

Planning for the Arrival and Implementation of a Speech Generating Device

Ideas to Get You Started



Introduction

Planning for the arrival and implementation of a speech generating device (SGD) is an exciting time. Because this is a complex process with many factors, this document gives teams that are anticipating the arrival of a speech generating device for their student some ideas and considerations to get them started on their way to effective implementation of their student's augmentative and alternative communication device.

This guide is divided into the following sections

- Before the SGD arrives
- When the SGD arrives
- Introducing the SGD in the Classroom
- Ideas for Assisting the Student in Learning the Vocabulary
- Ideas to Further Social Interaction
- Speech Pathologists are Encouraged to

Before the SGD arrives ...

1. Collect vocabulary lists (activities, people, places, foods, songs, etc.)
2. Do a preference profile with family and team
3. Do a peer culture survey (listen to what other kids are saying and doing and write this down)
4. Take pictures of classmates
5. Take pictures of the important people in the student's life i.e. - mom, dad, siblings, the teacher, the principal, the school secretary, the bus driver, the family pets, etc.
6. Watch for situations where you see that the student really wanted to communicate something but was unable to do so. Write down what you think the student wanted to talk about.
7. Talk to your SET Consultant and see if there is emulation software for the SGD (many are free downloads from the manufacturer's website) so you can: select a "user setup" and begin programming personal vocabulary on your computer which can be transferred to the device once it arrives
8. Decide how vocabulary additions will be handled (who will do the program)
9. Explore the manufacturer's website as there are often resources for training and page sharing
10. Think about goals - they should be specific, measurable, attainable and timely
11. Plan goals for operational competencies linguistic competencies, strategic competencies, social competencies

When the SGD arrives...

1. Import the "user setup" if you have been able to create this in advance
2. If you have not been able to customize the setup in advance, customize a "user setup" using the content you have gathered
3. Ensure strategic phrases are readily available on the device (e.g.: "I use this device to talk", "please wait while I find what I want to say", "I can't find the word I want", "please help me program that on my device")
4. Determine who will be responsible for charging and caring for the device
5. Allow the student lots of opportunity to explore the device
6. Explore the organization of vocabulary on the device with the user and people who are important in their environment
7. Model use of the device, use peers to help model
8. Provide lots of opportunities to use the device
9. The SGD should be on and available all day long in every environment
10. The student should be responsible for carrying the system whenever possible and there should be a designated place for it in each environment
11. Make the device powerful... set up communication opportunities that just can't be successful without the device
12. Add / teach repair strategies so student can clarify or restate message in a different way if required

Ideas for Introducing the SGD into the Classroom

1. Special planned and pre-stored activities can showcase student abilities and introduce classmates to the SGD
 - a. read a story out loud
 - b. participate in a play or production
 - c. do a class presentation
2. Students should be encouraged and supported to:
 - a. answer questions independently... everywhere (this means that family, caregivers and friends need to give the device user the time to formulate and insist that he/she expresses him- /her-self)
 - b. learn to write with the device (messages can often be created in the communication device and exported to other programs)
 - c. use ECU (for those with physical access challenges)
3. Using the device, create fun activities
 - a. play games... use the "random choice" tool ; build specific language for a favorite game like Guess Who, go Fish, I Spy, Pop up Pirate, etc.
 - b. import sounds
 - c. import images and video (the user, his/her family, friends, favorite places, TV shows, CDs or DVDs)
 - d. add jokes
 - e. use the MP3 function
 - f. use it with a phone
 - g. explore social networking
 - h. explore the school. "I want to go gym, library, office, outside."
 - i. Add current School News to the device - Take pictures of Zack's broken arm with the camera and use the scene page to explain what happened. Take pictures of Anna's new guinea pig and create a scene story. The student can then go home and share his news.

Ideas for Assisting the Student in Learning the Vocabulary

1. Develop a functional use of core vocabulary
2. Book reading – frequent reading of simple books out loud using the SGD can help to automate the search for vocabulary
3. Allow for and reward telegraphic communication initially- you can slowly teach where to find and how to add all the “little words” such as “the, a, to...”
4. Teach new vocabulary in activities that require their combination with known vocabulary. Typical SLP language activities and games that are designed for repeated practice work well.

Ideas to Further Social Interaction

1. Play games that involve joint attention
 - a. Decorate a paper Christmas tree with stickers - each participant names a decoration to add in turn
 - b. Build a zoo - each participant names an animal to place in the zoo enclosures
 - c. Dress a doll - each participant names a piece of clothing to put on the doll
2. Paint a mural -each participant choose an object to add to the rock concert picture
3. Plan a restaurant - each participant names an item to add to the menu
4. Plan a trip - each participant names a place to stop at
5. Play typical indoor recess games like matching games, go fish, guess who, etc...
6. Be sure to practice game vocabulary (“go fish”)
7. Add comments like “No Cheating”, “I’m winning”, “Lucky”, (check with peers for appropriate kid vocabulary)
8. Practice these a controlled setting before leaving the student to navigate the game on their own
9. Do a peer culture survey and add peer appropriate vocabulary to the system
10. Ask peers how they would *greet a peer, say something was good, compliment a classmate ...*
11. Ask peers what *the cool radio station is, their favorite TV show is, top movie, favorite singer ...*

Ideas for Developing Linguistic Competence

1. Remember! When teaching an alternative form of communication, linguistic competence is just like oral linguistic competence
2. Follow typical language developmental sequences
3. Provide opportunities for practice
4. MODEL MODEL MODEL
5. Explore the AAC Curriculum document on the SET-BC website (even if the student is young or will not be getting a Dogwood Certificate, content in this document can be helpful in creating a plan for developing AAC skills)

Speech Pathologists are encouraged to:

1. De-mystify the device with peers by explaining how the device can be used and sharing some of the things that can be done with it
2. Talk with peers and adults in the environment to ensure they understand alternate communication etiquette
3. Encourage peer interactions using the device
4. Showcase device successes
5. Connect with others who use a SGD- find a mentor if possible
6. Ensure teachers and school administration are aware of how the device is used and how they can support its use
7. Decide with the device user and people in the environment when it is appropriate to use the device and when an alternative mode (speech, sign, gesture, etc.) would be more efficient or appropriate
8. Plan ahead
9. Remember technical Speech Generating Devices break down need to be charged and are not appropriate in all environments (in the pool ...)
10. Maintain and periodically use the students low/no tech AAC system
11. BACK UP the technical SGD system on a regular basis. Repairs frequently wipe out ALL the devices memory