
Module 1: Introduction

In this package, consisting of 12 modules, we have tried to share all that we know about Supporting Communication through AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication). We hope that this does not cause you to drown in information. We anticipate that people will dip in and out of it to answer queries, read what someone else thinks about a topic or to learn about a new aspect of AAC – we do not anticipate anyone reading it from cover to cover!

Terminology has challenged us – should we refer to he or she or (s)he? We seem to have managed to use all three! Should we use children / adult or person who uses AAC – in this case we have used child or children most of the time because we anticipate that most readers will be focused on this age group. Nevertheless everything that is written is equally applicable to adults.

The package was the brainchild of Gillian Hazell of Scope who brought together the team who created the package. Janet Larcher acted as editor of the package. These people were members of the team who generously gave their knowledge and experience to creating this package:

Sally Conner – Ingfield Manor School, Billingshurst
Janet Larcher – Independent consultant (editor of the package)
Clare Latham – ACE Centre, Oxford
Janet Lesley – Dame Hannah Rogers School, Ivybridge
Ann Miles – Redway School, Milton Keynes
Gillian Hazell – Communication Aids project, Scope
Wendy Newton – Meldreth Manor School, Meldreth
Richard Walters – Meldreth Manor School, Meldreth

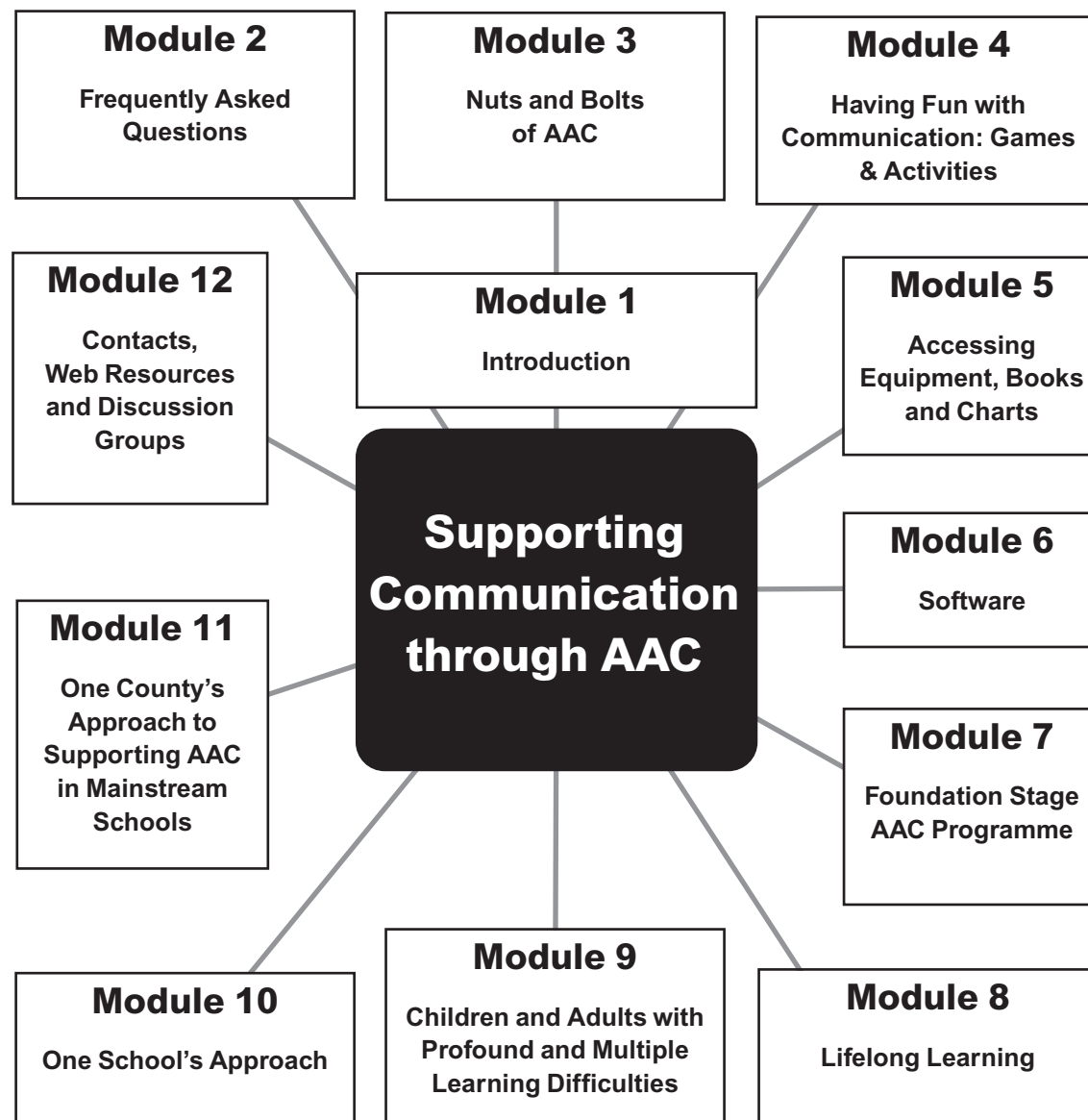
We are very grateful to other people who shared their knowledge on specific items:

Kate Holloway – Physical Impairment and Medical Support Services, Somerset
Tony Jones – Liberator Ltd.
Sally Millar – Call Centre, Edinburgh
Janet Trebilcock – Penhurst School, Chipping Norton

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Structure of the Package

The package consists of 12 modules of which this introduction is the first. The spider diagram below may help you get a picture of the scope of “Supporting Communication through AAC.”



- **Module 2: Frequently Asked Questions** is our attempt at answering many of the questions we are asked as part of our work.
- **Module 3: Nuts and Bolts of AAC** is where you will find most of the information that you would expect in this package, although all the other modules cover issues that are essential to the successful introduction and use of AAC.
- **Module 4: Having Fun with Communication: Games and Activities** provides lots of ideas on ways of introducing and teaching someone to use AAC. It is not easy to learn a second language, which is what AAC is, and unless it's fun and quickly successful in helping the user to control their lives and achieve what they want, they will give up or at a minimum not give it the effort it requires.

- **Module 5: Accessing Equipment, Books and Charts** Without the means of quick and easy access to the resources provided, they will remain unused or be sources of frustration. This module gives lots of ideas that will help you to ensure that the user's access to their system is as easy as possible.
- **Module 6: Software** This is a broad ranging module which provides information on curriculum access and word processing as well as software to support communication and to make professional looking resources quickly and easily.

The next three modules provide curricula to assist in developing the communication abilities of people who will benefit from using AAC, whether they are developing normally other than their ability to communicate through speech, or have additional physical and sensory difficulties:

- **Module 7: Foundation Stage AAC Programme** is focused on the needs of the child in early years environments.
- **Module 8: Lifelong Learning** is looking at supporting the communication skills of children and adults from when they leave early years settings onwards throughout the development of their skills to become efficient and effective communicators. This is based on “The Core Curriculum” published by SCOPE.
- **Module 9: Children and Adults with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties** is focussed on the needs of this population.
- **Module 10: One School's Approach** provides an insight into how the development of the communication skills of children who attend Ingfield Manor School has been addressed. Their school curriculum and the structure of the communication books used are discussed and illustrated in detail.
- **Module 11: One County's Approach to Supporting AAC in Mainstream Schools** Somerset Local Education Authority has developed a county-wide policy to ensure that children with communication difficulties are fully integrated within county schools and are receiving the best services that the county can support. One of their speech and language therapists has written about the development and practice of this policy.
- **Module 12: Contacts, Web Resources and Discussion Groups** provides suggestions of where to go for further help, information and discussion.

Whether you are someone who uses AAC, a parent, carer, student, therapist or teacher, we hope that you will find within this package the information or ideas that you are seeking.

Helping someone with communication difficulties to become an effective communicator is challenging, time consuming, and at times frustrating, but when all is going well it is also exhilarating. Remember those moments of exhilaration and make sure that the person using AAC experiences as much success and excitement as possible. A good motto for achieving this goal is to keep all activities FUN and FUNCTIONAL.