Agenda

Step 1: Problem-Solving
Step 2: Domain
Step 3: Eligibility
Step 4: Trials
Step 5: Yes/No
Step 6: Modifying the IEP

Adding Timeline

Pre-Domain  Domain  Post-Domain
Step 1: Problem - Solving Framework

Starting Place

Student may come to this phase of the Problem-Solving Framework from a number of different situations including:

- No formal AAC in place
- Limited AAC in place (may include classroom supports)
- Changing needs have rendered current AAC inappropriate
- Changing environments indicate need to reconsider AAC supports
Framework for Conceptualization

- Many teams utilize the SETT Framework by Joy Zabala
- The SETT Framework considers What We Know and What We Would Like to Know in the areas of
  - Student
  - Environment
  - Tasks
  - Tools
- To find more information about this framework, see the website http://www.joyzabala.com/

Framework for Conceptualizations: 6 Steps

- Parent/Legal Guardian Permissions
- Type of Meeting Needed
- Documentation
- IEP Documentation (*optional)
- Additional Considerations

Step 1: Problem-Solving Procedures:

- Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Needed:
  - Parents/Legal Guardians are an essential team member during the problem-solving process
  - Parent/Legal Guardian permission may be needed regarding observations/screenings at this time
- Type of Meeting Needed:
  - An informal problem-solving meeting with key team members, with a recommendation to include parents/legal guardians as key team members, in order to add/discuss/problem solve through information available and information that needs to be obtained
  - If this coincides with an upcoming Annual Review, this discussion can take place concurrently with the Annual Review within the Special Factors - Assistive Technology section

During these problem-solving meetings, it’s essential to consider:

- What has been working?
- What interventions have been tried?
- Have no-tech to high-tech systems been introduced?
- Review quantitative data, if there is none at this time, then determine what data needs to be collected.
- What is the family's vision for their child?
- Are there additional cultural and linguistic factors to consider in the process?
Step 1: Problem-Solving Procedures Cont’d:

- **Documentation:**
  - The Center on Technology in Education and Media Division on the Council for Exceptional Children (2005) recommends for 5 tasks to occur before making an assistive technology decision including when conversations are occurring within the timeline of the typical Annual Review schedule:
    - Reviewing the student’s academic skills, functional capability, and available evaluation data.
    - Developing annual goals, including objectives and benchmarks when appropriate.
    - Examining tasks required of the student to participate and progress in educational settings.
    - Evaluating the difficulty of the tasks and the student’s functional ability to perform tasks.
    - Identifying services and supports, including AT, that enable the student to participate and achieve. (p.19)

- **Information at this step in the process can guide a well informed Domain meeting as well as future AAC evaluations and include:**
  - Student Environment Task Tools (SETT) or other problem-solving framework paperwork
  - Data collected from modalities used to date
  - Any observed benefit or lack of benefit from previously implemented supports

- **IEP Documentation -**
  - If an Annual Review occurs during this stage, document progress in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) and Special Factors/AT Considerations
  - Check with your district’s preference regarding how to add this information into the students academic record if outside of the Annual Review Cycle. Suggestions may include: Parent Contacts, Additional Notes, Meetings, Addendum including documents in the AT considerations section
  - Hold on to all SETT documents, including data, to include in the assessment report
  - Only indicate AT needs within goals, related services, supplemental aids, testing accommodations, and support for service personnel for current, proven supports through AT, not for hypothesized supports or supports that are currently in the process of trial

- **Additional Consideration for Step 1: Problem-Solving Procedures may include:**
  - Inquiring regarding your district’s ability to support AT consultation/evaluation
  - Discussing your district’s guidelines on permission regarding observation, screening, and evaluation
  - Training for staff in order to collect essential data
  - Obtaining data as it will be essential for driving future directions -> evaluations, report writing, determining AT necessity within the IEP, and obtaining devices
Step 2: Domain

Procedures:

- **Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Needed:**
  - Yes! Parents/Legal Guardians need to give permission for further testing as outlined in the domain document.

- **Type of Meeting Needed:**
  - This meeting will be a Domain meeting with the purpose of gathering parent/legal guardian permission for testing regarding the AAC process.

- **Documentation:**
  - Invitation 10 days notice, indicating the purpose of the meeting (i.e. Review Existing Data - review your child's educational status and determine what additional data, if any, are needed to complete your child's evaluation)
  - Signature form
  - Completed Domain page with all nine domain areas considered
  - Permission for initial/re-evaluation form
  - Procedural Safeguards
  - Other District required documents
Procedures:

- IEP Documentation:
  - Consider Relevant Areas
    - For communication include what is attainable within the 60 days and will bring relevant information to guide the AAC evaluation and selection process
    - Feature matching
    - Baseline of skills of operational, linguistic, cognitive, and strategic competence
  - Motor - for access and positioning
  - Vision - for considerations on size, symbols, formatting (i.e., colors/background/lighting)
  - Health - regarding medically relevant information (i.e., concerning prognostic indicators)
  - Other areas as needed

Additional Consideration(s):

- If this falls outside of the three year re-evaluation cycle
  - Ask the team if they would like to evaluate in any other areas
  - Ask the team if they would like to complete a full evaluation and update the three year evaluation cycle
  - Ask the team if the current evaluation, within the three year cycle, continues to accurately inform the eligibility
  - If the team does not want to offset the original three year-evaluation cycle, then indicate in all non-relevant domains that no further testing is needed secondary to the answers of the above questions

Additional Consideration(s):

- If this falls within the three year re-evaluation cycle
  - Complete the domain documentation as typical with additional information to include the necessary AAC evaluation
    - Example: Communication domain may include testing for receptive language, expressive language, functional communication and feature matching to inform most appropriate AAC system
    - Example: Motor domain may include testing for fine motor, self care and sensory processing abilities as well as for most appropriate access to AAC device

Step 3: Eligibility
Procedures:

- **Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Needed:**
  - Yes! Parents/Legal Guardians must agree with the conference recommendations (eligibility, and they may either agree to waive or not agree to waive the requirement of a ten school day interval before an initial or change in placement occurs).

- **Type of Meeting Needed:**
  - Initial/Reevaluation and Eligibility Determination Meeting

Additional Consideration(s):

- If this falls outside of the three year re-evaluation cycle AND the team **DID NOT** complete a full evaluation:
  - The IEP team will consider eligibility at every Eligibility Determination Conference, however, the team will likely not have sufficient information to change current eligibility
  - Make sure the dates of this evaluation does not offset the date of the student's next 3 year evaluation cycle

Procedures

- **Documentation:**
  - Invitation 10 days notice, indicating the purpose of the meeting (i.e. Initial/Reevaluation)
  - Procedural Safeguards
  - Documentation of Evaluation Results
  - Eligibility Determination
  - Parent/Legal Guardian Notification of Conference Recommendations
  - Other District required documents

Additional Consideration(s):

- If this falls within the three year reevaluation cycle, or other team member(s) decided to evaluate in another area
  - The eligibility may change, but it would **NOT** be because the student would benefit from an AAC device
  - If a full three year reevaluation was completed, then the dates for the next three year reevaluation are correct
Additional Consideration(s):

- Remember, for the Documentation of Evaluation Results, the relevant areas addressed in the domain are the areas that are reported on.
- Information about the features of the AAC Device (low to high tech) are being reported, **no** mention of a specific brand name or product should be documented.

Step 4: Trial(s)

Procedures:

- **Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Needed:**
  - Parents/Legal Guardians are an essential member of the AT team and will have input regarding results of evaluation and device(s) trialed
  - If device is traveling between the district and home during the trial, which is recommended, your district may create a form for responsibility of device while at home and for transitions
  - Depending on source of obtaining the device, districts may request for parents/legal guardians to sign off on responsibility for the device such as for IATP, Infinitec and through company specific loans

- **Type of Meeting Needed:**
  - Parents/Legal Guardians will need to be a vital part of the whole process. In many cases, a discussion regarding trials has already taken place at the time of the Eligibility Determination Meeting when results of the evaluation were discussed. This information regarding next steps can be added into the meeting notes of the Eligibility Determination meeting.
  - Upon the completion of device trial(s), it will typically be determined how to move forward: request a device, the need for further device trails, or no device is needed at this time.
  - Your district will determine if a separate, official meeting needs to take place.
  - If a separate, informal meeting occurs, confirm with your district how to document the meeting. Possible means of documenting may include: Parent Contacts, Additional Notes, Meetings, Addendum including documents in the AT considerations section if outside of the typical Annual Review cycle
Procedures:

- Documentation:
  - Collecting Data (including data collection forms recommendations here)
  - Gather information to complete Medicaid/Insurance report
  - Why devices were ruled out

Additional Consideration(s):

- Make clear Responsibilities during trials
- Use
- Training
- Charging
- Transportation (insert chart here)
- Data collection (sheets here)
- In case of damage
- Returning device at the end of the trial
- Determine when the trial(s) will end and how to discuss the results

"Simply giving a child a board or device will not make him or her a communicator any more than simply getting a piano will make him or her a musician or getting a basketball will make him or her an athlete."


Step 5: Yes
Procedures:

- **Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Needed:**
  - Confirm that the parent/legal guardian, a member of the team, is in agreement with the device that is chosen upon review of the data.
  - If the team is going through Medicaid or private insurance, the parent/legal guardian will need to sign documents including:
    - Assignment of Benefits
  - If the team is going through Medicaid or private insurance, the district may consider a signed, written agreement of use for school/home with a transportation agreement and responsibility of use while in use at school.
  - If the district is purchasing the device, consider a form of responsibility for transportation and home use.

- **Type of Meeting Needed:**
  - This information was likely gathered at the time of trial data review.
  - An informal meeting may be necessary to gather parent/legal guardian signature for necessary documents indicated above if not gathered earlier.
  - If an informal meeting takes place, consider the following examples to document the meeting including: Parent Contacts, Additional Notes, Meetings, Addendum including documents in the AT considerations section if outside of the typical Annual Review cycle.

- **Documentation:**
  - Complete report including the results of the trial(s)
  - Complete necessary documents for funding source
  - Consider/prepare a Plan of Implementation upon the receipt of device including:
    - Training
    - Set up of device
    - Action Plan of Where, When, How the device will be used
    - Contingency plan if the device is lost or damaged
    - Plan for monitoring success

Procedures:

- **Type of Meeting Needed:**
  - This information was likely gathered at the time of trial data review.
  - An informal meeting may be necessary to gather parent/legal guardian signature for necessary documents indicated above if not gathered earlier.
  - If an informal meeting takes place, consider the following examples to document the meeting including: Parent Contacts, Additional Notes, Meetings, Addendum including documents in the AT considerations section if outside of the typical Annual Review cycle.

Additional Consideration(s):

- Depending on the funding source this may take a period of time
- Create a timeframe for completion of documents and responsibilities for each document
- Consider how the student will communicate while waiting for the device
  - District device with comparable hardware/software
  - Rental through IATP, Infinitec, or company
  - App based, comparable support
Step 5: No

Procedures:

- **Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Needed:**
  - It is important the student and their family is included in this decision and that they are in agreement with the rest of the IEP team

- **Type of Meeting Needed:**
  - This decision may have been discussed at the time of the data trial review. If not, an additional informal meeting may be necessary to discuss the decision to not move forward in requesting a SGD at this time.

- **Documentation:**
  - This may have been documented at the time of the review of trial data. If not, be sure to document the results of the trial and the decision made by the team. Depending on your district’s preference, this information may be documented:
    - In Additional Documents section of the IEP
    - In an addendum, by updating the AT considerations section of the IEP
    - In an addendum, by updating the PLAAFP section and AT considerations section of the IEP
    - In the next Annual Review in the PLAAFP section and AT considerations section of the IEP

Additional Consideration(s):

- There may be many reasons why a team decides not to move forward with obtaining a device at the end of an evaluation/trial this may include:
  - Significant change in environment, medical, or academic status
  - Lack of documented success of use
  - Desire to trial another device due to further information
  - Recognition that existing technology/system continues to be the most appropriate mode of communication

- Document plan for future considerations, for example
  - Further trials
  - Use of existing technology
  - Monitor medical changes and initiate further trials in future
  - Depending on the funding source, AT evaluation may expire at 6 months
Additional Consideration(s):

- Further trials and problem solving does not always equate more testing:
  - 1 Problem - Solving
  - 2 Domain
  - 3 Eligibility
  - 4 Trials
  - 5 Yes/No
  - 6 Modifying the IEP

- Next cycle may look like
  - 1 Problem- Solving
  - 4 Trials
  - 5 Yes/No
  - 4 Trials
  - 5 Yes/No
  - 6 Modifying the IEP

Step 6: Modify the IEP

Procedures:

- Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Needed:
  - It is important that the parents/legal guardians are included and in agreement with how the AAC device will be implemented into their child's day

- Type of Meeting Needed:
  - The modification of the IEP can be combined with the student's annual review, if it is in the near future.
  - If not, then an IEP Review/Revision would be held.

Procedures

- Documentation:

  AAC may be addressed in one or more of the following areas of the IEP, depending on the student's need for and use of AAC.

  These areas are:

  (NOTE: Each IEP system's verbiage may vary)

  - Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance
  - IEP Goals and Objectives
  - Educational Accommodations
  - Linguistic and Cultural Accommodations
  - Supplemental Aids
  - Assessment
  - Related Services
  - Support for School Personnel
  - Additional Information
Additional Consideration(s):

- When you are documenting AAC in the IEP, make sure to document as follows:
  
  **Feature(s) + (currently using specific product) + task description**  
  (Cochrane, 2015, p.3)

  For example: AAC device (currently using Tobii Dynavox with Snap+Core First) for communication

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**Sample Goal:**

**EMERGENT COMMUNICATOR:** By the end of the one-year IEP period, given 2 models and color coding cues for parts of speech (I need a blue word and an orange word) along with a level 2 prompt (general suggestion: “You can tell me what kind of animal”) plus 10 seconds of wait time, Susie will use her AAC system (a tablet-based device with a voice output communication app or a 50 location communication board with cells hidden to show only 20 locations) to describe a target item using an adjective and a noun 1 time per 15-minute classroom activity in 4/5 classroom activities. Baseline: Susie describes target items with a noun only with a level 2 prompt.
References: