



{inclusion outreach}

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Supporting Students to Use Voice Output

1. The student should have their device with them at all times.
Often this is the first goal for teams when students have a new device. Brainstorm ways to carry the device and make sure it is always with the student.
2. The device is the student's voice.
Messages should sound as though the student is speaking. When possible, the student should choose both the message and the voice used from the options available. If the choice of voice is being made by their family or educational team, they should choose one which they agree reflects the student's age and gender identity.
3. Messages should be in the first person.
A good message for a student named Sam would be *I have a joke to tell you*, not *Sam has a joke to tell you*.
4. Vocabulary which was important in the past should not be removed.
Previously-important vocabulary such as the name of last year's teacher, or the title of a book the student liked when younger, allows the possibility of talking about the past and reminiscing. These communication styles are often used in schools.
5. The device cannot be removed when it is inconvenient, just as other students' voices cannot be removed.
If the student is loud or disruptive with their device, the team should brainstorm ways to manage this that do not require removing the device or turning down the volume.
6. The device should be used to convey a message to someone else.
The person who receives the message should be someone other than the person who recorded it, and the message should be used for a communicative function. For example, if Ms. D records a message on Lara's device, it should be used to communicate with another person, not just played back to Ms. D.
7. The student should have many opportunities each day to use their device.
8. The student's entire team, including peers, should be included in suggesting programming for the device.

Respect

Competence

Inclusion

Presence

Choice



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Peers will often generate the most fun, useful, and engaging messages.

9. Record messages that make a difference.

The message should be motivating for the student. Keep the messages changing as necessary; novel messages will be more engaging to listeners. The voice output device can be particularly effective when an object or picture is part of the message, to spark others' curiosity.

10. Be spontaneous.

Often the most fun, interesting, and practical uses for voice output come when it is used spontaneously. Look at the activity or situation and think of one thing a peer might say in this situation. Record the message and go!

11. Participation is more important than the message

Some students may not understand their message, and the message itself is not the focus. What is important is the opportunity to participate in activities with peers, engage others in interaction, and have a voice like everyone else.