

Augmentative Communication Community Partnerships-Canada

December 2006.

The following characteristics of a good attendant / communicator were provided by 20 attendant consumers who use AAC:

A Good Attendant

- Understands why people may have communication disabilities
- Knows about AAC
- Knows about multimodal communication (i.e. body language, gestures, vocalizations etc.)
- Understands the importance of the communication partner within the communication context
- Understands the link between communication, choice, autonomy and dignity
- Recognizes human rights and violations within the attendant service context
- Knows and facilitates how an individual consumer wants to communicate within his / her service routines
- Responds to the consumer's body language and signals
- Structures opportunities for communication within service routines
- Provides sufficient time for communication during routines
- Ensures consumer choice and autonomy within services
- Maintains and sets up communication systems for use including face to face systems and computers for writing
- Asks questions in ways that the consumer can answer when he / she cannot access AAC system
- Demonstrates respect and privacy for the consumer in how he / she speaks to and about the consumer and treats his / her body, personal space and belongings
- Facilitates communication over the telephone and manages voice messaging as directed by the consumer
- Supports consumer in reading, and writing activities as requested and directed by consumer
- Listens to what the consumer communicates and follows through on consumer requests

- Provides services in ways that are approved and directed by consumer (i.e. according to service binder and / or pre arranged instructions)
- Listens well
- Acknowledges the person with whom they are communicating by looking at them
- Knows what the consumer wants him / her to do when listening (i.e. say item aloud when the consumer selects it, write down the message etc.)
- Provides the AAC consumer with sufficient time to construct message
- Does not interrupt the AAC consumer
- Guesses only when given permission to do so by the AAC consumer
- Responds to what the AAC consumer communicates
- Shows interest in the AAC consumer
- Demonstrates interest by genuinely asking questions
- Respects the AAC consumer's privacy on personal matters or topics that have not been introduced by the AAC consumer for discussion
- Is pleasant and approachable
- Shows kindness
- Willing to go beyond the call of duty
- Relaxed manner
- Is not rushed
- Does not "read your mind" or assume that they know what you want to say
- Behaves in a professional manner
- Leaves personal issues at home
- Focuses on work