

Autism National Committee Principles & Policies

The [Autism National Committee \(AutCom\)](#) has developed a policy and principle statement designed to empower and support individuals with Autism, & to ensure that each Autistic individual is given access to facilitated communication (FC). The laid out principles are based on the fundamental right that each individual has the right to exercise their voice, communicate their needs, and have it taken seriously regardless of their disability.

Obligation to Enhance Genuine Communication

To ensure that [Autistic individuals](#) are not denied the absolute right to communication, AutCom reminds us that It is a call to the people interacting with autistic individuals, such as teachers, healthcare providers, and family members, to be open and ready to listen and exercise genuine communication while interacting with Autistic individuals. Otherwise, we risk the potential of discrimination and isolation of those with communication disabilities such as Autistics.

Enhancing Genuine Communication Using AAC

AutCom acknowledges the potential of facilitated communication (FC) as a tool for Autistic persons to effectively express their wants and needs in ways which might otherwise be difficult. For those unfamiliar with what FC is, FC is a communication method that uses support from another person, a facilitator, to help individuals with

Autism, or any other disability, convey their thoughts and feelings. These individuals will help bridge cognitive barriers and allow for effective communication despite a disability.

AAC devices as a Support tool

AutCom policy also Advocates for the need for AAC devices as a fundamental right for Autistic individuals to provide them with an alternate form of communication. AAC devices are Alernative Augmented Communication devices like text-to-speech and PECS. To deny an Autistic individual access to AAC devices is to deny them their fundamental right to communication.

The Right To FC Training

The AutCom Statement emphasises the right to Facilitated Communication Training (FCT) for individuals who need FC and cannot speak fluently. For those unfamiliar with FCT, FCT includes practical and theory-based teaching to help individuals develop communication skills. It also helps those with difficulty understanding and using language due to Autism or any related disability. The policy statement ensures that Autistic individuals are given the opportunity/exposure to learn and effectively use FCT to communicate their wants and needs.

Literacy Skills

Aside from the FCT and AAC devices, AutCom advocates for literacy skills for each autistic person. Literacy skill is a right for each individual. Without Literacy skills, communication becomes a challenge. As such, Autcom emphasizes the need for them to access literary education, which allows for interaction with the world around them. Therefore Autistic must receive support in oral and written language, two key components in Literacy skills.

The Right to Participate in Decision Making.

AutCom also emphasizes the need for the Autistic community to have the opportunity to participate in national policies that could directly impact their lives. Participating in national policies could be accomplished through a spokesperson, advocates, or any person willing to speak on their behalf. This approach will ensure that Autistic voices are heard.

FC and AAC Research

Additionally, the ANC policy welcomes responsible research into FC/AAC and encourages the use of various research methodologies. Again It is noteworthy that research should focus on the effectiveness of FCT and AAC devices in providing Autistic individuals with an effective means of communication while ensuring their safety and privacy.

This brief is just a summary of the Autcom Policy rather than a complete description. It is essential to read the entire policy to understand what it entails and how it can help Autistic individuals exercise their right to communication. The bottom line is that the policy and principle statement seeks to ensure that Autistic individuals have access to AAC devices, FCT, literacy education, and support to communicate their wants and needs effectively. This step will allow them to participate in society as equal citizens, with their voices heard and respected.

Reference:

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