

Take CHARGE With Total Communication!

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A little bit about us!



- We specialize in addressing the **complex communication needs** of students with CHARGE Syndrome and those with significant global challenges due to complex diagnoses.
- We are passionate about facilitating the development of **functional communication**.
- We value an **interdisciplinary approach** to encourage generalization of skills across the school day, at home, and in the community.

Agenda

- **Overall goals of communication**
- **How does CHARGE impact communication development?**
 - Behavior
 - Sensory processing
- **Finding the right communication system**
 - Feature matching
 - Who's on the team?
 - Benefits and drawbacks of different systems
- **Progression of symbols and systems**
- **Strategies to support communication development across settings**
 - Environmental
 - Communication partner
 - Individual/student

Goals of Communication



**To be a motivated
and effective
communicator**

**To self-advocate and
be independent**

**To be a socially
engaged member of
the community**

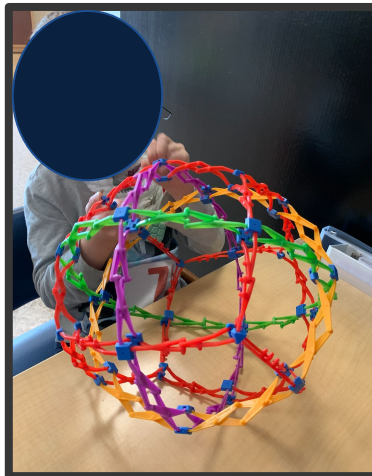
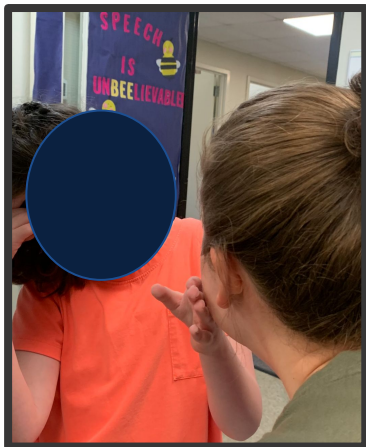
**To build language
and literacy skills**

Communication and CHARGE

Factors to consider when helping individuals reach their communication goals.

Where to Start?

Build a trusting
relationship and
positive rapport



Learn what the
individual is
motivated by

Meet the individual
where they are and
follow their lead



A Few Factors to Consider

Behavior

- **Behavior is communication!**
- When things don't go the way individuals expect
 - Change in routines, predictability, expectations, etc.
- When individuals can't express themselves
 - Wants/needs, preferences, feelings, etc.

Sensory Processing

- Individuals with CHARGE experience sensations differently
 - Five senses
 - Proprioception
 - Vestibular Sensation
 - Interoception
- Impacts how individuals interact with the world around them
- Energy levels may fluctuate

Finding The Right Communication System

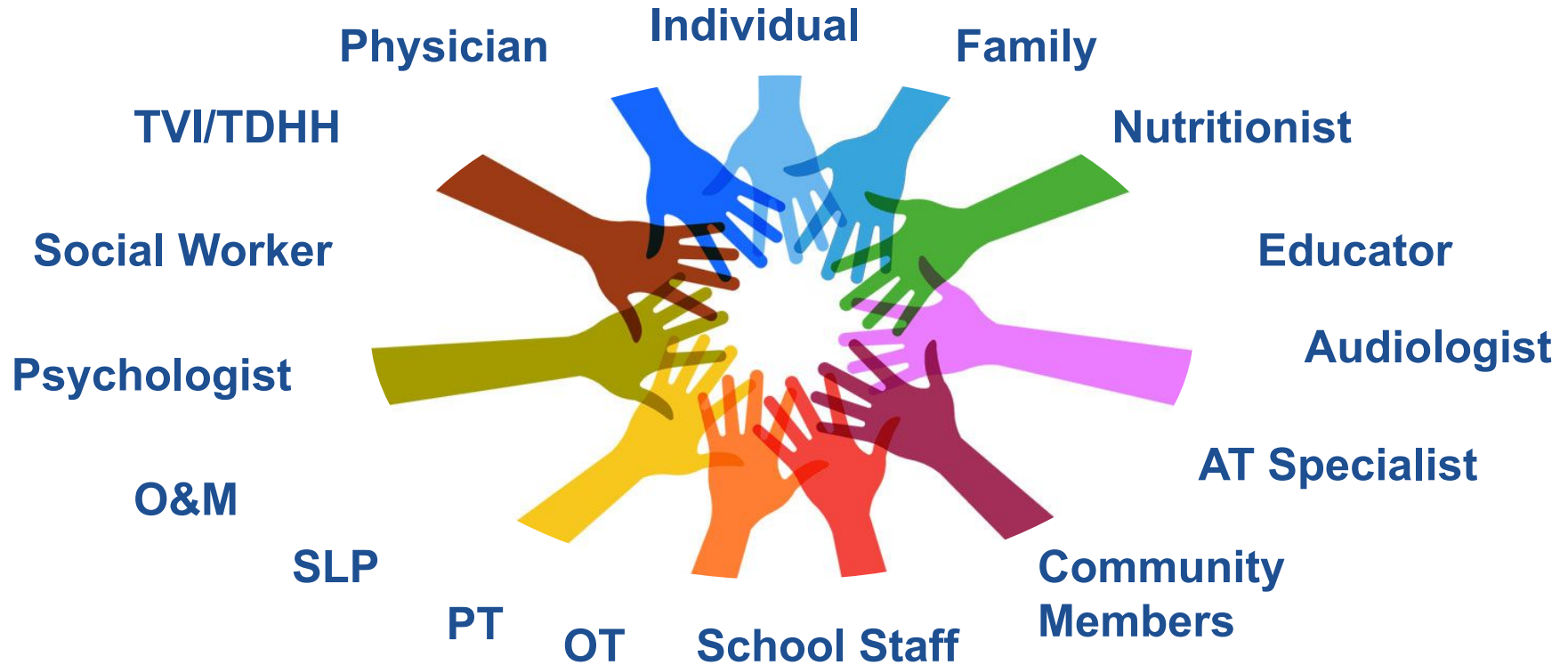
Augmentative & Alternative
Communication (AAC)



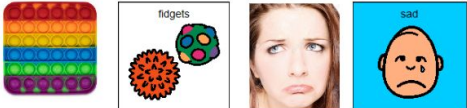


AAC

- Find a system with features that will suit an individual best, based on their unique skill set
- Consider their current and future needs
 - How can the system change with the individual?
- Use multiple modalities (**Total Communication** approach)
- Be a detective!
 - It takes time!
 - What is the individual motivated by?
 - What is the individual trying to communicate?
 - AAC is a learned skill - exploration is okay!
- How can the individual be a part of the process?



Collaboration is Key!



Communication System	Benefits	Drawbacks
Objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible • Concrete (can be directly related to the activity) • Less chance of technical difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not portable • Not robust • Difficult to manage • Difficult to represent abstract concepts
Partial Object Symbols/Tactile Symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible • Can be concrete (part of the object) or abstract (material representing a core word) • Can build sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less portable • Meaning of symbol may be different for different people
Photos/Pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More portable • More robust • Can be embedded in high tech or low tech • Can be used in different environments • Can use a combination of photos and picture symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tactile component (relying on vision) • Can be complex visually
Mid-Tech (switches, GoTalk9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible • Voice output 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be hard to manage (multiple pages of symbols) • Not robust/limiting vocabulary
High-Tech (speech generating device, iPad) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice output • Most robust linguistically • Often portable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May rely on visual and auditory skills • Leisure vs dedicated • Requires frequent charging

Progression of AAC

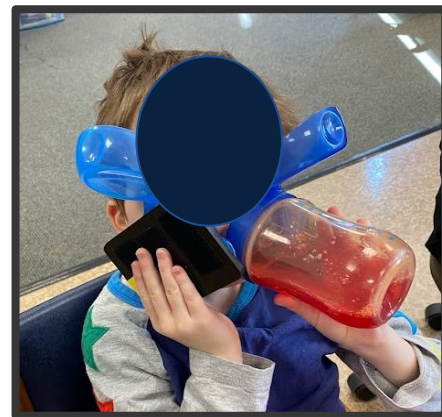
The individual mastered whole objects...

Now what?!

When to Transition?

An individual shows understanding of symbolic representation when they:

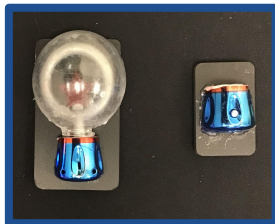
- Explore symbols visually vs. tactilely
- Match photos to objects
- Demonstrate knowledge of symbol/object representation (i.e., abstract thinking)
 - Put bottle symbol in mouth
 - Initiate pulling up shirt for g-tube
- Use whole objects accurately and consistently
 - Try to pair object with partial object or picture of object
 - Can they make an accurate choice?
 - Do they make the connection?



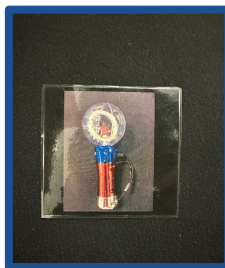
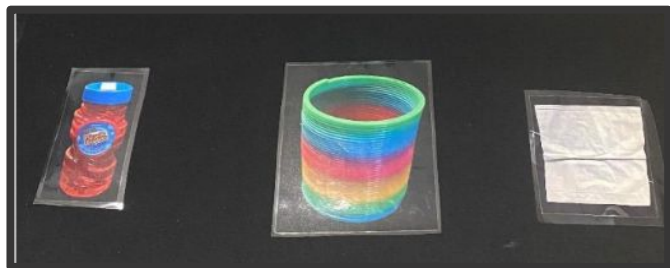
Progression of Whole Objects to Photos



→ Whole object symbols



→ Partial object symbols

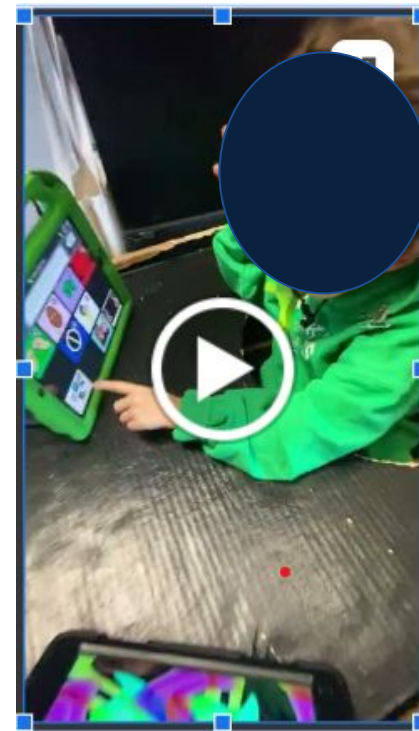


→ Photographs

Whole Objects to High-tech AAC



Whole objects



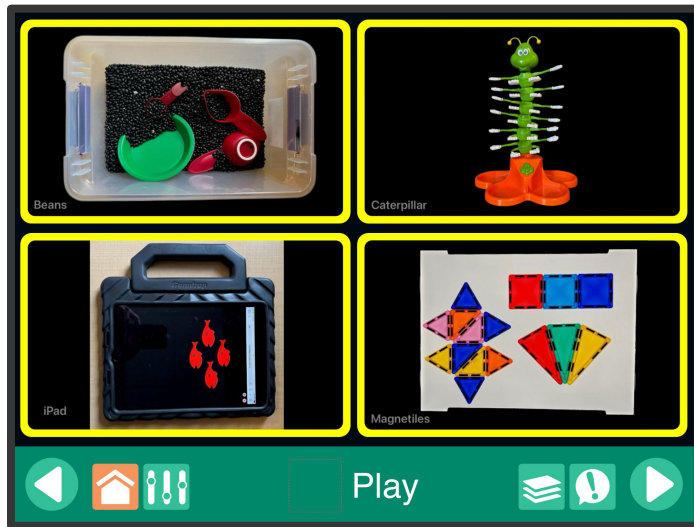
TD Snap



Symbols to High-Tech Device



Tangible symbols



GoTalk NOW

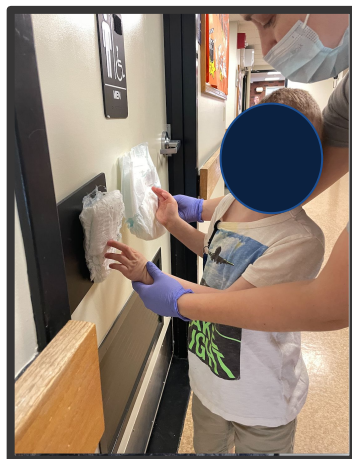


Strategies We Love!

To support communication growth.

Environmental Modifications

- **Label locations in the environment with corresponding symbols**
 - Supports understanding of abstract symbol representation
 - Promotes orientation to the environment



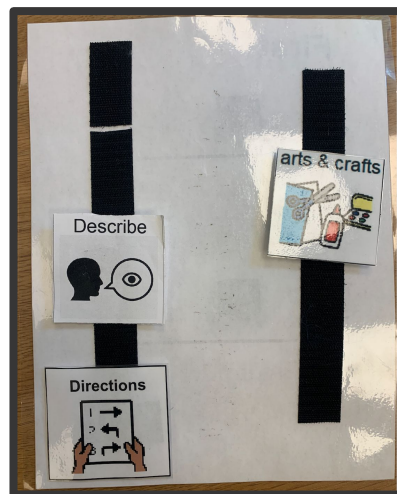
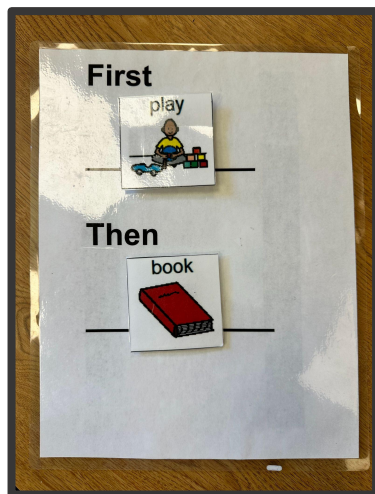
- **Use schedule systems consistently across classes and activities, especially during transitions**
 - Helps to anticipate events
 - Builds understanding of routines
 - Reduces stress and anxiety



Environmental Modifications

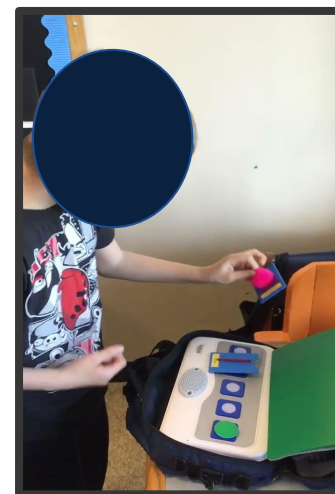
- **Establish predictable routines with consistent materials**

- Increases motivation and participation
- Provides clear expectations
- Reduces stress and anxiety



- **Keep communication systems in consistent location(s)**

- Provides predictability
- Promotes initiation and independent use of the system



Strategies for Communication Partner

- **Model without expectations**

- Teaches individual how to use their system
- Exposes individual to natural interactions and meaningful communication



- **Provide wait time**

- Allows for adequate processing time
- Encourages independent communication and responses



Strategies for Communication Partner

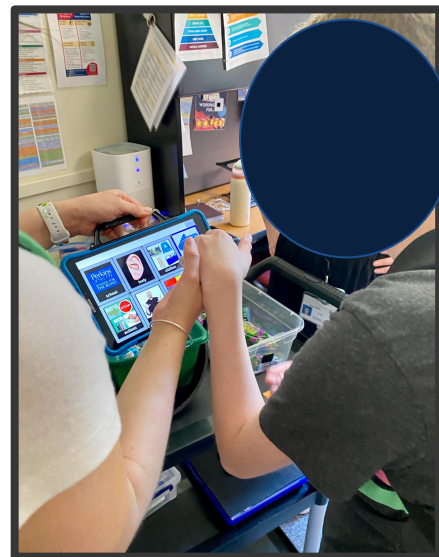
- **Least to most prompting**

- Encourages independence
- Decreases prompt dependence



- **Hand-under-hand support**

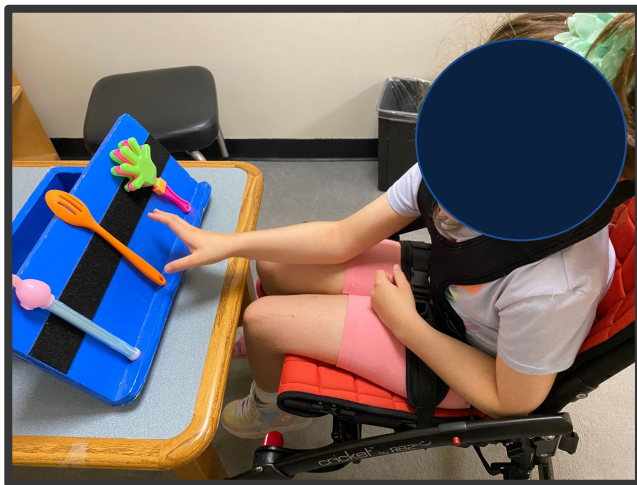
- Individual has active control during the interaction
- Individual can take their hands away if desired
- Decreases the chance of tactile defensiveness



Strategies for Communication Partner

- **Offer choices**

- Increases interest, motivation, and participation by giving the individual control and autonomy



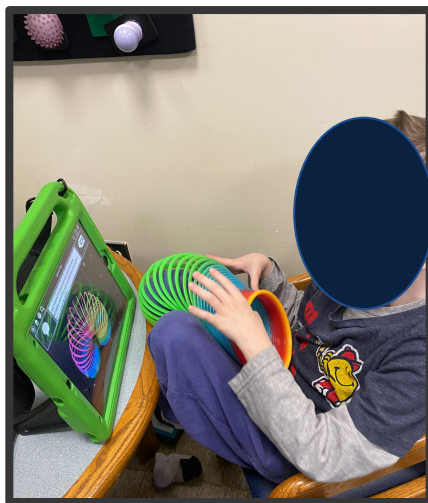
- **Provide communication temptations**

- Thoughtful environmental changes that encourage communication and self-advocacy

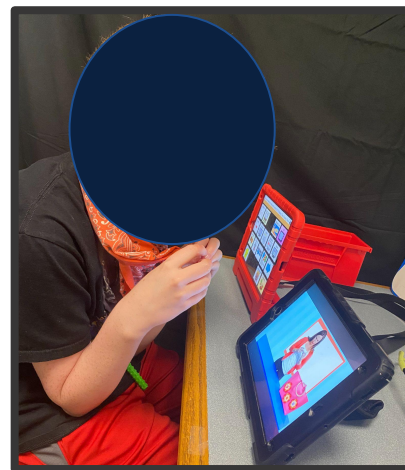


Expectations and Strategies for Individual

- **Encourage individual to tolerate communication system within their personal space**
 - Early developing skills for AAC users
 - Supports routines and expectations

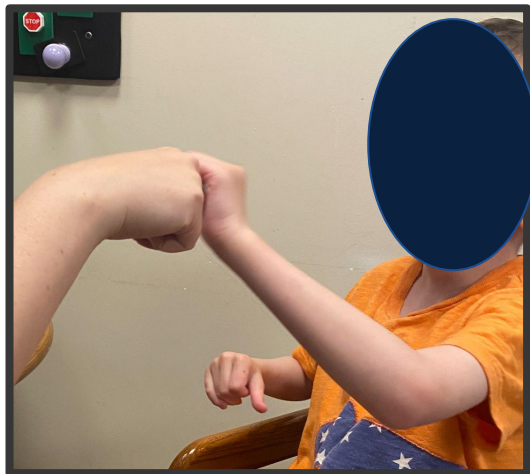


- **Consider having a high-tech device dedicated to communication and a separate device for leisure**
 - iPads can be used on guided access to allow access to only their communication app
 - Individualized

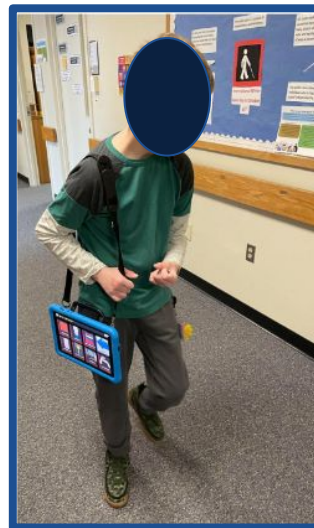


Expectations and Strategies for Individual

- **Encourage all communication attempts regardless of modality**
 - Provide positive praise!



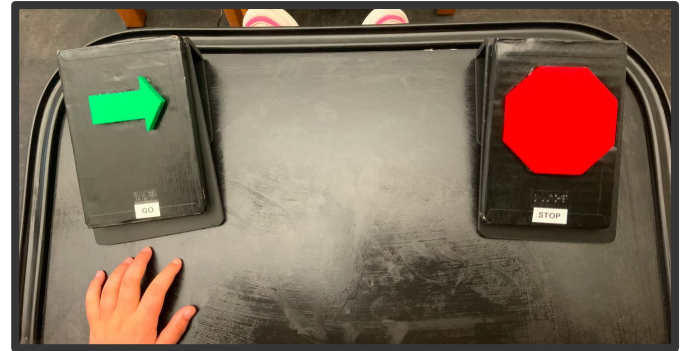
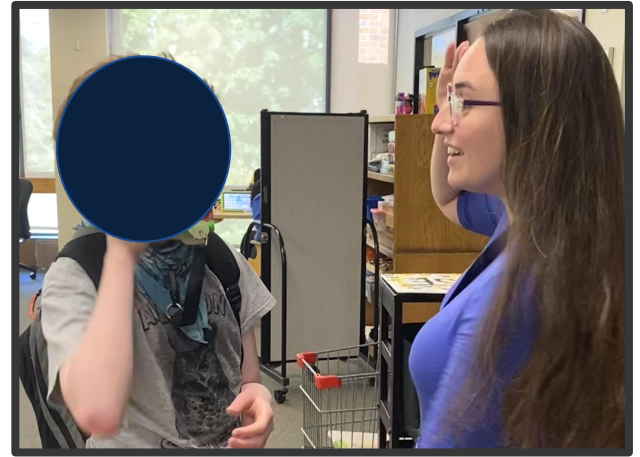
- **Encourage the individual to carry their communication system**
 - Helps the individual to take ownership of their own system



Start Small!

Choose one time each day to:

- Create opportunities for communication
- Practice/Model using the communication system
- Focus on one or two strategies



Resources & Contact

Resources:

- [Perkins School for the Blind - Deafblind](#)
- [National Center on Deaf Blindness](#)
- [CVI Now](#)
- [Reinforcer Assessment for Individuals with Severe Disabilities \(RAISD\)](#)
- [Active Learning](#)



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