

## Performing “The Magic Box”

The Magic Box DOES NOT need to be performed with skilled actors, elaborate scenery, or fancy props. While some ability to “get into character” is helpful, the ability to memorize a script or recite lines precisely is not required. The actors may be allowed to use their printed scripts during the play. Songs within the script can be sung with impromptu melodies or by adapting melodies from familiar, popular songs. As an example of song “melodies” and “mood”, QuickTime files of the songs are provided.

### Preparing to Perform:

1. Select the “director” of the play.
2. Print or photocopy 10 copies of the script.
3. Identify the actors who will play each character.
4. Create the costumes. Encourage the actors to be creative when developing their costumes. Some sewing or buying necessary bits and pieces might be required.
5. Collect the necessary props. It might be necessary to buy several props – like the magic wand or tickling bells.
6. Make the 4 paper-based AAC devices by using materials from the manufacturer, photocopying the devices, printing out displays, etc. You do not need the actual AAC device in the play. A simulated version of the device is all that is required. It is advised that they be laminated for durability.
7. Get the song “Graceland®” by Paul Simon, 1986. The song can be downloaded from iTunes for \$0.99. Download it to an iPod, MP3 player, or burn it to a CD to be played on a portable CD player. Use external speakers so that when you play the music, it is loud enough to be heard by the audience.
8. Rehearse, as necessary.
9. Provide your audience with a “program,” listing the characters and actors. Include some basic information about AAC, especially if you are planning a Q & A session after the performance.

### Modifying the Script:

It is perfectly acceptable to modify the script, as necessary, based on cultural diversity, available actors, regional differences, etc. Here are some ways you might want to modify the script:

1. Change Prissy Mae Jefferson to a boy if the actor to play the role is male.
2. Change the Granny to a Grand dad if the actor to play the role is male.
3. Have the kids going on the field trip to a different, more regional place. Alternative field trips (with an accompanying song) might be:
  - a. Disney World (song = When You Wish Upon a Star®)
  - b. baseball game (song = Take Me Out To The Ballgame®)
  - c. beach (song = Surfing USA® by the Beach Boys)
  - d. farm (song = Old MacDonald Had a Farm)

### Conducting a Q & A Session After the Play:

The purpose for performing the play should be to promote AAC awareness and stimulate some discussion about AAC. Based on your audience, use several of these questions to begin the discussion.

1. Using “Twenty Questions” is a common strategy for talking with people when they don’t have any way to talk for themselves. How will having an AAC device change the way people interact with the person using the device? Will it stop them from doing the Twenty Questions Rap? Why or why not?
2. What did you think about the Dream scene, when Prissy gets out of her chair and dreams of talking? She dreams of being a real chatterbox! How can you help someone who already has an AAC device become a talkative person? (Ideas: Ask them open-ended questions, give them time, watch-wait while they are talking, etc.)
3. Are AAC devices really “Magic Boxes?” What is and is not “magic” about them? (Ideas: Most people can’t start using them right away without someone teaching it to them and AAC devices do not fix a person’s disability, but they have the “magic” of voice output, which is very powerful for many people, and the potential to change the person’s life.)
4. Iggy, the Technology Witch, represents problems and things that can go wrong when a person uses technology to communicate.
  - a. Granny knew the device cost a lot of money and was afraid it might get broken, so she took it away. What other reasons might a person have for taking a device away from someone?
  - b. The kids on the bus told stories about bad things that happened with their devices. What kind of problems could happen with a device and how might you fix those problems? How can some of those problems be prevented?
5. How important do you think it is that everyone be able to talk for him or herself? What do you think it would be like if you couldn’t talk?