

# Communication: Aided Language Stimulation (ALS)



## What is it?

Aided Language Stimulation (ALS) is a teaching strategy used in conjunction with AAC to enhance language learning and communication skills. In ALS, communication partners, such as teachers, therapists, or family members, use the AAC system alongside the user, modeling how to communicate effectively by pointing to symbols or using the device to construct sentences. ALS is essential for demonstrating practical usage of AAC tools, reinforcing vocabulary, and promoting interactive communication.

## Why use it?

By using ALS, teachers and peers can demonstrate practical and functional ways to express thoughts, needs, and ideas. This not only helps AAC users understand how to use their communication tools more effectively but also normalizes the use of AAC within the classroom, promoting an inclusive environment where all communication methods are valued. Additionally, ALS encourages peer interaction and participation, allowing AAC users to engage more fully in classroom activities and social interactions.

## How to use it?

To implement ALS, communication partners like teachers, therapists, or peers use the AAC system alongside the user. They point to symbols or words on the AAC device while speaking some of the corresponding words aloud, but not necessarily every word in the sentence. For example, while discussing a book, they might point to "book," "read," and "like" while saying these words. This modeling shows how to construct sentences and use the device effectively.

## Inclusive classroom example

During a group reading session, the teacher reads a story aloud while simultaneously pointing to corresponding symbols on a large core board displayed at the front of the class. For example, as she says, "The cat is on the mat," she points to the symbols for "cat," "on," and "mat." This not only supports students who use AAC but also reinforces vocabulary and sentence structure for all students, including those learning to read, multilingual learners, and students with unidentified disabilities.

