



## ***Augmentative Communication World Network Newsletter***

**Issue # 1 - 2013**

**Editor: Dorothy Fraser**

Associates: Sarah Blackstone & Harvey Pressman

[www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org](http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org)

*A warm welcome to everyone. We hope you are safe and well. This issue has articles and information about AAC activities in Russia, Ghana, Poland and India.*

*We are grateful to Victoria Riskina and Liya Kalinnikova for their fact-filled report and ongoing energy in advancing the cause of AAC throughout Russia.*

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### **AAC DEVELOPMENT IN RUSSIA**

By Victoria Riskina & Liya Kalinnikova

Here in Russia, especially in the European part of it, specialists are becoming more and more informed about the field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Because of international conferences, the Internet and an increasing demand from parents that specialists help their children communicate, more professionals are recognizing the need to develop knowledge and skills in the area of AAC. Most especially want to learn about the everyday use of AAC, but they also like to hear about some theory and successful clinical practices.

#### **BACKGROUND**

One reason professionals in Russia have had limited information about AAC until recently is because we have a controversy about the use of sign language with children who are deaf. In fact, sign language for deaf children is still forbidden in many educational institutions. Some professionals consider it a "simple/primitive" language and fear that deaf children who learn sign language can never reach normal intelligence. The official language for the deaf in Russia is still daktil/finger language.

This belief about sign language persists today. Parents, specialists and ombudsmen who represent children and adults with hearing problems still must fight to allow children and adults who are deaf to use sign language. Unfortunately, this controversy also affects how people currently perceive the use of AAC with other groups. For example, some specialists think sign language is not “good for” children with Down syndrome who have unintelligible speech. Others think that children with cerebral palsy should not use graphic symbols to express language or they won’t ever “try” to talk. These superstitions and myths have created a serious barrier to the use of AAC in Russia. We found that we had to spend lots of time explaining why using AAC tools and strategies with children and adults with severe speech and/or language impairments makes sense.

*[Note from Editors: A useful publication that gives evidence that AAC approaches do not interfere with speech development and in many cases, actually seem to increase intelligible speech is available online at [http://www.augcominc.com/newsletters/index.cfm/newsletter\\_45.pdf](http://www.augcominc.com/newsletters/index.cfm/newsletter_45.pdf) False Beliefs and Misconceptions about AAC. *Augmentative Communication News*, volume 18, number 2.*

In 2012, we decided to establish a non-governmental organization (NGO) called “Alternative Communication”. The main founders are Victoria Riskina (Senior Researcher at the Institute of Inclusive Education at the Moscow State Psychological Pedagogical University); Liya Kalinnikova (Associate Professor of the Chair of Social Work, Northern Arctic Federal University [NARFU]), and Irina Kuznetsova (Consultant on Assistive Technologies, Russia- USA). This organization is now very active. In June 2012 we held our first conference.



### **“NEW APPROACHES” CONFERENCE – JUNE 2012, ST. PETERSBURGH**

The conference, *“People with Developmental Impairments and Society: New Approaches for Supportive Communication”* was initiated by the Caritas Education Centre for Social Services, in cooperation with the A. Hertsen State Pedagogical University, the NGO “Alternative Communication”, and The Saint-Petersburg Institute of Early Intervention. The entire content of the conference was devoted to aspects of AAC.

Participants included AAC leaders:

- From Poland: Alina Smyczek , Jolanta Szwiec-Kolanko, Aldona Mysakowska-Adamczyk, and Małgorzata Dońska- Olszko
- From Great Britain: Himali de Silva, Amy Lettington, Charlotte Godden, and Rebecca Wade

Joining the conference distantly through video communication were.

- Liya Kalinnikova - Associate Professor, NARFU, Archangelsk, Russia
- Dr. Magnus Magnusson - Senior Lecturer, Department of Special Education, Stockholm University, Sweden
- John Duganne - United States
- Mary Ann Glicksman - United States and France
- the NGO “Noser”
- Nadia Browning - Ergo therapist, Germany



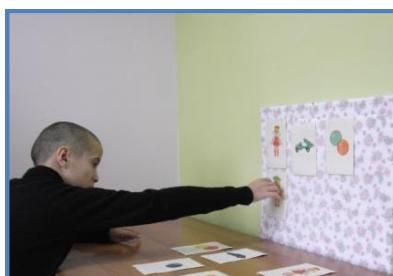
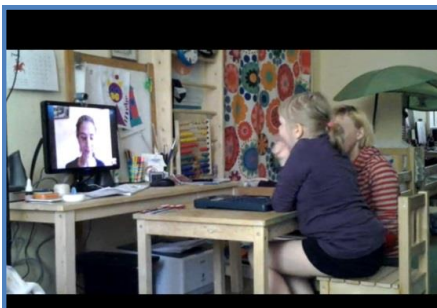
About 300 representatives attended the conference and participants from Archangelsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Cherepovets shared their AAC experiences through poster sessions.

Our next conference, utilizing the same format, will take place in October 2013.

## A MENU OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Over the past year, we held many AAC seminars and Round Tables for specialists and parents.

Date	Title of Activity	Location / Organization	Presenter
April 2012	“System of AAC and its implementation for children with developmental disabilities.”	A. Hertsen State Pedagogical University	Victoria Riskina
September 2012	PECS Seminar	Interregional public unite “Alternative communication”	Julia Erts from Israel
October, 2012	Presentations on AAC	Moscow and St. Petersburg. Videoconference for territories	Nadia Browning from Germany
	AAC course “Independent and Alternative Communication”	Specialists from Children’s Institutions of Leningradskaya Oblast.	Victoria Riskina
	Seminars & supervision for social workers and logopeds	St. Petersburg. Social School CARITAS,	Victoria Riskina
April, 2013	MAKATON System of Communication	Center of Curative Pedagogy, Moscow	Makaton Charity in Great Britain



## OTHER WAYS PEOPLE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN RUSSIA

- Stephen von Tetzchner's book *"Introduction in AAC"* is being translated into Russian thanks to The Early Intervention Institute and CARITAS.
- Basic AAC courses began in 2012 at the A. Hertsen State Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg in the Department of Special Education. Professors, L. Lopatina and L. Baryaeva.
- Two AAC sites are available: <http://logo-rech.ru/> & <http://aacnord.com> . A social group is on the net: <http://vk.com/club17159821>
- We have reconnected with Attainment Company and started to distribute the GO TALK communication tool to users and special institutions.
- Together with Dr. Charity Rowland from the Child Development & Rehabilitation Center, Oregon Health & Science University, USA, we have worked with a Russian translation of the Communicative Matrix. Now specialists from Ukraine and Belarus (Dragomanov Institute of Special Education in Ukraine and PSU in Belarus) are informed about this source. We have started to involve specialists in using this tool for their work with families.

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## ADAPTING AAC TO THE CULTURE OF GHANAIAN SCHOOLS



What does it mean to build capacity? For Professor Catherine J. Crowley and participants in Columbia University's 2013 Professional Development Retreat in Ghana, it means working together to exchange knowledge and create the communication resources teachers need in special *and* general education. Some sixty Ghanaian teachers, from both

special needs (about 40) and general education classrooms, along with a group of speech-language pathologist graduate students from Columbia University, explored [and](#) a variety of other ways to enhance the communication capacities of their students including Word Walls and Narrative Stories. To view a short video, right click on the picture below to open the hyperlink or go directly to [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgGie\\_s1W40](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgGie_s1W40) ]



## 2) How does the behavior affect the student's family and/or community?

During this year's retreat the group spent hours happily creating materials, such as calendars, schedules and AAC tools for use with specific students and in classrooms. Each year the Professional Development Retreat in Ghana expands in scope and practicality. In 2013, the Columbia University group also distributed 26 indestructible soccer balls (especially useful in the Ghanaian terrain) to give to special education teachers so they could encourage interactive play with general education students (see "Video" below).

On the first day of the trip, a group of six graduate clinicians worked with five patients to assess language abilities and make recommendations at the Korle Bu Hospital. Later that day they visited the Autism Awareness Centre and Training (AACT) and held a "make and take" session, working with parents, siblings and teachers to create personalized stories that help teach good behavior and social skills (Social Stories).

The 2013 Ghana trip ended with an extraordinary opportunity to watch an expert surgeon, Dr. Laing, perform cleft lip surgery.

To read more about this year's trip to Ghana go to: <http://going2ghana.tumblr.com/page/6>.

To view a short video of the teachers' retreat, go to: <http://leadersproject.org/blog/2013/03/22/ghana-2013-professional-development-retreat-3-minute-video>.



## AAC IN AUTISM: FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD IN POLAND

### A CONFERENCE SUMMARY

by Katarzyna Cichocka-Segiet

More than 300 therapists, teachers, representatives of software and technology companies and, most importantly, parents of young people and adults who use AAC from all around Poland participated in the *AAC in Autism - From Childhood to Adulthood* Conference. The gathering, organized by Stowarzyszenie na rzecz Propagowania Wspomagających Sposobów Porozumiewania się „Mówić bez Słów,” took place in Warsaw on 9 - 10<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The conference was, in a sense, a continuation of annual workshops organized by Stowarzyszenie for the past seven years. Both professionals and parents delivered presentations and participants took time after each session to discuss and exchange ideas.

Conference topics focused on teaching communication that would be functional, spontaneous, positively interpersonal and easily understood by everyone. Presenters talked about the benefits associated with introducing AAC in early childhood to build a foundation for communication and language and also to help launch the development of speech. For adults with autism, presenters noted that introducing AAC methods often significantly decreased tension and positively affected the quality of life among all family members. Attendees heard presentations from many viewpoints – those of parents, teachers, therapists, and also parent-therapists and parent-teachers.



Presentation by one of the mothers



Display of AAC materials and methods

The conference showed how much is happening in the field of AAC in Poland. It underlined the need to discuss and share the knowledge, to introduce systematic solutions and

to advance social awareness about AAC for children and adults. Of importance is the participation and cooperation of representatives from a number of organizations and agencies, including SYNAPSIS Foundation, Academy of Special Pedagogy, Prodeste Foundation, „Okno” Foundation, Centrum Relacji Rozwoju “Droga”, Harpo Company and PECS Pyramid Polska. Parents of children and adults with autism and therapists from facilities all around the country came together and took a major step forward.

The conference provided an opportunity to witness parents stating that AAC does NOT retard the development of speech and that AAC is a means of communication that enables a relationship to develop between parent and child. The following comments from participants that were posted on websites, Facebook and in evaluation surveys, illustrate the very positive outcomes of the conference. For example:

*“We have just returned from the conference „AAC in autism” held last weekend in Warsaw. We think it was a groundbreaking event, in many aspects: propagating professional approach in AAC-based communicative therapy of ASD children; establishing best practice standards for educational facilities; as an opportunity for representatives of a number of approaches and various organizations to meet, sharing a conviction that AAC helps to raise the quality of life for people with ASD. We are deeply grateful to Agnieszka Pilch and Angelika Łasocha from Stowarzyszenie 'Mówić bez Słów’ for the possibility to share our experiences in communication therapy both from therapist’s and parent’s viewpoint. We hope that the conference is a next step towards a better life for thousands of people with ASD in Poland.” (Prodeste Foundation)*

*“I had great expectations for this conference and I was not disappointed – it has been an extraordinary experience. A very valuable opportunity for me, a mother to meet with experts in the field. Experts, therapists, parents, teachers, all three hundred people present, were certain that AAC is a chance for happiness and a way to communicate with an autistic child. Some of the presentations made a deep impression on me, such as the one about self-consciousness of an autistic child, that made me realize that, autism notwithstanding, our children are children, with their own characters, feelings, desires and I hoped that little Tony's autism would not cloud this issue for me. (Małgorzata Dziewońska – Bajkiewicz, mother of ASD child)*

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## FROM AAC USER TO RADIO JOCKEY: A ROCKY JOURNEY IN KOLKATA

By Sayomdeb Mukherjee (RJ Den)



ISAAC Conference

As an AAC user attending an International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) Conference for the first time in Washington D.C. on the *morning of the millennium*, I wanted to make a career as an AAC Disability Rights Activist. They say "what man proposes, god disposes". My wish became a reality on the 'Founders Day' of my beloved Indian Institute Of Cerebral Palsy in 2005.

My disease had gone undiagnosed for a long time. Through an accidentally discovery, my father, a doctor, understood my genetic deformity. I started taking Dopamine tablets, which gradually improved my physical condition.

I was most surprised when I got the power of my speech back, and it kept on improving. Turning from a nonspeaking person into a speaker within 24 hours has its own set of hazards. Overcoming them was probably the greatest challenge of my life.

When I first started to speak, my modulation, intonation, stress and voice control were grossly mismatched. Many people misunderstood me because of these factors, but there was an additional reason to misunderstand me. As an AAC user, my primary language of communication had for a very long time been English. Not knowing or not being able to speak properly in my mother language gave people an idea that I was a show off. I might have seemed like that to people who didn't know me, but my family helped me overcome that problem.

I started my formal education, to obtain a few certificates missing from my résumé. During that time, I also searched for a job which would give me the satisfaction of financial independence. When I was unable to get one, I gradually sank into a depression. It was beyond my dreams that a day finally came when some radio people would actually take my interview for a job and select me. The scariest thing was that I needed to do the programme in Bengali, my mother tongue. But eventually, my jitters went down. I bit my teeth and jumped into the abyss not knowing where I might fall.





I have now been into this job for almost one and a half years, and I still cannot quite comprehend how I have completed over 430 shows successfully. In Kolkata, there are 12 radio stations and in my time slot, with the grace of God and the training and the guidance of my producer and boss, I have become the no. 3 RJ in Kolkata. The journey from a non-speaking person to a Radio Jockey has been outstanding. I LOVE MY LIFE.

<http://sayomdeb mukherjee.blogspot.com/>

#### **Notes from Editors:**

1. Congratulations to Sayomdeb. He received one of the coveted Cavin Kare Ability 2013 Awards. Go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Bt-7iWygpy>

2. DJ Eye Tech, another radio DJ from the UK, has locked-in syndrome, He cannot speak or move, but he is a unique radio presenter. Check him out on the EYE Life Show: [www.eyelife.org](http://www.eyelife.org), or listen to Phonic FM on [www.phonic.fm](http://www.phonic.fm)

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## **TALKING ABOUT ABUSE: A REPORT**

By Simon Burr, Widgit Consultant



It is a sad fact that people of all walks of life suffer abuse and in order to protect themselves they need to engage with the criminal justice system. Unfortunately, that system is incredibly confusing. It has its own language, customs, rules and traditions. The locations are unfamiliar and intimidating. The situations are stressful and difficult. If you have communication or learning difficulties the problems are almost insurmountable.

Almost 10 years ago, the UK Ministry of Justice, understanding the difficulties faced by people with communication or learning difficulties, began recruiting and training *Registered Intermediaries*. It is the Intermediary's role to ensure the person in the justice system fully understands his/her rights, what is happening to them and is able to offer evidence.

Janet Larcher, a Registered Intermediary, contacted Widgit because communication supports were lacking. Many defendants never had access to the vocabulary they needed to (1) understand what was happening in the judicial process and (2) express what had happened to them. Janet asked Widgit, members of the legal profession and therapists to develop symbol-based communication supports that could be used in court.

After a number of years of design and consultation the *Talk About Abuse* pack is now complete. The pack is designed to work either as a printed resource or within The Grid 2 communication software. For more details on the Talk About Abuse pack please visit [www.widgit.com/talkaboutabuse](http://www.widgit.com/talkaboutabuse). Below is a sample page from the pack:



## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **UPCOMING ELECTRONIC BOOK ON “VIOLENCE AND JUSTICE FOR PERSONS WITH COMPLEX COMMUNICATION NEEDS: AN INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE “**

By Diane Nelson Bryen

Juan Bornman from South Africa and I are pleased to announce that we are editing an electronic book that will provide international perspectives on violence against children and adults with disabilities, and promising approaches to risk reduction, intervention and access to justice when violence does occur. The book focuses on children and adults who have complex communication needs as a result of a variety of disabilities. Their voices have been silent too long. As a result of the physical, intellectual and communication disabilities, these children and adults are especially vulnerable to violence. Additionally they are often denied equal access to the criminal justice system.

To reach the widest audience possible, the book will be published digitally by Amazon Kindle so it will be widely available internationally. Given the small cost (\$2.99 US) and it's availability via voice enhancement, the book will be very accessible.

Chapter authors will present the scope of the problem from their own country's perspective. They will also describe promising practices that are successful in improving personal safety, communicating and telling, providing victim services, appearing in court as a witness or expert, successfully trying cases in court and others. The full manuscript is written and published in English; however, each author will include an abstract translated into his or her language and in Easy English. (Easy English is a style of writing easily understood by a wide range of people).

Authors are from the USA, Canada, South Africa, India, Australia, South Korea, Israel and the UK. Several are written by people who use AAC. Expected publication date is August 2013.

Given the electronic format, it is feasible to update and expand the book over time. If you are interested in submitting a chapter for future editions, please contact either Juan Bornman at [juan.bornman@gmail.com](mailto:juan.bornman@gmail.com) or Diane Bryen at [diane@temple.edu](mailto:diane@temple.edu).

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## CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENTS

By Justin Streight

The **5<sup>th</sup> Annual East African Conference on Communication Disability**, presented by the Association of Speech Language Therapists Kenya, 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> September 2013 in **Mombasa, Kenya**, will bring together experts from across the globe to share knowledge and skills, build supportive relationships, and present new and exciting research from across the African continent. One goal is to promote a sustainable future for speech and language therapy practices in East Africa. The conference offers a unique opportunity to learn more about current pioneering work in Africa, as well as an opportunity to learn about the new and exciting speech and language therapy courses in the region. For more information go to <http://www.sltkenya2013.blogspot.com/> The Conference email [sltkenya2013@gmail.com](mailto:sltkenya2013@gmail.com)

The **12th European Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE)** Conference, 19 - 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2013, in **Vilamoura, Portugal**, will bring together researchers, professionals, manufacturers, end users and their families, and combine their knowledge, expertise, needs and expectations. This will be achieved not only by the presentation of papers during the two and a half days of the conference, but also through participation in Instructional Courses (including a course on paper engineering techniques by Dorothy Fraser) and a "Research Symposium" held immediately after the main Conference. (The conference will feature a keynote by Sarah Blackstone.) <http://www.aaate2013.eu/>

The **Australian Group on Severe Communication Impairment (AGOSCI)** held its 11th Biennial Conference, 1 - 4<sup>th</sup> May 2013 in Sydney, Australia. AGOSCI represents people with complex communication needs, as well as those who live, know or work with people with complex communication needs. AGOSCI lobbies for the rights of people with complex communication needs, increases public awareness of complex communication needs, and provides relevant education and professional development events across Australia. The conference featured keynotes by Sarah Blackstone, Sue Balandin, and Meredith Smith. <http://www.agosci.org.au/conf2013/ConferenceInformationFlyerCurrent.pdf>

The **9<sup>th</sup> Biennial Eastern and Central European Regional AAC Conference** takes place on 28<sup>th</sup> June – 2<sup>nd</sup> July in Kiev, Ukraine. The Institute of Correctional Pedagogy and Psychology, and the NGO "Ukrainian Association of Correctional Educators" are organizing the conference, which is being held at the National Pedagogical M. Dragomanov University in Kiev. Presenters will come from across Europe including : Stephen von Tetzchner (Norway), Inna Marchenko (Ukraine), Sophia Kahlman (Hungary), Magnus Magnuson (Sweden), Victoria Riskina (Russia), Agnieszka Pilch (Poland ) Alina Tutu (Romania) and many more from other countries. For

information in your language, go to <http://www.ikpp.npu.edu.ua/aac2013> and click on the flag and it will translate it for you.

**“Heads Up”:** Every Three Years the CBR African Network (CAN) organizes a conference on community based rehabilitation. Later this year, at a time (probably after October) and place to be announced, the 5<sup>th</sup> CBR conference will take place. To track forthcoming details go to: <http://www.afri-can.org/>.

## ARTICLE

### SRI LANKA’S “SALIENT HEROES” BRING HOPE TO A FORGOTTEN CORNER OF THE WORLD.

In an article published August 26, 2012 in *Ceylon Today*, Nimisha Muttiah, a doctoral student from Pennsylvania State University specializing in AAC, wrote about her recent visit to Jaffna and its surrounding suburbs. The article, ***The Salient Heroes of a Forgotten Jaffna***, reports on Nimisha’s interviews with the parents of children with special needs and her visits to three schools and organizations where a handful of teachers and doctors help people with disabilities every day to live a productive, happy life: the Ark, Siva Poomi School, and God’s Own Children. This article demonstrates that heroes are everywhere, even in the war-torn province of Jaffna in Northern Sri Lanka.

To read the entire article (which we recommend), go to <http://www.ceylontoday.lk/35-11513-news-detail-the-salient-heroes-of-a-forgotten-jaffna.html>

## VIDEOS

**(Note: More information about Ghana project provided earlier in this issue of ACWN Newsletter)**

**AAC Market Cards in Ghana for students with communication challenges.** AAC Market Cards, designed as *“effective communication alternatives for students in the market place,”* are becoming a popular AAC tool in Ghanaian unit (Special Needs) schools. Buying things for the family is a traditional role of children in Ghanaian society, but many students in Ghana’s Special Needs schools cannot communicate well enough to go shopping. Seeing a great opportunity for the use of AAC methods, Cate Crowley and her Columbia University graduate students showed teachers how to develop communication cards for requesting common market goods and amounts to purchase. They used locally available materials to give them a “laminated” feel. The cards allow the students to purchase what their parents need.

After developing the cards, Crowley, her colleagues, students and Ghanaian lead teachers held sessions for special education teachers at the annual AAC teacher retreats. Many teachers now know how to make and use the cards. Also, students used the cards in their local markets and parents are overjoyed. To learn more about the Market Cards project go to:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJG2K0fFBoQ>

**Futbols (Soccer) Balls Facilitate Inclusion in Ghana.** One World Futbols recently created a mild sensation at the January 2013 professional development retreat for special needs teachers in Ghana. This event was organized to transmit locally relevant AAC strategies and tools to special education teachers. The specially constructed “futbols” are designed to last much longer than regular soccer balls. It was soon obvious that they could lure regular education students into contact with students with special needs on the playing fields. The donation of the “futbols” was part of this year’s third annual retreat. Public Affairs Officer, Sara Stryker from the US Embassy in Accra, joined the retreat and lent her support to Columbia University’s ongoing efforts

Most importantly, the kids loved the soccer balls. One World Futbols gave students with disabilities a chance to interact and play with peers from the general education school. The contribution of a simple game of soccer toward greater inclusion should not be underestimated. Check out how futbols encourage greater inclusion, go to:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4qbTIYVE58>

### USEFUL WEBSITES (by Justin Streight)

**Practical Supports for Language Learning.** Looking for AAC resources, AAC strategies or just discussion about the state of the AAC field? If so, have a look at **Praactical AAC**, a blog and website managed by two dedicated speech language pathologists, Robin Parker and Carole Zangari. The mission of **Praactical AAC** is “*to improve the level of AAC services available to individuals with significant communication challenges by supporting speech-language pathologists and other interested stakeholders.*” These professionals are constantly updating their resources and discussions and the information is very accessible and valuable to anyone interested in the area of AAC. Thus, **Praactical AAC** fulfils its goals admirably.

For more information go to: <http://praacticalaac.org/> and <http://praacticalaac.blogspot.com/2012/09/>

**What Really Matters?** Some people might ask, "What does a good conversation using low-tech AAC really look like?" The clinicians at Thames Valley Children's Centre have provided us with an excellent dialogue between two people using low-tech AAC message boards. This video will remind people that technology is great, but the real power lies in communication.

Go to <http://praacticalaac.blogspot.com/2012/09/what-really-matters.html>

**Aragonese Portal of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ARASAAC).** ARASAAC, a website created by the Aragonese government of Spain, features a large collection of free software tools, clip art like pictures, and sounds that can be used to create a variety of

resources, such as calendars, schedules, bingo cards, tables, and games, for special education teachers who work with people with communication disabilities. This site includes 14056 color pictograms, 11927 black and white pictograms, 1427 photographs, 4111 LSE videos and 4113 color LSE videos. These materials are FREE and can be selected and used as online software tools. Each online tool comes with a complete manual, and the site includes examples of use. All of these resources are downloadable.

They provide many of the same functions as Microsoft office or other software packages, are easy to use, offer a complete manual and examples, and the images are tailor-made for AAC resource creation, *i.e.*, the meaning of each image is simple and understandable. However, the online tools are limited to certain functions and intended only to create specific products. Also, the site translation is not complete so there are certain areas, like the education resource descriptions, that can be read only in Spanish. However, other areas are available in multiple languages. ARASAAC distinguishes itself in three ways: ease of use, a massive image library, and its price (free). It is easy to create calendars, schedules, bingo cards, or tables for a person with disabilities, using ARASAAC as well as other applications.

For more information, go to <http://www.catedu.es/arasaac/>

For a video example of some work created from the site go to:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmDozbZv1cI>

**New Resources for Students with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities.** The Schools Network Ltd Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) research project is designed to create information, assessment tools and inquiry frameworks to help educators engage students with CLDD in educational activities. Although the project at first glance seems like a purely academic enterprise, Schools Network researchers have created a series of concise, practical tools and briefings to give teachers well-tested methods of teaching students with CLDD.

There are three categories of resources: (1) CLDD briefings, (2) engagement profiles and scales, and (3) inquiry frameworks. These resources can help answer important questions like, "How can I change this activity to make a child more curious?" The project website reinforces methods with tips on how to use tools and gives examples of project resources in real life. This website can also prove very useful for teachers who are too busy to peruse many academic journals, but need useful information to improve the performance of students with CLDD.

Go to <http://complexld.ssatrust.org.uk/>

## **AAC APPS**

### **TouchChat HD Lite (<http://www.silver-kite.com/touchChat>).**

What is it? *TouchChat HD Lite* is a non-communicative configuration of TouchChat HD that allows for the user interface experience, but does not include speech synthesis or any type of audio playback capabilities.

How much is it? \$9.99

Platforms: iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch

Reviews: Bridging Apps reports, *"This lite version of TouchChat is a great introduction to the AAC world of apps, but does not include audio playback or speech synthesis. The lite version is best used for trial purposes to see if the features may be helpful for a particular user."*

### **Comapp (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/comapp/id442992034?mt=8>)**

What is it? *Comapp's* main purpose is to let non-verbal children communicate what they want quickly and easily. However, it can also be used as part of a child's ABA therapy to teach basic language skills.

How much is it? Free

Platforms: iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch

Reviews: According to iTunes customer reviews, *"I found out about this at an autism conference and have been on a waiting list. Although the video that they showed was impressive, the actual app is smashing! I can't wait until they release the full version. It will be amazing to be able to use my own photos for my son."*

### **Locabulary Lite (<http://locabulary.com/>)**

What is it? *Locabulary* is an app developed for communication, information, and fun. Words are made available based on your GPS location. With Locabulary, you can easily speak the right words in the right place.

How much is it? Free

Platforms: iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad

Reviews: Rated as number 4 in about.com's list of the top 10 apps for assistive technology

More updates on apps and other AAC/AT information can be found on Lauren S. Enders website. <http://pinterest.com/lasenders>

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## DOT'S SPOT

**Forming Links between Special Education and Education in Healthcare.** I travel to Romania, Poland and Serbia as Senior Representative to Eastern and Central Europe for the Central Coast Children's Foundation. Our international collaborations started through requests to support communication enhancement in special education and have now expanded to include patient-provider communication and preparation for medical encounters.

For information about this area, you can look at a Power Point presentation that is posted at:

[http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/files/Dot\\_fraser\\_serbia\\_ppc\\_powerpoint.pdf](http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org/files/Dot_fraser_serbia_ppc_powerpoint.pdf)

### 1. Translation of AAC Materials

Communication Matters in the UK. I checked with **Communication Matters** (the UK Chapter of ISAAC) regarding making translations of their material available to others and have received this answer:

The Board of Trustees confirm that Communication Matters would normally grant permission for translation of materials providing:

1. *Communication Matters receives a request for the translation of the publication(s) required.*
2. *The translated material will be available free of charge (except for the cost of postage and packing).*
3. *Communication Matters is acknowledged as the publisher of the original material, and [www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk) appears alongside the acknowledgement.*
4. *A draft of the translated material is sent to Communication Matters prior to publication.*

### 2. Widgit Boards to support patient provider communication

On the website [www.widgit-health.com](http://www.widgit-health.com) there is information about many projects and sets of symbols to prepare for a range of medical encounters. Take a look to see if symbol sets are available in your language. If you need another language, we can help discuss options for adding translations. You can find contact details on the Widgit health website and on their main website [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)

For example, check out all the *Bedside Phrases*: Being in a hospital setting can be a frightening experience. What if you cannot talk to your doctors or nurses? What if you cannot tell them important information? For a person with a communicative disability or someone who does not speak the native language, this is always a possibility and can lead to unnecessary pain and medical complications. As many readers of this newsletter are aware, the Central Coast Children's Foundation, utilizing research conducted in Australia, is helping make available 26


key phrases for use in hospital settings and bedside message boards that enable patients to communicate more effectively.

Widgit Health has recently created many of these new symbol boards in many different languages (approaching 30): All are FREE and available for download.

### 3. Communication Chart for Communication Partners.




















I recently saw this chart on Facebook. It's a useful reminder, easily modified and personalized. It is a 4/x/6 index card template created by Lauren Enders, Feb 2013.

You can find it at <http://media-cache-ec3.pinimg.com/originals/ab/74/7b/ab747bcbf55b7832824b2c29c6b23754.jpg>



## I CAN communicate. Here's how to help me!

Please keep this card attached to my AAC system!

 <b>DON'T do this...</b>	 <b>Do this...</b>
<b>DON'T</b> expect me to know how to communicate without first <b>SHOWING ME HOW.</b>	<b>MODEL, MODEL, MODEL for me.</b> Show me what to do before asking me to do it.
 <b>DON'T</b> talk so much that you forget to let me talk.	 <b>PRESUME MY COMPETENCE. I can do it!</b>
 <b>DON'T</b> prompt me every second. I need time.	 <b>WAIT</b> 10-20 seconds before re-prompting me. Count in your head!
 <b>DON'T</b> teach me ONLY to request or communicate wants & needs. I have lots of other things to say.	 <b>FOLLOW</b> a prompt hierarchy, only going as far as I need. <small>(Here's one from Environmental Communication Teaching -Dr. George Karlan.)</small>
 <b>DON'T</b> take away my device if I'm not cooperating. That's my voice!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pause. Focus your attention on me. Pause.</li> <li>2. Ask me an <b>OPEN-ENDED</b> question. Pause.</li> <li>3. Give me a partial prompt. Pause.</li> <li>4. Request my response. Pause.</li> <li>5. Give me a full model. Pause.</li> </ol>
 <b>DON'T</b> put words on my system that I won't use again.	Let me know what you heard and then model what I can add.
 <b>DON'T</b> always stop me from "babbling" or exploring my device by pushing buttons. I need time to learn.	 <b>TEACH</b> me to direct action, comment, reject & more. Besides wants & needs, I need to share my thoughts, worries, fears, and joys. I need to make friends and to become literate.
 <b>DON'T</b> move my symbols. I need them to stay in the same spot so I can develop a motor plan.	 <b>GIVE</b> me CORE WORDS including verbs, describing words, and function words...NOT JUST NOUNS!
 <b>DON'T</b> leave my system in my desk, cubby, or backpack.	 <b>COLOR CODE</b> parts of speech for me.
 <b>DON'T</b> expect me to talk in sentences right away. No one else does when they learn to talk!	 <b>MAKE SURE</b> I have access to my words at <b>ALL TIMES.</b>
	 <b>PROVIDE</b> aided language input. <b>USE SYMBOLS</b> when talking to me!

This 4x6 index card template was created by Lauren Enders, MA, CCC-SLP with content by Lauren Enders, Pat Mervine, Melissa Skocypec, & Cathie VanAlstine. Use the back of this card for important information about the way I communicate, my preferences, and my dislikes. The idea for the card was suggested by Maureen Welch of [www.reallifecolorado.com](http://www.reallifecolorado.com).

**4. For people with motor impairments.** My projects are interdisciplinary. I have collected many ideas to assist people with motor impairments to communicate. For example, sometimes it's quite difficult for some children to use a "talker" because it's difficult to point accurately. In a March 2012 blog, a mom shared how she helped her daughter Maya use the iPad for



communication. Go to <http://niederfamily.blogspot.com/2012/03/necessity-is-mother-of-invention.html> for a step-by-step description of a simple solution that worked.



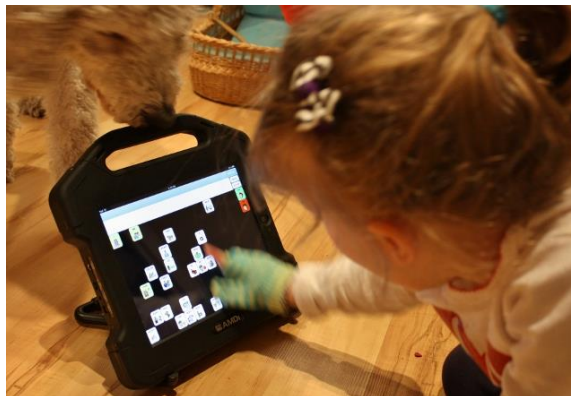
First, you need a pair of gloves that fits your kid and a pair of scissors. Cut the index finger off of the gloves. The gloves won't activate the screen. Adults in cold climates are all too familiar with this, as you can't use your touchscreen phone with gloves unless you have [special gloves](#). So the only part of her hand that can now effectively touch a button is her index finger.



Three fingers on the screen can't hit any buttons.



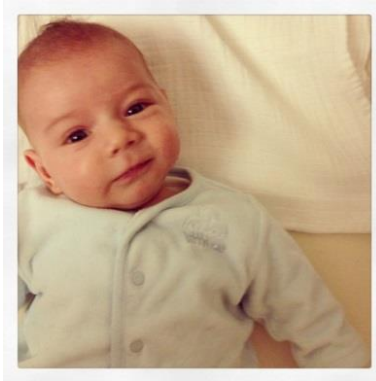
Using her pointer finger to hit a button.



This is the best picture, because her knuckles and the heel of her hand are actually resting on the iPad, but not activating any buttons! She's able to take the time to line up her index finger and hit the button that she is intending to. Success!

**Many thanks to all who have contributed to this newsletter.**

As a final note: Martina Minarikova from Slovakia, who co presented with Anne Warrick, Alina Tutu from Romania and me at the ECERAAC conference in Warsaw 2011 has sent me this lovely photo of her son Vincent .



We send her congratulations and wish her family joy.

As Europe finally comes to the end of a long winter, I feel this photo depicts a time of new beginnings. 'Til the next newsletter. Best wishes to all of you.

**Dot (dotfraser2@gmail.com)**