

**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Clinic at Niagara Children's Centre**  
**Clinic Stream Service Plan for New Clients**

**Service Plan For:**

**Date:**

**What is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)?**

AAC refers to tools and strategies that a person who has difficulty speaking, cannot speak, or who has difficulty being understood uses to communicate. AAC can include gestures, sign language, facial expressions, pictures/graphics, communication displays or books, and/or speech-generating devices/tablets. It looks different for everyone!

**About the Clinic**

The purpose of our Clinic is to provide assessments and support for children who may be eligible for communication tool *partially* funded by the Assistive Devices Program (ADP).

To be eligible for the Clinic/ADP funding, children/youth must:

- Need a communication tool or device at home/out in the community (cannot be used for school only)
- Have physical difficulty producing speech

Although technical tools like tablets can help children/youth with communication challenges in many ways, our AAC Clinic services focus only on helping children with a physical difficulty speaking to communicate directly with others. We are not able to help with access technical tools to assist with general learning, language learning, or to help children follow directions.

**About AAC Clinic Stream Services**

These services are for children/youth with motor and visual challenges and/or children who need an ADP-funded tool or device due to frequent communication breakdowns when they attempt to communicate messages with others. Children must have experience using communication tools (e.g. photos or pictures) and continue to have communication breakdowns.

**What to Expect at Appointments**

Appointments will:

- Occur at Niagara Children's Centre, a satellite site, or virtually, and/or in child care or schools
- Include a parent/primary caregiver and any other professionals or caregivers involved

- Be led by a Clinic Speech-Language Pathologist and an Occupational Therapist or a Communication Disorders Assistant.

### ***Assessment Sessions***

We will:

- Ask many questions about your child's communication and interests
- Interact with your child and observe them interact with you
- Try different AAC tools and strategies
- Give you recommendations and resources to use AAC at home, including at least one goal to practice before the next visit
- Ask you to return a list of words, messages, or topics that your child may want to communicate about

### ***Choosing Tools and Strategies***

Clinician(s) may or may not recommend a specific AAC tool that worked best for your child, depending on the assessment. The tool may be partially funded by ADP. Speak to the clinician(s) if you have concerns about the family portion of the cost.

Families may:

- Decide to purchase or lease the AAC tool recommended
- Decide to use other tools and strategies that worked well during the assessment (e.g. storing pictures on a tablet you already own, teaching your child clarification strategies)
- Decide that your child does not require additional AAC tools or strategies

Families who decide to use new AAC tools and strategies may be eligible for:

- Up-to-6 "training" appointments for the child, family, and/or other professionals to help ensure the tools/strategies are being used as effectively as possible
- Up-to-4 "check-in" appointments per year following the training period to help set new goals and problem-solve any concerns. These appointments must be scheduled by the parent/primary caregiver who must also attend, with limited exceptions. One visit can be scheduled per "season": January-March; April-June; July-August; September-December

### **How to Prepare for Clinic Stream Appointments**

1. Be ready to talk about how your child is communicating, including successes and challenges
2. Be ready to talk about the goals and strategies recommended at your last appointment, if applicable. How did it go? What worked well? What didn't work well?
3. Bring tools your child uses to help them communicate (e.g. photos, pictures, communication books or devices). If this includes technology, please be sure it is working and charged.
4. Bring motivating activities or snacks, if asked.

**Contact:** Contact the Clinician(s) at your last appointment:

Name	Role	Phone	Email