

# Scaffolding with AAC



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

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*Sometimes an AAC user may have some but not all the knowledge or skills needed to use their aided language system.*

*Scaffolding is a strategy where a communication partner helps an AAC user to extend their skills just beyond what they can do on their own.*

*Not everyone who uses AAC will want or need scaffolding. It is important to always check in with the AAC user as to their preferences.*

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## Aim

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*Support AAC users to participate in:*

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- *Participate in discussions*
  - *Contribute ideas to stories*
  - *Participate in planning*
  - *Participate in brainstorming sessions*
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*It is essential that an AAC user's decision **not** to participate must be respected.*

*Any use of an AAC user's device or communication system should be done with the explicit consent of the user.*

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## Responding to an AAC user's initiation

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*This is when the AAC user has done or said something that indicates they have something to say or an idea to contribute.*

*At this point we might be trying to highlight opportunities to communicate and create a space for that communication.*

*Give plenty of time before offering a model of a possible contribution*

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1) Be on the lookout for subtle initiations by the AAC user.

2) Respond to the individual

E.g., "It looks like you have something to say!"

3) Present a communication system

4) Wait.

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

5) Model something.

If the user does not contribute an idea themselves after a while, model something related to what is going on at the time.

## Communication partner initiation

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*There will be occasions where an opportunity to participate is generated by someone else.*

*An example from a classroom could be:*

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- *After an activity, the teacher asks for student opinions about the activity.*
  - *Someone helps by going to a page in the device/book that has some relevant opinion words and offering those in addition to a "I wonder how you felt about it." This is an invitation, not a requirement for participation.*
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1) Set the scene

2) Navigate to a relevant page

3) Invite participation

"I wonder..." statements offer a gentle suggestion about the types of things someone might contribute.

"I wonder what you thought of that"

4) Wait

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

5) Model possible contributions

## Plan to scaffold with AAC

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*It can be helpful to think ahead about how someone might need support to contribute ideas to discussions and conversations.*

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

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- 1. How do they currently initiate communication*
  - 2. What are the AAC user's preferences about scaffolding*
  - 3. What scaffolding opportunities are utilised now*
  - 4. What scaffolding opportunities could be utilised more*
  - 5. What scaffolding is not happening but could start*
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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: [Scaffolding with AAC](#)<sup>2</sup>

 Phone: 08 9381 0600

 Web: [www.indigosolutions.org.au](http://www.indigosolutions.org.au)

 Email: [help@indigosolution.org.au](mailto:help@indigosolution.org.au)<sup>3</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/09\\_scaffoldingwithaac.pdf](https://www.indigosolutions.org.au/docs/default-source/telethon-resource-sheets/09_scaffoldingwithaac.pdf)

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