Facilitating Collaboration: Roles and Responsibilities of the Team in Designing AAC

Note: This is not intended as a comprehensive list of roles/responsibilities or team members, but rather as a resource for effective collaborative teaming.

Name and Role	Roles and Responsibilities (examples)
Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI)	o Complete FVA and LMA o Share results of FVA, LMA, and clinical vision reports with team and implications for AAC design o Guide team in designing tactile/visual adaptations o Guide the team in determining additional considerations for access to AAC including: optical devices, positioning and seating, lighting and other environmental considerations o Provide the team with input on communication goals specific to children with visual impairments/additional disabilities, and the use of visually descriptive vocabulary (It is OK to use visual language with a student who is blind/visually impaired! Just be sure that the student has a functional understanding of what it means!) o Provide the team with input on selecting vocabulary to address skills across the areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum o Assist in designing and creating adaptations
Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)	o Complete Communication Evaluation/Assessment and share results of the student's communication strengths across various environments and partners o Collaborate with team members to determine the type(s) of functional AAC systems to trial during the assessment process o Consider messaging and vocabulary formats (and organization) when designing potential AAC systems, and provide the team with input on selection of vocabulary o Document and update AAC systems based on ongoing assessment and feedback from team members o Consult with outside agencies/SLPs related to additional AAC support and assessment o Assist in design and creation of adaptations
Classroom Teacher	**The teacher can often be the educational team leader, and is often responsible for facilitating communication between team members, as well as creating the structure of educational routines and activities.** o Lead the classroom team in carrying out AAC design and consistent implementation across the school day: **set expectations and communicate roles and responsibilities** o Provide the team with input on relevant routines, activities, social experiences and educational goals to support the selection of meaningful, relevant student-centered vocabulary and adaptations o Assist in selecting vocabulary and creating adaptations

Paraprofessional or Intervener	The paraprofessional often knows the student's educational routines best! o Provide the team with additional input on relevant routines, activities, social experiences and educational goals to support the selection of meaningful, relevant student-centered vocabulary and adaptations o Assist in selecting vocabulary and creating adaptations
Occupational Therapist (OT)	o Provide the team with input on fine motor goals and challenges and implications for AAC design including: grasp and reflexes, use of fingers and hands (bilateral integration, hand dominance, hand-eye coordination, wrist stability, thumb opposition, finger strength and isolation of fingers) o Provide the team with additional input regarding the sensory status of the student and how this may affect AAC design including: sensory integration difficulties, stereognosis (ability to perceive an object by touch) o Provide the team with additional suggestions for adaptive supports for access: slant boards, adaptations to grip, texture/type of material, orthotics and other physical supports o Assist in design and creation of adaptations
Physical Therapist (PT)	o Provide the team with input on gross motor goals and challenges and implications for AAC design including: crossing midline, head and neck support as it affects visual and tactile access, low/high muscle tone o Provide the team with additional suggestions for adaptive supports for access: adaptations to seating (Rifton chairs, classroom chairs) and tables or desks, postural supports including neck, trunk, arm supports (individually created or pre-made) o Assist in design and creation of adaptations that provide increased physical access and stability
Teacher for the Deaf (TOD/HH)	o Carry out communication-related assessments and provide relevant information on results to the team o Collaborate with team members on the impact of a combined sensory impairment related to communication, language, and concept development o Work with an audiologist and share information related to assistive technology that can enhance the student's residual hearing (if applicable) o Assist in design and creation of adaptations when appropriate
Orientation & Mobility Instructor (O&M, COMS)	o Provide the team with input on safe travel/O&M skills and goals that may impact vocabulary selection and design including: routines and routes, familiar places, specific words used in assisted and independent travel (cane, sighted/human guide, modes of transport, directions, terminology) o Provide the team with recommendations and guide the design of AAC to be used within O&M activities and travel routines, including labeling familiar routes o Assist in design and creation of adaptations including integrating opportunities for use of AAC in travel routes and routines

Parent/Caregiver	**The Parent/Caregiver can be the most important, consistent member of the team and is often the "voice" or advocate for the student.** o Initiate request for an AAC system o Offer expectations, priorities, hopes for student's communication goals and outcomes o Identify environments where an AAC system could be implemented across the day (not just at school), including related vocabulary needs o Reinforce school use of an AAC system at home
Student	**The student is the <u>center</u> of the team, and drives individualized AAC design and implementation** o Possesses unique communication skills that may be augmented through access to alternative system(s) of communication o Shows interest and motivation for topics, partners, activities that guides team members in selecting specific messages for AAC systems o Has distinct, observable sensory preferences that guide team members in providing efficient access to an AAC system (symbol type, output type, organization/location of systems and messages within those systems) o Assist in design and creation of adaptations when appropriate
School Psychologist / Social Worker	o Conduct individualized psychological/academic assessments and interpret results/data. o Offer input to team members related to the student's functional skills across (but not limited to) cognitive, social, emotional, communication, daily living, motor, sensory domains o Communicate with outside AAC providers
Audiologist	o Complete ongoing hearing testing and share results of audiology evaluation (with and/or without amplification) o Offer recommendations on assistive technology related to maximizing residual hearing, and how this technology may synchronize with high(er) tech AAC devices.
School Administrator	o Support collaborative team efforts by providing time to meet and work on adaptations and design elements o Facilitate role responsibility when necessary