**Facilitating Collaboration: Roles and Responsibilities of the Team in Designing AAC**

**Note: This is not intended as a comprehensive list of roles/responsibilities or team members, but rather as a resource for effective collaborative teaming.**

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| **Name and Role** | **Roles and Responsibilities (examples)** |
| **Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI)** | * Complete FVA and LMA * Share results of FVA, LMA, and clinical vision reports with team and implications for AAC design * Guide team in designing tactile/visual adaptations * Guide the team in determining additional considerations for access to AAC including: optical devices, positioning and seating, lighting and other environmental considerations * Provide the team with input on communication goals specific to children with visual impairments/additional disabilities, and the use of visually descriptive vocabulary (It is OK to use visual language with a student who is blind/visually impaired! Just be sure that the student has a functional understanding of what it means!) * Provide the team with input on selecting vocabulary to address skills across the areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum * Assist in designing and creating adaptations |
| **Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)** | * Complete Communication Evaluation/Assessment and share results of the student’s communication strengths across various environments and partners * Collaborate with team members to determine the type(s) of functional AAC systems to trial during the assessment process * Consider messaging and vocabulary formats (and organization) when designing potential AAC systems, and provide the team with input on selection of vocabulary * Document and update AAC systems based on ongoing assessment and feedback from team members * Consult with outside agencies/SLPs related to additional AAC support and assessment * Assist in design and creation of adaptations |
| **Classroom Teacher** | **The teacher can often be the educational team leader, and is often responsible for facilitating communication between team members, as well as creating the structure of educational routines and activities.**   * Lead the classroom team in carrying out AAC design and consistent implementation across the school day: **set expectations and communicate roles and responsibilities** * Provide the team with input on relevant routines, activities, social experiences and educational goals to support the selection of meaningful, relevant student-centered vocabulary and adaptations * Assist in selecting vocabulary and creating adaptations |
| **Paraprofessional or Intervener** | **The paraprofessional often knows the student’s educational routines best!**   * Provide the team with additional input on relevant routines, activities, social experiences and educational goals to support the selection of meaningful, relevant student-centered vocabulary and adaptations * Assist in selecting vocabulary and creating adaptations |
| **Occupational Therapist (OT)** | * Provide the team with input on fine motor goals and challenges and implications for AAC design including: grasp and reflexes, use of fingers and hands (bilateral integration, hand dominance, hand-eye coordination, wrist stability, thumb opposition, finger strength and isolation of fingers) * Provide the team with additional input regarding the sensory status of the student and how this may affect AAC design including: sensory integration difficulties, stereognosis (ability to perceive an object by touch) * Provide the team with additional suggestions for adaptive supports for access: slant boards, adaptations to grip, texture/type of material, orthotics and other physical supports * Assist in design and creation of adaptations |
| **Physical Therapist (PT)** | * Provide the team with input on gross motor goals and challenges and implications for AAC design including: crossing midline, head and neck support as it affects visual and tactile access, low/high muscle tone * Provide the team with additional suggestions for adaptive supports for access: adaptations to seating (Rifton chairs, classroom chairs) and tables or desks, postural supports including neck, trunk, arm supports (individually created or pre-made) * Assist in design and creation of adaptations that provide increased physical access and stability |
| **Teacher for the Deaf (TOD/HH)** | * Carry out communication-related assessments and provide relevant information on results to the team * Collaborate with team members on the impact of a combined sensory impairment related to communication, language, and concept development * Work with an audiologist and share information related to assistive technology that can enhance the student’s residual hearing (if applicable) * Assist in design and creation of adaptations when appropriate |
| **Orientation & Mobility Instructor (O&M, COMS)** | * Provide the team with input on safe travel/O&M skills and goals that may impact vocabulary selection and design including: routines and routes, familiar places, specific words used in assisted and independent travel (cane, sighted/human guide, modes of transport, directions, terminology) * Provide the team with recommendations and guide the design of AAC to be used within O&M activities and travel routines, including labeling familiar routes * Assist in design and creation of adaptations including integrating opportunities for use of AAC in travel routes and routines |
| **Parent/Caregiver** | **The Parent/Caregiver can be the most important, consistent member of the team and is often the “voice” or advocate for the student.**   * Initiate request for an AAC system * Offer expectations, priorities, hopes for student’s communication goals and outcomes * Identify environments where an AAC system could be implemented across the day (not just at school), including related vocabulary needs * Reinforce school use of an AAC system at home |
| **Student** | **The student is the center of the team, and drives individualized AAC design and implementation**   * Possesses unique communication skills that may be augmented through access to alternative system(s) of communication * Shows interest and motivation for topics, partners, activities that guides team members in selecting specific messages for AAC systems * Has distinct, observable sensory preferences that guide team members in providing efficient access to an AAC system (symbol type, output type, organization/location of systems and messages within those systems) * Assist in design and creation of adaptations when appropriate |
| **School Psychologist**  **/ Social Worker** | * Conduct individualized psychological/academic assessments and interpret results/data. * Offer input to team members related to the student’s functional skills across (but not limited to) cognitive, social, emotional, communication, daily living, motor, sensory domains * Communicate with outside AAC providers |
| **Audiologist** | * Complete ongoing hearing testing and share results of audiology evaluation (with and/or without amplification) * Offer recommendations on assistive technology related to maximizing residual hearing, and how this technology may synchronize with high(er) tech AAC devices. |
| **School Administrator** | * Support collaborative team efforts by providing time to meet and work on adaptations and design elements * Facilitate role responsibility when necessary |