



Exploring Communication Options When Hospitalized

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program

Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation

College of Design

April 2020

Introduction and Goals

- The Tools for Life team is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by collecting and vetting resources for individuals with disabilities in the community, as well as their family and circles of support.
- The resources in today's presentation are not meant to replace advice or instruction from a doctor or medical team. These resources are here to educate and empower. We encourage you to take this information, do further research, and share what you've learned with your medical and support teams.
- All presentations and resources are accessible and will be posted on the Tools for Life website www.gatfl.gatech.edu. We ask that you share this information with anyone that will benefit.
- We are in this together and together we are stronger. Stay safe and educated!



Your Presenters

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Contact Your Statewide AT Program


Visit AT3 Center

www.at3center.net/stateprogram



MENU

National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training (AT3) Center

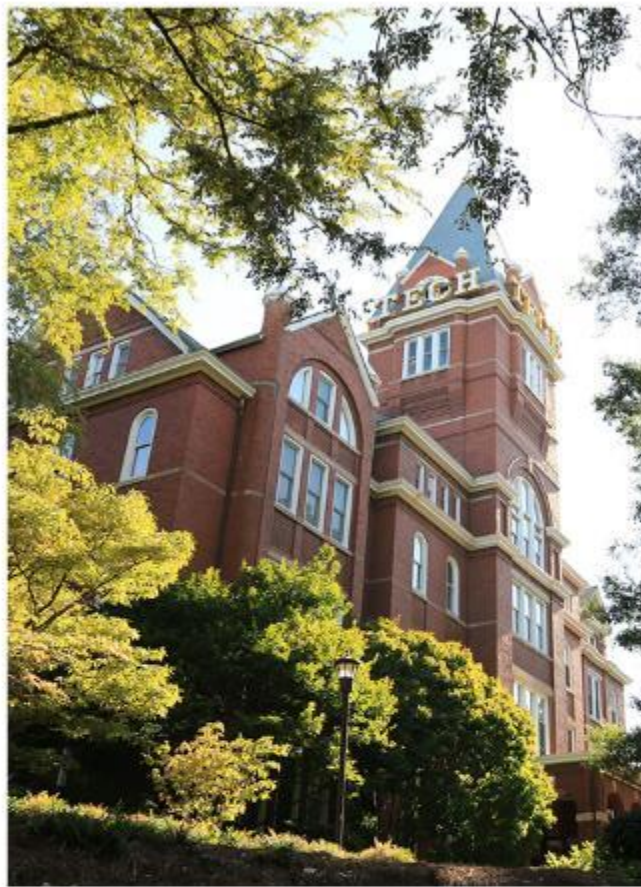


Program Directory - Find Your State Program

+ [Need help searching?](#)

Step Number 1: Select Directory:

Step Number 2: Select State:



Factors Affecting Communication

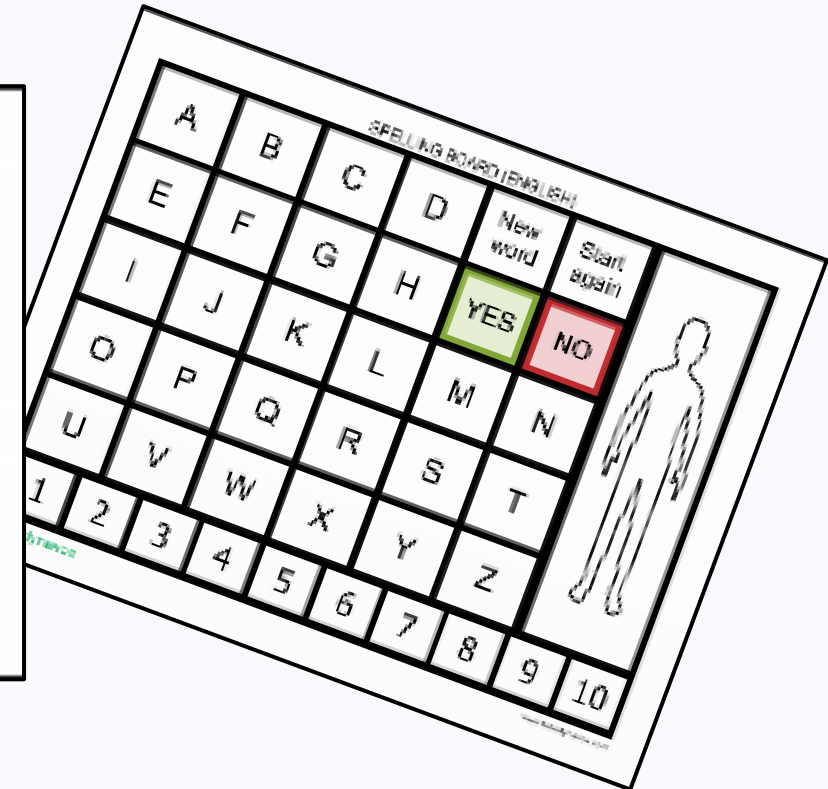
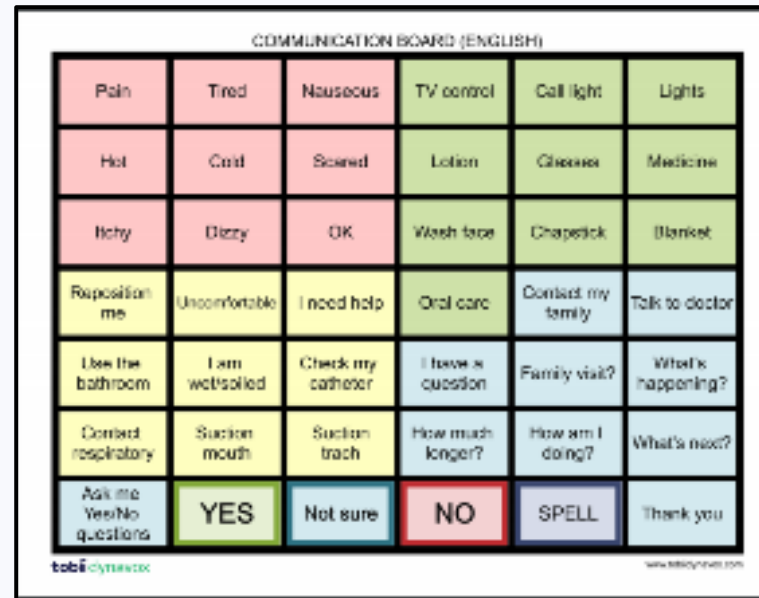
Communication Affected By

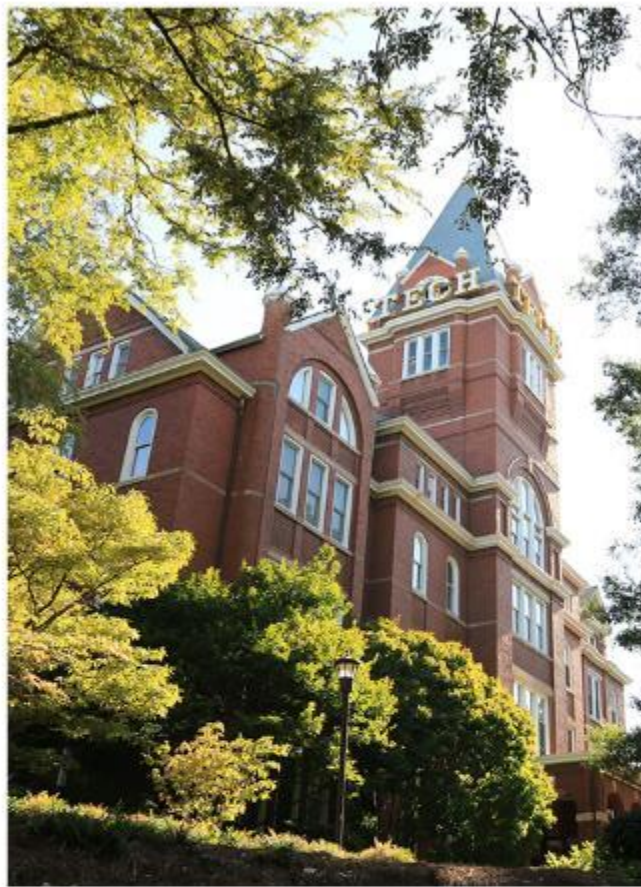
- Trauma or decrease in health
- Unfamiliar environment
- Rapid Communication (not necessarily in their 1st language)
- Critical decisions are being made
- Some degree of pain or discomfort
- Hearing aids, dentures and glasses may not be with them
- Medications and/or sleep deprivation alter their “state”
- Sub-optimal position for communication
- Other?

Elements of AAC in Hospital Settings

Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) must be:

- Necessity
- Functional
- Easy to Access
- Easy to Use
- Easy to Acquire





Communication Tools

Preparing for Temporary Communication Loss

- What if you are not able to communicate while you are hospitalized?
 - Create a plan
 - Support Team – who would be your support team while hospitalized?
 - Determine how you will communicate
 - Yes/No response – how will you respond?
 - Items/Vocabulary needed for communication
 - Method for support team and hospital staff to communicate with you
 - Yes/No questions
 - Communication Boards
 - Spelling Board
 - Pain scale/Body Parts
 - Partner Assisted Scanning
 - Written instructions for how to communicate with you

One Person at a Time

Who will be on your support team?

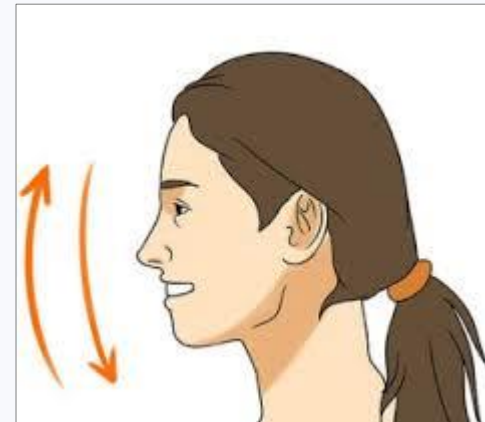
- Do they know what to do?
- Restrictions due to COVID-19



How Will You Communicate?

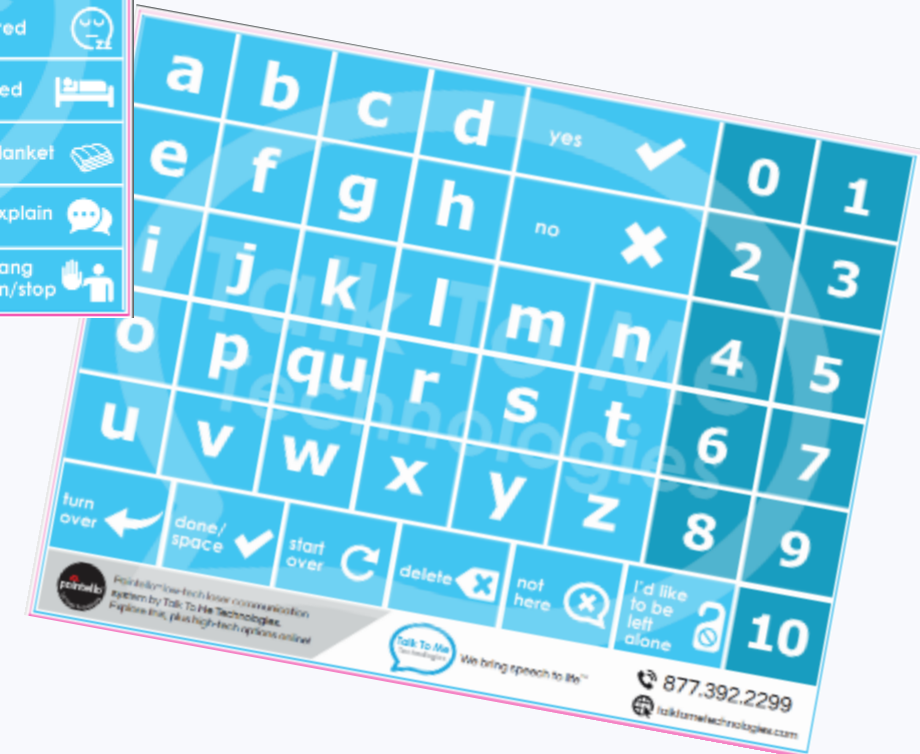
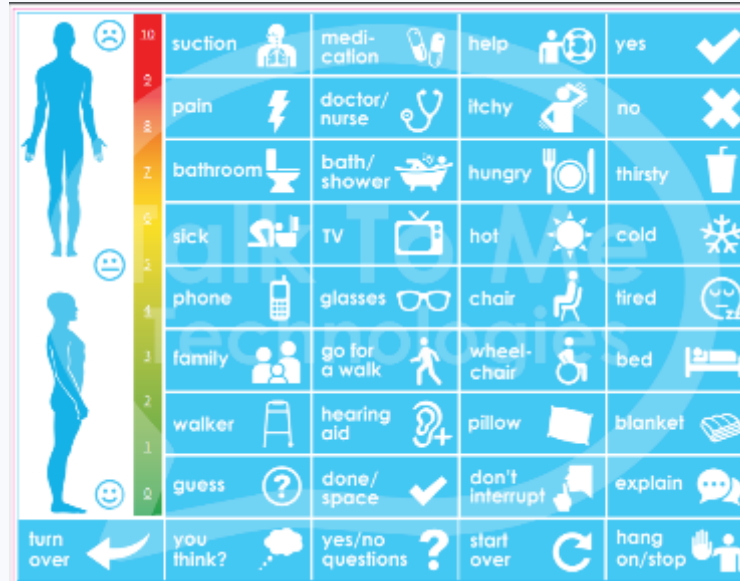
Look for a consistent way to respond

- Motor Response
- Yes/No Response
 - Eye Blinks
 - Head Nods/Shakes
 - Raise Hand/Finger
 - Other consistent movement



What Do You Need to Say?

- Medical Needs
- Personal Needs
- Personal Information
- Pain Scale
- Body Parts
- Spelling Board



Communication Board Design

COMMUNICATION BOARD (ENGLISH)

Pain	Tired	Nauseous	TV control	Call light	Lights
Hot	Cold	Scared	Lotion	Glasses	Medicine
Itchy	Dizzy	OK	Wash face	Chapstick	Blanket
Reposition me	Uncomfortable	I need help	Oral care	Contact my family	Talk to doctor
Use the bathroom	I am wet/soiled	Check my catheter	I have a question	Family visit?	What's happening?
Contact respiratory	Suction mouth	Suction trach	How much longer?	How am I doing?	What's next?
Ask me Yes/No questions	YES	Not sure	NO	SPELL	Thank you

tobii dynamox www.tobii-dynamox.com

Hospital Intensive Care Communication Board

COMMUNICATION BOARD (ENGLISH)

Pain	Tired	Nauseous	TV control	Call light	Lights
Hot	Cold	Scared	Lotion	Glasses	Medicine
Itchy	Dizzy	OK	Wash face	Chapstick	Blanket
Reposition me	Uncomfortable	I need help	Oral care	Contact my family	Talk to doctor
Use the bathroom	I am wet/soiled	Check my catheter	I have a question	Family visit?	What's happening?
Contact respiratory	Suction mouth	Suction trach	How much longer?	How am I doing?	What's next?
Ask me Yes/No questions	YES	Not sure	NO	SPELL	Thank you

tobii dynamox www.tobii-dynamox.com

Hospital Intensive Care Communication Board

Spelling Boards

SPELLING BOARD (ENGLISH)

A	B	C	D	New word	Start again				
E	F	G	H	YES	NO				
I	J	K	L	M	N				
O	P	Q	R	S	T				
U	V	W	X	Y	Z				
1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9

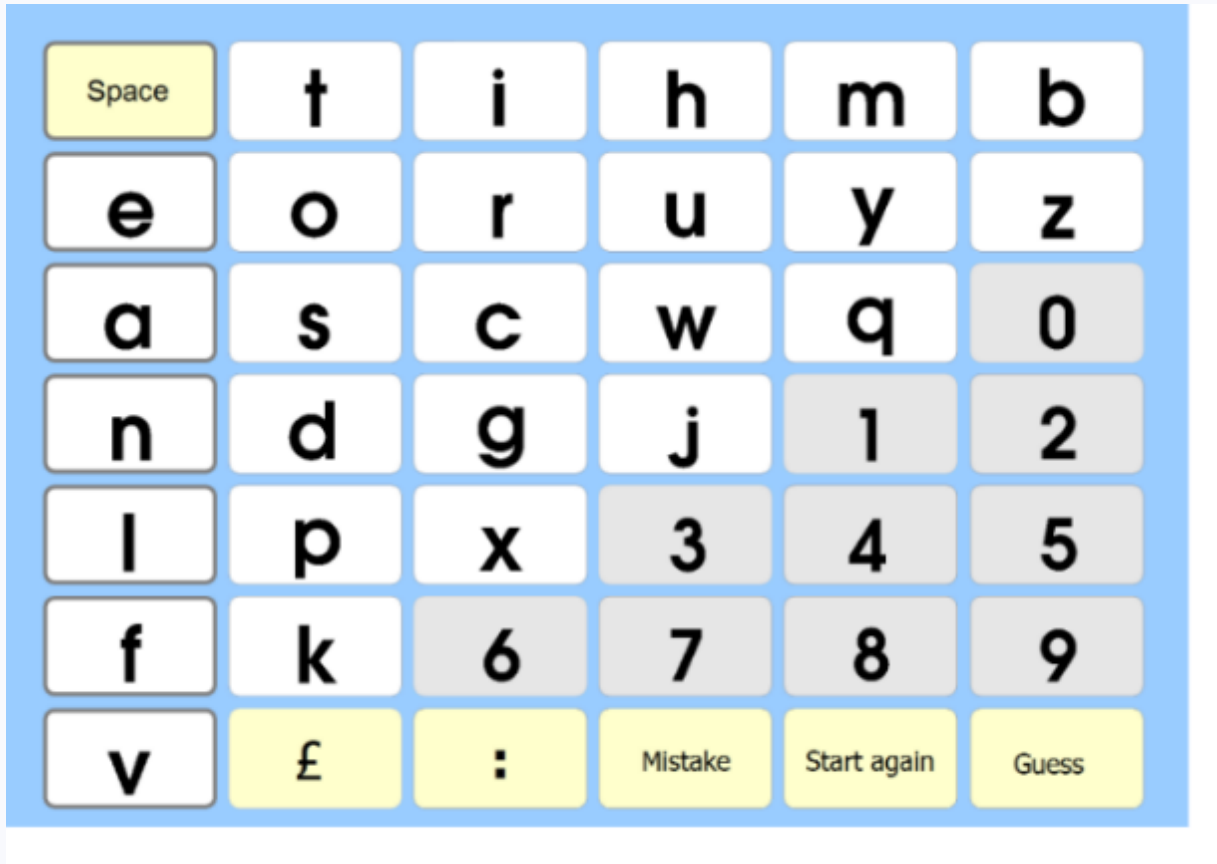
www.tobii-dynavox.com

Adult Medical Communication Board

a	b	c	d	yes	✓	0	1
e	f	g	h	no	✗	2	3
i	j	k	l	m	n	4	5
o	p	qu	r	s	t	6	7
u	v	w	x	y	z	8	9
turn over	done/ space	start over	delete	not here	I'd like to be left alone	10	

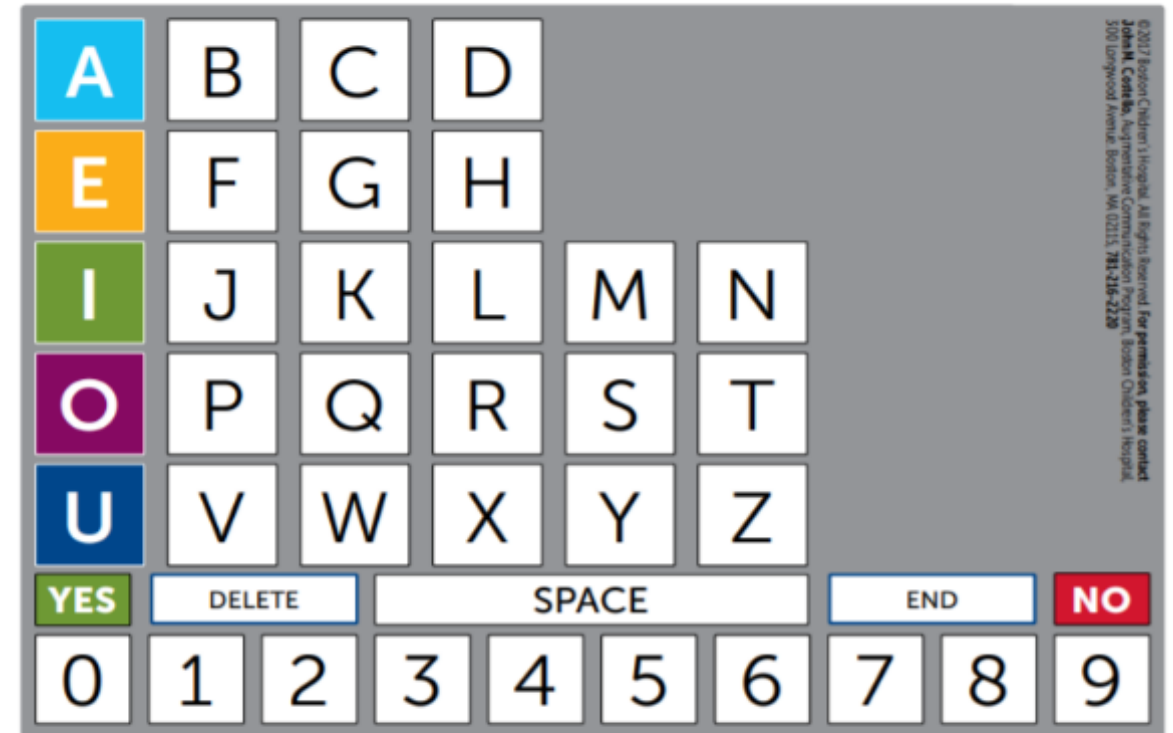
Hospital Intensive Care Communication Board

Alternate Spelling Board Designs



Frequency & Numbers for Listener Mediated Scanning

A E I O U/Body/Pain Scale Book



Pain Scale/Body Part Boards

WidgitHealth

Patient Communication Sheet

Turn over

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

Can you point to the pain?

For how long?

Have you had this pain before?

What is the pain frequency?

continuous

on / off

What type of pain?

pins and needles

numb

dull / throb

sharp

crushing

heavy

yes

no

good

bad

repeat

Medical Communication Board

Adult Medical Communication Board

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

turn over

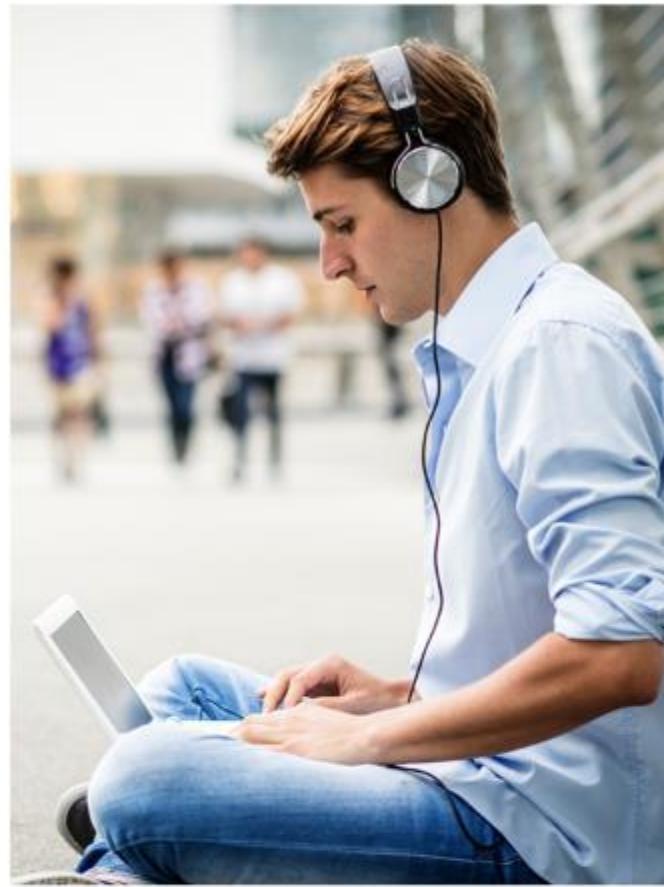
you think?

yes/no questions

start over

hang on/stop

suction	medi-cation	help	yes
pain	doctor/nurse	itchy	no
bathroom	bath/shower	hungry	thirsty
sick	TV	hot	cold
phone	glasses	chair	tired
family	go for a walk	wheel-chair	bed
walker	hearing aid	pillow	blanket
guess	done/space	don't interrupt	explain
you think?	yes/no questions	start over	hang on/stop



Ways to Access Communication

Partner Assisted Scanning

- Partner Assisted Scanning is a way for communication partners to help individuals who can't communicate by pointing.
- The communication partner will list or scan through possible choices on a communication board.
- Generally the partner will point to or name groups, then rows and finally items within a row.
- The individual will indicate their choice of group/row and then desired item by indicating with a yes/no, eye blink, raised finger, etc. when the desired row and item is named.

Partner Assisted Scanning Video

“Introducing Partner Assisted Scanning for Spelling”

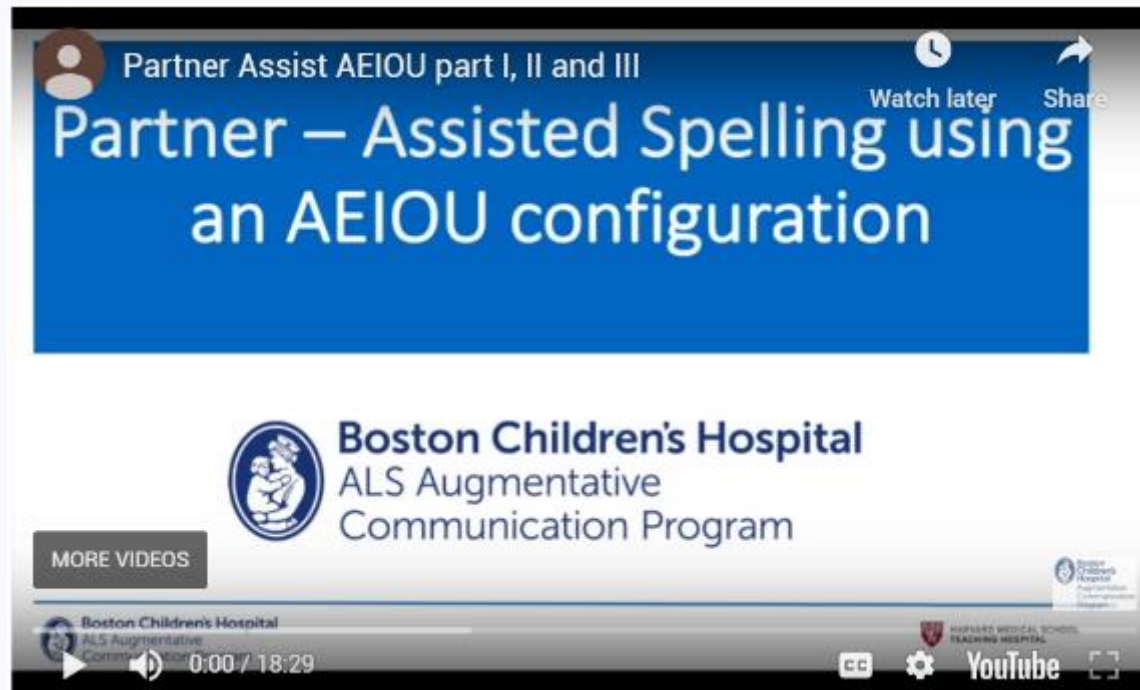
Boston Children's Hospital ALS Augmentative Communication Program



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8ZTfMqsfU

Partner Assisted Scanning Resource

Boston Children's Hospital ALS Augmentative Communication program



<http://www.childrenshospital.org/centers-and-services/programs/a--e/als-augmentative-communication-program/protocol-of-assessment-considerations/quick-access-and-low-tech-tools#>

Eye Gaze Boards



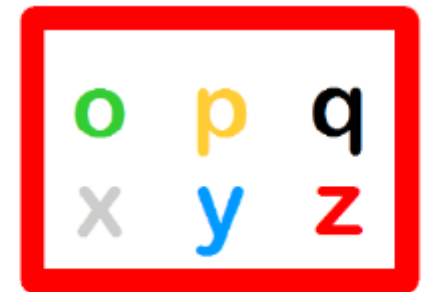
Space

This side should be used by the person who is communicating their eyes. You will need to print out the mirror image for the communication partner.

Cut out this central cream box.

Laminate the two pages together, back to back, ideally using matt laminate.

Mistake



Encoded Colored Borders E Tran

Eye Gaze Boards – How To Use

2-Step process to identify the desired letter or number

- 1st – look at the square with the same border color as the letter or number that you want
 - If you want the letter “M” which is orange, look at the square with the orange border first
 - Your communication partner then knows you want an orange letter
- 2nd look at the square that holds your desired letter
 - “M” is in the middle square on the bottom row
 - Your communication partner will track where your eyes are looking to find the desired square, then identify the orange letter



Step 1 – Color



Step 2 – Letter/Number



Eye Gaze Board for Spelling - Front

Front (facing individual)



This side should be used by the person who is communicating their eyes. You will need to print out the mirror image for the communication partner.

Cut out this central cream box.

Laminate the two pages together, back to back, ideally using matt laminate.

Space

Mistake



Eye Gaze Board for Spelling - Back

Back (facing communication partner)



Mistake

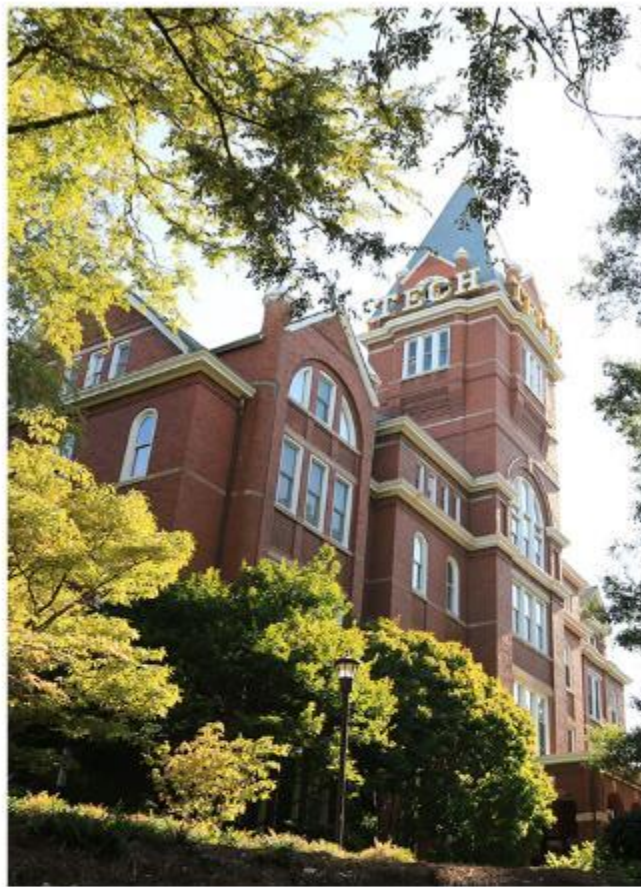
This mirror image side should be used by the person who is interpreting what is being communicated i.e. the communication partner.

You will also need to print out the page that is in alphabetical order for use by the person who is communicating with their eyes.

Cut out this central cream box.
Laminate the two pages together, back to back, ideally using a matt laminate pouch.

Space





Staff Instructions

Communication Board Instructions



Communication Instructions for Doctors, Nurses and Staff

- Provide a copy of instructions on your desired method of communication
 - Yes/No questions
 - Communication boards
 - Spelling Boards
- Describe how you need to access your communication
 - If you are not able to touch your boards:
 - Partner Assisted Scanning
 - Eye-gaze

Sample Instruction Sheet

Communication Board Instructions

1. Tell the person that this is a way for them to communicate while they are on a ventilator.
2. Review some of the messages on the board with the individual. Provide them with an example of how to use it. For example: If you want a blanket, you could touch the word "blanket" on the board.
3. Show them the messages and the spelling board. Tell them they can use the letters to spell what they want to say. This could be names of people or they could spell short phrases etc.
4. Leave the board close to the person. Hand it to them as you are trying to communicate together. Encourage them to use both the phrases and spelling board.

If the individual can't use their hands to touch the board, assist them using the following method:

1. Establish a way for the person to communicate a "yes" response (e.g. looking up).
2. Point to each row in turn and ask if the message or letter is in that row (e.g. "Is it in this row?"). Be sure to pause between each row.

3. The individual will use their "yes" response when you reach the row they want. There is no need for them to communicate "no." Just look for a yes.
4. Next, review each item in the row they selected. Be sure to pause between each one.

5. The individual will use their "yes" response when you reach item or letter they want.
6. If spelling, you can guess the word after 2 letters are provided, but make sure to ask the individual if it is correct.

Change the instructions to reflect what you need:

1. Tell the staff that this is a way for them to communicate with you while you are on a ventilator.

2. Review some of the messages on the board with the staff. Provide them with an example of how you use it. For example: If you want a blanket, you touch the word "blanket" on the board.

3. Show staff the messages and the spelling board. Tell them you will use the letters to spell what you want to say. This could be names of people or you may spell short phrases etc.

4. Leave the board close to you. Hand it to you when you are trying to communicate together. Encourage staff to use both the phrases and spelling board.

Communication Board Links

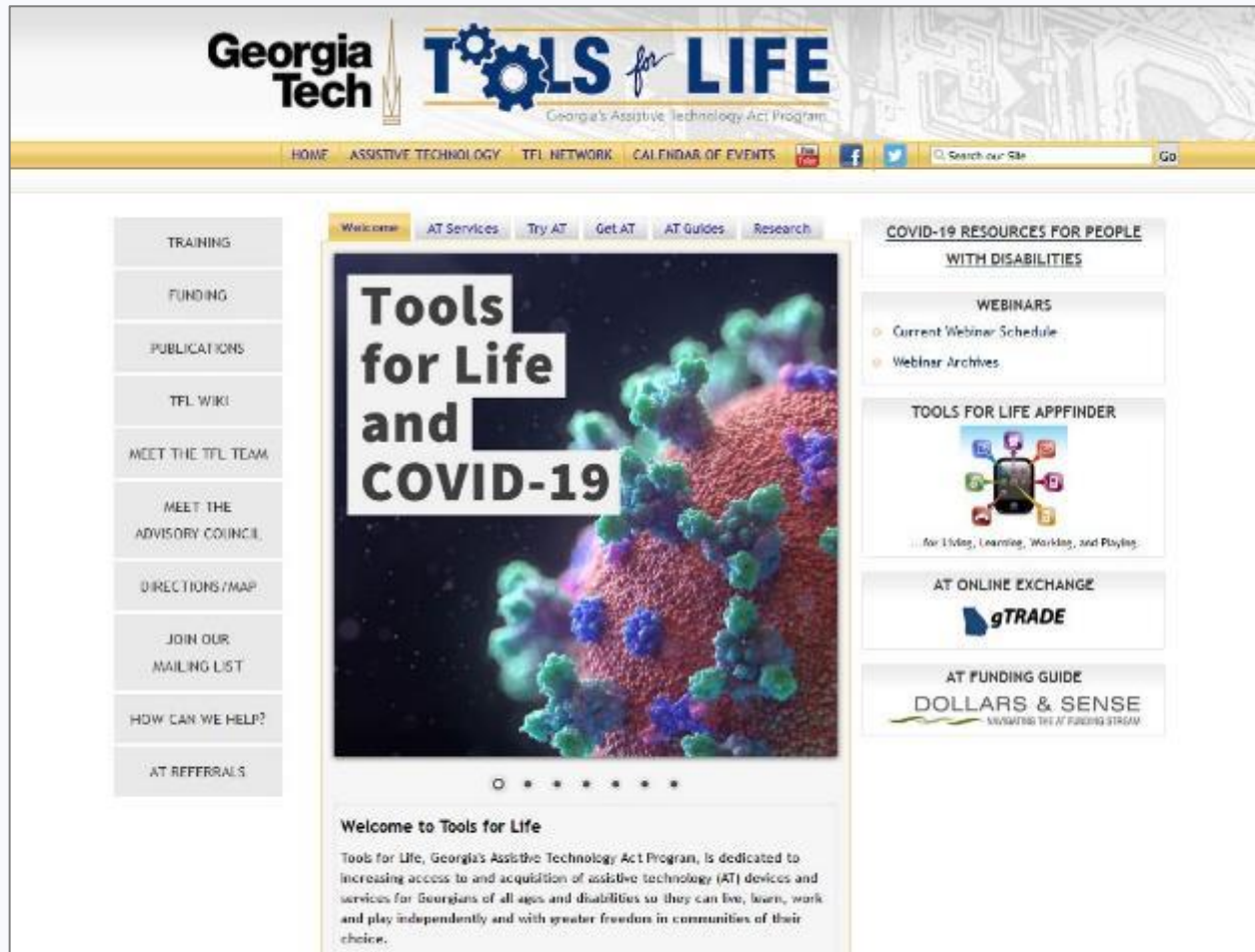


- **Adult Medical Communication Board** - Talk to Me Technologies:
<https://www.talktometechnologies.com/pages/adult-medical-communication-boards-free-download>
- **Hospital Intensive Care Unit Communication Resources** Tobii-DynaVox
(available on the My Tobii-DynaVox website – you can sign up for free):
<https://www.mytobiidynavox.com/Support/COVID-19-Downloads>
- **Frequency and Numbers for Listener Mediated Scanning** ACE Center:
<https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/frequency-numbers-listener-mediated-scanning/>
- **AEIOU/Body/Pain Scale Book** Boston Children's Hospital ALS Augmentative Communication Program: <https://www.bridges-canada.com/collections/widgit-health/products/9318-1>

Communication Board Links (2)

- **Medical Communication Board** Bridges-Canada: <https://www.bridges-canada.com/collections/widgit-health/products/9318-1> (\$20/pack of 10)
- **Super Core Communication Boards – COVID-19**, SmartBox (scroll down to printable resources): <https://thinksmartbox.com/news/coronavirus-super-core-resources/>
- **Encoded Colored Borders E – Tran** ACE Center: <https://acecentre.org.uk/resources/encoded-coloured-borders-e-tran/>

COVID-19 Resources for People with Disabilities



https://gatfl.gatech.edu/tflwiki/index.php?title=COVID-19_Resources_for_People_with_Disabilities

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