

# Session Descriptions: Indiana AAC Summit 2015

## **“Show Me the Money: Community Collaboration Making a Difference in AAC Service & Delivery in your Community” by April Newton (SLP)**

Improving communication skills is a frequent priority for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is needed to support inclusion and participation. Maximizing communication skills for individuals with complex communication needs requires more than the typical two 20-minute weekly therapy sessions. Ideally, access to AAC is available 24-7 at school, home, and within the community. More often than not, the reality is that there is a lack of funding for training, low tech materials, or even devices through special education services. This session will present local case examples of successful collaboration and effective community partnership in order to purchase and provide needed AAC materials.

## **“Strategies for Getting your Whole Team on Board” by Jenny Cardinal (SLP)**

Getting the most bang for your buck involves teaching not only your student/patient how to navigate their communication system but also all those involved in their care including parents, speech therapists, teachers, paraprofessionals, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. Using coaching strategies from this presentation will help you to get everyone on your team on board and on the same page when utilizing the student/patient’s communication system. These coaching strategies can then facilitate teaching your team evidence based practices to ensure your student/patient is progressing towards their goals.

## **“Plan AAC-COREdingly: Using AAC & Core Vocabulary Strategies & Visuals throughout the Day” by Brenda Brannigan (Special Educator)**

This presentation will highlight the journey of one special educator into the world of core vocabulary and the use of AAC strategies and visuals created to support language learning across curricular domains. Special education teachers are responsible for students’ growth and development not only in language but in every educational domain: academic, functional routines, behavior, personal care, mobility, etc. In addition, while students’ needs are considered individually, and they are provided one-on-one learning opportunities, it is necessary to support students’ success across small group, large group, and public settings. By infusing AAC, and core language strategies throughout the day and across settings, a student’s growth in each domain can support and is supported by language learning.

## **“From Tantrums to Toileting: A Case Study in Bilingual, Multi-Modal AAC Intervention” by Laura Kingsley (Special Educator), Conner Edwards (Student), and Lisa Pufpaff (PhD)**

This session will describe the increased communication skills of a 9-year old male with severe cognitive impairment and no functional speech, whose native language is Spanish, through a collaborative team approach to systematic instruction in specific skills along with AAC intervention and support woven across the school day. The classroom teacher and preservice special education student will describe their assessment and intervention plans that resulted in Anthony’s dramatic improvement in daily living skills, communication, and social interaction.

## **“AAC Competence: What are we training for?” by Erna Alant (SLT & Special Educator)**

The field of AAC has grown exponentially over the past three decades. This progress is evidenced by improvements in AAC devices, mobile applications and improved strategies to provide access to technology for people with severe physical problems. The field has also made strides in how to familiarize users of AAC and their communication partners in how to use these devices and technology by training communication partners. Successful users like Martin Pistorius is living evidence

of progress in our field. In spite of these advances, however, many users of AAC remain socially isolated, without a social network to support them into adulthood. Teachers have difficulties in implementing AAC strategies in the classroom in ways that are meaningful to them and the students, and parents are often overwhelmed and intimidated by the need to implement AAC strategies at home. This presentation will discuss findings of interviews conducted with AAC interventionists in Indiana to describe what AAC interventionists perceive as "AAC competence". Based on this discussion, an approach to communication will be presented focusing on both *engagement* as well as *participation* to enhance authentic communication. Strategies to support *engagement* in interaction will be highlighted.

**"Help! My Student Needs a Communication Device! What Can I Do?" by Susan Lee (SLP)**

Do you have a student that needs a functional way to communicate? I'm sure you desperately want to help your student, but may not even know where to start. Did you know that your student's health insurance can be accessed for purchase of a dedicated Speech Generating Device? A school-based Speech Pathologist can evaluate and obtain insurance funding for these devices and it's not as hard as you think! This presentation will describe how to access private insurance or Medicaid funding for these devices, including tips for writing successful Speech Generating Device evaluations.

**"Lessons Learned from Piloting a Communication Classroom" by Christa Wise (SLP) and Diana Nall (Special Educator)**

A pilot project at Anderson Community Schools was implemented during the 2014-15 school year partnering a speech language pathologist and special education teacher to implement a communication classroom. Many lessons were learned during the initial phase of this pilot. Topics to be discussed will include choosing vocabulary and tying it into other classroom materials and programs, how many words to address and how often to add new words. Additional topics will include how to incorporate communication throughout the school day, training para-educators and other staff, what equipment and programs were helpful, and recording relevant data.

**"Everyone Should be 'Heard': Creating Opportunities thru Public Awareness" by Sharon Mankey (SLP) and Mariesa Rang (SLP)**

Understanding and acceptance of AAC are lacking in our communities. IPFW has implemented two programs to increase the awareness of AAC in the Fort Wayne community, in hopes of fostering an attitude of acceptance. AAC World and IPFW AAC Poss-Abilities Theatre Camp are unique programs designed to educate the public, as well as provide hands-on experiences for students enrolled in the Communication Sciences & Disorders program at IPFW.

**"My Super Power is Scribbling: Alternative Pencils and Video Feedback Creates Real Writers!" by Beth Waite-Lafever (SLP)**

Students with severe communication deficits typically struggle with written communication as well as verbal. We ask the age-old question of "how do you teach writing when a person can't hold a pencil?" or, "but he doesn't know the alphabet yet so how can he write?" This session will explore the concept of "scribbling with alternative pencils" to provide students with severe communication deficits a functional way to generate authentic writing. Through video presentation, case studies, and demonstration, participants will learn how to help their students generate authentic writing and provide video feedback to support learning.

**"AAC-In-Action: Successful Interagency Collaboration Past, Present, and Future" by Annette Champion (SLP) and Erin Peabody (SLP)**

This presentation will provide an overview of the development, implementation, and future directions of an interagency collaborative cohort (AAC in Action) representing different stakeholders in the field

of severe disabilities and AAC. Through a multi-year perspective, both the perceived benefits and challenges this group has faced will be discussed, with an emphasis on highlighting the various research projects, trainings, and events that have been and will continue to be the fruit of their combined efforts.