preferred item or picture, using facial expressions and vocalizations, or using natural gestures &/or sign language.

- **A**ugment - to enhance or improve
- **A**lternative - another way or means
- **C**ommunication...the sending and receiving of messages

No Tech or Unaided Communication = Use only a child's body, therefore includes voice, facial expressions, gestures, eye gaze, and body language to communicate.

Low Tech Aided Communication = Use some kind of picture board, typically made of paper and laminated for durability, or an early speech generating device, typically using a battery for power.

High Tech or Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA) = Use some kind of computer or machine with words or symbols on it to communicate

PCS or Picture Communication Symbols = a set of pictures symbols your child is pointing to, reaching for or using eye gaze to select. People commonly refer to these symbols as pics.

PECS or Picture Exchange Communication System = a very structured program that teaches children to discriminate and physically exchange symbols for items/actions. This system is typically introduced to children who are demonstrating difficulties with social communication.

Visuals for Organization and Behaviour Management = Used to help a child organize themselves in regards to better understanding expectations and routines. They can also be used to help a child to anticipate what will happen next. These can include picture/object schedules, first/then boards, social stories, and token reinforcement boards.

Aided Language Stimulation = Refers to a teaching strategy where communication partners 'show as they go'. It involves pointing to pictures on a child's communication system while talking, in order to model use of the communication system. This is sometimes also referred to as Aided Language Input