



# Overcoming Challenges to AAC Device Implementation

**SECOND EDITION**

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# Introduction

We call them AAC devices, but they go by many terms. Augmentative and alternative communication devices, speech-generating devices (SGDs), assistive communication devices, or simply communication devices. No matter the name, AAC devices can be powerful tools for those with speech and language impairments. The impact is well documented with research and stories of hope and courage.

## **What's less discussed are the challenges on the other side of the AAC relationship.**

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) play an essential role in the recommendation, implementation, and long-term success of AAC devices. This report, now in its second edition, provides a unique look into SLPs and the challenges that they face during AAC device trials and implementation. The survey that underlies this report was conducted across three weeks in March of 2022 and elicited responses from 295 speech professionals.

This report highlights both the general challenges that are prevalent throughout the profession, as well as the specific challenges that SLPs face when using high-tech AAC. From challenges like paperwork and device customization, to patient motivation and caregiver buy-in, this report is a one-of-a-kind glimpse into the challenges presented by AAC for SLPs.



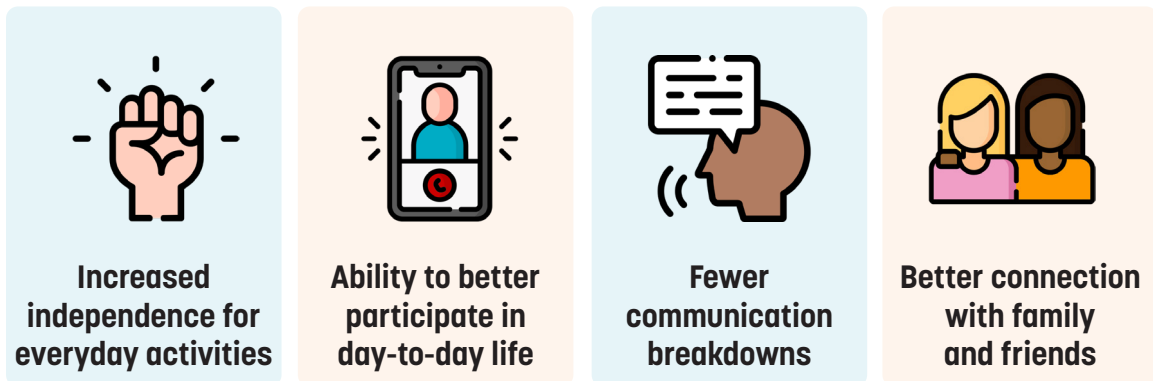


## What Are the Benefits of AAC Devices?

AAC devices have many benefits that have been shown both in research and in the success stories told by device users and their families. Ultimately, the main benefit of an AAC device is right there in the name: communication.

AAC devices help users to communicate through a combination of words, sentences, and images that the device then “says out loud.” Additionally, users can also communicate by typing or drawing, sharing pictures and videos, or even repeating words they hear out loud.

Communication is what allows us to connect with others. Improved communication is the most immediate benefit of using an AAC device, and that communication can offer numerous subsequent benefits for device users and caregivers, such as:



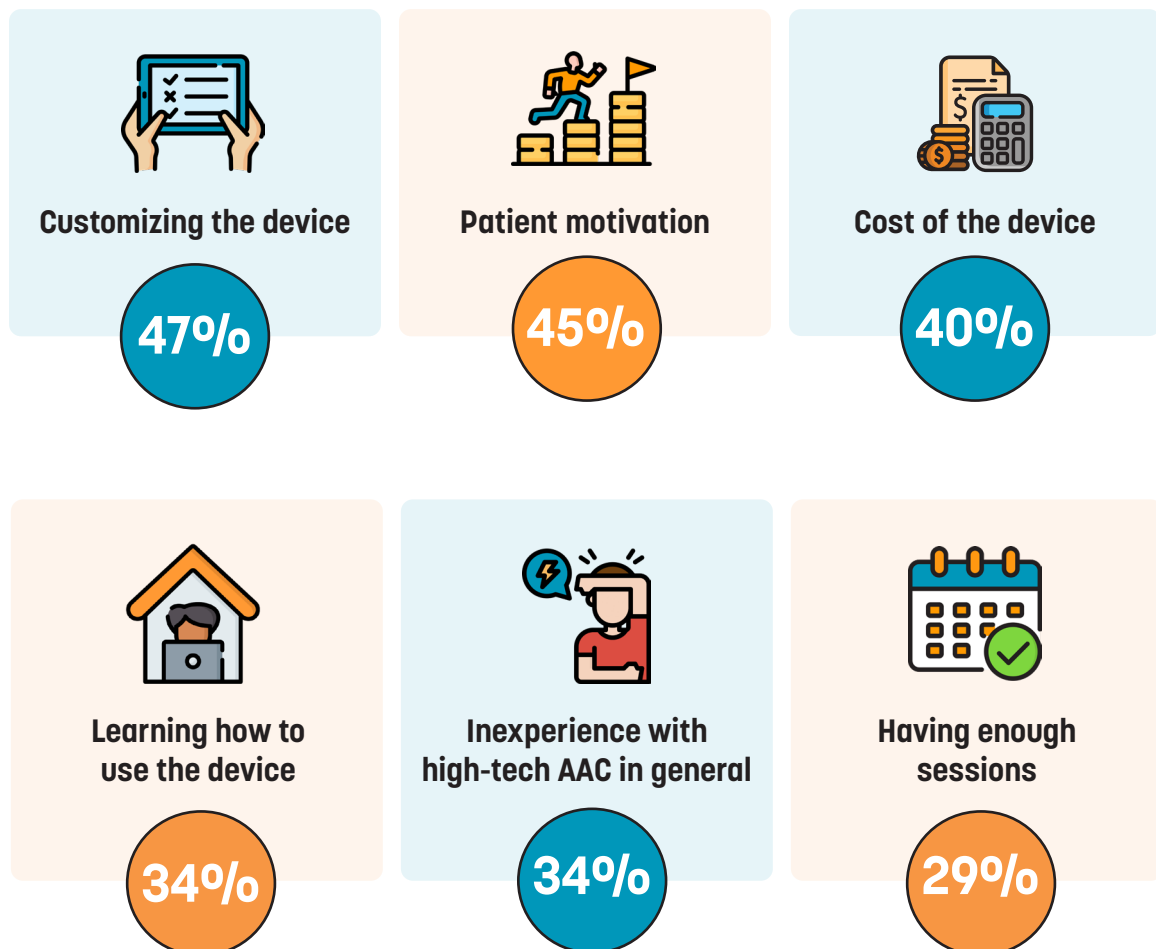
Although the benefits are numerous and well-known, AAC trials can be a difficult domain to navigate. Let’s take a closer look at what specifically gives SLPs trouble with AAC trials, and what solutions exist for the challenges at hand.

# Understanding the Challenges SLPs Face with AAC Device Trials

Of all the challenges speech-language pathologists face, the most common is customizing the device. The second highest is patient motivation, followed by price.

Every person is unique, and that individuality is something to be celebrated. But when it comes to providing care, it often means that there's no universal device that fits each individual perfectly out of the box. Customization is clearly important to SLPs. One might wonder if customization was easier or even done prior to a trial, perhaps this challenge wouldn't affect nearly half of SLPs. In turn, it could have a domino effect and ease other challenges.

The biggest challenges to using high-tech AAC are:



### When Caregivers Aren't Motivated

For those who chose to specify their own challenges, an obvious challenge stood out: caregiver support. Family or caregiver buy-in can make all the difference for someone working on their communication with AAC. Caregivers are in a unique position to provide support and develop personal strategies. Finding a way to ensure caregiver buy-in would clearly alleviate at least one major SLP challenge.



## Key Professional CHALLENGES

In addition to AAC challenges, SLPs also must face the challenges of the profession in general.



**Paperwork  
(clinical & reimbursement)**

**7 in 10 SLPs**



**High productivity  
requirements**

**4 in 10 SLPs**



**Finding clinical education  
in advanced areas**

**3 in 10 SLPs**

A woman with glasses and a headset is visible on a computer monitor, appearing to be on a video call. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders is visible, suggesting they are the one on the call. The background shows a window with trees outside.

**Knowing what we now know  
about SLPs and AAC device trials,  
the question becomes:**

**How can we help SLPs overcome  
AAC device trial challenges?**

# How Lingraphica Can Help You Overcome Trial Challenges



## Device Customization

While SLPs face a variety of challenges, the single most common challenge — shared by nearly half of SLPs — involves device customization.

Personalizing the AAC device to be more meaningful and relevant to the user is one of the most important things you can do in a device trial. That's why Lingraphica gets the process started by pre-customizing the device with your patient's info before we send it out. All you have to do is press the power button and hit the ground running.



## Learning How to Use the Device

High-tech AAC can have incredible real-world results. Unfortunately, the barrier to entry can be intimidating due to the complexity of some devices, so it's not surprising to see 34% of surveyed SLPs report learning how to use a device as a challenge.

Some AAC devices can be complex and difficult to learn and customize. However, Lingraphica devices are designed to be simple and easy to use. With little or no training, you can easily add icons, words, phrases, images, and videos. Or simply take advantage of the icons that are readily available by tapping on them the moment you power your device on. Lingraphica's friendly team provides lifetime training, so there's no need for you to be an expert.





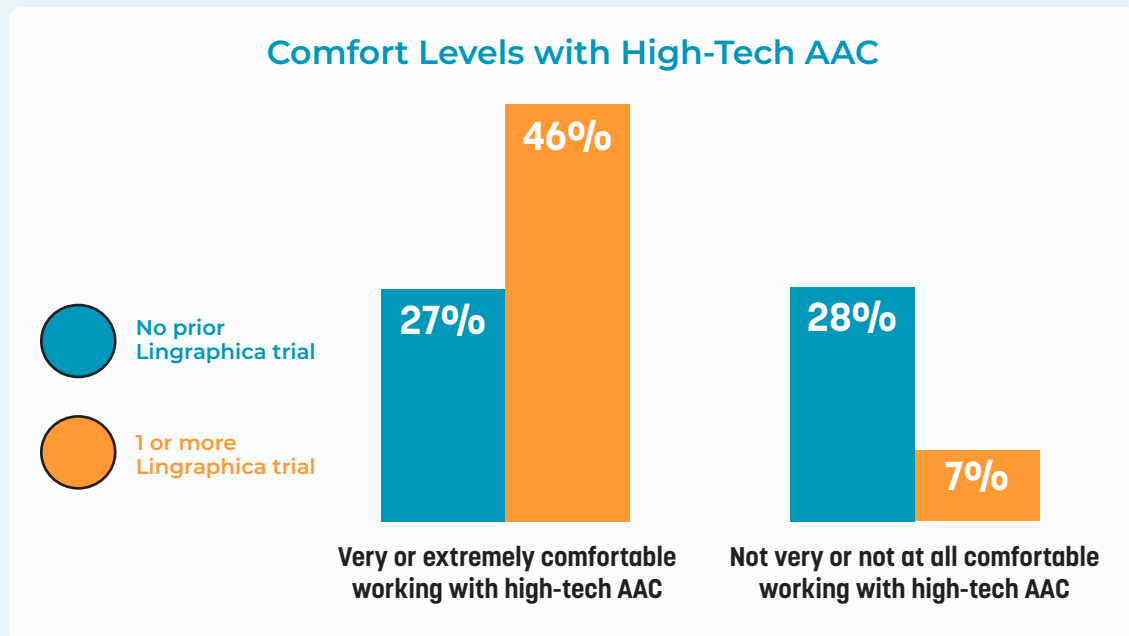
## Inexperience with High-Tech AAC

Where no-tech and light-tech AAC solutions might feel more accessible, high-tech AAC might feel less so. According to our survey, 34% of SLPs find inexperience with high-tech AAC to be a challenge.

With Lingraphica, no experience is necessary. We provide training during the trial and a dedicated Lingraphica clinical consultant. These consultants are also SLPs, so they can relate to your questions, concerns, and real-world application. Our team is more than happy to take the lead when appropriate or provide general guidance throughout the trial.

## PRACTICE Makes Perfect

Lingraphica communication devices, first and foremost, are for the benefit of those with speech and language impairments. But for SLPs, completing a device trial comes with additional benefits: experience and confidence. Following a Lingraphica trial, SLPs report a substantial increase in comfort compared to those who have never trialed one of our devices.



**Learn more about scheduling  
a device demo here!**



### Patient Motivation

AAC devices can help patients with a variety of impairments. Unfortunately, those same impairments can lead to patient frustration and subsequent decreased motivation. In our survey, nearly half of SLPs reported patient motivation as a challenge.

Lingraphica works with you to help you navigate motivation issues and establish patient-centered goals. These goals keep your patient more engaged during a trial and builds momentum for post-trial success. Our resources also include guidance on how to spread motivation to communication partners to increase the success of a trial.



### Price

SLPs don't want to overburden their patients, and that's entirely reasonable. High-tech AAC can sometimes be costly, so it's not surprising to see 40% of the SLPs who responded to our survey report price as a challenge.

An overwhelming majority of Lingraphica device users — 97% — paid nothing for a device. Our devices are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, commercial insurance, and more. We also can help with alternative funding and offer generous financial assistance on a sliding scale. In any case, a trial is always risk-free, with zero obligation to purchase.



### Having Enough Sessions

Recommending an AAC device is an important decision, and SLPs don't take that responsibility lightly. In some cases, there just isn't enough time to make that judgement due to a lack of sessions. In our survey, 29% of SLPs reported having enough sessions as a challenge.

Lingraphica is happy to work with your client directly to provide device training. Through Lingraphica's At-Home Training Program, they can try the device right at home, and we'll be there each step of the way to provide the necessary guidance. Near the end of the training, all you'll need to do is perform an evaluation.

# Lingraphica Can Help SLPs Overcome Professional Challenges



## PAPERWORK

Say goodbye to paper, fax, and email. Complete your client's paperwork in a fraction of the time with Smart Paperwork from Lingraphica. Access all your documents for each client and submit them in record time with our custom portal.



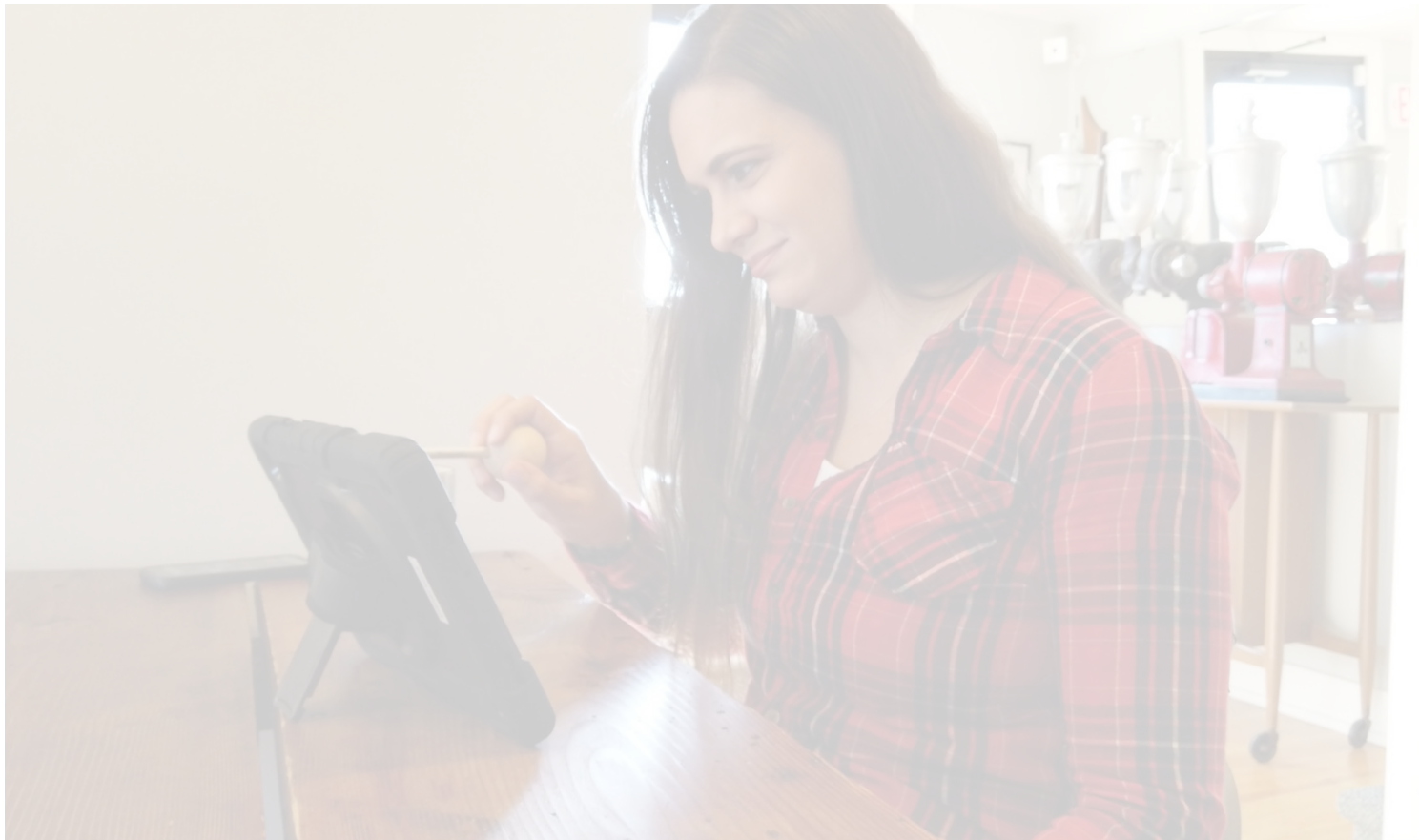
## PRODUCTIVITY

Every step of the Lingraphica process is structured to be as efficient and effective as possible. From customization and implementation to documentation and reimbursement, we have a streamlined answer to all your needs. And with Lingraphica, it's incredibly easy to get ahold of a real person who is equipped to answer your questions or field your feedback. That open line of communication allows us to continuously improve and build greater efficiencies.



## FURTHERING CLINICAL EDUCATION

Lingraphica offers free on-demand CE courses and is an ASHA-approved provider. Choose from a number of on-demand courses, or attend our live webinars for engaging education. Lingraphica clinicians are available year-round for online and in-person instruction with the latest in research, evidence-based practice, and AAC technology training for free.



## Lingraphica Can Help

**Lingraphica AAC devices are easy-to-use communication devices that offer so much more. They offer a simple language system and intuitive options for customization. It can be used by individuals of various ages and a wide range of communication abilities.**

### **For a variety of speech and language impairments:**

Aphasia • Apraxia • Autism • Developmental Disabilities  
Dysarthria • Primary Progressive Aphasia • Traumatic Brain Injury

We're committed to helping your patients and their families get a device that we think can change their lives. We uphold that commitment with lifetime training and support to ensure there's a continuum of care.

**Download the FREE  
Conquering AAC eBook**

**Schedule a FREE  
One-on-One Consultation**

## About Lingraphica

Lingraphica is dedicated to helping people with speech and language impairments improve their communication and quality of life through devices, applications and resources developed by speech-language pathologists and leading researchers.

Learn more about the basics of AAC at [lingraphica.com/aac-basics](https://lingraphica.com/aac-basics)

To learn more about us, visit [lingraphica.com/about-us](https://lingraphica.com/about-us)