ISAAC Canada Webinar Series 2026



NAACA
North American Alliance for Communication Access

isaac VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2026

Communication Access Guidelines

- Before we start, we want to remind you about the accessibility guidelines we are following during this conference.
- We want to ensure everyone's voice is heard:
  - To ask questions, use the Q&A panel
  - During interactive portions of the session, people who use AAC can use the chat box to type their message. If you want your message read aloud, please type “ROL”(Read Out Loud) before your message.
- I will be monitoring the chat box and reading messages marked with ROL when appropriate.

For more information, visit https://isaac-online.org/english/communication-access/

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Communication Access Guidelines

- I will also be reminding the presenter(s) to pace themselves and describe graphics used on their slides.
- To allow extra time to participate in the interactive portions of this session, presenters will provide their emails and links to any participation form so you can respond both during and after the session.
- Handouts for this session can be found at _____ .

For more information, visit https://isaac-online.org/english/communication-access/

AAC in the Wild

Jenn Markosky, M.Sc., S-LP(C), Reg SK
Speech Language Pathologist
AAC Enthusiast
Saskatoon SK

Land Acknowledgement

I live on Treaty 6 Territory and am privileged to work on Treaty 6, 8, and 10 Territories.

Treaty 6 encompasses the lands of the Plains and Wood Cree, Dakota, Nakota, Saulteaux and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

I am committed to continuing my education about Indigenous stories, culture, and language.

Jenn Markosky

family, hounds, thrifting, creating, lakes, travel









AAC in the Wild

I created **AAC in the Wild** because AAC Communication happens IN REAL LIFE.

Communication Partners feel AAC recommendations are impossible in real life.

They are right.

Vocabulary

AAC Users – Users

- Anyone using AAC regardless of age, modality, experience.

AAC Communication Partners – Partners

- Parents, siblings, extended family, friends, nannies, babysitters, paraprofessionals, community members.

Communication Partners are right:

Recommendations are not helpful if you don't know what you are doing, if you haven't been taught and coached.

We need to train the Partners, not just the Users.

AAC IN THE WILD

"They aren't taking it to the party."

- Linda Burkhart



AAC in the Wild: The Program

Designed to be open to any AAC User regardless of their communication mode, AAC proficiency, or mobility.



The program

Designed for AAC **Communication Partners**.

No expectation for structured group activities.

Participants explore the space at their own pace and interest.

No expectation for AAC User to use device.

Wait. What?

An AAC Program that doesn’t want the users to USE THEIR DEVICE?

yes.

Most participants are family members who see their SLP model fluent AAC in sessions.

They think “How hard can it be?”

Home and community are NOT the same controlled environment as an SLP room.

IT’S WILD OUT THERE.



Coaching in the community

- Strength in numbers
- Cycle of **practice, feedback, practice** creates successful AAC support.
- Real world problem solving.
- Communication Partner buy-in



Locations

Chosen for application in real life as well as size. Small places allow me to coach each family multiple times.

Repeating locations allows for improvement and builds confidence.



Mistakes were made...

- Zoo – too much space
- Park with water nearby
- Ice Cream Shop

Successful Locations

- SMALL neighborhood grocery store
- Science Centre
- Accessible Playground with “locked” gate

AAC in the Wild: Format

Unstructured structure:

- Online orientation
- Date, location, and coaching time shared in advanced
- No formal group activities (aka Circle Time)
- Individualized goals & strategies
- Sessions build on each other

Five-Day Program
vs.
Drop In Options

Example of 5-Day Program

Day 1 – Online Orientation

- Details on location and where to meet
- General outline of program
- Ideas on how they might prepare
- AAC Icebreakers
- Breakout group discussions

Day 2 – Explore the Wild

- Meet at location
- No expectation to use device but partner must carry it.
- Explore, observe what child likes. Make a list of words child will need.

Day 3 – Model in the Wild

- Choose one word from Day 2 list
- Use it 10x minimum

Day 4 – Double Time

- Same word – 20x
- Add another word from list – model 10x
- At home, talk about what you saw today. WAIT.

Day 5 – Wild Times

- 1 Noun – 5x
- 1 Verb – 20x
- 1 Adjective – 20x

DROP IN

Available after attending full program.



Accessible Playground



Trick or Treating



Holiday Party

concepts and strategies in the wild

Foundational AAC Concepts

Partners need explicit coaching

- Vocabulary - Core vs. Fringe
- AAC immersion, AAC is Language
- Assume Competence
- Modeling
- Listening

Foundational AAC Strategies

Partners need explicit coaching

- COMMENTS vs. QUESTIONS
- How to choose vocabulary
  - Using vocabulary in a variety of ways
- Finding moments to model
  - Touch the button, say the sentence
- Listening and observing
- Responding and creating a conversation

Celebrate success

Pam

- *FRIENDS*

Ryan

- Public Speaking
- AAC Group

Darren

- Go to table
- Go (Cree)

Naomi

- GLP – song clips

other programs

AAC in the Wild – Individual Partner Coaching

AAC Online – 3 session training program for Partners

Questions?
Comments?



thank you



Next ISAAC-Canada Webinar

January 12th, 2027 @ 7:00 pm Eastern (Toronto) time

“Exploring trends in AAC access, use, and clinician training”
Presented by: Juno (June) Coan-Brill, MClSc, SLP Reg. CASLPO

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