

# AN AAC CHARITY FUNDING JOURNEY

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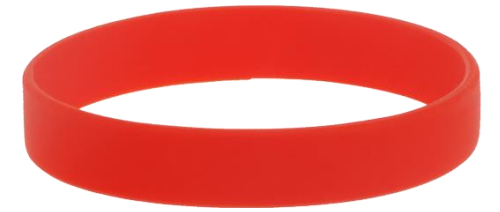
# Timeline summary

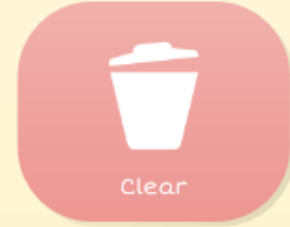
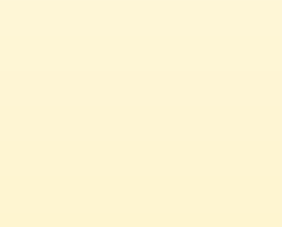
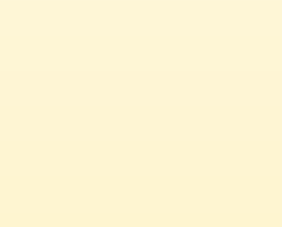
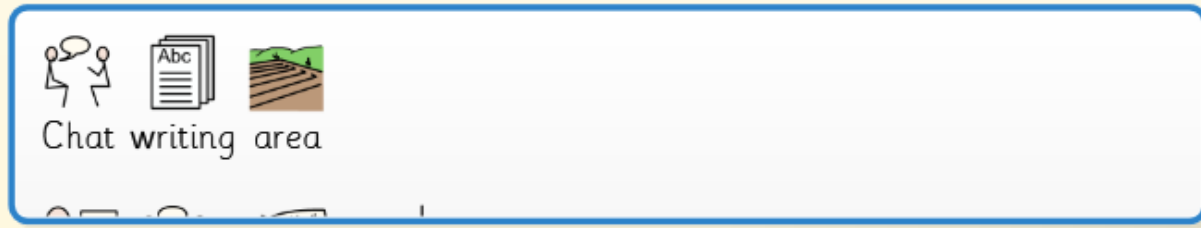
- Taylor began exploring eye gaze when they started at school
- Mostly, this started as exploring cause and effect games, and pushing for Taylor to link two symbols.
- Discussions started around a referral to explore eye gaze access as a primary form of communication



# Other approaches trialled

- Smiling as a yes response
- Yes/no wrist bands
- Using a communication book, accessed through combination of auditory scanning and eye pointing.
- When using all of these methods, it was found that Taylor was becoming increasingly withdrawn and frustrated
- Taylor was always most engaged when using the eyegaze

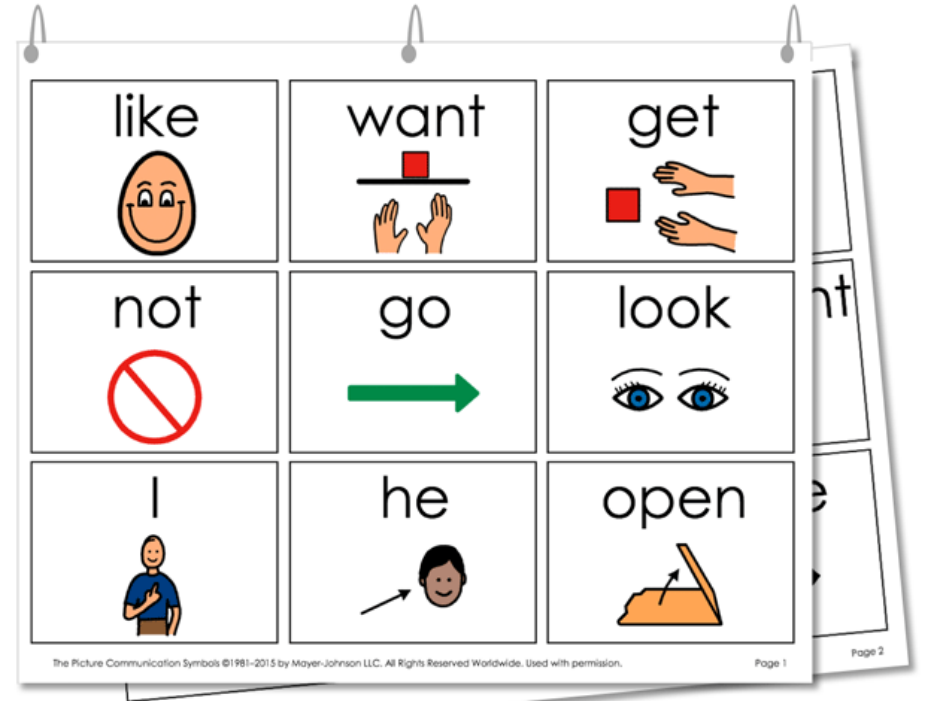




- A referral to the Specialist Communication, Access & Mobility Potential (SCAMP) clinic was submitted
  - Multidisciplinary clinic lasting up to 2 ½ days to look at communication, computer access and powered mobility
  - The reason was the referral was to fully explore a range of AAC systems with Taylor, to determine the best way to support communication
- The SCAMP clinic took place, focusing on eye gaze access and powered mobility.



- The SCAMP clinic determined that eye gaze would be an appropriate primary method of communication for Taylor
- In the meantime, recommendations were made regarding Taylor's communication book, including the inclusion of more core words, and increasing to more cells on a page



- At this stage, Taylor was not felt to meet criteria for a referral to the local communication aid hub
- **“would benefit from the opportunity to continue to develop skills for eyegaze”.**

- The school eye gaze device broke!
- Taylor had access to the existing communication book, which was amended following the recommendations made at the SCAMP clinic.
- There was no consistent access to school eye gaze. Taylor continued to practice using this when possible to do so

- At this stage, it was decided to discuss Taylor's case again with the local communication aid hub, as support could not be reliably provided in school and Taylor was missing out on precious time to build on their eyegaze skills
- Unfortunately, the local hub confirmed that Taylor did not meet their criteria, as it could not be demonstrated that Taylor was able to consistently connect symbols



- We then begun to explore charity funding options.
- To do this, we needed information on why funding could not be obtained via the local communication aid hub, as well as detailed information on why Taylor would benefit from having a device



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Lifeline 4 Kids

- [Funding your device in the UK and Ireland – thinksmartbox.com](http://thinksmartbox.com)

# Communication device trial



- A school visit with a representative from Smartbox was arranged
- In the appointment, Taylor trialled a range of devices and software, including different Smartbox gridsets.
- Taylor could use Symbol Talker A, and also explored Vocachat within the session
- Taylor then had a two-week trial with a Gridpad 12 with Lumini eyegaze unit
- Taylor's family and school team kept an extensive diary throughout this time, including videos and pictures

# After the trial...

- The next step was to apply for charity funding
- After the trial, we were given a full invoice for all equipment that was felt to be required, including the software, training, device, and bespoke mount, which was submitted as part of the application
- The application for the charity funding was submitted – and was accepted!

- Fundraising was then started by Taylor's family and school team
- After 5 months, the charity had received all the funds required for the device, and it was delivered 2 weeks later
- Smartbox were able to support in setting up the wheelchair mount, and training staff on how to use this safely

- Now, Taylor is using their device across a range of contexts, both with his family and in school
- In a short period of time, Taylor has grown in confidence, and is now able to communicate more widely
- Taylor has a consistent voice, and increased level of independence, and an ability to show off their cheeky sense of humour



# Plans for the future...

- The MDT are working towards providing additional support to find the best way to aid Taylor in keeping their head in the optimal position while using the eye gaze device.
- Ongoing practice with Taylor to develop their skills in using Vocachat, with the potential to move towards a different Gridset in the future to support the development of vocabulary
- Continued support regarding his reading using the eyegaze
- Exploring additional ways of incorporating Taylor's device into their learning, in school and beyond
- Possibility of re-referral to local AAC hub in the future???

# Learning points

- This is a journey
- Take the time to gather as much information as possible about what the AAC user needs, and ensure that you can clearly demonstrate why
- Fitting a wheelchair mount is complex!

**Thank you for listening!**

Questions?

