

# AAction Points

## MAXIMIZING YOUR PARTICIPATION AT AAC CONFERENCES

Conference attendees trust the organizers to select qualified presenters, plan a scientifically-based program, and arrange for the latest products in the Exhibit hall. However, conference attendees are responsible for getting value from their participation. We prepared this handout to help you ask the right questions in order to make your own data-driven decisions.

### What to Ask Conference Presenters

Today, presenters welcome questions about the evidence (references and research). Presenters recommending specific strategies and techniques should be able to show how data were collected to monitor change using performance and outcome measures. Remember, you can't claim success unless you've measured it.

1. What in your experience and training led you to be curious about the AAC topic of your presentation?
2. What type of research did you collect for this presentation and why?
3. Can you share the research references used to prepare for your work and presentation?
4. If you did your own research, how did you set it up and why?
5. Tell me what information you collected for your case studies, and why was that type of data considered important?
6. How many people who rely on AAC have been involved in using what you're recommending and what have been the outcomes?
7. What quantitative measures were used to support your findings?
8. What qualitative measures were used to support your findings?

### PRESENTER NOTES

## What to Ask AAC Manufacturers

Conference attendees visiting Exhibit Halls are confronted with a variety of competing marketing messages. Much of the feature terminology in AAC assistive technology is used to sell products. Conference attendees need to be critical in evaluating the features that will lead to optimized communication. Keep in mind what is in the best interest of the person who will be using the AAC system, since their life experience is impacted by the ability to communicate. Remember, you can't claim success unless you've measured it.

1. Of the 3 AAC language representation methods, which ones do your products support?
  - Single Meaning Pictures
  - Alphabet-based Methods (spelling, word prediction)
  - Semantic Compaction
2. How does your language software act like a natural language e.g. "put words together" to say what you want to say?
2. Does the software support a high frequency or rare vocabulary (core vocabulary generally does not include nouns)? Please, demonstrate.
3. Can you show me how to select these high frequency words? (Consider other core vocabulary words as well.)
  - my                                • like
  - on                                 • more
4. Can you show me how a person transitions to a higher level of the language software?
5. What kind of literacy skills are needed to use your products to generate novel utterances (express your own thoughts)?
6. Do your products include Language Activity Monitoring (LAM) or another data logging method (key counting is NOT a language logging system)? Please, demonstrate.
7. How much time should I expect to have to spend programming with a beginning user of your software options?
8. Can you refer me to people in my area to talk with who use your products, either adult users or parents?

### EXHIBITOR NOTES