



# Implementing AAC.

Getting Started with Digital AAC on an iPad Device.

Ms Linsey Miller BSc, PgCert, PgDip  
Specialist ASN Teacher, Falkirk Council  
e. [linsey.miller@education.falkirk.sch.uk](mailto:linsey.miller@education.falkirk.sch.uk)

# The pupil device arrives in school... now what?

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- 1** Familiarise Yourself
- 2** Initial Setup
- 3** Introducing the Device
- 4** Modelling
- 5** Embedding into Practice
- 6** Assess & Update



## Modelling



## Assess & Update





# Familiarise yourself with the system.



- ★ Check the paperwork provided; find online tutorials; have a play with the device yourself; try using it to communicate.
- ★ Understand the key points of the system, e.g.;
  - Does it offer customisable voice output?
  - Colour coding scheme used?
  - Can you adjust grid sizing and layout?
  - Which type of symbol set(s) are available?
  - How do you upload custom symbols and images?
- ★ Ask ChatGPT to summarise the key features.
- ★ Don't forget to consider the device itself.





**PCS** (Picture Communication Symbols) – Used in Boardmaker and many AAC apps. Bold, clear, fairly recognisable. Widely used in schools.

**SymbolStix** – Cartoon-style, modern look, widely used in Proloquo2Go and TouchChat. Consistent design and updated regularly.

**Widgit Symbols** – Simple, highly structured, commonly used in UK education settings. Good for literacy support.

**ARASAAC** – Open-source, widely available, simple style. Increasingly used in free resources and low-cost AAC solutions.

Check if the student (or your school) already uses/recognises a system, as again, consistency is key.

## Colour Coding:

Many apps use Fitzgerald Key or Goossens' colour coding conventions (e.g. verbs in green, nouns in orange/yellow, etc.).

Check if the student (or your school) already uses/recognises a system, as consistency is key.

These systems help users construct grammatically correct sentences and build language skills, so it's worthwhile using them from the get-go.

Hey, can you summarise the key features of ProLoQuo2Go that I should be aware of as a class teacher?

Of course — here's a clear summary of the **key features of Proloquo2Go** that are most relevant for you as a class teacher:

### Proloquo2Go: Key Features for Teachers

#### 1. Core Vocabulary Focus

- Designed around *core words* (high-frequency words like *go*, *want*, *more*, *stop*) which can be combined flexibly.
- Supports functional communication beyond requesting (commenting, questioning, social interaction).

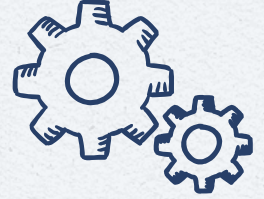
#### 2. Customisable Symbol System

- Uses SymbolStix symbols (cartoon-style, consistent design).
- Colour coding follows **Fitzgerald Key** (verbs = green, nouns = orange/yellow, descriptors = blue, social = pink).
- Teachers can **add**, **hide**, or **edit** symbols to match class topics or learner needs.

+ Ask anything





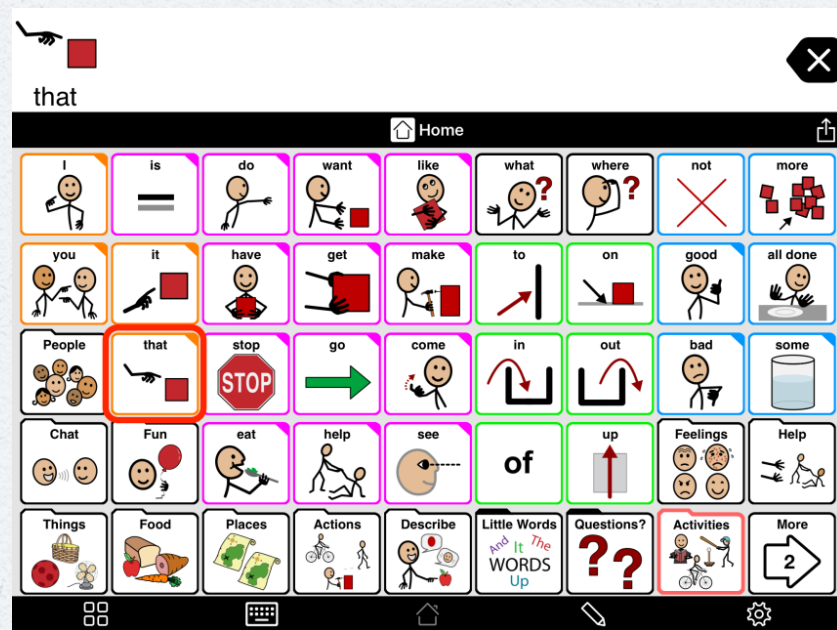
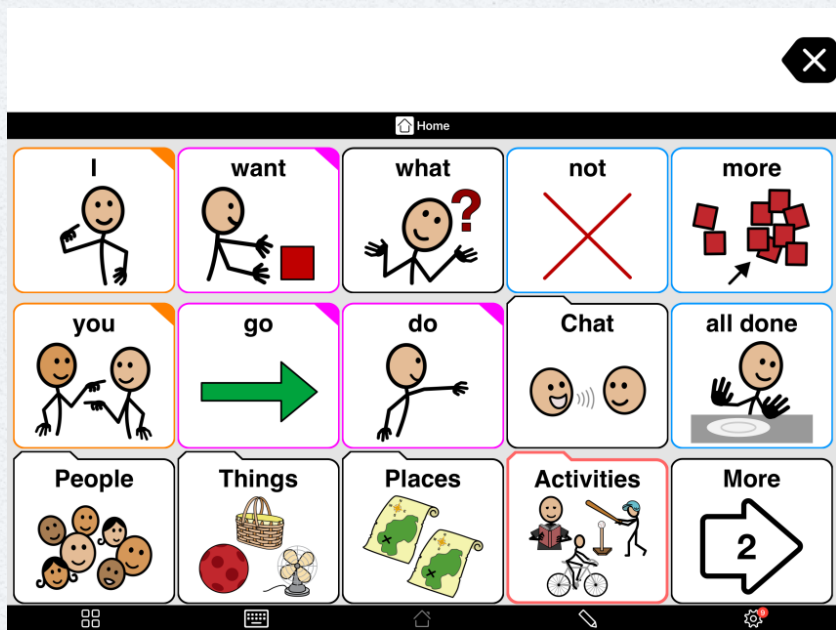


# The initial setup.

Many of our learners may be able to work with you to co-design devices setup. However, in my experience with primary learners new to AAC, it's something that I've had to set up for them in the first instance. Then, once it is implemented, follow their lead, observe, watch and adjust alongside the learner.

- ★ Archive / hide content that is not yet appropriate, *but don't delete it.*
- ★ Consider your learner and adjust the grid size – I prefer not to have the pages too busy initially, but you need to balance this with the number of pages in any given section.
- ★ When choosing a voice output profile, aim for one that matches the user's age, gender identity, and cultural or regional background so it feels authentic.
- ★ Now think about what custom content you want to add...





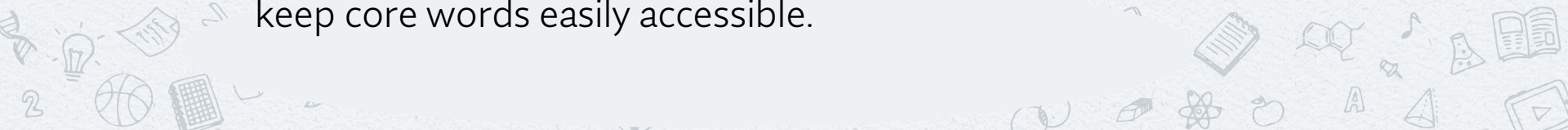


“If they were able to speak to you, what would they want to tell you about?”



# What custom content?

- ★ What are the child's interests? TV, music, sports, hobbies, gaming, favourite foods... if you don't know then find out!
- ★ Pictures of staff, classmates, family, friends, and of course, any pets! Family home, family car, garden...
- ★ Personal routines (snack, bus / taxi, PE, music, breaktime).
- ★ School-specific locations (gym hall, library, playground, sensory room).
- ★ Think about how you group these into section.
- ★ Don't overload with too much fringe vocabulary; keep core words easily accessible.







# Final recommendations for setup.



- ★ On iPads use Guided Access with a password to lock the device onto the AAC app and blank out any sections of the screen that allow editing.
- ★ If the app allows, add an edit password / hide the edit option.
- ★ Share the lock codes with anyone who will take responsibility for editing.
- ★ In the future the child can take responsibility, but for many learners in the early stages, you often end up with child on YouTube, and / or a child who deleted all the AAC content you worked so hard to set up!
- ★ On that note... take a backup. Then backup the backup!





# Introducing the Device.



## With your Learner:

- ★ Find a comfy spot to sit with the learner.
- ★ Model a few basics, perhaps how you feel or what is for lunch. Talk them through it.
- ★ Hand the device over and follow their lead. If they wander off with it, let them explore – don't hound them, there's plenty of time.
- ★ Let the child have time with the device... it is their device – don't quickly take it away and move them on to a task.
- ★ Remember there is going to be a settling in phase until the novelty wears off!
- ★ Consider setting basic expectations e.g. don't leave on the floor.

## Within the School:

- ★ Staff who commonly interact with the learner.
- ★ Fellow pupils / classmates.
- ★ Perhaps a trusted friend could also be shown how to use the device and support their friend?

## Linking in with Family\*:

- ★ Family support is going to be key.
- ★ Arrange to meet with the family to go through device basics, modelling, and agree on device care, charging, expectations, unlock, and add symbols.
- ★ Can a specialist come along to the meeting?







# Modelling use of the Device.

- ★ Encourage the learner to take the device with them as they move around the classroom and school, and between activities.
- ★ First, choose an area of the day to begin modelled use of the device
  - Circle time feelings check worked well in my ASN classes, e.g.
    - ★ Ask them “How are you feeling today”
    - ★ Support them to access the correct section on the app if req.
    - ★ Give them **time** to respond.
    - ★ If they need support, model for them “Ms Miller feels happy” or “Joe feels bored”, or note body language “You look tired.”
- ★ Model ‘good manners’ in device use, but...
- ★ Don’t take the device away from the child – perhaps they can turn it over in their lap when they aren’t using it?
- ★ Plan short-burst direct teaching activities.
- ★ *Don’t overwhelm yourselves... try one thing at a time.*



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/WWlnyObC0k>





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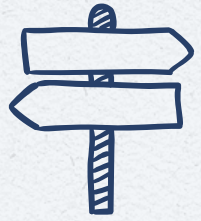
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Toilet • The Weather • The Date  
Snack Time • Choosing Lunch  
Story Time • Show & Tell • My Weekend





# Embedding into Practice.

- ★ Keep modelling to the learner, and modelling to / encouraging support staff to use the device.
- ★ Pick one or two ideas for direct modelling and directed learning and try them for *at least* a week.
- ★ Once you feel it is becoming embedded, try adding something else.
- ★ Are you working on common words or phonics in class? Create a section with the pupil's learning words.
- ★ Make social stories, cocreate, take screenshots and print
- ★ It might feel a bit 'clumsy' at first, but stay with it...





# Assess & Update

New Topic Words

New Interests

New People

Upcoming Transitions

Growing Up & Independence

AAC Skills Developing

## ASSESS

What is working well?  
What isn't quite right?  
Is something missing?  
How can we try to fix it?  
Is there anything coming up?

## ADJUST

Make the relevant changes.  
Can you co-create?  
Share with the team.

## EMBED

Model, support and repeat.  
Give it time to embed.

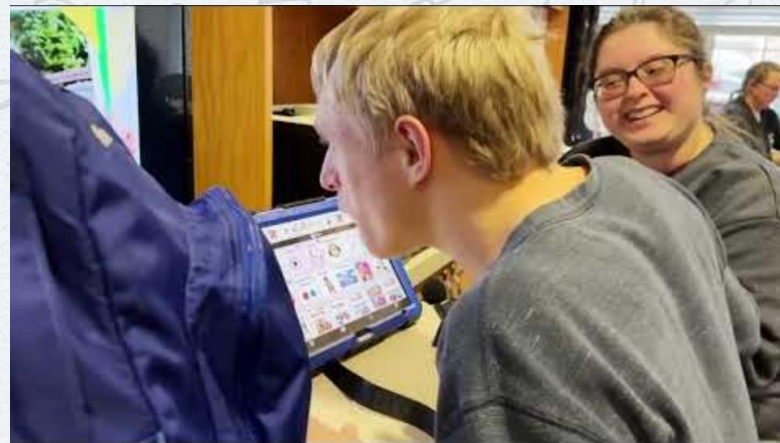
**Keep the  
Device  
Relevant**



## Useful Info and Links



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAYsolBrjSM>  
Strategies for Modelling AAC and Immersing Learners.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5GUz5eqhrs>  
Strategies for Modelling in Home Environment.

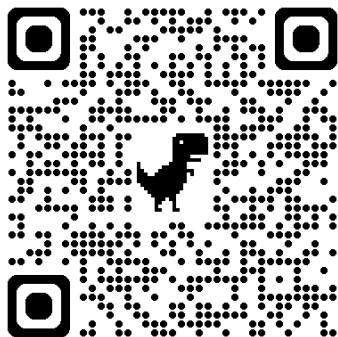






[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wi5j\\_V4fbws](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wi5j_V4fbws)

An AAC user gives some tips on how to effectively communicate with device users.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6W\\_XAY7YOc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6W_XAY7YOc)

An AAC-Supported Read Along and Example of Combining Digital and Printed AAC.

