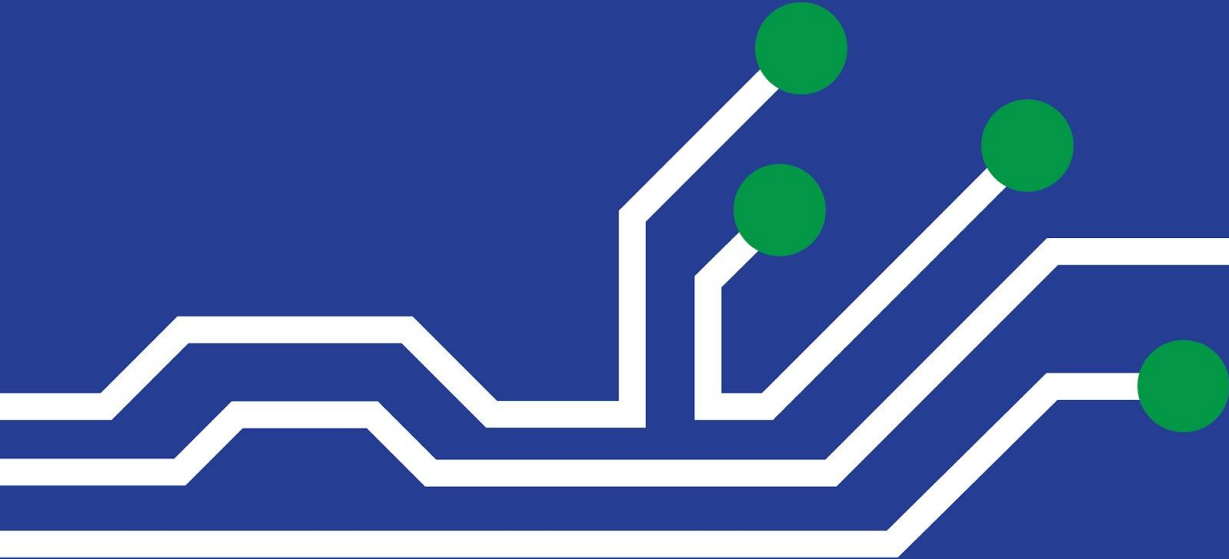


# Assistive Technology (AT) Forward

# AT

FORWARD PROJECT



# Assistive Technology (AT)



AT must be considered for each and every student with an IEP.

## Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

- The term “assistive technology device” means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.
- The term “assistive technology service” means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

## Wisconsin State Statute:

- “Assistive technology service” means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device, including all of the following: (see web page).



# Community of Practice Focus Areas

**Goal:** Improve student autonomy in using assistive technology tools to support access, engagement, and progress in learning.

1. Focus on underserved students.
2. Bridge support to families.
3. Build capacity of educators and CoP members.
4. Develop sustainable systems for ensuring equitable access to assistive technology.



# Achieving Community of Practice Focus Areas



To achieve our focus areas we will . . .

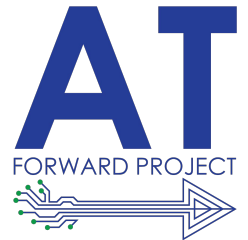
1. Share current information from AT experts including those with lived experiences.
2. Share ideas and foster collaboration among community of practice members.
3. Focus on actionable information and resources that can be used by a wide variety of audiences and skill levels.



# Assistive Technology Forward Resources

The Community of Practice provides members with...

- Free virtual learning and networking
- Access to AT Forward Video Library
- Monthly [AT email updates](#)
- [Micro-credentials](#) in assistive technology
- To join or refer a friend, click on the [AT CoP Registration Form](#).
- More information and resources including legal guidance and best practices on the [DPI AT Forward webpage](#).



# Additional Resources

- AAC assessment support from CASC
- Access to [AT lending centers](#) around the state
- Support from the [Wisconsin AEM Center](#)
- Assistive Technology Lending Center [ATLC](#)



# Partners in Assistive Technology

- [Wisconsin Assistive Technology Network \(WATN\)](#)
- [State Leaders in Assistive Technology Education \(SLATE\)](#)
- [Assistive Technology Council](#)
- [Wisconsin AT4All](#)
- [UDL Forward!](#)



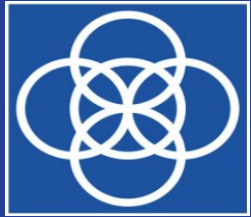
# Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT)

1. Consideration of AT Needs
2. Assessment of AT Needs
3. AT in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)
4. AT Implementation
5. Evaluation of Effectiveness of AT
6. AT in Transition
7. Administrative Support for AT
8. **AT Professional Development**

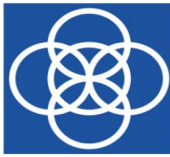


# Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

## Funding Tips & Considerations



# Abygail Marx, MS, CCC-SLP



## Speech Language Pathologist

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Specialist

## Waisman Center AAC Program

University of Wisconsin – Madison

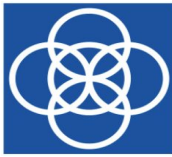
## Communication Aids & Systems Clinic (CASC)

AAC Partnership Program (AAC-PP)

## Communication Development Program (CDP)

ECHO AAC



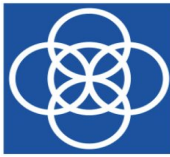


# Learning Objectives



1. Understand the evaluation and funding process for obtaining a Speech Generating Device (SGD) in Wisconsin.
1. Describe at least 2 pitfalls and ethical considerations for SLPs completing the AAC funding process and interdisciplinary teams collaborating in that process.
1. Identify at least 3 resources from AAC vendors and/or other sources that will help you complete the AAC funding process within your own practice.





# Agenda



AAC Funding Process



Pitfalls & Ethics in AAC Assessment



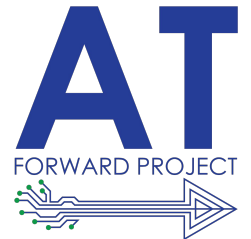
SGD Vendor Resources



Other Evaluation Resources

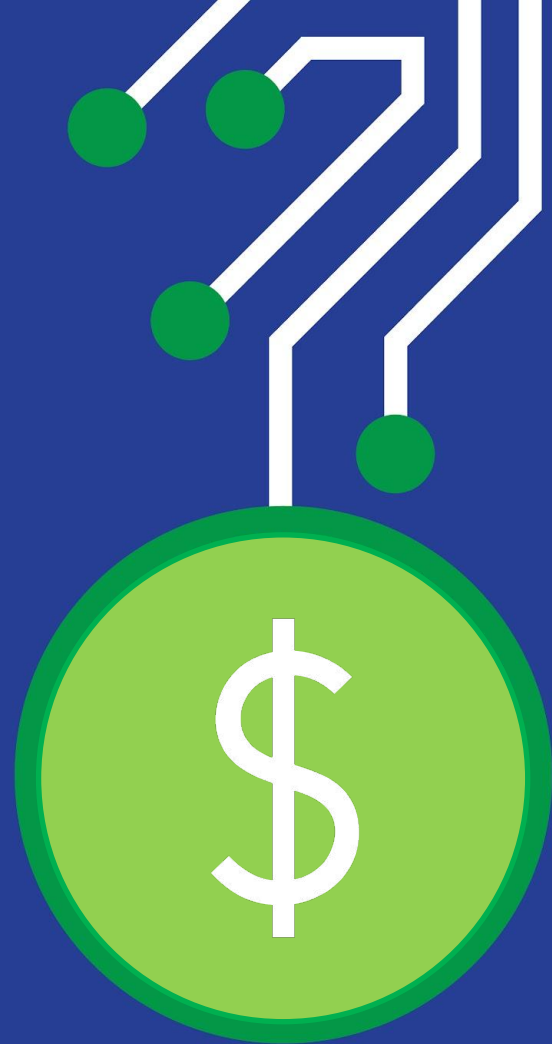


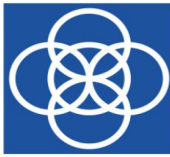
Questions & Discussion



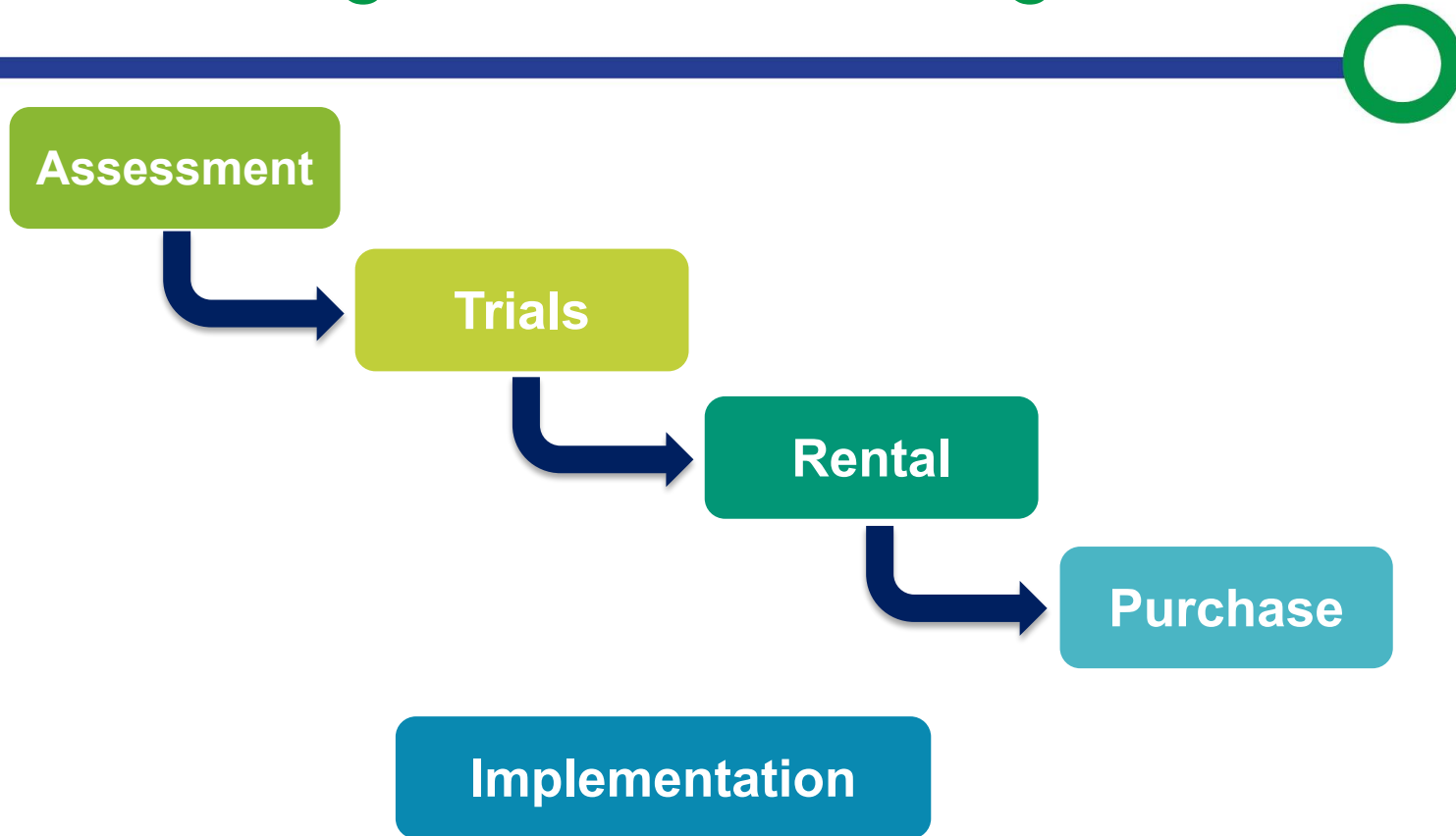


# AAC Funding Process



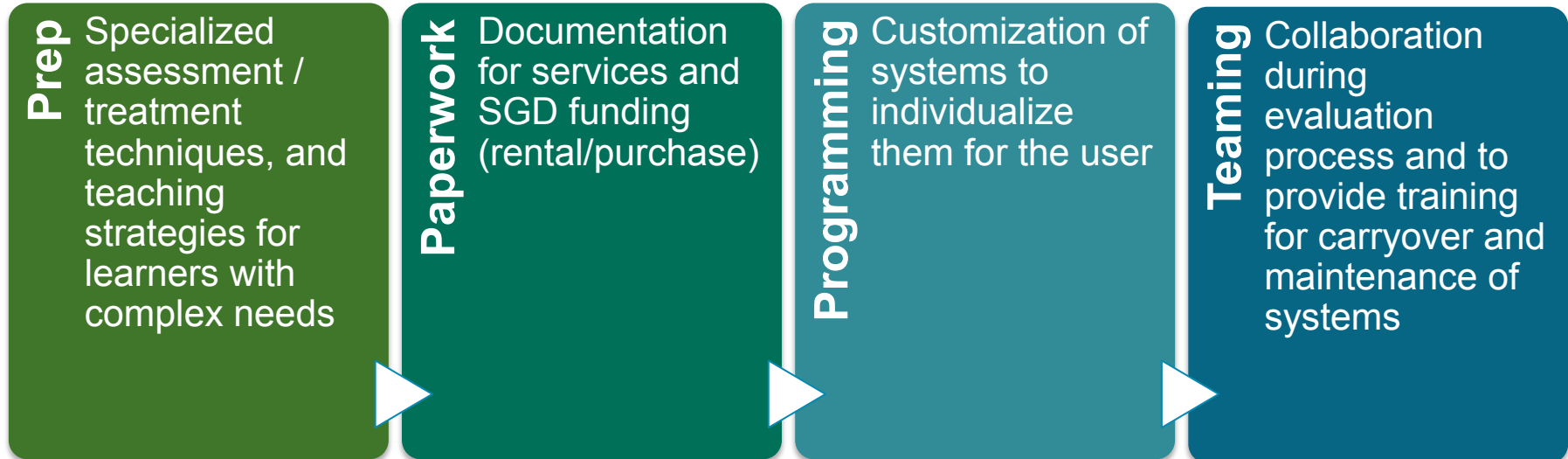
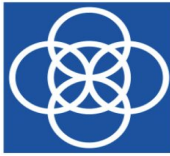


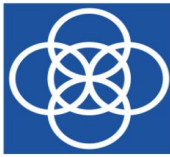
# Obtaining a Device: Funding Process



# Obtaining a Device: Tasks Outside AAC Session (non-billable)

Anderson et al., 2015  
Baxter et al., 2012  
Clarke et al., 2001  
Swanson & Nanof, 2018



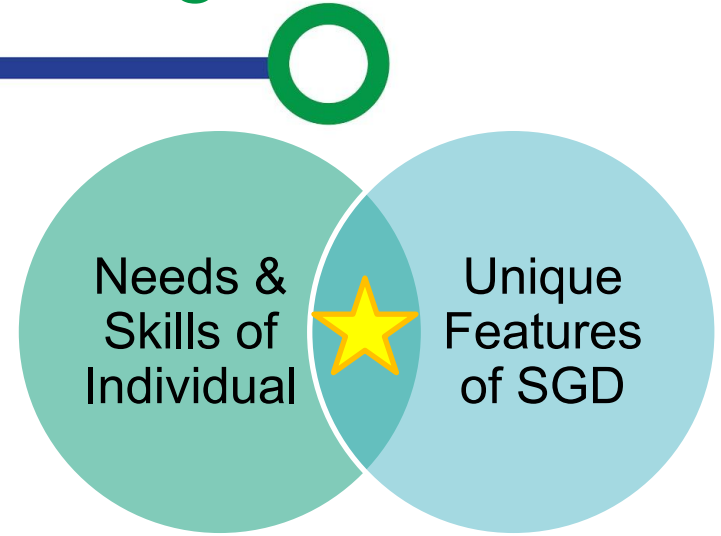


# AAC Assessment: Feature Matching

## Feature Matching = "Gold Standard"

Includes:

- Review of Records (e.g., IEP, other reports)
- Interview
- Dynamic assessment and trials of at least 3 systems
- Opportunity for additional rental period



# AAC Assessment: Before the Evaluation



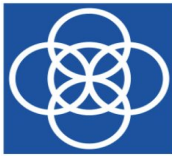
## Complete record review and consider beginning the interview

- Intake forms available through vendors OR create your own

## Can help “narrow down” devices to trial by asking yourself:

- Need for accessories?
- Potential access method?
- Vision / hearing concerns?
- History of certain symbol set?
- Might they need... Motor planning? Full phrases? Dynamic branching?





# Requirements for AAC Assessment

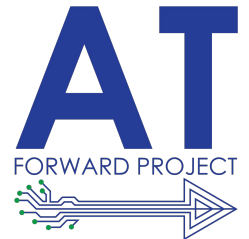


## **Trial of at least 3 different speech generating devices within evaluation**

- Not required to complete a rental of all 3 devices
- Rental often required for first-time SGD users; typically not for updated devices

## **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)**

- Set requirements for AAC evaluation, trials, documentation, and prior authorization (details on upcoming slides)
- Many private insurances / HMOs also follow similar requirements



# Requirements for SGD to be considered Durable Medical Equipment (DME)



## SGDs are DME when they...

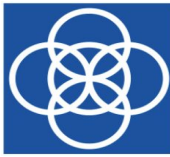
- Provide an individual with a severe speech impairment the ability to meet functional communication needs
- Dedicated | Used solely by an individual with severe speech impairment for communication purposes
- May use digitized (recorded) or synthesized (computerized) speech output

## SGDs are not...

- Non-dedicated computers capable of running software for other purposes
- A device that is useful to someone without severe speech impairment

CMS Pub. 100-03, (Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual), Chapter 1, Section 50.1



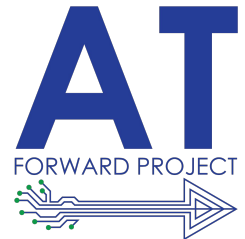


# Requirements for Prior Authorization of SGD

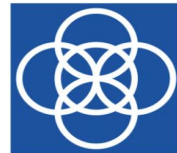


## **Medical Necessity is demonstrated, and SGD is covered when all 7 criteria are met:**

1. Formal evaluation completed by an SLP (see next slide for minimum required elements to include in written evaluation)
2. Medical condition results in a severe expressive speech impairment
3. Speaking needs cannot be met using natural communication methods
4. Other forms of treatment have been considered and ruled out
5. Speech impairment will benefit from the recommended device
6. Treating practitioner (e.g., MD, DO, APNP) receives and agrees with SLP's written evaluation and recommendation
7. Recommending SLP may not be employed by or have a financial relationship with the supplier of the SGD

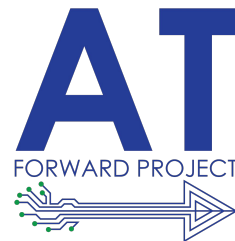


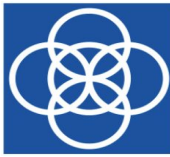
# Requirements for Documentation



## Formal, written SGD evaluation must include:

1. Current communication impairment (type, severity, language skills, cognitive ability, anticipated course of impairment)
2. Assessment of whether daily communication needs can be met using other natural modes of communication
3. Description of functional communication goals and treatment options
4. Rationale for selection of a specific device and accessories (feature matching)
5. Treatment plan for teaching use of selected device
6. Cognitive and physical abilities to effectively use selected device and accessories to communicate
7. For updating/replacement devices: functional benefit of the upgrade compared to the initially provided SGD (e.g., change in status, outdated, broken and unrepairable)





# Funding Considerations: Medical / Insurance coverage

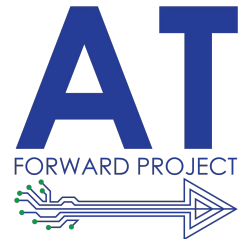


## **Insurances that cover Dedicated Speech Generating Devices (SGD):**

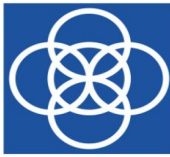
- Medicare (national program, rules the same for every state)
- Medicaid (state program, rules different across states)
- Medicaid Managed by an HMO (required to follow state's Medicaid requirements)

## **Variable coverage of SGD:**

- HMO Only in Wisconsin often means no coverage (also varies by state and HMO)



# Funding Considerations: Alternative Funding Sources

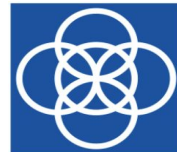


## **Alternative funding sources may purchase AAC:**

- Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP)
- Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Waiver
- Philanthropic Organizations (e.g., Lions or Kiwanis Clubs)
- School Districts (not required to fund SGD, more information on next slides)



# Funding Considerations: Schools



## School Responsibilities for funding:

- B-3 and IDEA are “payers of last resort”
- Medicaid is responsible before schools

Forward Health Update 2004-02: Medicaid as payer of last resort |  
<https://www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/kw/pdf/2004-02.pdf>

**Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare** update  
January 2004 • No. 2004-02  
Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Information for Providers

**To:** All Providers  
HMOs and Other Managed Care Programs

**Medicaid as payer of last resort**  
This *Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Update* reiterates current policy regarding other health insurance billing. These policies apply even when a recipient is enrolled in a state-contracted Managed Care Organization (MCO).

**Other health insurance**  
Except for a few government programs\*, Wisconsin Medicaid is the payer of last resort for most Medicaid-covered services. This applies even when a recipient is enrolled in a state-contracted Managed Care Organization (MCO). Before submitting claims to state-contracted MCOs, providers are normally required to bill other health insurance sources (i.e., commercial health insurance and Medicare). Refer to the Coordination of Benefits section of the All-Provider Handbook for more information about billing other health insurance sources.

**Recipients enrolled in commercial HMOs**  
Except for emergency services, recipients enrolled in a commercial HMO and Wisconsin Medicaid (i.e., state-contracted MCOs or Medicaid fee-for-service) must receive services from providers affiliated with the commercial HMO. When a recipient has commercial HMO coverage, Medicaid providers are required to refer the recipient to commercial HMO providers. This is necessary because commercial health insurance is the primary payer. For more information about emergency services, providers should refer to the Covered and Noncovered Services section of the All-Provider Handbook.

**Verifying recipient eligibility**  
A recipient's other health insurance coverage can be found in Wisconsin Medicaid's Eligibility Verification System (EVS) under "Third Party Liability" or "TPL." If a recipient is enrolled in a state-contracted MCO, it will be indicated in the EVS under "Managed Care Enrollment."

**Obtaining information**  
For questions about this *Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Update*, providers may call Provider Services at (800) 947-9627 or (608) 221-9883.

\* Wisconsin Medicaid is the primary payer before certain governmental programs such as:  
• Birth to 3.  
• The Crime Victim Compensation Fund.  
• General Assistance (GA).  
• The Indian Health Service.  
• Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).  
• Title V of the Social Security Act, Maternal and Child Health Services.  
• The Wisconsin Adult Cystic Fibrosis Program.  
• The Wisconsin Chronic Renal Disease Program.  
• The Wisconsin Hemophilia Program.

PHC 1250

Department of Health and Family Services

# Funding Considerations: Schools



## Financial Responsibility Form

- Signed by parents to acknowledge schools are not required to cover recommended devices if denied by insurance

Example courtesy of Tobii Dynavox

School  
Date

Speech Device Recommendation/Responsibility Statement

This statement is to attest that we believe \_\_\_\_\_ would benefit from the use of a speech device. It has been determined that a recommendation be made through home insurance to acquire this device.

If the determining body deems the device is not medically necessary, or if financial limitations prohibit the purchase of the equipment, then other alternatives to the device may be used. These alternatives may include obtaining the recommended device, obtaining a different device, or finding other means of communication that will benefit the student.

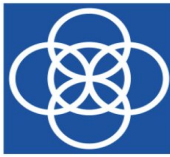
I, \_\_\_\_\_, attest that I am the legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ and release the school from obligation to obtain the specific device recommended. I understand that the recommendation occurred as a means to improve communication, and alternative devices or resources may serve as an equal replacement if a denial occurs. I also understand that this does not mean an abandonment of communication, but rather a re-opening of ideas on what may serve the student the best.



# Pitfalls and Ethical Considerations in AAC Assessment



# Pitfalls with Speech Generating Apps (SGAs)



Use caution with free communication apps that lack evidence-base and are not created by communication specialists

## **Apps with Dedicated SGD**

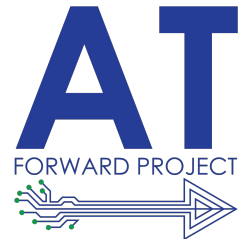
### **Counterpart:**

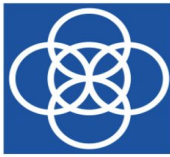
- Touch Chat HD
- TD Snap
- Compass
- LAMP Words For Life
- Grid for iPad
- Predictable

## **Apps without Dedicated SGD**

### **Vendor:**

- Go Talk Now
- Proloquo2Go
- Cough Drop
- Quick Talk AAC
- Avaz
- Sounding Board



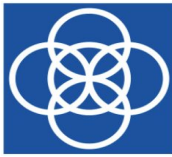


# Pitfalls with SGD Vendors



- Be cautious about primarily relying on vendors who are most responsive
- Trying 3 devices within the same company doesn't really count
- Never sign a report written by someone else
- Ask for a second opinion or additional support from other professionals if you need it

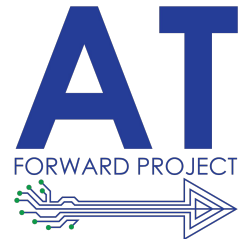




# Other Pitfalls / Ethical Considerations



- Maintaining the integrity of the language system vs. customization for motivation, user preference, style, and personality
- Effective interprofessional practice is essential to leverage different expertise and scopes of practice within the AAC assessment
- Watch out for any “Conflict of Interest” when working with vendors, funding sources, etc.
  - ASHA Code of Ethics | <https://www.asha.org/code-of-ethics/>

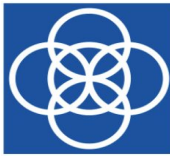




# SGD Vendor Resources



# SGD Vendor Resources: Prentke Romich Company (PRC)



## Website

<https://www.prentrom.com>

## Find Your Rep

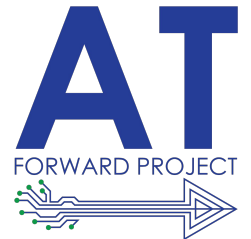
(search by zip code or interactive map)

<https://www.prentrom.com/prc-advantage/prc-regional-consultants>

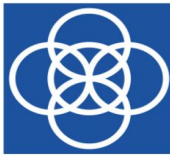
## Wisconsin Rep

Christopher Yensan

[christopher.yensan@prc-salttillo.com](mailto:christopher.yensan@prc-salttillo.com)



# SGD Vendor Resources: Saltillo



## Website

<http://saltillo.com>

## Find Your Rep

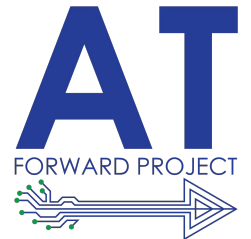
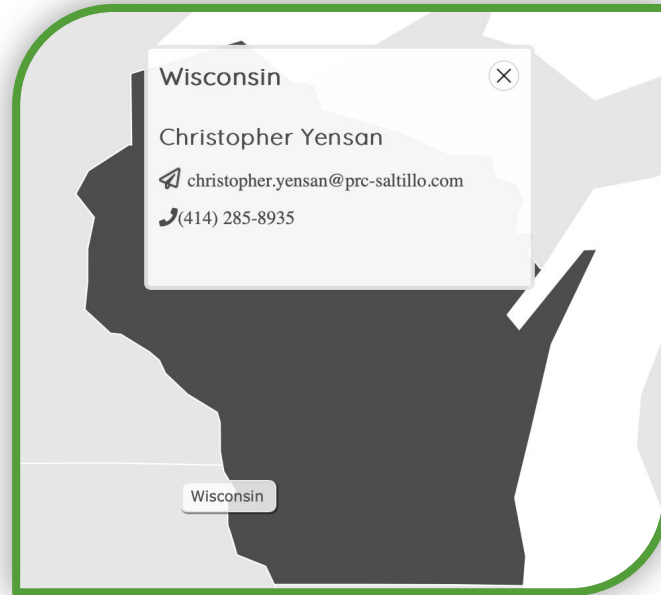
(search by zip code or interactive map)

<https://saltillo.com/rep>

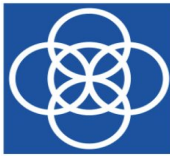
## Wisconsin Rep

Christopher Yensan

[christopher.yensan@prc-saltillo.com](mailto:christopher.yensan@prc-saltillo.com)



# SGD Vendor Resources: SmartBox Assistive Technology



## Website

<https://thinksmartbox.com>

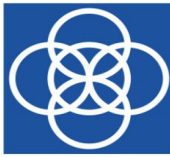
## Request In-Person or Virtual Rep Support

(complete online form)

<https://thinksmartbox.com/what-we-do/request-a-visit/>



# SGD Vendor Resources: Talk To Me Technologies



## Website

<https://www.talktometechnologies.com>

## Find Your Rep

(complete online form)

<https://www.talktometechnologies.com/pages/contact-a-speech-language-pathologist-aac-consultant>

## Wisconsin Rep

Christie Witt

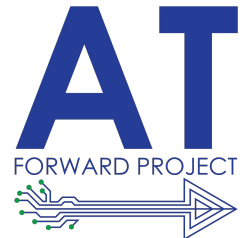
[christie@talktometechnologies.com](mailto:christie@talktometechnologies.com)

**wego A™**  
Communicate in style!  
Powerful, portable and flexible.  
5", 7", 10", 13"

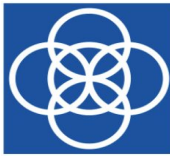
**wegowrite™**  
Next Generation  
Type-To-Talk.

**zuvu™**  
Powerful, flexible  
and sleek.  
10", 12" and 16"

**eyespeak™**  
Say it with your eyes!  
Eye-tracking communication systems with eyespeak™, eyespeak  
all™ or eyespeak inspo.™  
12" and 16"



# SGD Vendor Resources: Tobii Dynavox



## Website

<https://www.tobiidynavox.com>

<https://www.mytobiidynavox.com>

## Find Your Rep

(search by zip code)

<https://us.tobiidynavox.com/pages/find-a-solutions-consultant>

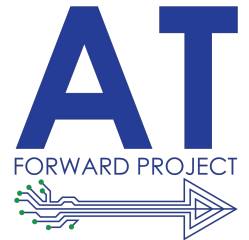
## Wisconsin Reps

Bob Penshorn | Western WI

[bob.penshorn@tobiidynavox.com](mailto:bob.penshorn@tobiidynavox.com)

Kellie Bews | Eastern WI

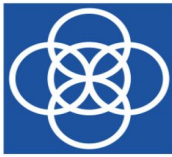
[kellie.bews@tobiidynavox.com](mailto:kellie.bews@tobiidynavox.com)





# Other Evaluation Resources





# Finding AAC Resources by State



## **Assistive Technology Act of 1998, Revised 2004**

- Federal grants that support each state in addressing the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities (including AAC)

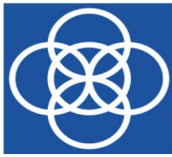
## **National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training (AT3) Center**

- Information about state AT Program(s), device loans, demos, and reutilization, and financial information and supports
- <https://www.at3center.net>, Click: "State / Territory AT Programs"

## **Wisconsin's AT Center:**

- Wisconsin Assistive Technology Program (WisTech)  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wistech/index.htm>





# Assistive Tech Lending Center (ATLC)



## The ATLC library's new website:

<https://wisconsinat4all.com/>

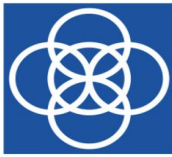
## To access communication equipment:

- Register by clicking "Create account"
- Login with newly created account
- Click on Speech Communication (Program field should fill in as ATLC)

## Questions or problems?

Contact [donna.hutson@cesa2.org](mailto:donna.hutson@cesa2.org) or call 262.473.1449





# ASHA Resources for AAC



## Practice Portal

<https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Augmentative-and-Alternative-Communication/>

## Continuing Education

<https://www.asha.org/ce/>

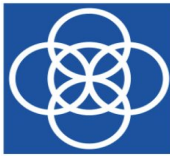
## SIG 12: Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

<https://www.asha.org/SIG/12/About-SIG-12/>

## Perspectives

<https://perspectives.pubs.asha.org>





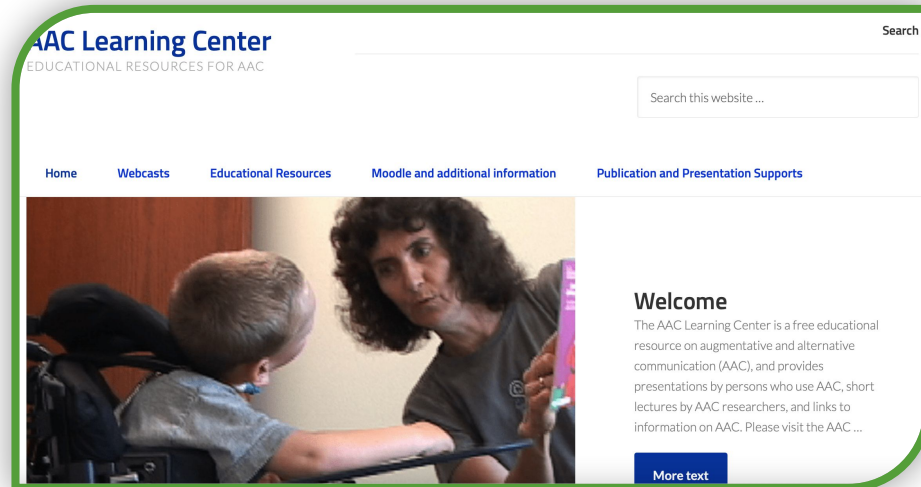
# Penn State AAC Learning Center

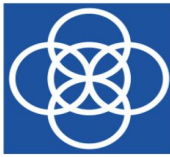


<https://aac-learning-center.psu.edu>

## Educational Resources for AAC:

- Webcasts
- Moodle
- Publications





# AAC Assessment Resources for Schools

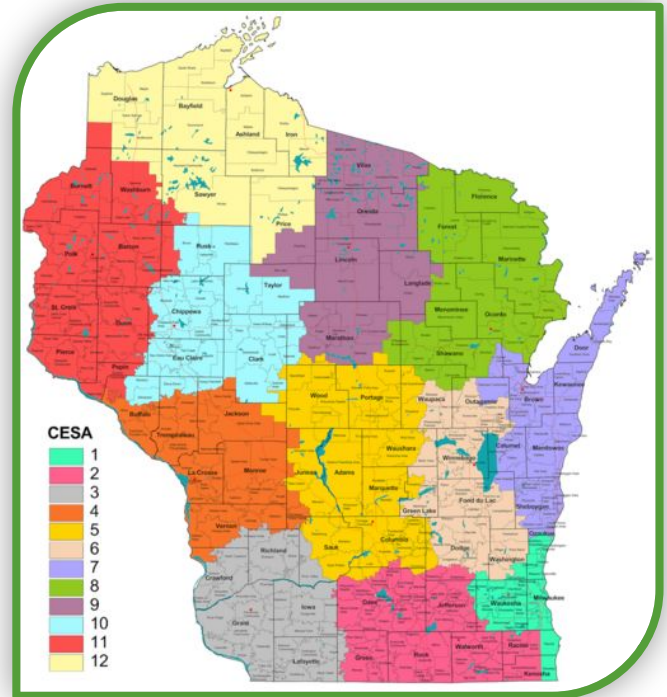
CESA or District Assistive Technology  
Specialists / Teams

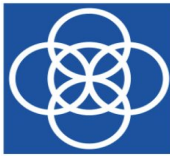
## Find Your CESA

<https://dpi.wi.gov/cst/data-collections/school-directory/directory-data/published-data/dist-by-cesa>

## CESA Contact Information

<https://dpi.wi.gov/cesa>





# Feature Matching Resources



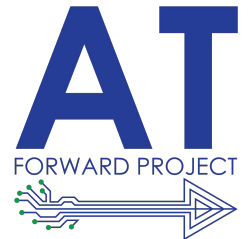
## Feature Matching Comparison Chart

<https://praacticalaac.org/practical/practical-resources-feature-matching-chart/>

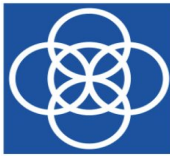
**Vendors** (Caution: Limited to single company's products)

**CESA and State Lending Libraries** (Sometimes may be older versions)

**iPad Apps** (Non-dedicated, limited access methods, restricted options)



# Feature Matching Resources: Tele / Remote Assessments



## **PRC-Salttillo AAC TeleTips**

<https://www.prc-salttillo.com/classes/aacteletips/>

## **Tobii Dynavox Virtual Assessments**

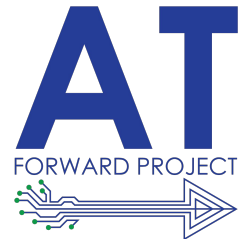
<https://www.tobiidynavox.com/en-US/aac-virtual-assessments/>

## **Talk To Me Technologies Remote Support**

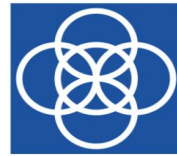
<https://www.talktometechnologies.com/pages/remote-aac-and-speech-therapy>

## **Forbes AAC Teletherapy Assessment Program**

<https://www.forbesaac.com/teletherapy-assessment-programs>



# Feature Matching Resources: AAC Partnership Program



## Waisman Center AAC Partnership Program

<https://ucedd.waisman.wisc.edu/aac-partnership-program/>

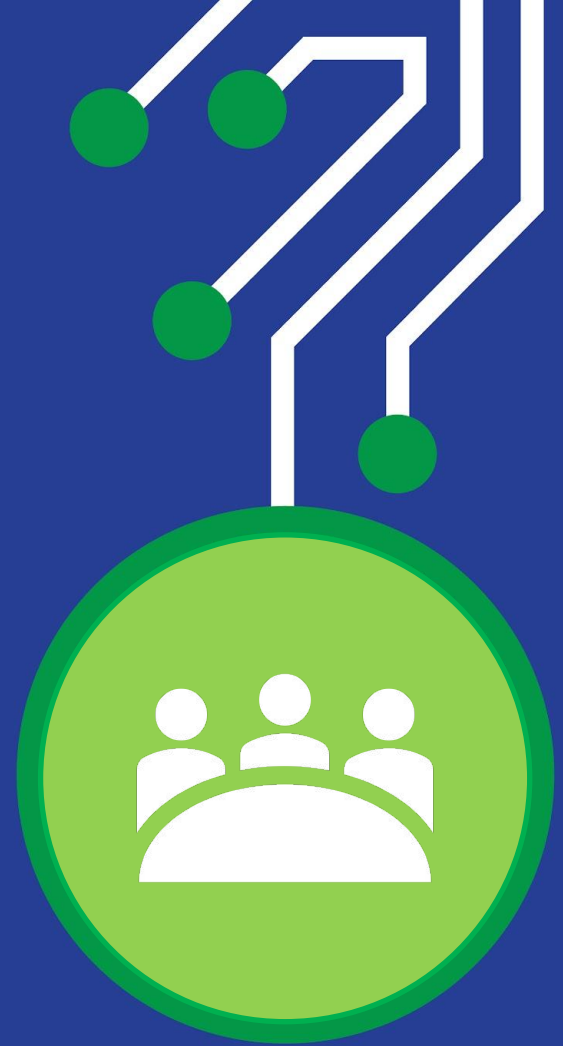
Collaboration with local school / outpatient SLP in process:

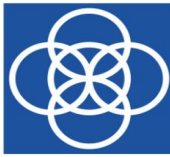
- AAC Partnership Program Agreement between family/client, SLP, and CASC
- Pre-evaluation phone consultation or intake form
- Attendance at evaluation (in-person or virtually)





# Questions & Discussion





# References



Anderson, K.L., Balandin, S., & Stancliffe, R.J. (2015). Alternative service delivery models for families with a new speech generating device Perspectives of parents and therapists. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 17(2), 185-195.

Baxter, S., Enderby, P., Judge, S., Evans, P. (2012). Barriers and facilitators to use of high technology augmentative and alternative communication devices: a systematic review and qualitative synthesis. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders*, 47(2), 115-129. ISSN 1368-2822

Clarke M, McConachie H, Price K, Wood P. Views of young people using augmentative and alternative communication systems. *Int J Lang Communication Disorders* 2001 Jan-Mar;36(1):107-15. PMID: 11221427.

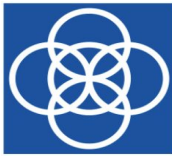
CMS Pub. 100-03, (Medicare National Coverage Determinations Manual), Chapter 1, Section 50.1

Forward Health Update 2004-02: Medicaid as payer of last resort | <https://www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/kw/pdf/2004-02.pdf>

Swanson, N. & Nanof, T. (2018). Device Documentation: Follow these guidelines when documenting and billing for speech-generating device evaluation and treatment. *The ASHA Leader*, 23, 32-33.



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Link [bit.ly/widpisurvey](https://bit.ly/widpisurvey)

Passcode: **AACfunding59960**

