



ALS Augmentative Communication Program

The Mission

We provide comprehensive augmentative communication and assistive technology assessments, trials and training to people with ALS from the time of diagnosis through the lifespan.

Program Goals:

To support communication and daily functional needs, sustain personal control and dignity, facilitate continued social and vocational goals, and maintain quality of life through thoughtful implementation of solutions ranging from high technology to quick-access/low tech tools and strategies. This is best accomplished by providing support to a person with ALS and his/her family.

Program Description:

The ALS Augmentative Communication Program team includes Speech-Language Pathologists who specialize in augmentative communication, Occupational Therapists with alternative access and assistive technology expertise, administrative professionals and graduate trainees. The ALS-ACP staff collaborate with local, regional and national resources to provide the highest quality services for individuals with ALS. In addition we collaborate with regional, national and international clinical leaders, engineers, developers and ALS care providers/teams to bring our innovation as well as the innovation of others to people with ALS and their families.

What to Expect:

Our team hopes to meet people as early as possible after diagnosis but remains eager to support people with ALS at any time during their journey.



As appropriate, *Speech-Language Pathology* will introduce strategies to minimize fatigue associated with speech, including strategies to enhance intelligibility or preserve energy, and may introduce varied voice amplifiers. You may be introduced to our model of Message-Banking and/or options for Voice Banking, partner with us to create personalized quick-access communication tools, learn about and try various high tech speech-generating devices that support face to face

communication as well as communication through internet/telephone. If technology is appropriate, you will be supported to participate in evidence-based trials with the most appropriate augmentative solutions so you can experience how technology may be helpful in the 'real world' before making final selections.

Based on assessment of current voluntary motor abilities, *Occupational Therapy* may identify adaptations and tools to facilitate continued physical access to daily activities. These may range from minor modifications to one's computer keyboard and mouse to hands free control of a computer, tablet and smartphone. All possible modes of physical access including voice control, hand function, voluntary movements of eyes, head and feet are explored to minimize over-use of any one muscle group. Accommodations to minimize fatigue and facilitate function often include positioning-mounting adaptations, low and high tech adaptive pointers, and alternative computer mice and switches. In addition to facilitating access to written and spoken communication, email, the Internet, social media, options for independent access to reading, television operation, and other leisure time activities may be addressed.

Location:

Boston Children's Hospital WALTHAM CAMPUS
ALS Augmentative Communication Program
Otolaryngology and Center for Communication Enhancement
Second Floor West
9 Hope Avenue
Waltham, MA 02453
Free parking with abundant accessible parking

For more information about the ALS Augmentative Communication Program, please contact:

John M. Costello, MA, CCC-SLP
Director, Augmentative Communication Program
718.216.2220
john.costello@childrens.harvard.edu

How to schedule an appointment:

Please contact Lynne Moran at 781.216.2229 or
Lynne.moran@childrens.harvard.edu

Lynne will forward our three-page intake. Please have your ALS team (if available) complete the form and return to us.

The Boston Children's Hospital ALS Augmentative Communication Program is fully supported by philanthropy. For information on how you can support us, please contact Hilary Smiley Marshall at 857.218.3120 or Hilary.Marshall@chtrust.org