Software/App Features to Consider

Use this list to help think about what features of an app you might want to consider when matching it to a user. Read through the details and look for features that might be helpful to your user. You can also use this to learn about app features that you did not know about that are already available in the current app.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| APP FEATURES | DETAILS |
| *settings* | locked/invisible option, ease of use, quantity of setting options |
| *display* | number of buttons (grid) per page, button shape (e.g., folder), button size; |
| *voice and auditory feedback* | range of included options; ethnic match to user; unique voices; multiple voice options; different languages; auditory preview; key click; |
| *button activation* | delay; dwell; highlight; interrupt |
| *button look and function* | changes to cell color, border color and thickness, overall size; mix of sizes within or across displays; actions assigned; spacing between; options and ease to show/hide; |
| *symbols* | sets available (symbolstix, boardmaker, smarty symbols…); photos |
| *programming* | ease of sharing/backup; options for sharing; ease of editing; creating new buttons from user |
| *keyboard* | qwerty; word prediction; wp prioritize vocabulary; rate enhancement |
| *vocabulary* | overall quantity; range of messages pre-programmed |
| *navigation* | predictive branching; core display repeated across pages; button signals navigation; maximum number of buttons per message; choice of button arrow vs swipe; word search / highlight key |
| *accessories* | keyguard; carrying case; strap; screen protector |
| *display types* | visual scenes; core vocabulary; activity-based displays; quick/common phrases; visual supports |
| *message window* | change size, change background, text color; speaking options; clearing options |
| *support* | Data collection systems; aided language monitor; customer support, FB, tutorials; written documentation; Lite/free version; evaluation version; cost |
| *interface with other apps* | Launch other apps; cut and paste into other apps; saving messages |

**Physical and Electrical Features to Consider**

Perhaps the simplest features to discuss are the physical characteristics of any device or technique. These can range from the size and shape of a device to the durability of the equipment for normal use. It's important that you're familiar with all the different options among all the many AAC devices on the market. Here are some questions that you should ask about equipment you're considering:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| DEVICE FEATURES | KEY QUESTIONS |
| Weight: | How much does the device weigh? With extra battery and speakers, as needed? |
| Portability: | Is there a carrying bag, neck strap, shoulder strap, belt attachment, or carrying handle for the device? |
| Dimensions | What are its dimensions of the device? With extra speakers or battery, if needed? |
| Mountability: | Is there a wheelchair or walker mounting kit or a table-top mount for the device?  Control accessibility: |
| Backup capability | Can customized vocabulary/messages be stored on a floppy disk or tape or on a computer hard drive in case the memory on the device is destroyed? |
| Control | How does the user turn the device on/off and is there an accessible control for volume? |
| Memory: | How much vocabulary and/or how many images (at what size and image quality) can be stored with the current memory? Can memory be expanded? |
| Durability | Is the case shock-resistant? Are the internal components shock-mounted? Is the screen waterproof or splashproof? Are the plugs, jacks, and ports mounted solidly for repeated use? |
| Power | Does the device take both wall power and battery power? Are the batteries rechargeable, and if so, how long do they take to charge fully? How long can the device be operated for normal use on one charge? Are extra batteries included with the device? Does the adapter or power supply work around the world? Is there a power-saver mode to reduce the drain on the battery when it's not in use? How much do the batteries cost and where can they be purchased? What happens when the power is low or unavailable? Is there a warning light or alarm when power is low or automatic switching to a backup source? |
| Speakers: | Is there an extra speaker? If so, what type of battery does it use? How long does it last on a charge? Is the on/off switch accessible to the user? |
| Hardware Compatibility | What other equipment is being used? Will it need to interface with the device (e.g. power chair, assistive listening device, hearing aid, cochlear…) |
| Software Compatibility | Some AAC devices work with other computer software programs. Find out if this is possible and what software will work with the device, as well as memory requirements. |