

Q: How do I assess someone for a Minspeak system?

A: This answer is a compilation of ideas contributed by Tony Jones (UK), Paul Andres (Germany), Janelle Sampson (Australia), Katya Hill (USA), Sheela Stuart (USA), Tracy Kovach (USA), Sheryl Haeusler (USA), Carole Zangari (USA) & Gail Van Tatenhove, (USA).

Assessment is an established step in the selection and implementation of any AAC system – including a Minspeak system. When the assessment process singles out “assessment for a Minspeak system,” this thinking often leads an evaluation team to focus on ***ease of use at first encounter (IF the person can use Minspeak)*** instead of ***parameters for learning (HOW the person would use Minspeak)***.

When focused on ***parameters for learning***, the end result is the development of a profile that reflects the person’s strengths and challenges relative to use of a Minspeak system. Assessment teams generally do not “assess someone for a Minspeak system.” Rather, they complete a comprehensive AAC assessment, including consideration of Minspeak as a strategy for representing and organizing vocabulary in an AAC device. Minspeak is considered regardless of the person’s age or abilities.

Information is available at this website that describes the use of Minspeak for individuals with cerebral palsy, apraxia, developmental disabilities, autism, and adult onset disabilities. Go to [Use of Minspeak in the More Information sidebar](#) to download that information. Use that information to help you in your assessment process.

Assessment teams collect information on a range of factors that influence the AAC decision-making process, including the following:

- communication needs
- environmental and communication partners factors, such as current AAC support resources and needs
- past experiences using AAC symbols, strategies, boards, or devices
- access methods and their impact on design of an AAC system
- sensory issues (e.g., vision, hearing, sensory integration)
- communication skills of the individual needing the AAC system
 - communication interaction skills
 - receptive vocabulary
 - aided and unaided expressive language output
 - conversation and discourse skills
 - classification/categorization skills
- learning style
 - responsiveness to aided language stimulation
 - responsiveness to communication partner strategies (such as expectant delay, modeling through Aided Language Stimulation, coaching and prompting hierarchy, scaffolding, etc.)
 - strategies used in self-exploration of the Minspeak device
 - responsiveness to Minspeak-system and device accommodations (such as hiding keys, shortening icon sequences, modifying pictures, changing the color code, etc.)

An AAC assessment might include a short-term or long-term device trial. A Minspeak-device trial period might include profiling the person's **teach-ability** for the following:

- learning of 1 to 3 part icon sequences
- motor automaticity to retrieve specific vocabulary from a stable display compared to that same vocabulary across dynamic displays
- use of predictable patterns for parts of speech organization
- retrieval of vocabulary from activity rows or pages
- responsiveness to communication partner teaching strategies, such as aided language stimulation
- use of visual support materials as strategies for supporting communication partners

All of these areas of assessment help create a profile of the person's communication skills as they relate to the learning and use of a Minspeak system. The more information that you can collect, the better able you are to select or design a Minspeak program for the person.