



Many families are interested in exploring the iPad as a communication device for their child with special needs. The iPad with an appropriate communication app can be a very valuable communication tool for many children, but it is not necessarily the best tool for everyone. Some clients may need a device that requires less controlled movement than an iPad. Others may have more success with a simpler device, or with a means of communication that does not use technology at all, such as a communication board or book. Some clients may do better with a device whose only function is communication, rather than a device that serves many different purposes, such as the iPad.

Talk to your child's speech-language pathologist if you are not sure about the best augmentative communication approach for your child. Therapists can request consultation through our All About AAC service to find out about different options. Eligible clients can be assessed in CAC to determine the best AAC approach to meet their needs.

If you do wish to explore the use of the iPad for augmentative communication, and are considering making a referral to CAC, it is important to understand the role of the CAC team in recommending and supporting iPads:

1. CAC can only recommend an iPad and communication app after a thorough assessment of the client's communication needs and abilities. Depending on what we find during this assessment, we may recommend an iPad, another communication device, or no device at all.
2. If you purchase a communication device (including an iPad with a communication app) before your CAC assessment, you will not be able to receive funding for it through the Assistive Devices Program (ADP). If the device you purchased is meeting your child's basic communication needs, you may not be eligible for ADP funding for other communication devices, and CAC involvement may be limited. We are unable to provide support or training for devices we did not recommend, but we would be happy to share some written resources with you or provide you with links to on-line resources.
3. ADP will only provide funding for an iPad and communication app together as a bundle. If you already own an iPad, there is no ADP funding available to purchase just a communication app.
4. CAC can only recommend an iPad with a communication app that is approved by ADP. At present, the following apps are ADP-approved: Proloquo2go, Proloquo4text, Predictable, LAMP Words for Life, Touchchat, TouchchatHD w/wordpower, Compass, and Compass w/Podd. CAC staff may be able to provide you with some information about other apps, but we cannot assess these apps with your child or prescribe them for you.
5. CAC can only prescribe a communication device (including the iPad with an approved app) to meet everyday, functional communication needs at home or in the community. We cannot prescribe communication devices for use solely at school.
6. CAC cannot prescribe an iPad if it will be used primarily as a tool for language development, learning or recreation. To find out more about using an iPad for functions other than communication, you can talk to our Technical Services team or visit the OCTC lending library.