

New Challenges and New Opportunities in AAC

Improving outcomes for individuals with complex communication needs

Janice Light, David McNaughton, David Beukelman, Susan Koch Fager, Melanie Fried-Oken, Thomas Jakobs & Erik Jakobs discuss the significant advances the AAC field has made, the remaining challenges that must be addressed, and the key priorities for the future.

Advances in the field

The field has made significant advances in the approximately 40 years since its inception.



The increased provision of AAC services to a much greater number of individuals with CCN



The explosion of technologies in society, especially for use as communication supports



The increased scope and options for communication within society



The increased expectations for individuals with CCN

Key challenges that remain

Despite these advances, key challenges remain that must be addressed.



The continued marginalization of individuals with the most severe disabilities



The need for research-driven technology development



The limited number of researchers and tech developers with AAC expertise



The gap between research and everyday practice

Future needs

In order to meet these challenges and move the field forward, the following future directions are priorities.



Increase collaboration between ALL stakeholders, especially to meet the needs of individuals who are underserved



Expand the functionality of AAC technology so individuals can be FULL participants in society



Increase AAC research and research-driven technology development



Leverage new and innovative technologies



Investigate technology optimization and precision AAC to BETTER meet the unique needs and skills of individuals with CCN