



Empowering Connections through Effective Communication

Communication Spotlight

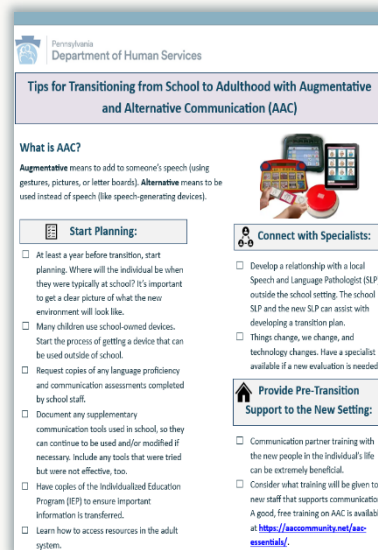


Communication and successful transition!

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) published an updated resource; “[Bridging the Gap from Classroom to Community: Transition Resources Related to Communication](#)”, with a new and improved design!

As a new school year begins, many students with disabilities and their families may be starting to think about the transition to life after high school. Most of the time transition planning includes preparing for work or post-secondary education, but communication access is just as important in the planning process.

This resource provides information on how to ensure access to **effective communication** by mode, such as American Sign Language (ASL), tactile, and Visual Gestural Communication (VGC), during transition.



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Did you Know?

Stories that Matter



Transition planning can be an exciting but overwhelming time for individuals and families as they identify goals and prepare for life after high school. However, with successful planning and the right support, individuals can build a happy and fulfilling life.

Individuals have very different experiences, but everyone uses various services and support to help them navigate their journeys into adulthood. The individuals in this story reside in Minnesota, however many of the services and supports they relied on are like those in Pennsylvania. [Listen to their inspiring stories](#) and the paths they took towards living their best lives!

Communication Tips



How to Support Effective Communication Across Environments

Access to communication should be available wherever a person goes, and in all environments, such as at home, in the community, at school, or at your place of employment. Below are some strategies to promote communication access.

- Use the person's preferred method of communication consistently across settings.
- Make sure new environments have needed communication supports before the person arrives.
- Ensure that communication tools are accessible and within reach of the individual.
- Share information with communication partners about how the person communicates and how to respond.
- Create a simple [communication profile](#) that travels with the person and explains how they communicate and how others can best support their communication.

Resources and Upcoming Events



Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Essentials Courses

- **What:** The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University offers free virtual courses on AAC that are designed for your particular role.
- For more information, access [AAC Essentials Courses](#).

Just SO Speech

- **What:** TechOWL at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University provides Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) short-term services for Pennsylvanians who are registered with the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP).
- See [Just SO Speech](#) for more information on how to access these valuable services!

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Special Populations Unit's Website

- **What:** The MyODP communication page has a brand-new look! Access the [website](#) for resources, tools, and all things communication!
- Contact [RA-PWSpecialPopUnit@pa.gov](#).

Communication Tools

What is a Visual Schedule?

A visual schedule is a person-centered tool that uses pictures, symbols, objects, and/or written words to share information about upcoming activities, events, or tasks and the order in which they'll occur. They can help make routines and expectations clear and predictable.

Visual schedules benefit everyone and can be used for various activities (such as morning routine, brushing your teeth) and within different settings (school, employment, home). Consider the following when creating a schedule:

- Select a format. Will it be used for one specific task or for an entire day, week, or month? Will it be stationary or portable?
- Consider the person's unique skills and needs (like choosing symbols that make sense to the person).
- Use a symbol, object, or picture with a short description of the activity, such as a toothbrush with "brush teeth".
- Ensure accessibility (such as larger pictures and font).
- Use the person's preferred method of communication (tactile symbols, objects, picture cards).
- Involve the individual in the process of creating the schedule and review it together.
- Teach and model through time, exposure, consistency, and practice.
- Be creative and make it fun!



Morning Schedule ☀️

1	wake up 	☐
2	bathroom 	☐
3	wash hands 	☐
4	brush teeth 	☐
5	get dressed 	☐

Visual schedules support communication! They give information about activities or events, increasing understanding, choice-making, and independence!

Did You Know?

All Supports Coordinators (SCs) are required to contact the Deaf Services Coordinator within 30 days of a Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind individual being added to their caseload. SCs are to email RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov and put "communication consultation" in the subject line. You will then receive information on how to schedule.