

Right to Communicate

The Autism National Committee (AutCom) supports the right of everyone to communicate anywhere, anytime, with anyone, about anything, using methods they choose and find effective for themselves. Access to communication and the opportunity to explore many and varied methods toward that end is a fundamental right.

We stand with autistics, along with their families, friends, allies, and others who know and respect them, who are working to gain a reliable, autonomous voice--people with limited or no reliable speech who, with knowledge of best practices for implementation, current research (supporting or not supporting), and potential risks involved, choose to pursue various approaches for access to communication, including, but not limited to, Facilitated Communication Training (FCT), Rapid Prompting Method (RPM), Spelling to Communicate (S2C), or Informative Pointing Method to improve their pointing skills for access to communication devices.

No one should impede the sometimes arduous and oftentimes complex, long-term, and ongoing work for more effective communication that many autistics undertake.

U.S. Law on Communication Access And Choice

<https://unitedforcommunicationchoice.org/law/>

ASAN letter to ASHA on the Right to Communicate

Excerpt: "As autistic self-advocates dedicated to advancing the rights of all people with developmental disabilities – including non-speaking people – we are committed both to ensuring access to a wide range of effective communication supports and promoting research on effective supports. We do not take positions on individual communication support methods or techniques. Nevertheless, we believe each non-speaking person has a right to use the method of communication that works best for them, as determined by an individualized analysis. Moreover, we believe that no single method of AAC will work for all non-speaking individuals."

<https://autisticadvocacy.org/2018/07/asan-letter-to-asha-on-the-right-to-communicate/>

CommunicationFIRST -

"CommunicationFIRST is the only nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the civil rights of the more than 5 million people of all ages in the United States who, due to disability or other condition, are unable to rely on speech alone to communicate. Our mission is to educate the public, advocate for policy change, and engage the justice system to protect and advance the human and civil rights of our historically marginalized community."

<https://communicationfirst.org/>

TASH Right to Communicate statement

"The right to communicate is both a basic human right and the means by which all other rights are realized. All people communicate, and are presumed to have an active interest in communicating their decisions and choices. In the name of fully realizing the guarantee of individual rights, we must ensure: that all people have a means of communication which allows their fullest participation in the wider world; and that their communication is heeded by others.

<https://tash.org/about/resolutions/tash-resolution-right-communicate-2016/>