

# Initiating with AAC



This resource was produced by Indigo therapists with funding received from Telethon 2021

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*People who have complex challenges (physical, sensory, cognitive, and/or language), often need extra time to initiate communication.*

*This extra time can result in people missing the opportunity to initiate a turn in fast moving conversations.*

*Some people with complex needs have not experienced lots of successful communication.*

*Communication partners often need to be taught to provide time, observe for, and respond to these initiations.*

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## Aim

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*Help individuals with complex needs learn a clear way to initiate communication with others.*

*Help others learn how that person initiates, so they can experience communication success.*

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## How

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***Model ways to express: "I have something to say!"***

*If someone hasn't figured out how to initiate, they need to be shown.*

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Wave your arms and vocalise (make a noise with your voice)

Say "I have something to say!"

Have a wristband that says "I have something to say!"

Look at it. Wave it around.

Press a programmable button that says "I have something to say"

Look at a communication device or system and talk about what you're doing

Reach for or tap a communication system

"I'm looking at my book. I'm touching my book. I'm looking at you. I have something to say!"

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*Verbally reference what you see*

*If we don't expect it, we will never see it when it happens.*

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Be on the lookout for subtle initiations

Respond to the individual

Present a communication system

Wait.

Give the AAC user a chance to contribute if they want to.

## Plan to model initiations with AAC

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*It can be helpful to think ahead about how someone might need to be shown how to initiate.*

*For each AAC user, it might be helpful to think about:*

*How will their communication partners model initiation?*

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- What will they do and what will they say?*
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*How does the individual currently initiate*

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- What do they do and how should others respond*
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For more information

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For more information visit our website: Telethon: Country Kids Communicate ([indigosolutions.org.au](http://indigosolutions.org.au))<sup>1</sup>

Download this as a PDF document: *Initiating with AAC*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.indigosolutions.org.au/our-services/services-for-schools/telethon-country-kids-communicate>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.indigosolutions.org.au/docs/default-source/telethon-resource-sheets/08\\_initiatingwithaac.pdf](https://www.indigosolutions.org.au/docs/default-source/telethon-resource-sheets/08_initiatingwithaac.pdf)

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