



The Importance of Using AAC *(Augmentative and Assistive Communication)*

"PASSAGES" IS A PUBLICATION OF
 PIKE AUTISM SUPPORT SERVICES

201 BROAD ST. STE 4
 MILFORD, PENNSYLVANIA
 18337
 INFO@PASSNEPA.ORG
 570-832-4000

Pike Autism Support Services

PRESIDENT
 JOHN PASSARO

VICE PRESIDENT
 NICHOLAS MCINTYRE, ESQ

TREASURER
 LILLY ABBAMONTE

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OUR MISSION

PIKE AUTISM SUPPORT SERVICES (PASS) IS A 501 (C)(3) NONPROFIT WITH A MISSION TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND RELATED INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (IDD) WITH SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

OUR VISION

WE ENVISION A DAY WHEN INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND IDD ENJOY FULFILLING AND INDEPENDENT LIVES, EMBRACING EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL INCLUSION, PERSONAL GROWTH, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS.

Opening Doors



to Independence



As a Speech Language Pathologist working with primary students with Autism and other developmental disabilities, I often recommend AAC (i.e., Augmentative and Assistive Communication) devices or SGD (i.e., speech generating devices) for individuals who demonstrate difficulty with speech and/or language. AAC devices can and should be considered for anyone demonstrating difficulty accessing language, no matter the age, cognitive ability, or amount of previous intervention received. Using AAC devices allows learners the opportunity to practice using language in real life situations. They are essential for language acquisition and development when verbal communication is challenging. AAC promotes independence, strengthens communication, and increases social interactions and connections with others.

Many parents fear that giving their child a device will hinder their ability to learn spoken language. It's quite the opposite. Using AAC actually helps with communication and supports learning. Research indicates that learners who use AAC devices often progress faster in speech and language development. AAC devices benefit speech and language development by providing visuals to increase comprehension and offering an appropriate way to play with new words and concepts. AAC promotes functional communication to help individuals request (i.e., familiar items/objects/actions while developing the ability to identify them), protest, comment, describe, initiate and respond to questions, and engage in familiar social routines. When individuals have the ability to express themselves (i.e., their thoughts, feelings, and ideas), they are more likely to participate in discussions and activities and engage in meaningful interactions with others.

Parents and teachers should create a supportive environment that encourages and reinforces AAC use without the pressure of "forcing" communication. The learner should receive high levels of social praise and positive reinforcement. Communicative efforts should be acknowledged and celebrated. All family and team members should be on board and actively engage in AAC interactions with the learner. Generalized use of AAC across people and settings will not only increase overall communication skills but will also help to decrease frustration and negative behaviors, and ultimately improve the learner's quality of life.

For several years, PASS has supported individuals in our local community by providing AAC devices and voice output applications to our speech and language impaired learners through the iCare program. For information regarding PASS' iCare program or to make a donation, please refer to our website at www.passnepa.org.

If you have or know an individual who struggles with verbal communication and language, please contact their Speech Language Pathologist for information regarding AAC.

Amy DeVrieze MS, CCC-SLP



What's happening at PASS ?

<https://www.passnepa.org/>

Social Groups

- **Lauren's Board Game Group** Monday at 5pm, The Milford Community House
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/756038fa-c6d7-4f9a-9e6e-47089908074f>
- **"Society of Wizards" Role Playing group**– Teens & Adults - meets virtually every Wednesday
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/17c0a179-ca73-4879-adb7-c9eca5867f0b>

Social Events

- **Breakfast with Santa**- St. Patrick's Parish Hall, Milford
Saturday, December 14th, 2024 and will be split into two sessions.
Session 1 will begin at 9:00am and conclude at 10:30am, while Session 2 will begin at 10:30am and conclude at 12:00pm.
\$2 for each person, 3 and under Free
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/0424de56-9478-4f25-9267-e2902b1d1ed2>

Art Classes

- **Disney Master Class** - This class has 5 sessions. It will be held on the following Monday's: 10/7, 10/21, 10/ 28, 11/4 and 11/18 from 5:00 to 6:30 at the Community House.
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/22fc5155-d681-4f06-b6c2-43a9fab984c9>

Fundraisers

- **Santa Crawl** Sunday, Dec. 8th – starting at Log Tavern Brewery
<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/a92637b0-85d5-4ca9-98b1-148a3461e0c7>

Support Groups

- **Adults on the Spectrum** Meets Thursday, Sept. 26th at the Milford Community House
- **Parent Support** 4th Wednesday of every month. Sept.25th
- **Need Support?** - Email us at: info@passnepa.org

Independence Village

- **Please support our Community Center and Housing project**
 - <https://www.passnepa.org/independence-village/>
 - Donate: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/b4dbc83e-0bdd-41a8-829e-c06e5712e996>

Trainings & Workshops

- **November 21 – “ABA Through the Lifespan”**
 - This workshop will examine how ABA can teach new skills and reduce problem behaviors in early childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. There will be time for Q&A Come prepared!
 - Presented by: Kelly Adams BCBA