

Introduction to Letterboards

An overview of how letterboards are used in RPM and AAC, with tips for families getting started.

What is a Letterboard?

A letterboard is a flat surface -- typically laminated card or foam board -- printed with the alphabet, numbers, and sometimes common words or phrases. In RPM, the learner points to letters to spell out their thoughts, answers, and ideas.

Letterboards come in different sizes and layouts. Your practitioner will recommend the right format for your child's motor and sensory profile.

How to Introduce the Letterboard to Your Child

- * Start with a stencil or large-font board before moving to a full letterboard.
- * Introduce it during a calm, low-pressure moment -- not during correction.
- * Model pointing yourself so your child can observe the movement.
- * Begin with forced-choice questions (e.g., 'Point to A or B') to build motor skill.
- * Gradually increase complexity as your child's pointing becomes more consistent.
- * Always pair letterboard use with engaging, academic content.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- * Moving the board during pointing -- keep it still and at a consistent angle.
- * Rushing -- give your child time to motor plan each movement.
- * Over-praising individual letters -- wait for a full word or thought.
- * Using the letterboard only for testing -- it should feel like communication.
- * Skipping sessions -- consistency is critical in building the motor habit.
- * Giving up too soon -- progress can be slow at first and then suddenly rapid.

Progressing from Letterboard to Other AAC Tools

The letterboard is often a stepping stone. As communication develops, many learners transition to other AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) tools:

- * **Speech-Generating Devices (SGDs):** Apps like Proloquo2Go or LAMP that produce speech output when the learner selects words or symbols.
- * **Keyboard Typing:** Some learners progress to independent typing on a standard keyboard or tablet, increasing speed and independence.
- * **LAMP (Language Acquisition through Motor Planning):** A complementary method that builds consistent motor pathways for word access.

Your practitioner will guide the transition at the right time for your child.

