

- All right, can you see my screen okay?

- [Jim] Yes.

- Okay, thank you.

Just like to make sure before I start, let me get it into slideshow mode.

Okay, all right.

So welcome for joining us today for incorporating comprehensive literacy instruction into AAC intervention.

My name is Kristen Ellis, and I'm a speech language pathologist and also an augmentative and alternative communication specialist.

Some disclosures that I have to go through just prior to us getting to content, my financial disclosures is that I'm a full-time speech language pathologist and AAC specialist with Behavioral Health Associates.

I'm the owner of Time 2 Talk Therapy Services, which is my private practice, that we specifically specialize in AAC intervention.

I'm the organizer and developer of the Everyone Deserves a Voice AAC Summer Camp, and some non-financial disclosures is I'm a member of ASHA, a SIG 12 member, member of USSAAC and ISAAC.

A little bit about me, as I said before, my name is Kristin Ellis.

I received my bachelor's and my master's degrees from East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania.

I've worked in a variety of public schools, charter schools, and approved private schools for varying diagnoses, including autism, emotional disturbance, blind and visually impaired.

I've worked in a variety of healthcare settings as well, including outpatient clinics, field nursing facilities, and home health.

And I opened my private practice that specializes in AAC in July of 2020, amidst the COVID 19 pandemic.

Our learning objectives for today is that we'll be able to identify when to use a conventional literacy versus a comprehensive emergent literacy approach.

Recognize our role as speech language pathologists, specifically in regard to working with students with complex communication needs.

And what can we do during our intervention to strengthen and reinforce emergent literacy, and how do we select appropriate activities that can be easily incorporated into AAC

intervention? I'm gonna be talking a lot about this book, "Comprehensive Literacy for All: Teaching Students with Significant Disabilities to Read and Write," by Karen Erickson and David Koppenhaver.

It's kind of the premise of where I've gotten the bulk of what I'm going to share today, and how I've kind of taken that information from that text, and then ran with it to develop an AAC summer camp that focuses a lot on AAC and literacy instruction.

And I did include the link for that book in the handout today since I will be referencing it.

So before we get started, it's kind of important to really know what emergent literacy is.

Sometimes I think there's several misconceptions of what it actually is.

So we're gonna go through that first and foremost.

Emergent literacy encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a child develops in relation to reading and writing throughout the early childhood period.

That's oral language, both speaking and listening.

Understanding that print can carry meaning, basic alphabet knowledge, and early phonological awareness.

Something that I didn't know when I was putting this presentation together is that emergent literacy actually begins at birth, and it continues all the way through the preschool years, prior to the onset of conventional reading and writing instruction, which usually happens upon school entry.

It is highly dependent on the nature, frequency, accessibility, and interpretability of experiences with print as well.

Simply just meaning that, you know, if a child's not really exposed to print, they're less likely to have the development of those emergent literacy skills than someone who is maybe read to every single evening with their parents.

So how do we decide whether or not we're going comprehensive emergent versus conventional literacy instruction? From the book that I mentioned earlier, the authors say that there are four yes/no questions that we should be asking of our students prior to making that determination.

Now, number one, does the student identify most of the letters of the alphabet most of the time.

That's not a 100% accuracy on every single letter, that's just most of the letters most of the time.

Is the student interested and engaged during shared reading? Does the student have a means of communication and interaction? And the last one is, does the student understand that print has meaning? And again, that's coming from that book that I referenced before.

And the results are, if we have four yeses in response to the previous questions, that would indicate that a student is likely to be successful with the introduction of conventional literacy instruction, which is typically for those of us that have, you know, children in school currently is pretty much what they're doing now.

You know, I have a first grader and a second grader, and this is a lot of what they're doing.

A lot of a repetition and doing the flashcards and trying to learn to write those words and copy them from the board and alphabet instruction.

One or more negative answers to the previous questions would indicate the need for some comprehensive emergent literacy instruction, which is what the bulk of the presentation is geared towards today.

'Cause specifically a lot of our AAC users do fall within this comprehensive emergent literacy instruction.

They may not always stay there, but for the majority of the kiddos that I have worked with, this is where we're starting.

So why do we want to take this comprehensive approach? Educators turn to a comprehensive approach because of the enormous variety in our learners with significant disabilities.

And because emergent literacy knowledge and understanding have foundational importance to later conventional literacy learning.

So I said kind of a little bit earlier, you know, that they might start at this comprehensive approach, but then might shift into more conventional approaches later on.

You know, and some of our kiddos are hands on, some of them are demonstration, some of them are watching and observing what we're doing.

Now simply put, emergent literacy, when it's provided with further experience and instruction will lead to the more important ends of independent communication, reading and writing capabilities, and to the choices, opportunities, and increased control of those skills that are represent for our people with significant disabilities.

So what's the role of the speech language pathologist? According to the American Speech Language Hearing Association or ASHA, SLPs have a key role in promoting the emergent literacy skills of all children, not just students with complex communication needs, but especially for those with known or suspected literacy-related learning difficulties, SLPs may help to prevent such problems.

We can identify children at risk for reading and writing difficulties, and we can provide intervention to remediate literacy-related difficulties.

Prevention efforts involve working in collaboration with families, caregivers and teachers to ensure that young children have high quality and ample opportunities to participate in these emergent literacy activities, both at home and in daycare and preschool environments.

SLPs also help older children or those with developmental delays who have missed such opportunities, which is sometimes what we're seeing within our populations with AAC users, specifically with those that haven't gotten their devices until a little bit later in childhood or even into young adulthood.

Emergent literacy and complex communication needs, literacy is often an overlooked area in instruction for AAC users.

Specifically for those with more complex communication needs, because we struggle, and I'm gonna speak for myself specifically, you know, I struggled for finding ways to do it, and I really just didn't know how to implement it into my therapy and what that should look like.

Many older students and even adults with significant disabilities are pretty much still emerging in their understandings of literacy due to limited learning opportunities earlier in their lives.

And some of that could be stemming from exposure.

You know, I have some kiddos on my caseload that have come from orphanages, and they weren't adopted until later on in life, got their devices later on in life, and kind of had a rough early start.

But some of that can come from students that have been in their house for a long time, have had a device in their lives for a while.

But again, the speech language pathologists, the teachers, you know, those working with the child didn't really know where to get started and how to start.

And sometimes we're making assumptions preemptively about what these kids are able to do as well.

You know, sometimes they're being viewed as being incapable of learning and engaging in emergent literacy activities.

And this is such a common misconception, you know, that they must be engaged in and exposed to using reading and writing in real world contexts from very early on, just like their typically-developing peers.

Otherwise, we're not gonna see the development of those same skills as we see in typically-developing peers.

If we don't find a way to teach it and to implement it, we're not going to see them progress with their literacy skills.

So as a little bit of a background, a lot more of what we're gonna get into is what a lot of people are here to see, and it's, you know, how do we do this and where do we start? What does that look like? The biggest thing that I want everyone to walk away with today is collaboration with emergent literacy is very much the key to success.

I find myself communicating with teachers, with paras, with other therapists and other professionals constantly.

And there's really no need to reinvent the wheel, and spend hours upon hours planning and making activities.

We need to find and use what's already being utilized in the classroom and other therapy sessions that we can encourage carryover of skills.

So some of what you're gonna see here are some books that maybe the classroom teacher is integrating within their classroom.

Perhaps they're doing a book study with all the kids in the room, and the teacher is struggling for a way to incorporate the AAC user into that.

What are their sight words that they're expected to be able to be working on right now? You know, are they at the pre-primer level? Are they at the primer level? Are they at a fourth grade list? And taking that information and kind of running with it, rather than finding different things or making things that really we could probably get the same satisfaction from using these things that are already being used.

And we do know that our learners, they benefit from repeated exposure.

So if it's something that's happening in the classroom, and I can now transport that to my therapy room, not only are they getting the repeat exposure of the literature, of the words, you know, they're getting that interaction with another individual as well.

And because I'm a speech therapist, I may approach it in a different way, and I may model and do things in a different way than the classroom teacher probably.

I'm gonna talk a lot early on about shared reading and taking these books that either this classroom teacher is using or books that we've identified as something the child might be interested in, or is heavily rooted in repetition, colorful, interesting, and having that device readily available while we're reading.

And you know, that takes more than one person.

As you can see in the pictures that I've taken from my summer camp, you know, there's someone working with these kids and helping to point out the words and also model the words that we've kind of pre-identified as words that we wanna show them and give them contextual meaning for.

And a lot of times these do happen to be sight words and/or core words within our instruction, you know, so you're gonna see words like up and want and go and on, but instead of just giving them the word isolated, we're putting it into print, and giving it more meaning.

As you can see, what we've done with these books is we've taken the words that we've identified and then we've used emulator softwares to create the pathways for the words, and then we've attached those to the books, and then also kind of highlighted that word.

So it's showing them then on their device how they can find that word as a visual cue to help them find it within their own device.

We also have the availability of low tech boards being visible as well.

Multisensory approach to learning these sight words that have been kind of pre-identified is so super important.

Many of our kiddos, they like to fidget, they like to move around constantly.

They're seeking that movement, and we have to find ways to make this fun.

If we remember back to when we were kids, learning sight words was not very fun.

Learning vocabulary words was not really fun.

It was a lot of writing them over and over, doing flashcards over and over.

And AAC learners, while there are some that may take to that approach, the majority of the AAC users that I've worked with across the lifespan, that's kind of not their preferred.

They want it presented in different ways.

So you can see my friend here, how we've put them on colorful paper, we've outlined them in colorful markers, laminated them, and then shoved them into some kinetic sand, and then he's pulling them out, and then I'm modeling them on his device, and I'm not looking for him to imitate that.

That would be great if he does though, after quite a few repetitions with different words within the book that we had already identified, he was able to then locate the words independently on his device.

But again, this was repeat exposure to those words in a more fun way.

This kiddo loved kind of putting his hands in sand and Orbeez and all those kinds of things.

So that was another one that we did.

We put the sight words into the Orbeez, although I did not get a picture of that one, so that he could kind of dig out the words and then he has his device next to him.

And then we do have some kids that really like to, you know, do that flashcard type mentality.

So that does work for some kids.

So the kiddo in the upper right hand corner, he has a little worksheet that has a bunch of sight words, and what it says is it's good and not good, and he has to decide which one is the written word good, and which one is a different word, can, or stop or go.

And he has to sort them into the different piles.

And as he's doing that, he's also reading the words, and we're modeling them on his device as well to kind of show him where those words are.

Now again, he is still doing the bulk of this on his own, so he's getting the paper, he's adding the glue to it.

So it's still keeping him busy even though it's more of a worksheet type activity.

Sight words are by far my favorite thing to work on.

So I've come across so many different ways to do this, from using emulator softwares and printing out the pathways of the words, whether that be on, you know, TouchChat, or that be on Snap plus Core, or that be on Speak for Yourself, or any of the Unity software programs.

But what I've found that these kids really like is thinking outside of the box.

My kiddo on the left hand side, he has individual little Pop Its with letters on it that we're using to build the word that's underneath on the paper.

And then as we build them together, they connect together, and he can then push down the letters as we spell the word together, and then I'm modeling it on the device.

I'm showing him where that is.

This kid also likes to work out and look out the window while we're working, and there's nothing wrong with that.

I've had people who see pictures of him in the window and they're thinking, well he's avoiding, and he's not doing the work.

And I kind of reiterate to them that if he's comfortable there in the window, and he's going to participate with me, we're going to do it that way because I'm going to capitalize on the fact that he likes that.

I also get to use the window as a nice built-in natural break because he likes to look at cars out the window.

So when he does a few activities of what I want him to do with our target vocabulary, I'm then gonna pull out his device and start modeling some other things saying, look, I see a red truck or a red car, and break that instruction up for him.

My girl next to him, we are using plot the sight word.

But what I did in the middle was I took wooden letters to spell the word, and then I put four of the fly sight words around it.

And what mom is helping her do is to plot the word with the built up letters, and then we are looking for that same word on the flies that are surrounding her, and kind of building her awareness, and then we're modeling it on the device as well.

That little girl also, she does not have a device of her own, we just use it as a support in therapy, but it's been working beautifully for her.

My next little guy, we took an alphabet train, and we built the individual pieces on the alphabet train for the focus word, the core word that we were working on or sight words, 'cause a lot of the core words and the sight words overlap.

So he was building that word with the train, and making it move, again, giving some movement to what we're doing, and showing also that the C and the A and the AN together make the word can, you know it's not just this one unit of information and showing him that we build that.

And that's what a lot of these activities are showing, that it's two letters or three letters or four letters or five letters that make up this given word.

And then my girl on the right here, she's actually 19, she's also one of my kiddos that has come from an orphanage, wasn't adopted until you know, later elementary school age.

Just got a device about two years ago.

So we have been really starting at this comprehensive emergent literacy approach with her, because it's just never been tried before.

It was always kind of written off that it wasn't something she could do.

She was past the point of no return, so to say, that we could not, you know, instruct her at this point.

But we've been seeing that she's been doing really, really well with this approach.

Just like all of the kiddos that you'll see today are.

And she really likes to color.

So again, we're capitalizing on what she enjoys, but we're putting more meaning to it, and showing her that we have the O and the P and the E and the N, and that those letters put

together make the word open, and then we're finding that on her device, and we're doing activities that go with it.

So another area that I like to target specifically, once we kind of move past some sight words, or we do some sight words and I'm looking for something to break it up a little bit, I start to look into word families.

And we all kind of know those as all the words that end in at, and all the ones that end in an, and ake and ap, and how there's those patterns to the words and we're just flipping out that consonant to change the word.

Again, we can ask ourselves what are they already learning in their classroom? And if they aren't learning something like this, what are their typically developing peers learning? And that's where I'm pulling from this information.

And again for my 19 year old, if we've never been exposed to it, we're gonna start at the very beginning.

We're gonna go with the at.

The at family's usually one of the first ones I go with because it's the short A, and there's a lot of fun words and a lot of fun nouns that we can find within the device and that a lot of those words are actually there.

So I'm gonna share with you a video of one of my kids actually using these word family sliders up at the top, and I did include the link to that.

This is a free resource that you can find on Teachers Pay Teachers, and I actually cut these all out, I laminated them, and made them very manipulative for the kids.

Again, movement, multisensory, and we ourselves, we get more out of things that we physically do and have hands on doing, you know, better than like flashcards.

You know, I'm one of those hands on people, but I want to show you, this as my friend William. He has had his device now for two years.

This is about, I wanna say this is about six to eight months into his AAC journey.

Just to kind of give you some background.

He is limitedly verbal, has a diagnosis of apraxia, and has a diagnosis of autism.

Let me open this up.

And I just wanna pause it while it loads, and I'm gonna make it bigger.

- [Kristin] Can we spell it first? B, b.

- [Device] B.

- [Kristin] Oop.

- [Device] Zero.

B.

- B.  
William, what comes next, ah.

- [Device] A, t.

- [Kristin] Good job.  
You spelled bat.  
You spelled, what did you spell? Can you find it? Where is it?

- [Device] Bat.

- [Narrator] On every vacation, at a Vrbo home.

- So that was just one instance of, let me get my presentation back.

There we go.

Just one instance of my friend William using those sight word sliders.

And then we're going in and we're spelling the word, but you saw I was not telling him like b-a-t, I was giving him the sound b, a, t, and I modeled that first letter to show him what I wanted him to do, and then he was able to pick on on what I was looking at with him.

There we go, okay.

But sometimes we have to go all the way back to the very, very beginning.

You know, William knew some of his letters, but some other kiddos may not know their letters.

So what do we do to work on the letters of the alphabet and their names and specifically their sounds is so important.

We tend to leave the sounds out so much about what we are, and we're so focused on letter names, that we forget to introduce the letter sounds.

And what's really great on some of the software programs is they already have, you know, a folder built in for phonics, and I tend to use that folder a lot for my kids.

So we'll build the letter out of Play-Doh or Floam or kinetic sand, and then we'll go into the phonics folder and we'll talk about the name that that letter makes, and we'll go in the keyboard and we'll type the letter and we'll build words that have those letters.

As you can see in our middle picture, this is our little girl again, who's just using this as really a support for her during therapy.

And we're building her name, that no one before has really taught her.

They've taught her the letters, but they haven't taught her that those letters together make her name, and she's currently not required to write her name.

And she's six.

So we've been working on taking those letters, giving them meaning, and that that spells her name.



It spells Cora.

Something so simple that we tend to take, we take for granted, and that you can see we can do this with a variety of ages from four to six to 13.

On our right hand side, you know, Aiden is 13, and again, we haven't really exposed the typing and the spelling and the sounds of the letters and what they make.

We might have done the letter names, but we haven't done any of those other activities.

Another thing I can do too, when I'm doing like these cards, this is also another good time to pull out some of those other manipulatives I might have, like the Pop Its or the letter train, the alphabet train, the wooden letters and putting them on top and kind of matching that lowercase and that capital as well.

'Cause a lot of times there might be introduction to the capital letters but not the lower case.

And learning that those are the same letter, and they make the same sounds.

After I'm doing letters and phonics and sight words and word families, once they're kind of got a bunch of words under their belts is when I, and I really don't have a number that I go to, I tend to kind of see how the kids are doing, and I make that judgment based on, you know, do I think they're ready for a short story, similar to what we see in our typically developing classrooms.

They give them some sight words, they give them these short readers, you know, and if I'm thinking, okay, I've given them a couple words, now let me try some sight word readers.

The sight word readers that you're gonna see in the videos that I show next are from teachingmama.

org, which is another free resource if you download them individually.

You can print them in black and white or you can print them in color.

I do like them because they are simplistic, they have a lot of sight, you know, the sight words are in order of instruction typically, and there's several of them, and there's three books per sight word.

So you're able to do that repetitive exposure, but differentiating it.

So now it's a book about the forest instead of a book about animals.

So let me click, and we will take a look at, you know, what does it look like to read using an AAC device.

Whether the child is minimally verbal, nonverbal, or verbal, but uses a lot of scripted language.

So I have three different kiddos here that we're going to look at.

Let me, gonna do Mason.

- [Narrator] Whoa, whoa.

- I see the.

- I, the.  
Giraffe.

- Giraffe.

- Good job.

Let's make our whole sentence.

I.

- I.

- [Kristin] You do, I.

- I see.

- [Device] Giraffe.

- Giraffe.

- [Kristin] Period.

- Period, so.

- [Device] I see giraffe.

- I see the, dum dum.

- Giraffe.

- Giraffe.

- [Kristin] Good job.

Let's make our whole sentence.

I.

- I.

- [Kristin] You do, I.

- I see.

- [Device] Giraffe.

- Giraffe.

- [Kristin] Period.

- Period, so.

- [Device] I see giraffe.

- Let me flip back here.

All right.

And then the next one we're going to look at, well, let me say a little bit about Mason.

So Mason is a limitedly verbal kiddo that came to me, he started nonverbal, and we got him a communication device, and we started working on a lot of his sight words that his teacher was doing.

And then we started putting those sight words into sight word readers.

And as you saw in the video, he was imitating the words that were in the print, putting them on the device, and then verbally saying them.

So we were working towards building that, and Mason actually today does not use his device as much as he did a year and a half ago when I first started with him.

So he is a predominantly verbal communicator now.

After giving him that support, he does have a diagnosis of autism as well, and he comes from a bilingual household.

Our next kiddo is Lucius, and he is nonverbal.

- [Device] Your.

- [Kristin] Yep, there you go.

- [Device] Yes, you.

Can put the boat stop on the bus.

Yes, you can put the boat on the bus.

- [Kristin] Good job Lucius.

- I'm gonna let it play one more time just 'cause it.

- [Kristin] There you go.

- So everyone gets to see it.

- [Device] Yes, you can put the boat stop on the bus.

- So he is a cutie.

He came to us at BHA in October of last year, and he was completely nonverbal.

A lot of behaviors, a lot of yelling, a lot of screaming because we had no way to communicate.

So we ended up getting him a communication device, and once we got him a communication device, we realized how much he actually, you know, knew, vocabulary wise, but also that there was some reading elements already there.

So we really, again, capitalized on things he liked, and he really loved doing these reading type activities.

So these sight word readers, those sentence strips like I had where they were laminated and they were Velcroed and we can take the, I always let him pick the word that we would put on, 'cause it would be silly, he likes silly things, so we capitalized on that to make it more meaningful and he would have more fun with it.

And you could see that I was using my finger to like gear him towards the different words so that he realized that they were all a different word as I was letting him use his device to put the words in.

My last guy is Gunnar, and he was a kiddo that came to me in March of this past year, so 2022.

And he was very scripted in his language in the beginning, there was not very much spontaneous novel utterances at all.

It was very scripted, typically around TV shows or songs.

And mom was just hoping that we could get some more spontaneous communication prior to entering kindergarten this fall of 2022.

Let me get Gunnar.

- Three, three.  
do, do, dream, dream.

- [Kristin] Think you have your words a little too close together, hold on buddy.  
'Cause look, you hid your next word.  
You just have to be careful.  
There you go.  
'Cause now you can see you have two words left.

- I.

- [Kristin] Good job, good fixing.

- I want.

- [Kristin] Love.

- I love a good dinner.

- [Kristin] Good job Gunnar.

- So that was Gunnar, and he absolutely, absolutely loves to learn to read.

This is kind of his love now.

He started with like letters and letters, and we realized he knew his letters.

We started with words, and then we realized he was recognizing so many of them that we were like, okay we're putting it in print, and we're just gonna keep moving up with the skills and building on what he knew.

So he absolutely loves it, and he will sit and he'll do, he will sit and do worksheet upon worksheet with you.

But he's also started to read, like if we're doing a shared reading activity, trying to read the book, and he's only in kindergarten.

We're gonna kinda flip from sight words and sentences and the reading now, we're gonna talk a little bit about writing and typing and maybe using our core words and/or our sight words, the activities that we can do in writing and typing.

So you recognize our friend Gunnar up on the left hand side.

I have taken that sentence that's already written.

I wrote it in a different color marker, and I've given him a pencil to go over top of it that he can work on writing those words.

And then he reads it back to me.

So we're working on his writing.

William, over on the right hand side here, we're using an iPad Pro, and we are writing on the iPad, the app that is being used.

That's actually not in your handout, I didn't add that one.

It's Doodle Buddy, and it's free.

So I wrote out the core word for him, and I gave him the three lines to represent the three letters that make up the word.

So what he's doing is he's spelling out the word, and then after that together, 'cause he will not write independently.

We did a slight hand under hand for his writing to put it onto the tablet.

My friend in the middle, he's my window friend, that really has zero interest in writing.

And you can see he already put the words on top of the other words to build the sentence.

I did something similar to what I did with Gunnar, and I wrote it out in yellow marker underneath.

And then he was going to write it with me.

Similar to William, I did some hand under hand with him and I taped the paper to the window to kind of like block his view in kind of a visual representation of we're gonna do this first, and then we'll look out the window.

Which really kind of motivated him to work through the activity because then the paper came off the window and he was able to watch the cars go by.

My friend in the lower left hand corner, we're doing a core word book, and it's similar to the sight word readers that I had mentioned earlier that you saw earlier in the videos.

However, these ones have openings that have images that you can put in for the core word that you're working on, which she was really liking, and then she was finding the word on her device and we were encouraging her to use it.

And I was modeling back those sentences on the device.

Here's my friend Kelsey.

Kelsey, I wanted to throw Kelsey in in the middle because she has cortical vision impairment or CVI.

So we adapt a lot of the things that we do, and again, we're doing it very similarly, but we're putting it on, you know, her preferred colored paper, and a lot of her things we do laminate and make more manipulative for her as well because of dexterity issues.

Another thing you can see in her picture here, is that we've put her name on the blocks here, and these are just MEGA Bloks, these are nothing special.

And teaching her that she has all of these individual letters in her name, and she loves Play-Doh, so we put Play-Doh on the top of each of them that as we're spelling her name, she can push down the Play-Doh or she can grab it to signify each one.

And then, you know, it's drawing her attention to the fact that her name is made up by six different letters, and all of them together make her name.

And you can see the yellow paper for, we were working on the word some that day.

And here she painted that same core word, where she had to do the paint dabbers.

And all of these materials that you're seeing in this picture and Kelsey and some of the other ones, they're from Mrs.

Moe's Modifications, which is also in the handout.

These are not a free material, but I highly recommend, they are wonderful and the kids love them and the activities are leveled.

So I mean you have, you know, these sentences, but you also have ones that are, you know, completely blank too, like that this picture scene is blank, and they can draw their own picture that matches this sentence.

So they're really, really nice for kiddos of varying diagnoses and varying difficulty level, which is nice when you can purchase one thing, and you can have a variety of different leveled activities within it.

Let me get out of my spotlight, and I have a video here of William again, and this is William, summer of 2022.

His last video was six to eight months into his AAC journey.

So we were just approaching two years, I believe, of having the communication device when this video was taken.

- [Device] Look who.

- [Kristin] Is.

- [Device] Is.

- [Kristin] Here.

- [Device] Here.

- [Kristin] Put it all together.

- [Device] Look, look who.

- [Kristin] Is.

- [Device] Is.

- [Kristin] Here.

- [Device] Here.

- [Kristin] Put it all together.

- So you can see he's definitely increased in his fluency of using his device, and locating vocabulary as he's been going.

And again that this, I wanna reiterate that this hasn't happened overnight, that it's taken, you know, kind of years to get to this point with him.

And he's loving it, and you'll get to see him a little bit later on that we've actually been able to increase his layout on his NovaChat because he's been doing so well.

All right, so coming to kind of full circle here is, you know, that carryover and self-advocacy that we tend to see in kids, and when is that going to happen? You know, William decided he wanted to do the speech therapy outside in the parking lot, and you know, that's okay.

I'm taking those activities outside, and he's getting exposure outside of the four walls of the therapy room, and that's okay.

We're giving that repetition with that differentiation, and it definitely pays off.

But like I said earlier, it doesn't happen overnight.

So I have a video of William that his mom actually shared with me, that she caught him in the act of doing things that I had previously taught him on his own.

So he was carrying over those activities.

Let me get my, oop, let me switch it over so I can open that video.

Okay.

All right, I'm gonna play this.

Go back to the beginning.

So mom is downstairs doing laundry, and William is upstairs in the house, and she hears the device going off and she thinks he's just kind of exploring vocabulary, but she starts to make her way upstairs and this is what she finds.

- [Device] Why, my no, now, good, up, I, that, one out.



- So I was so excited when mom sent me that video that she found him doing that on his own. These are things we've worked on. You could see him skipping words he didn't know yet, or that he just wasn't as familiar with, but it kind of warmed my heart to see that. And let me put me back slideshow here. So it was really interesting to see. And then I've had other families that are sending me, you know, we've been working on building sentences and putting the words in sentences, and I get images like this, where the individual typed out the whole message of I use my device to communicate, so please give me time. And that wasn't something that I taught. I taught the individual words, and I worked on making sentences, but he typed that out on his own using the keyboard or using the buttons. Let me get out of my spotlight. And the other piece of this is, so we've got carryover but we've also got self-advocacy. And teaching them that they need to ask us for help when they need it. The last video of William you saw was in the fall of this year. So 2022, probably about several weeks ago mom sent me that. So I'd say October. And this one occurred around the same time during a therapy session with William. Nope, not too far.

- [Kristin] Let's put our paper here, you ready? First word.

- [Device] I need help.

- [Kristin] You need help? I'll help you.

- [Device] I.

- [Kristin] Need.

- [Device] Need.

- [Kristin] Good, to.

- [Device] To.

- [Kristin] We need to spell, u.

- [Device] U, s, e.

- [Kristin] Good.

- [Device] E.

- [Kristin] Yeah, use, look at that next word.

- [Device] Use it.

- [Kristin] Yep.

- [Device] Bathroom.

- [Kristin] Good job.

Let's put our paper here, you ready? First word.

- [Device] I need help.

- [Kristin] You need help? I'll help you.

- [Device] I.

- [Kristin] Need.

- [Device] Need.

- [Kristin] Good, to.

- [Device] To.

- [Kristin] We need to spell, u.

- [Kristin] U, s, e.

- [Kristin] Good.

- [Device] E.

- [Kristin] Yep, use, look at that next word.

- [Device] Use it.

- [Kristin] Yep.

- [Device] Bathroom.

- [Kristin] Good job, let's put our paper.

By the end of this, I'm getting faster with flipping between the screens.

But William, we had been working so much on him with self-advocacy and asking for help, and we were so happy to see that he's begun to do that, and kind of vouching for himself, and when he needs some help.

So it's helped to kind of decrease the behaviors that they are seeing at home and at school.

As you saw in that video, his layout was changed from a TouchChat 60 Basic to a TouchChat 80.

And what we were teaching him is that when he doesn't immediately know where a word is that he doesn't need to give up, that we can sound it out and we can spell it.

So we've been working on a combination with him now that we're approaching 2 1/2 years of using a device that he can alternate between using the keyboard and using the buttons that are already pre-programmed there.

Oh my, so, so many videos and pictures and things to talk about.

So I wanted to leave a lot of time for, well not a lot of time, but I wanted to, you know, open up the floor for questions that we could kind of go through.

I didn't know if you want me to read them straight from the Q&A, or if you wanted to read them for me.

- [Jim] If you're happy to read them from the Q&A, that's fine, I can read them for you if you'd prefer.

- Okay, so one of the questions in the Q&A is, can I repeat the type of software that I use the emulator? So the emulator software that I used was Chat Editor, which is on the Saltillo website.

It's a free download that you can download, and emulator means that it copies your child's, or the AAC user that you're working with, their software.

You can make it look like any of theirs.

The only downside is the fact that you, it will not talk unless you pay to upgrade it.

And you can also do some of the tools that are in there.

There's snipping tools where you can do a screen capture, and you can pull the images.

It's actually easier to show you probably than to describe it.

So let me pull up Chat Editor a second.

And again, it's a free download.

If you have a managed system like I do through BHA, I had to have my tech people do it because it requires passwords in order to get it.

But this is my emulator software, and you can see I can say I want, but it's not gonna talk, to go places and home.

I also use this during virtual sessions, and what I'll do is I'll pull up the spotlight, and they can watch what I'm doing.

What I'm talking about in order to get those icons, the screen capture, is I go to this capture button up here and then whatever now I touch is gonna go in here.

So if I want a pathway, so let's say the word is little, describe, little, and now I've gotten the pathway to the word little for a TouchChat 60 Basic user.

I can copy it to my clipboard, and I can copy and paste it into a Word document and print that out in order to put into the books.

So that's my Chat Editor.

Again, it's a free download, you just have to go to the Saltillo website in order to download it.

I've had several teachers download it as well, to use it as modeling in the classroom.

So I'll use it for modeling too.

I actually did that today, I used it for modeling.

Let me go back to my Q&A here.

Do I have, okay, so this next question.

Do you have anyone have concerns with the term sight words? This is a term that current literacy research doesn't really use as much anymore.

I'm just wondering if what you are using is more core words.

I do think it is different than typical literacy when it comes to AAC, but just know that the term sight words can cause some interesting reactions currently.

Maybe it's just a matter of clearly explaining the different with learning AAC.

So no, I haven't had anyone have any negative interaction to that, 'cause it's the terminology that the majority of their teachers are still using.

So I actually have more, what's interesting is I get more impact when I say core words, because they're not recognizing kind of that same streamline between the words.

But I definitely haven't had that reaction.

And I think it's because, I mean, they're even sending home papers that say pre-primer Dolch sight word list.

So it's not something that I've encountered at this point.

I have done this in a group setting.

Someone's asking have you done this in a group setting? I'm just wondering what this would look like with two to three students using different devices.

So yes, at the summer camp we do it with whole groups, which is like 10 kids.

And then at my clinic we run AAC support groups, and we have four kids that we're doing it on, and we have kids on different devices.

So I have done it with more.

But what I have found useful is having another set of hands with doing it because it's hard for me to bounce and model.

It's just gonna take longer for me to model on one student's device, go to another, jump to another.

So during camp we have helpers that are helping to model on the kids' devices and helping them navigate.

So it's not all just on myself.

And then we have two other speech language pathologists that are also helping during the camp, but that's also a lot more kids.

When it's just the three or four, I can manage.

It just takes a little bit longer.

Try and go back up to the top, 'cause it keeps throwing me down every time.

Just, that was a comment.

Could I provide some example goals for targeting literacy and AAC? That's a good question.

So what I tend to do is I make more broad goals in the beginning because I'm typically unsure with how far they can go with the goal.

So I usually wanna try it a little bit before.

So what I usually do in my school setting is I will write that they're, so like for their sight words, or their core words, whichever way you want to, high frequency words, whatever you want to call them.

Like I said, I typically call them what their teachers are calling them just to eliminate any issues with thinking they're something different than what it actually is.

So I'll typically do that they're going to recognize and spell the word, or if I'm giving them the word that they can type it if they are a typer, if we are working on Typer, like typing like William or Gunnar or who else was it, Lucius is at that point now too where he could do the same thing, that we can work on for that.

Doing that with the words.

And then from there I would then put it into that we're reading a sentence with the high frequency word, the core word, the sight word within that sentence.

And then it might be written in such a way that we're going to write it, we're going to read it, we're gonna verbally read it, and we're going to input it onto the device.

Usually I have all of that written within the criteria of the goal for the kids.

Now at this point, I don't have anyone at the next level, which would be kind of reading.

I would then take it to reading like short stories, like two sentence, three sentence, things like that.

But I would write it the same way I would write it for, you know, a typically developing kid.

If I'm working on those types of things within their IEP, I just do it similarly, but I'm going to adjust what I'm doing for a kid who uses AAC.

So if the kid is working on tapping out the syllables in a word, and we're working on drawing their to multisyllabic words, that there's more than one part to that word, that we then are gonna use some type of manipulation, manipulative in order to kind of show that more strategically for them.

And if it's compound word, I might show them how those two words are separate words, and we put them together on the device to make the one word.

When putting a sequence in a book for core words, what do you do if you have one student with TouchChat and one with LAMP Unity? So what we do during the camp is we do the, they each have their own copy of the book.

So, and it has, so it's differentiated for each child.

So everyone had that "Bear's New Friend" book, and it had their pathway for that child and their names were written in them.

So we give that to them.

If it were my copy of the book, it has both pathways so that I'm able to help by modeling it, whether that's me saying it out loud, or modeling it on my own version of the device.

So I might say, you know, if the word is on, you know, this is a bridge word, we're gonna go into the bridge and we're gonna go to on.

Or you know, LAMP or Unity.

But for TouchChat I'm gonna, if it's 60 Basic, it's gonna be on the homepage, so I'm gonna say, okay, it's on, it's gonna be on the front page.

It's on our right hand side.

Do you have any examples of activities to target literacy and AAC with children with limited physical capabilities? So Kelsey, who you saw the picture of on the ground, she actually uses head tracking, and we do the same activities.

In some of the other pictures, her device was mounted, and we worked on, you know, kind of just giving her a lesser field and we do a lot more repetition with her, and the parents help a lot with the modeling with her as well.

So that's kind of what we do.

But if I can do hand over hand with her, with like helping her with the Play-Doh and things like that because she has brachydactyly, so she has like only half of her hand, she can't really grip things.

So I might help her make the formations of the letters and things like that.

And then again, I'm using a lot, a lot of modeling with her to draw her attention to the letters. And in that phonic folder, they're drawing her attention to the sounds that the letters make as well.

So a question, after the first video, do you support the idea that AAC devices should not be used in a testing manner? I thought best practice was to avoid using a lot of imperative language and prompting students to provide specific responses by saying things like find the, where is the, I'm trying to think what the first video was.

Oh, of William with the word sliders.

So I didn't view it as I was testing him, so I put the, and we had done that activity like a couple times before as well.

So it wasn't his first go of it.

He actually started doing that on his own.

He started sliding the word slider, and seeing that it made different words, and then he was looking at me and then gauging towards the device.

So I took that as his welcome of, let's find the word, which is what we did.

So we started spelling it, and then finding it, and then he just turned it into his own big activity. You know, I follow a lot of the child's lead.

I do not like test the kids, I'd like to say.

And actually some of my parents are on here, and they could tell you I don't really test them.

I follow their lead, and if they are interested in something then I'm gonna, I'm kind of gonna go after it.

Yes, I did use like the terminology of find, like finding the bat or looking for it, but I knew that that was the intention of what that activity, what he was wanting out of it.

So I'm using that to guide my instruction.

So on the last clip after Mason touched the touched I, the folder automatically opened to the verbs for see, did you program that? No, that is the way TouchChat is programmed.

60 basic is programmed to do that.

TouchChat is a generative language app.

So it works a lot like auto, like not auto, kind of like the autofill, autotext.

It's guessing, it's kind of guessing what you wanna do next.

So because he touched I, it generated to the verbs because it was kind of anticipating what he wanted to say next.

And one of my moms is on here talking about aided language simulation, and how, you know, sometimes it's called aided language input.

Some people call it modeling.

So you know, it's going back to some of the other things we talked about with sight words too, and how, you know, people call them all, there's a whole bunch of different words for the same thing.

But you know, she just made apparent that, you know, the purpose of it is to just build the communication skills using an AAC device, and showing that all of these words that we're exposing them to have meaning beyond just the word.

And now we're gonna put it in a book, and look at what it means.

And, you know, and this is William's mom by the way, you know, she's going on to say, and she does have two typically developing children as well.

She, you know, she kind of jumps in, and says how we prompted our kids to say words when they were little, and we did, we did.

We prompted them to talk when they were like signaling to us up.

We were like, say up, say up.

Am I doing that with the device? No, I'm not, I'm modeling a lot.

I'm not doing it the same way.

But you know, we are still giving some type of prompting to get them to communicate with us.

I love the multisensory ideas.

However, I have multiple students with iGAZE systems and limited mobility.

Any tips for best supporting their literacy as every word, letter takes extreme effort.

So I would do a lot of, so when I worked at the School for the Blind, I did have a lot of kids that had iGAZE systems or head track.

Well, head tracking wasn't as big when I was there, but it was in existence, and for those kids we were using a lot of auditory type things with them.

So we were playing the sounds, we were playing the words for them to hear.

We were, if we did tactile sign on their arm, we did that to make like the sign letters.

We were doing tactile sign with them.

And then I also, like, I would take the Play-Doh and put it in their hand and make the letter and then take their other hand and let them feel over top.

And this was even for some kids that were completely blind.

So there was that auditory, tactile, 'cause those senses tend to take over.

Something else I have done is I've used like the sandpaper cards.

So yeah, we have those kids building with the Floam, but I also have the tactile ones that are the sandpaper that are the letters, and will let them feel them and touch them that way.

And again, with the help and the assistance of, you know, myself or a teacher or a classroom aide to help with that as well.

Have you tried using windows markers, or tracing with shaving cream on the window? So I haven't done shaving cream on the window.

I've done shaving cream on my table with my guy that likes the window, and I haven't done the markers in the window, but we do markers on the little tiny little whiteboard.

But that is a good idea to do the markers in the window.

I might have to try that with him, and see what he thinks of it.

How can you support literacy with students with an AAC device who are hyperlexic? A student of mine does not have an issue with reading the words, but receptively does not understand what he is reading.

So I do have couple kiddos that are hyperlexic.

With them, I do give them a little bit more control with what we're doing.

So I might give them the option of some of the more complicated sentence activities.



Again, I don't have any of them at the story level just yet to do like the multiple sentences, but they might do the more complex sentences as opposed to like my little guy in the window that was only doing the three word sentences.

And then I usually take that sentence, and then put it into meaning.

So for those kids, we act it out.

or we find a video of what is happening and we watch that, that video modeling and showing them, we're actually acting it out.

You know, the one time I did the one sentence with William of like, I need to use the bathroom.

Like we took a trip down the hall, and we're like, okay, we're gonna go to the bathroom.

And we're putting it in that real life context for them, because that's what they need.

If they're not getting that comprehension, they need to understand that those words in the print, they have meaning, and that that goes beyond just, you know, I'm matching the words on the page to what I'm building.

So have I seen generalization of the target words that I've been working on from a literacy perspective, i.

e.

, some be used in their expressive speech.

So my girl that was working on some, she's nonverbal, so not verbal, expressive speech.

My verbal kids like Gunnar, yes.

His mom has said that he has so much more spontaneous communication now, and they actually were able to shift him from a behavioral classroom to a life skills classroom because his skills were just outperforming the type of classroom he was in, and he needed more support.

But he does verbalize all of those things now too.

And he generates his own spontaneous sentences on the device as well.

So yes, and the same thing with Lucius, he is now verbal as well, and so is Mason.

And those words that we worked on a long, long time ago are now in present in their verbal speech.

And it has helped as well in other areas of their language as well, answering w h questions, because we've worked on the target words of who and where and what and now they've been able to generalize that and understand what that word means because we've spent so much time teaching it.

You know that a who is a person and a where is a place.

William is using TouchChat 80 on a NovaChat.

So William's is not on an iPad, it is on a NovaChat.

What's the average speech language therapy minutes are for weekly services? So I will say this is gonna, I'm gonna tell you what I do, but some schools have their different stance on what what they deem can be, you know, recommended in the school setting.

I work in an approved private school, so it's a little bit different.

But my recommendation for an AAC user, especially when they're first starting out, is twice a week, 30 minute sessions, which the way we write our IEPs are so many minutes per month, that's 240 minutes per month.

I start one individual, one group, and then I also add 30 minutes of consultative time per month to work on programming.

And I add into the IEPs as well about training the staff and training them all at once.

And that's kind of what I do.

Now in the private setting, I do a lot of them are once a week, 'cause they're traveling a distance to me for an hour.

So I see them for an hour straight, like William comes to me, and I see him for a whole hour, and then he stays for AAC social skills.

So he comes for two hours straight on a Saturday that I see him.

So again, it depends on the setting that you're in, what you should do.

But they need that repeated exposure, which is why I recommend in the school setting twice a week plus all that consultative time.

The sight words website you mentioned, does it need a subscription? The Mrs Moe's Modifications that's on Teachers Pay Teachers.

If that's what you're referring to.

And that is a paid resource.

The sight words I just get, you can get from the Dolch, like sight word site.

If you like Google pre-primer or primer sight words, you can find them.

I also go to my teachers as well 'cause typically they already have the lists, and then they have the flashcards as well.

So I will copy them all so I can give to the families the words, and then I start adding words as we're going.

Similar to like typically developing kid, as my daughter was in kindergarten, you know she got more and more sight words every week and they were flashcards.

The words we're working on, I'll tend to add them to their devices on one of those silver rings and loop them around.

Ooh, I like that, yeah, someone's saying that you call them trick words versus sight words.

I do like that.

I might need to use that.

Do you write goals in the schools regarding sight words and devices? If you could, talk about a good example goal.

So what I typically do, I do, but I don't call them usually sight words.

In my speech goals I usually call them the core words 'cause they overlap so significantly that I usually make a goal that if I give them a picture scene is usually the big goal, like a simple picture scene, like maybe like a cat chasing a dog or something like that that targets the word go.

That they're able to use that target core word to formulate a novel sentence about the picture.

Similarly to when you teach a verbal child's, you know, words or vocabulary, that your goal is for them to use that in a spontaneous sentence.

I mean do it the same way, but I'm gonna use it using a device.

I am curious, how do you move to teaching phonics connected with phonological after sight words or learned for nonverbal clients, or how do you know when they are ready to move to phonics? This is all dependent on the kid.

So I tend to teach, the way I teach though, is I tend to teach the letters and the phonics sounds simultaneously because that's really what they're doing in kindergarten is that they're learning the letters and the phonics sounds simultaneously.

So when they first come to me as a, and I get them a device, you know, we start, you know, on that bottom step with the letters and the phonics.

And the way that I do it is, you know, I have flashcards and I have all the other manipulatives and I'm gonna look at it and oh, what letter is that? You know, and I might have them in their keyboard and I gotta see what letter it is, like maybe I have one and they have another, and I'm like, oh well Miss Kristen has letter B.

Hmm, what letter is that? And then I'm kind of taking that, you know, awkward pause and letting them go to it.

And then I'm gonna flip, and I'm gonna go to the phonics page and I'm like, oh, but my letter says a sound, and the sound that it says is B.

What sound do you think your letter says? And then I might type in some things that are like completely off the wall wrong, like do you think it says G? And then what I see after a while, and it's not gonna happen the first time, is they start to kind of fill that in.

They fill in that awkward pause, and start to do it.

Again, I try not to test, but again, there has to be a, the way you're wording some things, you gotta be a little tricky, right? And that you're opening the door for them to participate with you, and they think it's a game, that it's like a hide and seek thing, okay, we're gonna play hide and seek, we're gonna find the sound that goes with that letter.

Basically I start to know, you know, when it's time to move on by, so a lot of the kids that I work with have a lot of behaviors, a lot of them are on the autism spectrum.

So like I can tell by the behaviors, they're done.

That there's something not right.

So I have to change something, I need to manipulate what I'm doing and make it more interesting.

So usually that's my cue to try the next level up.

So if I've been doing words for quite some time now, all right, well, let's start to do it in a sentence.

Let's start to do some writing, let's do some more reading, let's pull out some books, and see what happens.

And then if I start to get the behaviors kind of decreasing, I know that was the problem was that they weren't being challenged enough.

I'm trying to make sure I got all the parts of that question.

And I typically do, I'm working a lot on that stuff before I'm doing like sight words or word families because the word families you saw in the video with William, I was doing the b at, and he was spelling it based on what he heard me say.

Some of the kids also start to teach this to themselves because they like the phonics folder.

So it's something that they tend to put themselves in a lot and then just listen to as you know, they touch the letters, they listen to the sound that it makes.

So I start to kind of capitalize on that as well.

And I can start to move forward based on what parents are telling me they're doing at home as well.

So I have a case of an 18-year-old whose parents insist on reading on a reading program rather than emergent literacy techniques.

Any advice, student is in the 18 to 22 program.

Well, you've got to walk before you can run.

So the same thing is true with reading.

You have to be able to do the foundational skills before you can, you know, do a reading program.

You know, if they don't know their letters.

and they don't know their sounds, and they don't recognize any words yet, I mean, a reading program is not going to necessarily be beneficial for them depending on the reading program, especially if it doesn't have any of those early foundational skills as a part of it.

Now there are some programs that do have some of those more emergent literacy things in it.

So like you could probably do something like that.

But to just do something that's really focusing on like getting into the nitty gritty of reading, you know, they're not gonna take anything out of that, you know, they need to understand how all these skills build on one another before being able to put it in sentences and books and that it has meaning that way.

So all of my, do I have a folder of planned activities that can be shared with this presentation.

So a lot, I do, I do keep like soft charts for all of my kids with all of the words that we're working on and all the activities that we're doing.

But I can't share the Mrs.

Moe's Modifications because that is a paid resource, and that's what some of the things are that are in their folders.

I can share any of the free resources I have, I can most certainly share the things that I've used.

And I do make a lot of things too, so in my spare time, not that there's much of that.

And I would like to say too, that a lot of the activities that I use, like paper-based, I also have electronically.

So I have them in interactive PowerPoints.

I have them on Boom Cards.

So like I'm able to use a lot of the same activities and programs with my virtual AAC kids as well as with the kids that I see like in person in the clinic or at the school.

Do you have a favorite session layout schedule as far as must do elements of emergent literacy? So when I'm working with the younger ones, the kindergarten, the six year, kindergarten, six year old, seven year old, that are like in that emergent stage.

My go-to like lesson plan and layout is that I introduce the word, so whatever the word, let's say it's open, I'm gonna do open, open's the word, I'm gonna introduce them to the pathway on their device, and we're gonna do that.

And then I usually build the word, we're gonna build the word in some way.

So I'm going to either build it with MEGA Bloks, I'm gonna build it with the alphabet train.

So it's hands on manipulation that we're gonna build that word open.

And I might have the paper underneath that's like the Play-Doh mat or the the dot one, but we're going to build it with something manipulative, or the wooden letters or the magnet letters or whatever it may be, we're gonna build that, and we're gonna do that a couple times.

We're gonna build it, we're gonna mix it up, we're gonna do it again, and then I'm gonna take a turn, and you're gonna take a turn.

I'm gonna put a letter, you're gonna put a letter, and that back and forth, right.

That back and forth is part of communication too.

So we're doing a lot of this taking turns back and forth.

Then from there, we're going to write it, or we're going to color it.

For my kids that can write, we're gonna write, for my kids that can't, we're gonna color it, we're gonna color it, and we're gonna spell it as we're coloring it.

And then I pull an activity.

So one of the things I like to do, I don't have it in in my room with me right here, but I have a lot of Lakeshore things are, Lakeshore Learning Materials or learning resources have wonderful, wonderful manipulatives you can use.

One of my favorite ones for the word open are, it's a set of like nine, nine, I know there's a lot, of picnic baskets that are all different colors, and inside the picnic basket is an item.

So when you shake it, you hear it.

And my target is that we're gonna do the word open.

So what I do is I shake it, and I'm like, hmm, I wonder what's inside.

I wonder what's in there.

I have to open, and I'm gonna model the word, I have to open the picnic basket, and I take the lid off, and I take the item out.

I'm like, look, I opened it and inside there was this.

And then I do it, I pull out another, I was like, oh my God, look there's so many more.

And then I'm like, okay, let's pick one, and I'll let the child pick one out.

And even honestly my 19-year-old that's doing emergent literacy, she thinks this is the coolest thing in the world.

That there's all these different picnic baskets with different things on the inside that match the color.

She thinks it's fantastic, and we shake it, and then I hold it a little closer to me, and I wait and see what happens.

And I'm asking, and waiting for them to do open.

And it doesn't happen the first time.

It doesn't happen the second picnic basket, sometimes it doesn't happen until like the ninth picnic basket that I'm getting that independent communication of open.

You know, and from there, I'm able to then go to something else.

So then we'll move to doing a Little Book, one of those Little Books, and putting the word into the book.

She likes to do the one with the images where she glues the images on, my 19-year-old.

So we'll do that, and then sometimes I pull out like an actual book that I know targets the word open, or I can turn it into targeting open.

And then I usually print out a bunch of the extra activities from Mrs.

Moe's Modifications, and I leave some of those for homework with the family.

And then typically when I come back next session, we review the previous word, and introduce a new word, and I look to see if they start to generalize it because open can be used for, we used it to open the picnic baskets, but can also be used to open a marker, and it can be used to open a box, and it can be used to open the crayons, and a lot of other things.

So I start to see if like, if I put that stuff to the side and do a little bit of planned sabotage, do I get what I'm looking for? So I kind of set myself up for the next session then.

But that's kind of like a quick rundown of what a typical session for me might look like.

Sometimes I'll throw a craft in there too, especially if I'm working on on and under and in and up and down and I can use some of those concept words, I will do that.

So where can I find more information on the summer camp that you've mentioned, thank you.

So my summer camp has a flyer, and I can share that with Jim and he can send that out.

I can add it into the shared folder of the free materials as well.

I can put it in there.

Just to confirm the Chat Editor is for Windows only, not Mac.

I believe the download that's available on Saltillo's website currently is only for Windows.

I've been told that that is to change in the future, but I don't think right now it currently runs on Mac.

I appreciate all your videos, so what can I do now? Questions are concretely and so important when training others.

Thank you for that comment, I appreciate that.

If teaching phonemic awareness, what do you target first? So again, I'm gonna go back to, you know, what is the classroom doing? Like what are the rest of the kids in the room doing? Like where I am, I'm in a school for children with autism, so what are the rest of the kids in the room doing? What is she teaching? So what she's teaching, I'm gonna try to teach.

And I'm just gonna be a little bit more creative in what I'm doing, not that my teachers aren't creative, they're creative, but we might need to think outside the box a little bit more.

I know that she does a lot of the clapping of the syllables, if that's the case, I'm gonna go after the syllables.

We're gonna figure out the syllables in the word like an air plane.

Air plane has two parts 'cause it has two words in there.

So it might start with very, very simplistic, and use those compound words to show that.

Another way I would do that with like different parts of the words are those word puzzles, like the puzzles where you have air and plane, and we're gonna put it together and now we have airplane.

Now we've made a whole nother word, we have air, we have plane, now we've made another big word.

Now if they're doing like the first sound of the word, so we're listening for the first sound, or we're listening for the last sound, you know, that's what I'm gonna work on.

If they're not working on any of those skills in the classroom, I'm gonna go back to same age peers.

What would they be working on? What would be the typical development of phonemic awareness skills and what would we do? We would work on identifying first sounds, last sounds.

We would work on determining syllables and things like that.

So I'm gonna work on that, now, but remember, I had to work on letters and I had to work on phonics before I can identify sounds and words.

So we had to isolate that first.

So now that I'm giving you the word c, cat, what's the first, the first sound.

And they have to understand the concept of first.

So you have to teach that as well.

So they need to understand first and last in order for you to do identification of first and last sounds as well.

So if you haven't done that, you need to teach that.

But again, it's again going back to AAC therapy is just like traditional speech and language therapy and anything you would do typically you're gonna do now but now you're gonna use a device.

I have lots of thank yous.

You guys are all very welcome.

Do I have favorite programs for AAC.

It's challenging for me to know which one is better.

I like them all in different aspects.

I do use a lot of TouchChat, but I do have a lot of kids on Unity as well.

I find that my kids, predominantly the ones I work with anyway, benefit from something that is pretty robust.

So I'm usually ending up looking at TouchChat, Unity, LAMP Words for Life, Speak for Yourself, Snap plus 4, and I do trial more than one when I work with them and I kind of, I gauge their reaction.

Again, I work with a lot of students on the autism spectrum so if I switch to an application that I can't change the size of the buttons, and the buttons are super tiny, and they're mishitting all the time and I start to get like clawing behavior on my carpet, I'm like hmm, probably not the best application for them.

Let's go to something else, and then I'll try something else with them.

I also, knowing kind of where their literacy skills are is very helpful, you know, or are they hyperlexic? Are they already typing and reading? That's gonna help me determine, you know, we started William on one that didn't have a keyboard on the front, and then we had to transition him to having a keyboard on the front because he was so, so interested in spelling, and he still is, so it was a good shift for him, you know.

But if we anticipate those skills are going to be there, do we need to have it on the front? Do we want a keyboard readily available? You know, another thing with looking at it too is you know, I've had some people ask about with more physical disabilities, you know, if they can't do direct selection, now you're looking at things that can do iGAZE and head tracking and that are compatible with that, and not all the applications are, or only certain devices are, not necessarily the apps that are presented on the Android tablets or the iOS tablets.

So you have to kind of use all of those when you're looking for an application.

I do find that the, I do find that the programs that, you know have some of those built in phonics and things like that are some of my favorites because I think they make teaching literacy and emergent literacy all that more easier because you're not having to pull out something else to do it.

And I also, I think another plus to that is something that you can also have.

So TouchChat offers the opportunity to be a TouchChat partner, whereas a speech language pathologist, you can get a free copy of TouchChat.

You know, if you go through any of the LAMP trainings you can get LAMP for free so you have it for yourself for modeling, and then any of the emulator softwares that are out there as well to help with making things and having those pathways for the teachers is all very helpful too.

So you know, using the NuVoice and you know one for Unity and using the Chat Editor for TouchChat.

Is Chat Editor the same as PASS and NuVoice? So Chat Editor is like PASS and NuVoice.

PASS and NuVoice is the Unity one, Chat Editor is for TouchChat.

Yes, I can link the emulator software for you.

Oh, someone already put the link in.

Another thing you can do with PASS and NuVoice is you can do writing with symbols.

So when you go into that, you type the word, and then it automatically puts it in symbols, which is a fun thing to show the kids as well.

Can we use the AAC device for providing accommodations for testing when students are getting better in using AAC? So I do have students that do use their AAC devices for testing in order to give answers.

The answer is yes.

I will tell you it's going to depend on the skill that's probably being assessed as well because some will make the argument that that's giving them a prompt, or it's visually giving them the answer, and that they're just matching.

So depending on what the skill is will depend on, but yes, you can.

Usually I work together with teams on how we can do that.

You do these activities with shorter functional sentences before you work on sentences with articles, as in want go play instead of I want to go play.

So yes, I do.

Usually I will be modeling the sentence that way early on.

And as we're going on, again the videos you saw of William doing the sentences with the I want to go play with the articles and everything, you're talking about two years into his AAC journey.

So early on it wasn't like that, it was two sentence, two, not two sentences, my apologies.

Two words, three words.

It was looking like that rather than, you know, the exact perfect grammatically correct.

So yes, I will, and I can do that a bunch of different ways.

Like William started through play, we did a lot of play in the beginning, of playing with toys that he liked.

and I'm modeling things like that.

Then I'm starting to putting it in sentences, then we're moving to words.

So he's really progressed significantly now that we're more at 2 1/2 years into his AAC journey.

Just wondering, do you split your sessions between functional communication and literacy skills or shift focus or rotate skills? I jump all around is the short answer.

So I will do some literacy, I will do functional communication, I will do following directions, whatever their goals are.

I'm gonna put a bunch into like one big, one big like session for them.

Now my AAC kids that are traveling a distance or an hour, I can do that a little bit better than anyone that's maybe only 30 minutes.

And in my schools we're only 30 minutes, so it's going to again depend on what I need to get accomplished as well.

But I will split, and it keeps it interesting for the kids that way too.

If I'm doing a little bit of everything, that it's not so boring.



How do you introduce and teach verb tenses using AAC? Do you end up using the same pictures for different tenses? So on the AAC devices, the pictures are the same regardless of the tense.

So go and went are exactly the same.

And the way I start with verb tenses is just showing them, okay today, the person goes to the store or walks or whatever, or is walking, whatever I want to model, I then model how we can put the ed on the end, and say okay, it happened in the past.

So yesterday I walked.

And what happens on TouchChat is there's an ed that comes up for it to change the tense, but the picture stays the same.

Which is what's really nice about the AAC devices is because you're not necessarily, you don't need to teach another icon because now the verb is past tense, it's the same icon.

And I do it a lot just through modeling first, and then when the kids show me they're ready, that's when we start to do more explicit instruction.

So meaning that they start to independently do that, they'll do walk and add the ed for walked, and I'm like, oh, walked did you, yesterday, did you walk? You walked yesterday, maybe, with mom you went out and you walked, you know.

And then that's where I start teaching it, and I'm modeling it a little bit more.

And then we might be doing sentences that focus on talking about things that happened in the past and now we're adding that ed on.

And in the beginning I typically have to do a little bit of a verbal prompt, oops, we're missing something to that verb, let's see what we need to add, 'cause it happened yesterday, so we need to say a little bit, we have to add something, and that's what I do.

But yes, we use the same pictures, the same pictures are on the icons and the devices and I actually use the same photo verb cards as well.

I just kind of change what I'm doing.

Is there any research regarding what words you should target for emergent communicators with limited receptive language? For example, if they don't understand the concept of the word little, would you wait to teach that written word until they have learned the meaning of that word? So I usually follow the information from Gail Van Tatenhove as to like the most popular first developing words.

And that's where I pull from also.

So I'm not pulling just from those sight word lists from the teachers, I'm not pulling just from, you know, the core words, I'm also using that as well, the research that's been done on the words that develop first.

So those in traditional communication, with all of us when we were growing up, the words that we learned, we understood, and we produced first, verbally.

So that's kind of what I look at.

But yes, little would be later on in that list because it's a descriptive word.

Little is referred to as a core word, but it might not be like one of the first 50 developing words, which I have that list as well.

Which it's also free on Gail Van Tatenhove's website.

Any good reason to choose a NovaChat over a TouchChat on an iPad? Yes, there's many good reasons to choose a NovaChat over a TouchChat on an iPad.

Durability is the first and foremost.

So a NovaChat's gonna be a little bit more durable.

Well, it's gonna be a lot more durable actually, than a TouchChat on an iPad.

So if it's to be thrown, it's going to withstand the being thrown a little bit better than an iPad.

If any of you have personal iPads, and your kids have picked them up and chucked them, you know, you've done that inside cringe because they're not really developed to do that.

They're not really meant to be thrown.

So I usually find out what kind of behavior I might be dealing with, and particularly in my school for my kiddos on the autism spectrum, are they gonna throw it? Are they going to, do they excessively drool? That's another thing I look at, iPads don't like that.

Any kind of water, not good.

Now you can put it in like one of those cases, but that would be like an extra, you know, cost to the family or to the clinician using it to put it in a life proof case.

Also the warranties are different.

The NovaChat warranty is longer than TouchChat on an iPad is and that's just solely because it's an iPad.

So the warranty's different.

And AppleCare is AppleCare, whether it's, you know, AppleCare on our phones or AppleCare on a communication device that maybe the family purchased on their own or they purchased it in addition to, you know, the iPad being funded or something extra.

It only covers certain things.

Where a NovaChat, you know, if the screen breaks they may be more likely to replace it, and there's not gonna be a fee to the family.

Is kind of what the reason is behind going with a dedicated NovaChat, over TouchChat on an iPad.

Similarly to, you know, getting LAMP Words for Life on an iPad versus LAMP Words for Life on an Accent 1000.

It's the same type of thing.

It has to do with warranties, has to do with the ability to back them up, and the ease of backing them up.

So there's a lot of things that go into that conversation with family.

Similar question, how can school SLPs find time to split sessions between functional communication skills, expressive language development, and literacy skills, phonic skills, I guess special education teachers also should be working on the spelling and the phonic skills, correct.

So everything that I'm doing with my teacher, with my kids, and my sessions, I am then, and this is the whole point of the whole team trainings, I'm then teaching them what I need them to do too.

And I show them a lot of videos on modeling, and how it's so important, that it takes a village, and it's not just me, because that research is out there, right.

If they come to the speech therapist once a week for 30 minutes, then it's gonna take 84 years for them to be fluent AAC users.

You know, and unfortunately I'm also gonna be in the ground by then, so it's not helpful.

But the more people you have modeling, the more people you have helping you, the better it's going to be, and the quicker it's going to happen.

Something else I do, is I do like push in lessons in my school as well.

So I push in and I do whole classroom lessons, and that's kind of like more functional type things that we're doing 'cause I'm pushing in and it's not necessarily explicit instruction, it's gonna be more carryover type activities.

So I find those to be helpful as well.

I also go on community-based instruction as well with my classrooms.

So I'll go out when they're going to the pumpkin patch, and something I find is everyone's like, we're gonna leave the device behind.

I'm like, no, no, no, no, no, we're taking all the devices with us because we're, you know, I'm not taping your mouth shut when you're going on a field trip.

We're gonna communicate about what is going on out in the community.

And again, it's giving you contextual real life application of the words that you've learned.

Do I have a specific site or resources that I like when training staff about AAC? I actually use, I use a modified version of Saltillo's, aided language simulation training, and that's what I educate all of my staffs on, and I can put that into my free resources folder that I'll send to Jim later with all of that information that you can have.

And I go off of that, and then I also always show Chris Bugaj's video about aided language input, put like simply put, and it's just a short video on YouTube so I use that as well.

And then also, the beginning of all of my trainings, I hand everyone a low tech board, and tell them that they have to tell their partner what they did today.

And that's usually my light bulb moment, because they are struggling, and I'm looking at them and I'm like, you're struggling and you can't, what's the matter? And they say that they're having difficulty putting the words together and that they, and I said, but look, you don't have any kind of language difficulty whatsoever and you can't tell the person next to you what you did today.

So I do that in the beginning as well.

Do you have a good resource for the sight words for kids to color and sentences they glue build according to the picture? That's Mrs.

Moe's Modifications.

Now you could in theory make that by using like Microsoft Word, and then using like the word art feature.

You could put the bubble letters in, and like make your own.

I'm just personally of the mindset that, you know, if someone else has already done that work, you know I'm gonna beg, borrow, and steal, and in this situation I'll have to pay.

I will say that if your school district does the Teachers Pay Teachers school access, that if you purchase the words individually, you can use your school access codes to get like one bunch of words.

You cannot get the whole bundle though.

You'd have to download them individually Oh, thank you so much for that, Alex.

I have a student who has developed the habit of bringing my hand to the device to select a button, but she won't select it independently.

When I take my hand away, or say no, then that can create an escalation.

Do you have any recommendations to break this habit? Oh my goodness, I have students that do this too.

That they do it, now I'll let it go for like a little while but I do try to as quickly as I can start to fade it away.

So what I try to do is kind of, that backward chaining, right, I sort of back my hand away that they're holding less and less of me, to eventually were, hopefully they are where they're doing it on their own.

But it might take some while, take a while for this.

There's varying reasons why kids do that.

It can be due to trauma in their history.

It can be due to, you know, just liking that feeling of holding your hand, or you holding their hand.

It does show me that they know where the word is though, I will say that.

So I like that aspect of it.

But I will try to backward chain as best as I can.

If it has to do with holding something, I try to replace my hand so they're holding my hand, maybe giving them a stylus, and trying that.

Especially a thick stylus, you can find tons on Amazon, all kinds of adapted thick, the thick one I'm thinking about is called the Cosmonaut, I think it's like 12 to \$15 on Amazon, and it's like thicker.

So if they're looking for something to like hold, I've found that that helps as well.

Trying to find the root of probably why they wanna hold your hand is probably important.

If you can't get them to back off with the backward chaining, there's probably an underlying reason.

whether that's trauma or something else, is kind of exploring that and that might take some collab, again, collaboration with your staff, as to have you seen this behavior? Do you know what's kind of causing that behavior, and then making a plan moving forward.

I think I got them all, Jim.

- [Jim] Yeah, that looks like all the questions.

Thank you so much for sharing your expertise, and for sticking around to answer all those questions.

I know everybody really appreciated it.

- Yeah, not a problem.

- [Jim] Unfortunately did have to dismiss, just try and clean up that Q&A so you could get to those.

- Yeah.

- [Jim] Thank you everyone for attending.  
Keep an eye out for upcoming sessions.  
Have a great day.

- [Kristin] Thank you.

- [Jim] Bye.