

ECHO Didactic May 2026

AAC System Access and Funding

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No relevant financial disclosures.

Overview

- Getting started
- AAC evaluation best practices
- Funding process
- Alternative funding sources

Identifying an appropriate and effective system

Starting with a print based system

1. Identify if the individual's communication needs are being met through current modalities
2. Encourage the family to access services to help support symbolic communication development
3. If the family has not accessed these supports, provide resources for print based supports that can support them in the interim that will teach the symbolic communication
 - a. Communication systems that can be developed at home:
 - i. Gestures
 - ii. Sign language: <https://www.signingsavvy.com/>
 - iii. Pictures from magazines, online sources, [Lesson Pix](#)
 - iv. Communication boards: [Lite-tech Communication Board Options](#), [Universal Core Communication Systems](#)
4. If the family would like to pursue high tech options:
 - a. Referral for an AAC evaluation
 - b. Accessing necessary avenues through grants

Transitioning to and accessing a speech generating device (SGD)

- AAC Evaluation with an SLP
 - <https://nwacs.info/resources/provider-directory/>
- Loan systems
 - WATAP
 - Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED)
- School provision of SGD (SETC)
- Grants
 - Ben's Fund
 - Apraxia Kids
 - Small Steps in Speech
 - <https://nwacs.info/resources/systems/funding/aac-funding-sources/>

SGD Funding through Insurance

Team Members

Required team members:

1. Speech language pathologist
 - Collects trial data
 - Completes and submits AAC evaluation to vendor/insurance
 - Provides coaching and instruction for programming and use of SGD

<https://nwacs.info/aac-provider-directory/>
2. Medical provider/prescriber (e.g., MD, DO, ARNP)
 - Submits referral for AAC evaluation
 - Submits prescription for DME/SGD
3. Patient and caregiver

Other possible team members:

1. Family/guardian/caregiver
2. Occupational therapist
3. Physical therapist
4. Teacher
5. Rehabilitation counselor

SGD Funding through Insurance

Coverage and requirements vary by insurer

Coverage must include durable medical equipment

Check with insurance provider for explanation of coverage on devices

Medical vs. Therapeutic purposes

* Will this device be used across settings or only in therapeutic settings?

Funding through insurance can be completed through community based or school based SLP

Getting started:

1. Complete benefit check
2. Obtain referral for medical provider
3. Schedule AAC evaluation with SLP

SGD Funding through Insurance

During the evaluation

1. Trial period with loaned device
 - Required by some insurances for a specific duration
 - Data collection in therapy and/or home setting may be required
2. SLP may provide multiple diagnostic therapy sessions during the trial period
 - Provide support with AAC device use and programming features
 - Educate caregivers on aided language input, using supportive communication partner strategies, and providing opportunities in home/community settings for AAC modeling and use
 - Trial multiple communication programs if appropriate
3. SLP will compile data and submit an evaluation report to a funding source
 - Considerations
 - Patient preference
 - Linguistic and/motor planning needs
 - Caregiver input
 - Visual and/or motor needs
 - Portability

SGD Funding through Insurance

After the evaluation

1. Submit evaluation report to a funding source
<https://www.aacfunding.com/>
<https://www.ablenetinc.com/>
<https://www.forbesaac.com/funding>
<https://efunding.tobiidynavox.com/>
2. Obtain a prescription from medical provider
3. Insurance review and determination
4. Release of a device to the family
(Families can request a case manager with their insurance as needed)
5. Continued therapy services with coordinated care between providers
6. Networking for programming support

Resource: <http://www.aacfundinghelp.com/>

Grants and Scholarships

[Alyssa V Phillips Foundation](#) provides grants to maximize independence for individuals with cerebral palsy

[Apraxia Kids](#) awards “speech tablets” to qualified children with a diagnosis of childhood apraxia of speech for use as AAC, to help with speech practice, and/or for educational support.

[ASF Family Fund](#) provides financial assistance to families to improve the quality of life for an individual with Angelman syndrome, including communication devices.

[Autism Care Today](#) provides grants for autistic individuals for treatment products and services including assistive technology.

[Ben's Fund](#) provides financial support to autistic children and young adults in Washington State.

[Chive Charities](#) provides grants for veterans, military families, first responders, and rare medical diagnoses.

[Connect](#) is a free platform that allows you to search for grant opportunities to fund financial needs.

[HealthWell Foundation](#) provides financial assistance to help with copayments/coinsurance, deductibles, travel costs, pediatric treatment costs, and more.

Grants and Scholarships

Jordan Fund helps families with respite, therapy, and equipment costs that are not covered by their insurance.

Lilly's Voice assists people that have been rejected by other programs/funding sources and cannot afford an AAC device without help.

Multiple Sclerosis Foundation Assistive Technology Program may help locate and partially/fully fund devices (including communication devices) for people with MS.

Oracle Health Foundation provides individual grants that cover a wide variety of costs related to children's healthcare needs, including assistive technology.

Orange Effect Foundation provides grants for children and young adults up to age 21 for speech therapy and technology.

PAN Foundation provides grants to help cover out-of-pocket copayments, deductibles, and transportation expenses.

Small Steps in Speech grants do not cover iPads, however can be used toward an assistive technology device (including a communication device) and/or iPad apps.

Grants and Scholarships

The Jiselle Lauren Foundation provides financial assistance grants for families with a child with a disability or special needs.

United Healthcare Children's Foundation provides health care grants for children 16 years old or younger.

Varghese Summersett Autism Scholarship is intended to provide financial aid for educational or recreational opportunities for autistic children 15 years or younger.

Varghese Summersett Down Syndrome Scholarship is intended to provide financial aid for educational or recreational opportunities for children with Down syndrome.

Wheel to Walk Foundation helps children with disabilities (20 years old and younger) obtain medical and adaptive equipment or therapy services not covered by their insurance. (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, or California) *Note: currently not funding iPads, iPhones, computers*

Reminder!

Choice of device should consider user's abilities and the needs and skills of the support system

AAC is not MAGIC! Communication must be taught! Teaching AAC is an ongoing process and takes time.

Familiarize yourself with your child's device.

MODEL! MODEL! MODEL!