

# Familial Response to Augmentative Alternative Communication in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

## A Literature Review

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### Abstract

The prevalence of culturally responsive practices has created a challenging dialogue between speech-language pathologists and the caretakers of children who use Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. The roles expected of being facilitators of an AAC device may conflict with a family's cultural identity, values, home-based language, and abilities. This session will provide an overview of the definition, current state, efficacy, and challenges of culturally responsive practices in AAC services. In addition to reviewing the prevalence of AAC in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, facilitator perceptions and competence will be discussed. As healthcare and communication providers it is important in understanding culture and cultural values as they relate to AAC. Future studies should focus on increased awareness of cultural and linguistic values and its effect on the intimacy of literacy. Participants will be able to:

1. Explain the current state and use of AAC amongst culturally and linguistically diverse communities
2. Describe the importance of literacy intimacy and the deficiencies in cultural representation programming within Augmentative Alternative Communication devices.
3. Identify culturally responsive practices that can be used to accommodate and improve familial interaction as facilitators and programmers of their child's AAC

### Introduction

**Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)** is an area of clinical practice that supplements or compensates for impairments in speech-language production and/or comprehension, to improve functional daily living in individuals with disabilities or limitations (ASHA, 2022).

**AAC systems** are a spectrum of components that include symbols, aids, strategies, and techniques to aid individuals with communication. (Bailey et al. 2006)

**What is a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community or Household?**

- Individuals whose values have been influenced by more than one culture, as reflected in their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious or political affiliations, or gender identity
- Linguistic development has been influenced by more than one language (Maul, 2015)

### Culturally Responsive Practices: AAC

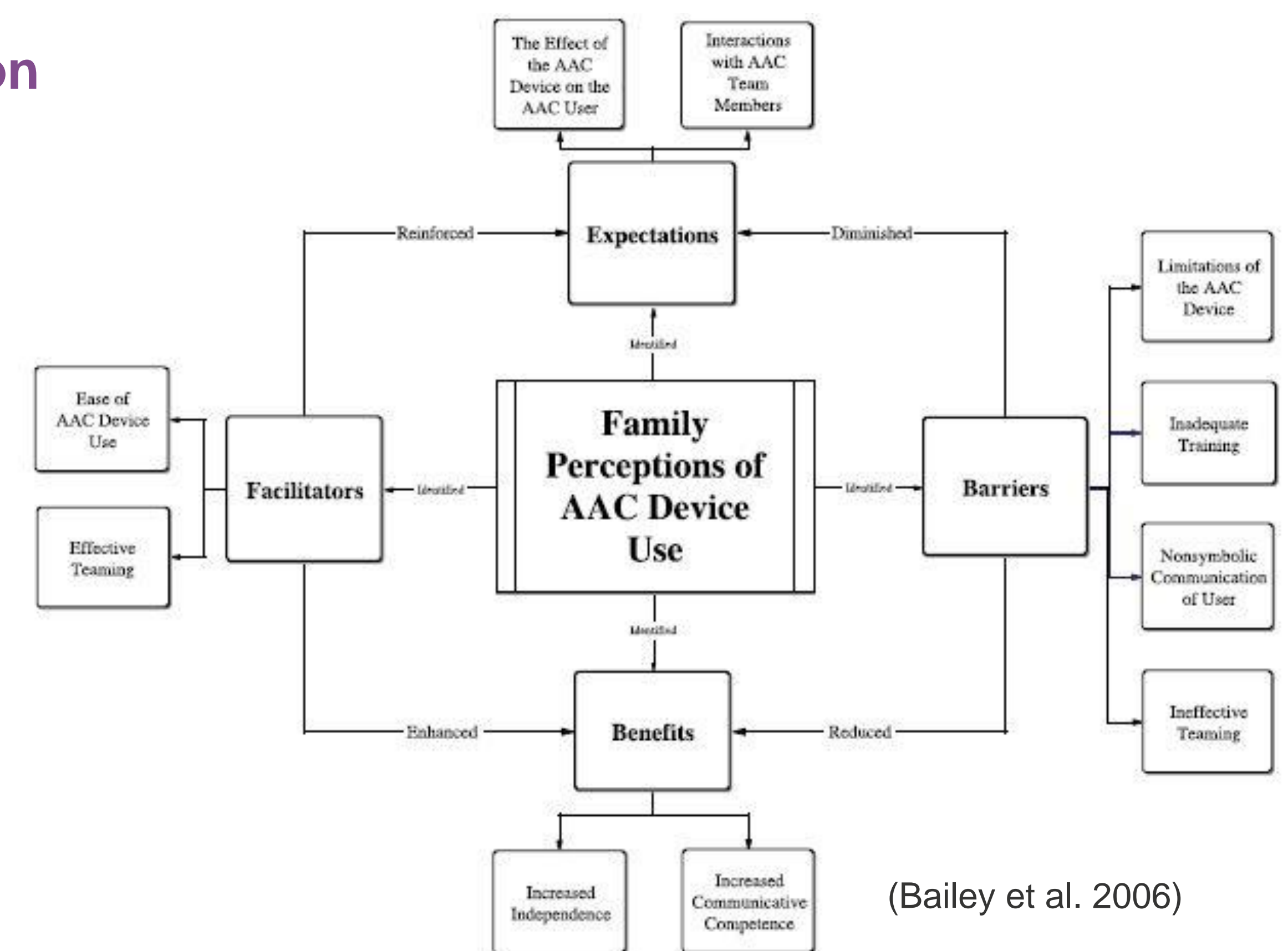
Services to children with complex communication needs from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has been noted as one of the greatest professional challenges among Speech Language Pathologists (Light & McNaughton, 2012). Culturally responsive practices include cultural awareness- recognition our personal and professional values are specific to our culture and not universal truths. Providing all families with strategies to ensure equal access to their services. (Soto, 2012). Creating AAC displays that consider the representation of the user- vocabulary, icons, familial jargon (Worah, et al., 2015)

### Deficiencies In Cultural Representation Within AAC. Devices

- Euro-American culture influences every aspect of US education including the decision-making processes related to students with disabilities and AAC devices (Parette et al., 2002)
- Family's had negative associations with the AAC devices. It was seen as a forced option, where they received inadequate training and support and found it to be an impractical for use at home (Kulkarni & Parmar, 2017)
- Mexican American Families expressed needs of Spanish-speaking supports and access to more high-tech devices to include local language options (Huet et al, 2001).
- Difficulties understanding AAC device jargon
- Research studies tended not to include CLD subjects and issues pertaining to service delivery to CLD populations were only discussed theoretically (Bridges, 2004).
- Cultural identities impact the level of acceptance and use of AAC-Social stigmas influenced by culture.
- Cultural Preferences to use low-tech options or natural speech to AAC devices. Families' perceptions of devices were inconsistent with language styles for non-English speaking groups (Kulkarni & Parmar, 2017)
- Societal barriers that yield inequitable access to AAC and bilingualism (McNamara 2018).

### Intimacy of Literacy

- Literacy as it relates to cultural is often compared to the idea of personhood and identity. What it is to be a person, to be moral and to be human in specific cultural context is frequently signified by the kind of literacy practices in which a person is engaged. Literacy and Personhood are intertwined through many cultural discourses and serve to remind us that the acquisition of literacy involves more than simply technical skills (Verhoeven, 1994)
- A family's intimate culture and their language socializations influence a child's literacy development. (Serpell et. Al, 2003).
- From examining intimate family culture and the perspective of literacy development, psychosocial features of a family's intimate culture are more informative than economic indices of the family's material resource (Serpell et. Al, 2003).



### Improving Familial Interaction as AAC Facilitators

- Home-based intervention that are culturally relevant, provide contextual intervention, support sensitive to needs, and regard current established patterns of communication (Kulkarni & Parmar, 2017)
- Familial group decision making, what the total impact of assessment and services may be on the family unit. (Parette and Huer 2002).
- Valuing familial viewpoints to facilitate trust and emphasizing the necessity of time for collaboration with professionals. Honest communication regarding prognosis of AAC implementation (Bailey et al. 2006)
- In African American Vernacular Dialect (AAVD) Homes who used AAC it was requested that devices be preprogrammed with AAVD slang and more represented of the user because it is an extension of them self, icons to have different skin tones (Davis, 2005).

### Further Research

- Understanding if cultural accommodations to are valued and functional by diverse individuals who use AAC.
- Obtaining perspective from the Individual AAC user in a variety of contexts
- AAC companies' ability to reprogram systems for user-friendly language switching capabilities
- Variance in culture and its impacts on literacy amongst CLD communities

### References



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