EZConversation — Parent & Caregiver Manual

A guide for families. No technical background is needed. If you are a speech-language pathologist, see the SLP manual for the clinical and configuration guide.

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1. What this app is

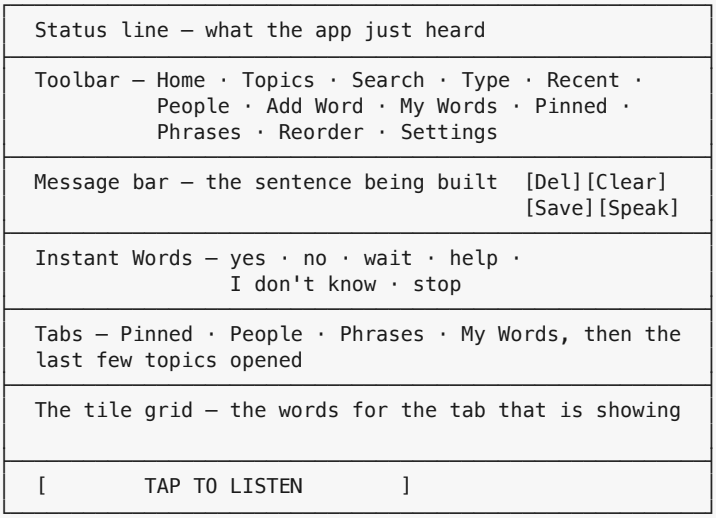
EZConversation is an AAC app for the iPad. Your child taps pictures and words, and the iPad speaks a full sentence out loud.

It has two key features that most grid-based AAC apps lack:

1. **It listens to the conversation.** When you say something to your child, the app can change the words on screen to the ones your child is likely to need for a reply. This is called **Listening Mode**.
2. **It builds the grammar.** Your child does not have to tap "I", "am", "going", "to", "the", "store". They can tap **I → go → store** and the app says *"I go to the store."* This is called the **Sentence Builder**.

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2. The screen, top to bottom



Instant Words (the row just under the message bar)

Six words sit in a strip directly beneath the message bar: **yes, no, wait, help, I don't know, stop**.

Tapping one of these speaks it immediately. It does not go into the message bar, and it does not wait for the Speak button. These are the only tiles that work this way, as the rest are intended for building sentences. They are for moments when building a sentence would take too long, such as

answering a question, stopping something, or asking for help.

They are always in the same place and never scroll away.

The message bar

Every other tile your child taps is added here, left to right, and the sentence is spoken when they press **Speak**.

Inside the bar you will see two kinds of chips:

- **Word chips** are the tiles your child tapped. Tap one to remove it.
- **Small chips between the words** are the words *the app added* ("to", "the", "a", "and"). A chip showing a dash means nothing was added there. **Tap a chip to switch its word off**, and it turns into a dash. Tapping it a couple more times brings the word back. There is no list of other words to choose from.

Some tapped words show with a **line through them**. This means the app folded that tile into another word. For example, tapping "why", "I", "no", "feel", "good" produces *"why don't I feel good"*, so the "no" tile is crossed out because it became part of "don't". A tile tapped twice by accident is also crossed out. Crossed-out tiles can still be tapped to remove them.

Buttons on the right of the bar:

Button	What it does
Del	Removes the last word
Clear	Empties the whole message. It then turns orange and reads **Undo** until the next word is tapped, so an accidental Clear can be undone
Save	Opens a box showing the tile this sentence will become on the Home screen. You can add a picture, then press **Save** (or **Cancel**)
Speak	Says the sentence out loud

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3. Listening Mode ("TAP TO LISTEN")

This is the wide button at the bottom of the screen.

How to use it: press it, then speak to your child normally. The button shows *Listening…* while it records, and it stops on its own after about two seconds of quiet. It then shows *Processing…* for a moment, and new words appear.

What changes: the app chooses the topics most likely to be needed and puts those words on screen. It can also detect names and places that were mentioned. For example, if you ask *"Do you want to go to New York?"*, "New York" is added as a tile, even if it is not in your child's vocabulary.

What it does not do: it does not answer for your child, choose words for them, or speak anything on its own. It only changes which words are on screen, and every word in the app can still be reached without it.

Where the words appear. The results open on their own **Heard** tab (with a microphone picture). Names, places, and the words the app thinks are most likely are shown first, in bold. After them come the words of each matching topic, under that topic's name. Listening again replaces the Heard tab.

Privacy. Listening Mode uses the iPad's own speech recognition, the same one behind dictation, so audio may be processed by Apple, exactly as dictation is. The app does not save the audio, and what was said is only used to choose which words to show. No audio is captured unless the button is pressed.

The tiles, the grammar and the voice all run on the iPad itself, and do not need the internet.

If it mishears you, press the button and say it again, or use **Topics** to pick the words yourself.

The first time the button is used, the iPad asks for permission to use the microphone and speech recognition. If either is turned down, the app explains how to turn it back on in the iPad's Settings app.

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4. The Sentence Builder

Your child taps a short sequence of words, and the app speaks a grammatical sentence.

They tap	It says
I · want · cookie	I want a cookie
I · want · go	I want to go
he · go	he goes
dog · eat · sandwich	the dog eats a sandwich
yesterday · I · go · store	yesterday I went to the store
tomorrow · I · eat · pizza	tomorrow I will eat pizza
I · no · like · it	I don't like it
leg · hurt	my leg hurts
dark	it is dark
I · headache	I have a headache

They tap	It says
cat · dog · go	the cat and the dog go
I · tired · hungry	I am tired and hungry
where · mom	where is mom
who · you	who are you
Sam · go · with · I · park	Sam goes with me to the park
there · nothing · eat	there is nothing to eat
I · want · water · I · want · cookie	I want water and I want a cookie

One thing worth learning as a parent:

> **Tapping a person again, right before a thing, makes it "belong to" them.**
>
> I · like · **I** · car → *I like **my** car* he · like · **he** · car → *he likes **his** car* give · I · **I** · book → *give me **my** book*

There is **no "me", "my", "your" or "his" tile** in this app, on purpose, because the app's job is to tell *I*, *me* and *my* apart automatically. Tap the plain person tile, and the app chooses which form the sentence needs.

The same is true of **"and", "but" and "because"**. There are no tiles for these either. Tap two things in a row, and the app joins them.

Some examples of what the Sentence Builder handles:

- **Verb endings**: "he go" becomes "he goes", while "I go" stays "I go".
- **Articles**: it adds "a", "an" or "the" where they are needed, and leaves them out where they are not ("I eat pizza", not "I eat a pizza").
- **"to" before a second action**: "I want go" becomes "I want to go".
- **"to" before a place**: "I go school" becomes "I go to school".
- **Missing "is / am / are"**: "I happy" becomes "I am happy".
- **Missing "have"**: "I headache" becomes "I have a headache".
- **Negation**: tapping "no" before an action or a feeling produces "don't", "doesn't", "isn't" or "not".
- **Time**: "yesterday" anywhere in the sentence puts the whole thing in the past, and "tomorrow" or "next week" puts it in the future. "Last night" and "five minutes ago" work as well.
- **Questions**: "why I sad" becomes "why am I sad", and "where he go" becomes "where does he go". "where he go yesterday" becomes "where did he go yesterday".
- **Body parts**: "stomach hurts" becomes "my stomach hurts".
- **Numbers**: number tiles tapped in a row make one number, so "2" then "1" is 21.

- **Double taps**: tapping the same tile twice by accident is treated as one tap ("I need need help" becomes "I need help").

If it gets something wrong, tap the small chip in the message bar to remove the word it added, or remove a word chip and try a different order. Please also let us know through Settings → About → **Contact Support**, with the exact tiles tapped and what the sentence should have been.

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5. Finding words

There are four ways to reach a word, and all of them add it to the message bar.

Pinned words are the core words used in almost every sentence: *I, you, he, she, we, they, go, want, need, like, feel, have, more, stop, yes, no, please, thank you*, the numbers 0–9, and more. They have their own **Pinned** tab, at the left of the tab bar on every screen. The Pinned tab always looks the same, so the words stay where your child learned them. Unlike Instant Words, pinned words **do** go into the message bar.

Topics (toolbar) opens a page of picture cards, such as Food, Feelings, I Need, Animals, Things To Do, Places, My Body, Not Well, Clothes, Colors, Weather, School, Money, Devices, Home Stuff, Questions and Calendar. Tap one to show its words. The cards use pictures so that a child who does not read can still use them.

A **tab bar** sits above the grid on every screen. On the left are the Home screen's tabs: **Pinned**, **People**, **Phrases** (saved sentences) and **My Words** (words you added). Each one appears once it has something in it. After them come the most recently opened topics, newest first, each with its card's picture. Tap a tab to switch to it. Going back to a tab never changes the order of the bar, so tabs stay in the same place. **Home** goes back to Pinned. When you add or change something, such as saving a sentence or adding a person, the app shows that tab.

Search (toolbar): type a few letters to see every matching word from every topic, plus your people, your own words and the pinned words. This is useful for you, but usually too slow for a child in the middle of a conversation.

Type (toolbar) opens an on-screen keyboard with word predictions, which learn from what your child says. It has two modes, switched with the **Words / Phrase** button:

- **Words** (the default): each typed word is added as its own tile, and the grammar is applied as usual. A word typed in its full form, like "wants", works too, and "I wants water" is corrected to "I want water".
- **Phrase**: the whole line is added as one tile and spoken exactly as typed. This is for typing a complete sentence that should not be changed.

6. Tile colours and pictures

Most tiles have a picture. Words like "very" or "already" do not, since there is no clear picture for them.

Tile colour shows **where a word comes from**:

Colour	Means
Light grey	Pinned words
Dark grey	The words of the topic you're in
Blue	Names (your people and pets), and words the app is suggesting

7. Setting the app up for your child

People & Pets (toolbar → People)

Add the people your child talks about: family, friends, teachers and pets. Each entry has a **name**, whether it is a **person or pet**, and an optional **photo**. The photo appears on the tile, and only the name is spoken.

Names come up constantly in conversation, and no built-in vocabulary can guess them, so this is one of the most useful setup steps.

People appear on the Home screen's **People** tab, in the **Names** topic, and at the start of the **People** topic.

Adding your own words (toolbar → Add Word)

Add words the app does not have, such as a favourite toy, show, food or place. Each word can have a **photo from your camera roll**. If you are inside a topic when you add a word, you can choose whether it goes on Home, in that topic, or both. **My Words** (toolbar) lists the words you have added, so you can edit or remove them.

When you add a word, you will be asked **"What kind of word is this?"**, with six options: *A person, A place, A thing, An action, Describes things, Describes actions*. This is optional, but it tells the Sentence Builder how to treat the word. For example, an action gets the right ending ("he Zooms"), and a thing gets an article ("a Squishmallow"). A word marked "A person" also gets the blue name colour. If you skip it, the app makes a guess.

Pinned Words (toolbar → Pinned)

The core words on the Pinned tab. Add and remove them here, and use **Restore Defaults** (it asks twice) to get the built-in list back. To change their order, use **Reorder** (below).

It is best to keep this list short, so the words your child uses most are easier to find on the Pinned tab.

Home Phrases (toolbar → Phrases)

Whole sentences saved to the Home screen. You can type them here, or tap **Save** on a sentence your child has just built. Each phrase can also have a photo. Newly saved phrases go to the front of the list.

Some examples: "Can I have a break?", "I'm all done", "Can you help me please?"

Reorder (toolbar → Reorder)

Lets you drag tiles into a new order on whichever Home tab is showing: pinned words, your own words, or home phrases. Tap **Done** when finished. People are dimmed while reordering, because the app sets their order.

Recent (toolbar → Recent)

This has two tabs. **Recent** shows the last 50 sentences spoken. Each row has **Speak** to say it again, **+** to load it back into the message bar for editing, and **X** to delete it. **Most used** lists the sentences said more than once, most often first, which helps show which ones are worth saving to Home. **Clear All** deletes the list, including the copy stored for progress reports.

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8. Settings

Toolbar → **Settings**.

Setting	What it does
Account	Shows your account's email. Tap it for sign-in, backup, your subscription, and your licence code.
Voice and speech	Build your child's voice: age (Kid, Teen or Grown-up), voice type (A, B or C), and pitch, speed and volume, with **Hear it** to try it out. The app asks you to set this up the first time it opens. The voice follows your account to other iPads.
Hold time before a tile speaks	0.3–2.0 seconds. **Press and hold** any tile to hear that word without adding it to the sentence. Raise this if your child rests on tiles, and lower it if holding feels slow.

Setting	What it does
Ignore repeated taps on a tile within	0–2 seconds, off by default. Ignores a second tap on the *same* tile within that time. Turn this on if a tremor or a bouncy touch causes doubled words.
Speak each word when tapped	Off by default. When on, each tile is spoken as it is added. The full sentence is still spoken on **Speak**.
Supporter modeling	Turn this on while *you* use the iPad to show your child how to build sentences. What you say is not saved to Recent or counted as your child's in progress reports. An orange banner shows while it is on, and it turns off every time the app is opened.
Tile size	Small, Medium or Large. Larger tiles are easier to hit, and smaller tiles fit more words on screen. Tiles that don't fit can be scrolled to.
Share anonymous usage data	On by default. Sends counts of how often features are used, to help improve the app, never what your child says. Turning it off applies to every device on your account.
About	**Show the Tour**: a one-minute walk through the screen (it is also offered once when an account is new). **Contact Support**: send us a message from inside the app, and we reply to your account's email. Your app version and iPad model are sent with it. If the iPad is offline, the message is sent once it is back online. The Terms of Service and Attributions are here as well.

Settings are saved as soon as you change them.

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9. Backup and accounts

With an account, the app signs in when it opens and backs up your people, your own words, pinned words, home phrases, recent sentences, and settings.

Paying for the app. There are two ways to hold a licence:

- **Subscribe in the app.** After you create an account, the sign-in screen offers **Subscribe**: monthly, yearly, or a one-time purchase, paid through the App Store. A free trial is shown when one is available to your Apple ID. Apple handles the payment, receipts and refunds, and you manage or cancel a subscription in your Apple ID settings.
- **A licence code from a school or clinic.** If you were given one, enter it in Settings → Account → **Licence Code**.

If you already paid on another iPad, or reinstalled the app, go to Settings → Account → **Subscription** → **Restore Purchases**. Signing in to the same account on another iPad means one subscription covers both.

10. Seeing how it's going

If your child's account is set up, you can sign in on the website and see a summary of how the app is being used over the last 90 days: how many sentences per week, which topics they came from, how many different words, and average sentence length over time. Reports show counts, not the sentences themselves, though the sentences are stored on our servers so the reports can be produced. **Clear All** in Recent deletes that stored copy.

Linking to your child's account. As a security feature, parents must be linked from their child's account.

1. Sign in on the website and choose **"I'm a parent / caregiver"** when asked who you are.
2. On **your child's account**, sign in, open *"Who can see your reports"*, and press **Generate invite code**.
3. Enter that code under **Redeem an invite code** on your own dashboard.

Codes last seven days and link one person each. Your child's account can see everyone linked to it and remove any of them at any time.

Sentences spoken with **Supporter modeling** on are not included in the report.

11. Getting started

1. **Add your people.** Toolbar → People. Family, pets, teachers and close friends, with photos.
2. **Add five of your own words.** Toolbar → Add Word. Add the things that matter most to your child, with photos, and answer the "what kind of word" question.
3. **Build the voice.** The app asks the first time it opens, but it is worth coming back to with your child: Toolbar → Settings → Voice and speech. Let them choose the voice that sounds right to them.
4. **Trim the pinned words.** Toolbar → Pinned. Remove anything your child does not use yet.
5. **Set the tile size and hold time.** Toolbar → Settings. Make the tiles big enough for your child to hit reliably.
6. **Model it.** Turn on Supporter modeling and build sentences yourself on the iPad, saying them out loud. For example, tap "I", "want", "cookie" and press Speak while saying it.
7. **Try Listening Mode.** Press TAP TO LISTEN, ask your child a question, and see what appears.
8. **Save sentences that repeat.** When your child builds something they will say again, press **Save**.

The app takes care of the grammar. Your child's job is to choose the words, and yours is to make sure the words they want are easy to reach.