



# Welcome to ISAAC Canada's Talking AAC, Eh Webinar Series



isaac

International Society for  
Augmentative and Alternative Communication



**ISAAC** is pleased to announce that **ISAAC 2020**, the 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, has been rescheduled for 2021. As originally planned, the Conference will be held at the Cancún International Convention Centre (ICC) in beautiful **CANCÚN**, adjoining the Riviera Maya on México's Caribbean coast.

**JULY 31 – AUGUST 1, 2021**

AAC Camp, Pre-Conference Workshops, Executive and Council Meetings

**AUGUST 2 - 5, 2021**

Main Conference at the Cancún ICC, México

Surrounded by Mayan culture and with easy access to beautiful beaches, tours, shops and restaurants of both Cancún and the Riviera Maya, the ISAAC conference will feature AAC events and perspectives; cutting edge research and clinical innovations; workshops, seminars, exhibits, social events, and entertainment, all in a unique cultural setting.

**Mark your calendar today, and save  
the date for ISAAC 2020 (now 2021) in México!**

For more information, visit us at [www.isaac-online.org](http://www.isaac-online.org)  
and follow #ISAAC2020 on Twitter.

isaac  
International Society for  
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

[www.isaac-online.org](http://www.isaac-online.org)

celebrate!



AAC AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2020 | #AACAware20

BRIDGING THE SILENCE THROUGH SOLIDARITY

# "Stories of Practice & Support During COVID"



Anne- Marie Yaworski  
Braille & Literacy  
Specialist, Montreal



Dr. Karen, Pollock  
Professor, Department  
of CSD, U of A,  
Edmonton



Krista  
Wennerstrom SLP,  
Edmonton Catholic  
Schools,  
Edmonton



Alison Rumball  
OCT, MEd,  
Toronto



The background features abstract, flowing waves of color. At the top, a thick, vibrant red wave curves across the frame. Below it, a thinner, more ethereal yellow wave flows. At the bottom, another thick red wave curves upwards, overlapping with a yellow wave that flows from the right side towards the center. The overall effect is dynamic and modern.

# VIRTUAL TEACHING




































Anne-Marie Yaworski



MARCH 13<sup>TH</sup> 2020  
THE DAY EVERYTHING CHANGED

# WHAT DID I DO?

- Getting kids what they need
- Anne-Marie's Literacy Place
- <http://annemariesliteracyplace.weebly.com>

I 	like 	get 	help 	can 	more 	all 	in 	who 	when 
you 	want 	look 	turn 	do 	finished 	some 	on 	what 	
he 	go 	make 	open 	put 	same 	here 	up 	where 	
she 	it 	good 	stop 	not 	different 	that 		why 	

# WHAT DID I DO?

- Getting kids what they need:
- Adding support for parents

## Weather

- I like windy days. 🌀
- I like cloudy days. ☁️
- I like rainy days. 🌧️
- I like sunny days. ☀️
- I like hot days. 🔥
- I like cold days. ❄️
- I like snowy days. ❄️





# WHAT DID I DO?

- Getting kids what they need:
- Pre-recorded activities

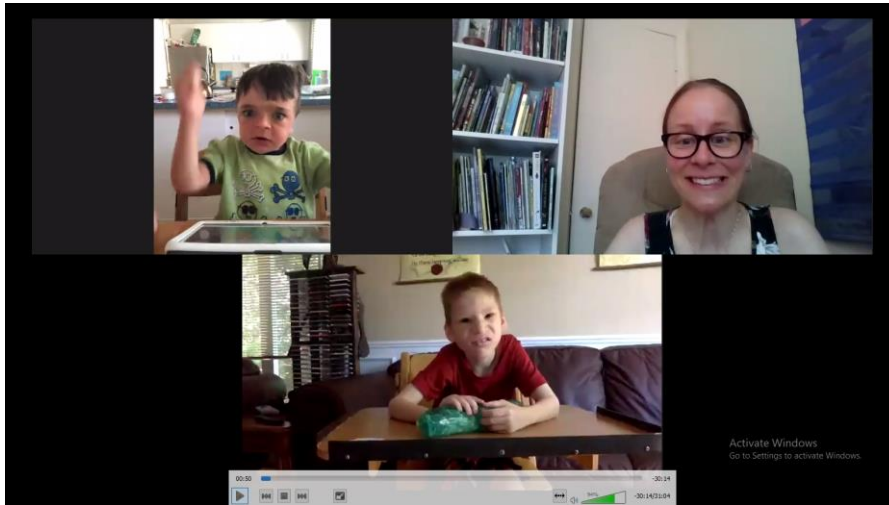




# WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART?

Figuring out “the new normal”

# IS IT WORTH IT ?

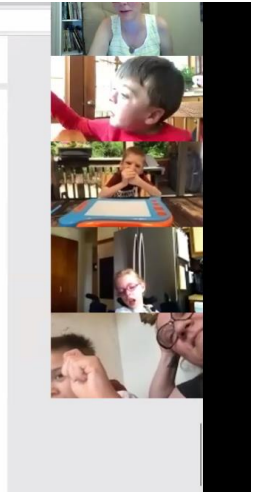


p/predictable%20chart/Summer%20look-%20Laura%20class.pdf

Liam



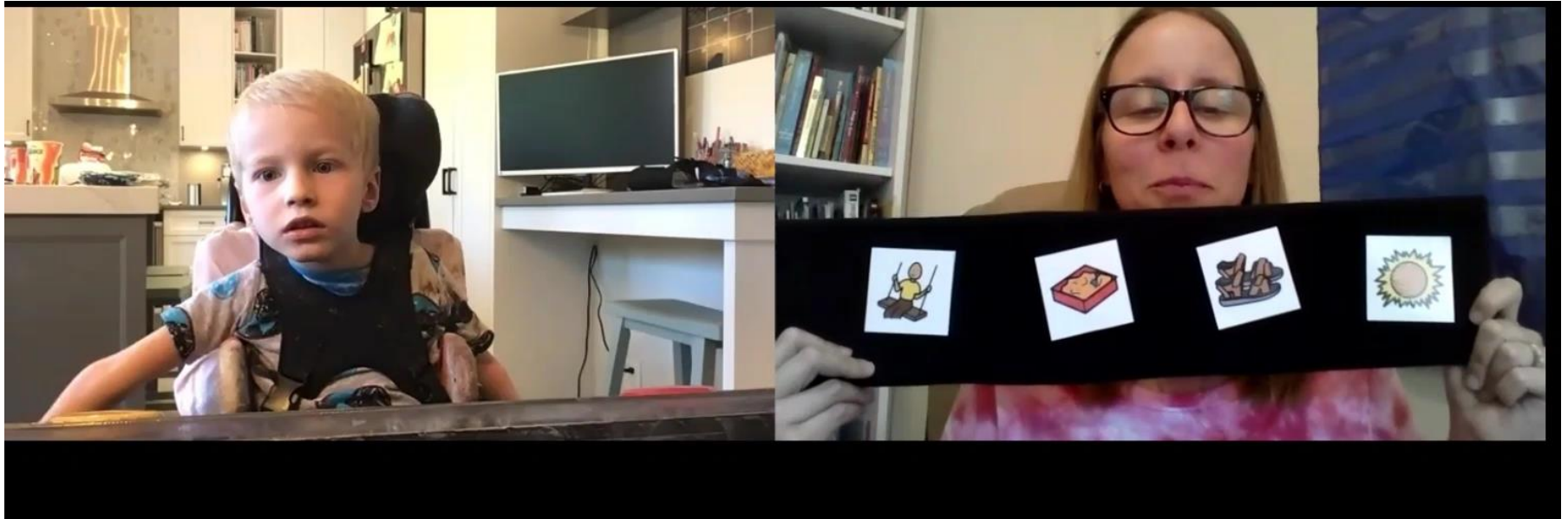
I can swim. 



IS IT WORTH IT ?



IS IT WORTH IT ?







# WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

- Parent Support
- It is possible to change everything
- Teaching is awesome
- We all have something to say!



# POST COVID SHUTDOWN

- Digital Classrooms
- Communication Kits
- Parent drop ins

Anne Marie's slides go here!



Karen E Pollock, PhD, R.SLP

# Background – AAC Camp Alberta

- Offered through a partnership between the University of Alberta and March of Dimes Canada since 2016
- Annual weekend family camp
- 3 primary goals
  - ▣ To provide a camp experience for **children with complex communication needs**, where they can communicate and build friendships with each other
  - ▣ To provide training and networking opportunities for **parents and siblings** of campers
  - ▣ To provide an interprofessional experiential learning opportunity for **SLP/OT/PT students**



# Focus on communication

- Communication is multi-modal for everyone
- Communication competencies are best learned in an environment rich in shared activities that include expert, guided interactions
- At AAC Camp
  - Campers (and parents and siblings) learn to use AAC
  - Counselors learn & practice strategies to support communication development



# Campers

- 20-25 children and youth (6-19 yrs of age) + parents/siblings
- All AAC campers communicate with a speech generating device
- Campers paired 1:1 with SLP student counselor
- Teams of 5-6 campers based on age
- Supervised by experienced volunteer professionals



# Activities – teams of 5-6 campers rotate through stations



arts & crafts



high ropes



music/movement



swimming



hiking/biking

# Challenges with converting to a virtual camp

- Platform
  - Zoom – multiple breakout rooms, familiar to families & volunteers, supported by MODC
- Registration
  - Kept cost very low – basically covered cost of t-shirts & shipping
  - Slow initially - not sure what to expect?, tired of online learning?
- Engaging online activities
  - Simple & flexible
  - Adaptable to different ages/interests
- Minimizing on-screen overload
  - Camper team size, number of counselors/volunteers



# Virtual AAC Camp Alberta 2020

- 20 families
  - 20 campers (6-9 yrs)
  - 10 siblings
  - 3 parents/caregivers
- Geographically diverse
- 10 teams





# Schedule



## The Great StAACation



- Spread over 3 days
  - 6 camper activities
  - 4 parent sessions (recorded)
  - 2 sibling sessions
  - Ample breaks
- Staggered start times to accommodate campers in different time zones

Friday, Aug 28	Saturday, Aug 29	Sunday, Aug 30
<b>Note:</b> all activity start times are in Mountain Time (MT) – see adjustments for different time zones	<b>MORNING</b>	<b>MORNING</b>
	<b>Group A: 9am MT (11 ET/10 CT)</b> <b>Group B: 10am MT (9 PT)</b> <b>Build-a-Fort</b> <i>(scavenger hunt, show/share, Q &amp; comment)</i>	<b>Group A: 9am MT (11 ET/10 CT)</b> <b>Group B: 10am MT (9 PT)</b> <b>Feel the Beat!</b> <i>(create a sensory bin and musical instruments)</i>
<b>AFTERNOON</b>	<b>AFTERNOON</b>	<b>AFTERNOON</b>
<b>Time: 1pm MT (3 ET/2 CT/12 PT)</b> <b>Communicating with AAC</b> <i>(Anne Kuhlmeier, SLP)</i>	<b>Group A: 12pm MT (2 ET/1 CT)</b> <b>Group B: 1pm MT (noon PT)</b> <b>Finish the ...</b> <i>(literacy, mad-libs, stories)</i>	<b>Group A: 12pm MT (2 ET/1 CT)</b> <b>Group B: 1pm MT (noon PT)</b> <b>The AACcessible Boogie</b> <i>(dance party)</i>
<b>Group A: 3 pm MT (5 ET/4 CT)</b> <b>Group B: 4 pm MT (3 PT)</b> <b>StAACation Destination</b> <i>(choose where to go and what to do, &amp; create a visual scene to share with others)</i>	<b>Time: 2pm MT (4 ET/3 CT/1 PT)</b> <b>Sibling Meet &amp; Greet</b> <b>Group A: 3 pm MT (5 ET/4 CT)</b> <b>Group B: 4 pm MT (3 PT)</b> <b>The Great Out-Smores</b> <i>(build a campfire, make s'mores, campfire songs)</i>	<b>Time: 2pm MT (4 ET/3 CT/1 PT)</b> <b>Sibling AAC Challenge</b> <b>Open Session</b> <i>(Kathy Howery and others)</i> <i>(Q &amp; A session - submit questions on Fri/Sat)</i>
<b>EVENING</b>	<b>EVENING</b>	
<b>Time: 7pm MT (9 ET/8 CT/6 PT)</b> <b>Everyday AAC</b> <i>(Kathy Howery, PhD, AAC Consultant)</i>  <b>Time: following parent session</b> <b>Parent Networking time</b>	<b>Time: 7pm MT (9 ET/8 CT/6 PT)</b> <b>Regulation: Tried &amp; True, plus Something New</b> <i>(Julie Russell &amp; Sheka Reid, OTs)</i>  <b>Time: following parent session</b> <b>Parent Networking time</b>	

Camper/Sibling Team Activities
Sibling Group Sessions
Parent Sessions (older siblings also welcome) – will be recorded for those who missed them to watch later)

**Group A:** Boutillier, Collins, Dowdy, Glatt, Huyette-Arrizza, Michalosky, Mobbs, Stuart, Toper, & Woodruff

**Group B:** Arbeau, Berrv, Brookes, Foto, Martens, Massis, Navarro, Obi, Stedman, & Woodward

# SLP, OT, and PT Counselors

- ❑ Pre-camp training
- ❑ IP activity planning teams
- ❑ Team assignments
  - ❑ 1-2 SLP + 1 OT or PT student
- ❑ Introduction videos



# Activities – StAACation Destination

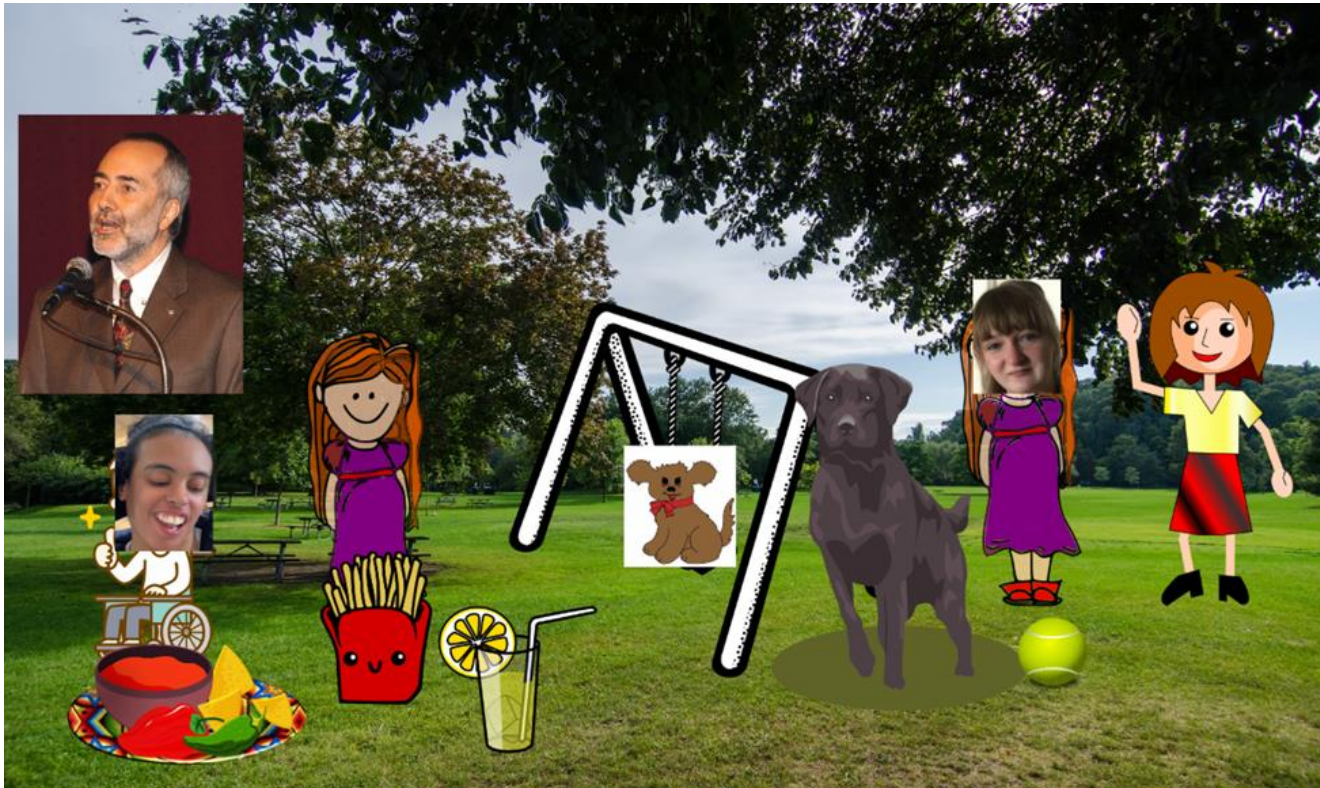




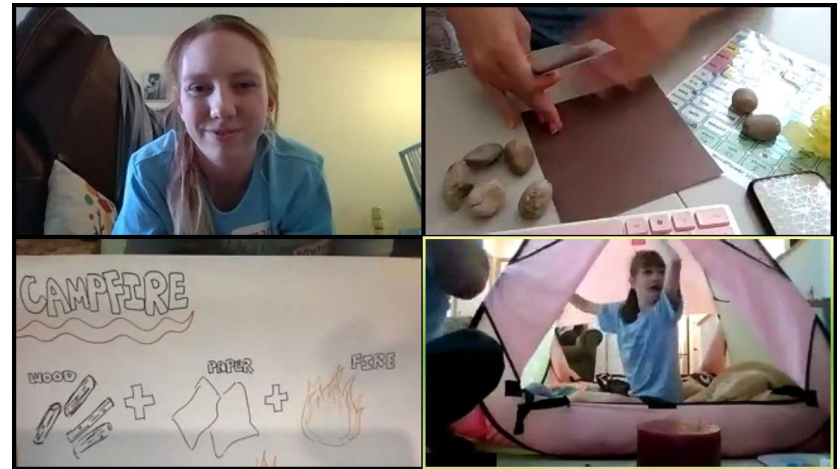
# Activities – StAACation Destination



# Activities – StAACation Destination

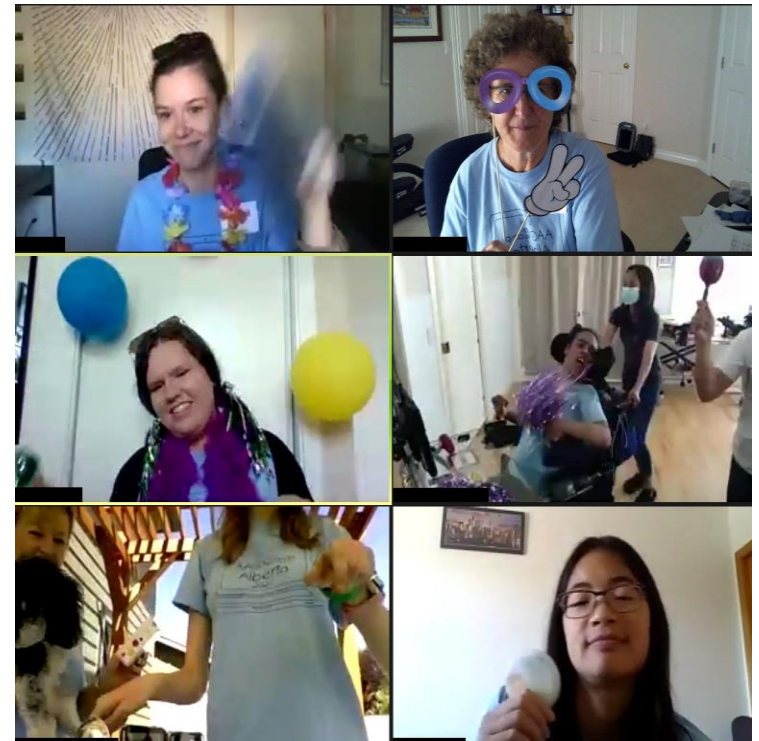
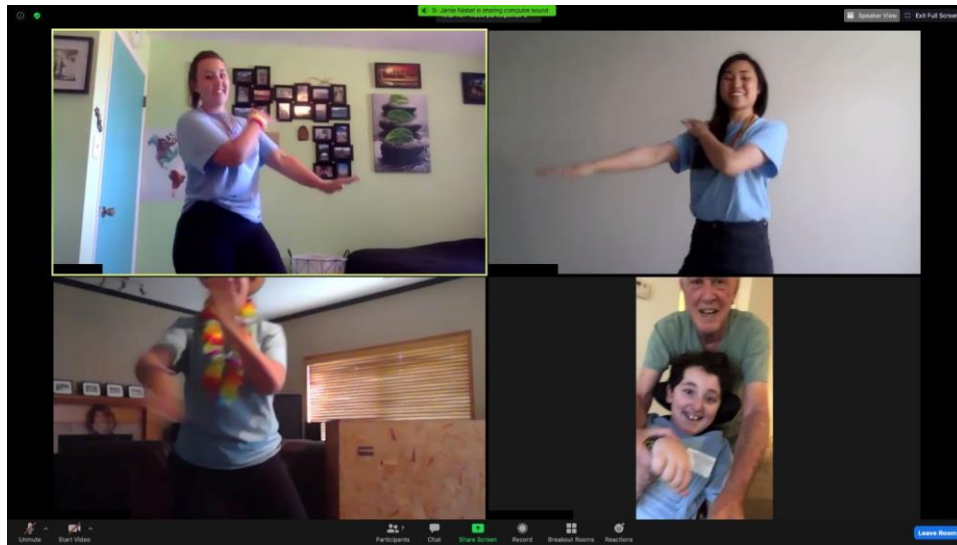


# Activities – The Geat Out-Smores





# Activities – music & movement



# Celebrations

- Student counselors really stepped up to the challenge
- IP student collaboration was the most successful of any previous camp
- Campers were much more engaged online than anticipated
- Parent sessions were very well received; parents supported each other
- Feedback from families was overall very positive
  - *“Everyone was so great. The conversations we had were fantastic. This was the first time our daughter has really interacted with another kid like her that uses a communication device.”*
  - *“This camp opened a new door for me. I truly feel it was providence that led me to this event. It was life changing and I’m immensely grateful.”*

# More parent feedback

- *“Was great to have international campers and to offer an easily affordable camp.”*
- *“The technology was terrific! Very smooth!”*
- *“Our family would never be able to attend a camp “in person” so virtual is a wonderful way to support families from all areas.”*
- *“It was an amazing experience! Everyone was friendly and helpful. There were so many opportunities for my daughter to talk. The staff provided excellent communication and wonderful activities. There was a lot of prep that went into this camp and it shows!”*
- *“Did not know what to expect but it exceeded any expectations I may have had!”*
- *“Was a wonderful idea given nothing is offered in all areas of the country for AAC users. Was a way to see others use AAC too.”*
- *“My daughter was engaged and enjoyed the activities. She had a lot to say!”*

# Lessons learned

- You can make a difference in a weekend – even virtually
  - *“I just wanted to share another positive “side effect” of your AAC Camp. My daughter’s teachers said she is much more engaged in online learning after attending your AAC Camp. I guess that weekend provided the structure she needed to understand online learning more. Her teachers are pleased she is interacting more and learning from their online lessons.” (sent 2 wks after camp)*
- Parents really want/need resources and support
- Students (counselors) learn best by doing
  - Planning activities & working through sample case profiles prepared them well for the experience at camp

# Lesson in Flexibility



- Team 8's visit to the chicken coop



# What will we keep post-COVID?

- Tentatively planning a 1-day virtual camp reunion in March 2021
- Considering an annual spring virtual camp in addition to annual in person summer camp
- Will continue to use IP planning teams for counselor pre-camp training and activity planning
- Pre-camp counselor video introductions were a hit
  
- It takes a village to run a successful camp
  - Could not do it without a dedicated team of volunteer professionals
  - Also great support from March of Dimes Canada



# Questions?

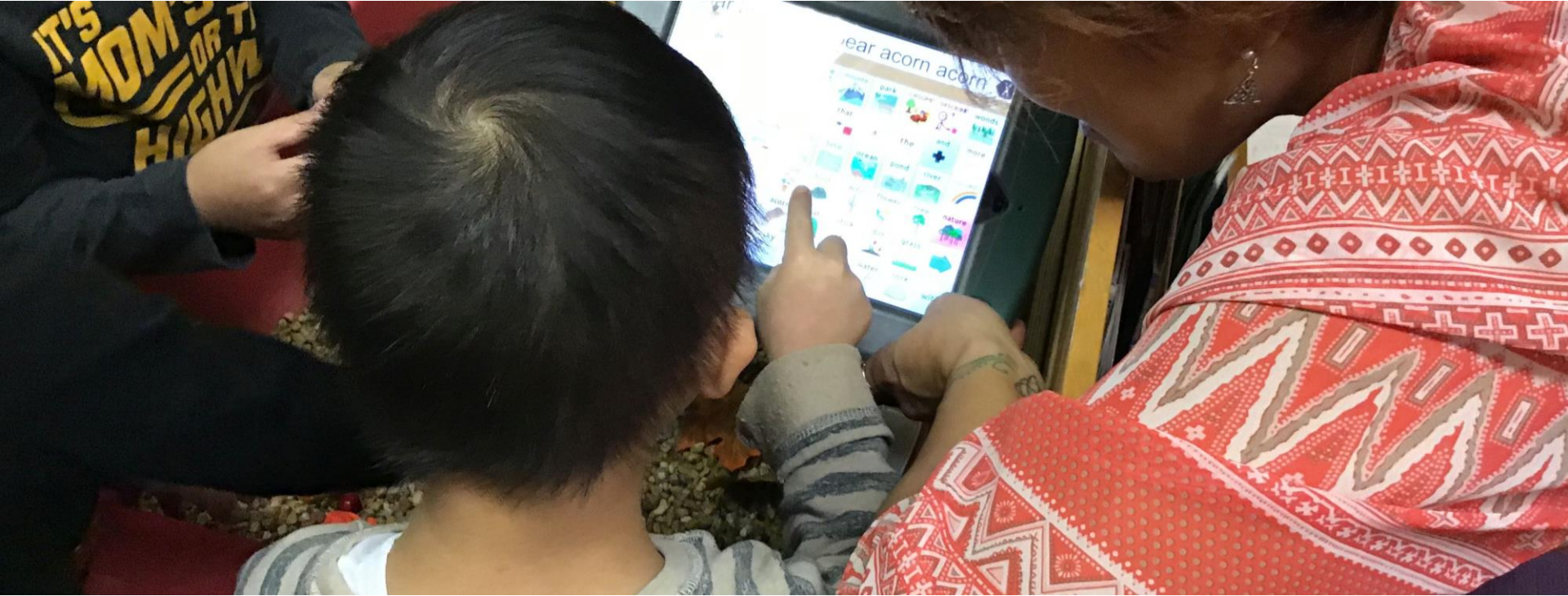
[karen.pollock@ualberta.ca](mailto:karen.pollock@ualberta.ca)



**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**  
FACULTY OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE  
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders



**MARCH  
OF DIMES  
CANADA**

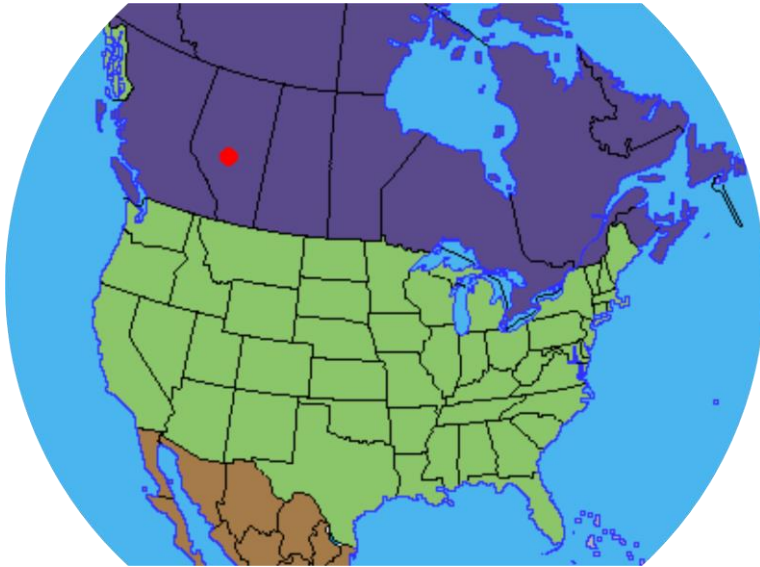


# Supporting Our On-Line AAC Learners

AAC-AT Team Edmonton Catholic School Division, October 2020

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## Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

- Population 972, 223 (2019)
- 2 Major publicly funded School Boards
  - Edmonton Public School Board (213 schools)
  - Edmonton Catholic School Division (96 schools)



# Inclusive Policies

*“Edmonton Catholic School Division respects diversity and promotes inclusion” (Goal 3 - District Plan for Continuous Growth)*

- Provide equitable opportunities for students to participate
- Ensure that assistive technology is available to students

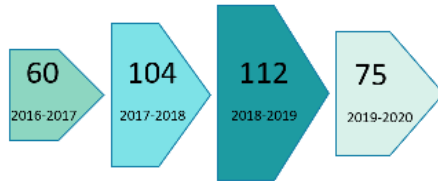




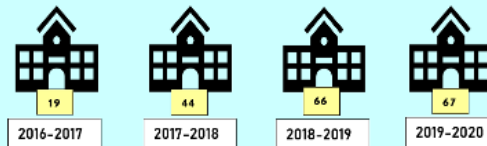
# Augmentative and Alternative Communication Service - Four-Year Summary of Work | 2016-2020

The Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Service provides Speech-Generating Communication Devices (SGCDs) to students from PreK to Grade 12 with severe verbal communication challenges. The AAC Team is responsible for helping schools and families choose a device that best suits both school and home environments. A plan is created to support the use of the device and the team tracks, monitors and adjusts the plan to achieve optimal communication outcomes.

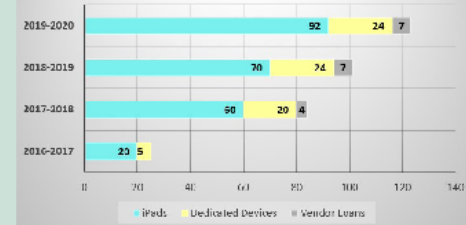
## Number of Referrals



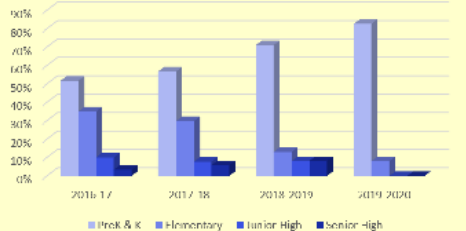
## Number of Schools Receiving AAC Services



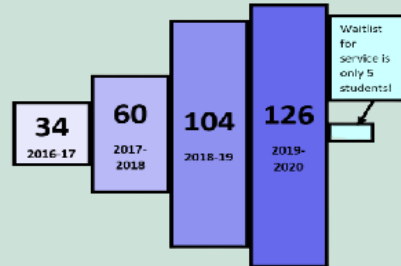
## AAC Devices Currently on Loan for Trials



## Percentage of Referrals by Grade



## Number of Students Supported



AAC Website Visits 2018-19  
811

AAC Website Visits 2019-20  
25,912

AAC Website Visits 2017-  
18  
139

We were invited to provide a guest blog post to **PRACTICAL AAC** about our **AAC Calendar** for remote learning resulting in a phenomenal increase in website traffic.

AAC Website launched May 2017

[bit.ly/ecsdAAC](http://bit.ly/ecsdAAC)

It has been our priority to ensure children in our early learning programs have access to AAC as soon as possible.

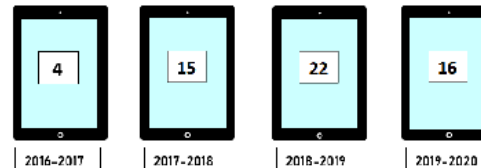


There are no cognitive or behavioural pre-requisites to use of AAC!

With good intervention, anyone can succeed!



## Number of devices funded through AADL and Jordan's Principle (4 in 2019-2020).



## Collaborative Partnerships





## The Need



- Approximately 300 ECSD students from preK to Grade 12 were using or learning to use an AAC device or had been referred to our service
- As a Level 2 Service Centre, our AAC team supports device trials and the application process to access government funding of high-tech devices for direct access users
- When school closures happened, many



# About Us

ECSD Speech-Language  
Pathology Team

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- 41 Speech-Language Pathologists, 5 specifically supporting students and their educators and families in using AAC
- Subcommittees created to develop on-line resources and provide direct support to AAC users



“AAC at Home”  
Project



On-Line  
Therapeutic  
Intervention

# AAC at Home



- Information, tips and activities across the grades to support AAC device use
- Found on our [ecsd.net](http://ecsd.net) website
- <https://www.ecsd.net/page/7861/speech-and-language-aac-core-words-at-home>

## Features

- An interactive home that allows the viewer to tour different rooms in the home
- Activities specific to typical family routines and engaging, age respectful activities
- Focused on core words to support introduction to device use
- Content in the home changed every month
- Accessors self-pace their learning

# Our Everyday

## AAC Tips

1. Always have your child's system charged and accessible. Teach your child to bring it with him or her wherever you go.
2. Start slow and practice daily. Select a few "core" everyday words to focus on each week.
3. Make it a family affair! Use the games and activities found on this slide to help everyone learn your child's AAC system.
4. When possible, have your own paper copy of your child's device that you can model on. Click [here](#) to find a printable version of your child's system.
5. Point to and say words just above your child's language level. For example, if your child is not yet using words, point to one word (e.g., "more"), if he is using single words, model 2-3 words together (e.g. "want more"), etc.

## CATEGORY SEARCH

Make a list of general categories, such as people, feelings, transportation, games, and food. Use a ready-made spinner linked [here](#). Click on the spinner and see how long it takes you or another family member to find a word that belongs to the category.

## OBSTACLE COURSE

Create a fun obstacle course for you and your child. Have another family member use the device or board to tell you which direction or way to go, e.g. "go under", "go over", "go behind". Click [here](#) for more ideas.

**WORD VOTE** Using a book or a magazine, open it up and close your eyes. Point to a word on the page. Call out the word and have your family members decide if it's an "Everyday" core word (e.g., like, more, all done, it, that) or a "Sometimes" word (e.g., red, pizza, cat). Note that some words may be considered everyday in your home, e.g. if you have a pet

 **GAMES**

Family





Today's Word  
Menu

Tips for Using AAC With Your Child During Meals

1. Always have your child's AAC device charged and accessible wherever you go.
2. If you are worried about your child's AAC device getting spilled on, this is a great idea to use your low-tech paper copy of vocabulary you use with your AAC device. We have also given you some suggested "everyday" words to help get you started.
3. The next time you are at the table and ready to model what words to use with your AAC device, give your child a great start by modeling the words on your AAC device. We have also given you some suggested "everyday" words to help get you started.



Modeling AAC  
at Home:  
Kitchen



"I SEE" in the Kitchen

Like the popular guessing game "I Spy", you can play "I see..." in the kitchen and model these words on your child's AAC

I see something hard (e.g., the table, the floor)

I see something shiny (e.g., a fork, a light)



an  
l,  
hot



**1000  
Views!**

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EDMONTON  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS





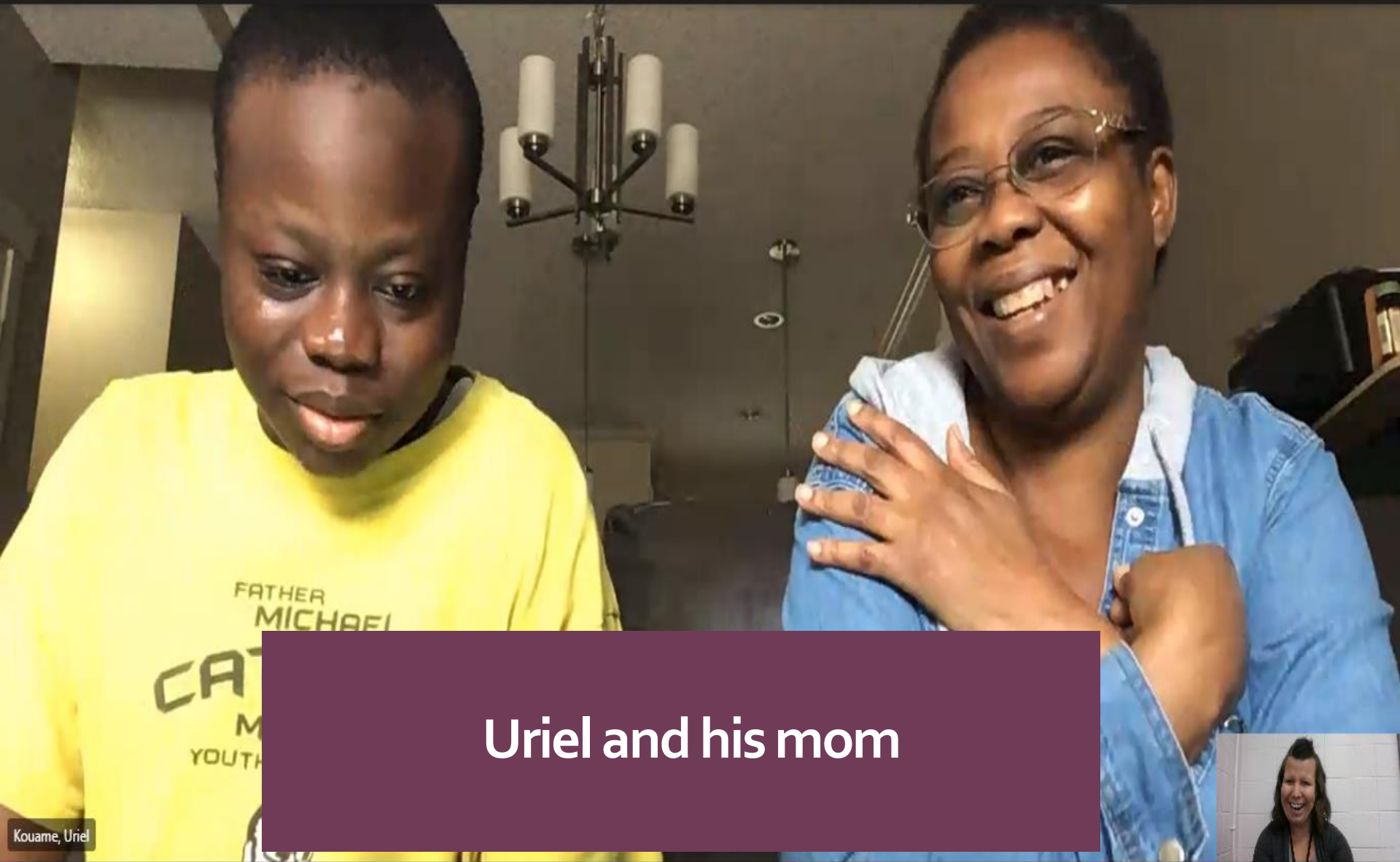
## Teletherapy for AAC



10:46



Leave ▾



Uriel and his mom



Kouame, Uriel

# The Good, the Bad...

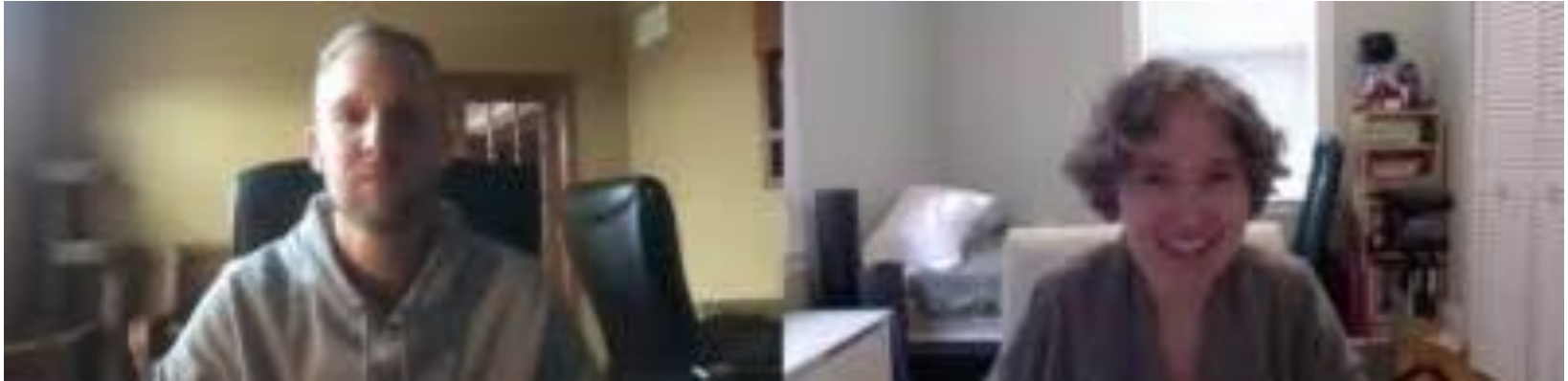
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- stronger focus on the family for intervention
- more meaningful conversations and interactions happen over telepractice in their home vs at a school meeting
- families and caregivers are taking on a much more active role in their AAC intervention –modelling and troubleshooting
- no travel time. - connect with more families and school teams throughout the day without geographic limits



- Internet connection
- No-shows
- Seeing how much prompting was happening
- Device malfunctions
- Declining services altogether



# **The Wonderful!**

Family Capacity Building

# Virtual Literacy Groups



By Alison Rumball

2020



# Where we came from?

- In Jan. 2016, we started an in person Literacy Group within the Greater Toronto Area for children with disabilities and their families
- Initially, a local school donated their gym space on Sunday mornings.
- We then met monthly at someone's house, for a literacy session followed by a potluck
- Once or twice a year, we would meet in the community



# 2020 Spring

How to continue literacy groups?

Initially, completed a poll with parents to see what they wanted, how often, etc.

Decided on twice a week sessions via Zoom and we would use a similar format to our in person sessions.

Attendance was voluntary with usually 5 of the 8 families attending each session.

Working with 4-12 year olds.

# Agenda

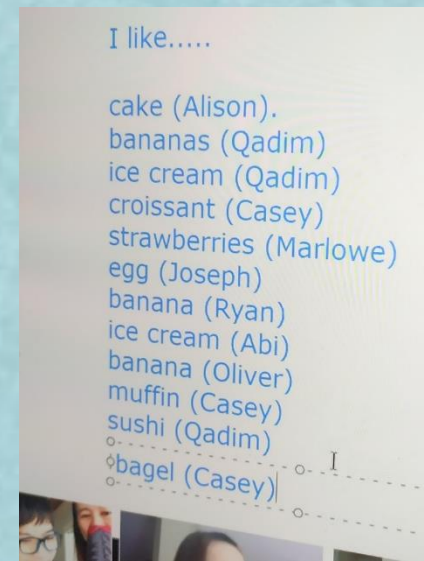
- 1) Name Chants (Caroline Musselwhite's Name Chants - 2018 Tip #8)
- 2) Read a book, one theme for the week,
  - matching fiction and nonfiction
  - 2 books on the same topic



# Agenda con't

## 3) Predictable Sentence

- based on the book
- used the whiteboard within Zoom
- created either a Tar Heel Reader Book online or a PowerPoint Book that were then shared with families







## 4) Socialization and Good Bye

Tar Heel Reader

Alison and Friends All Topics Include unreviewed

Rated E/Everybody English Search

<b>Our Alphabet about Canada</b> Alison and Friends  57	<b>Then, Snuff hid the....</b> Alison and Friends  7	<b>Some Dinosaurs are</b> Alison and Friends  8	<b>My Daddy Can</b> Alison and Friends  12
<b>I love my Daddy because</b>	<b>Do you like ----?</b>	<b>Are you a Cow? No</b>	<b>I can climb</b>



# Books Shared with Families

Tar Heel Reader Books

PowerPoint Books

I like to drive....

Alison and Friends

Don't  
Let the  
Pigeon  
Drive  
the  
Bus!

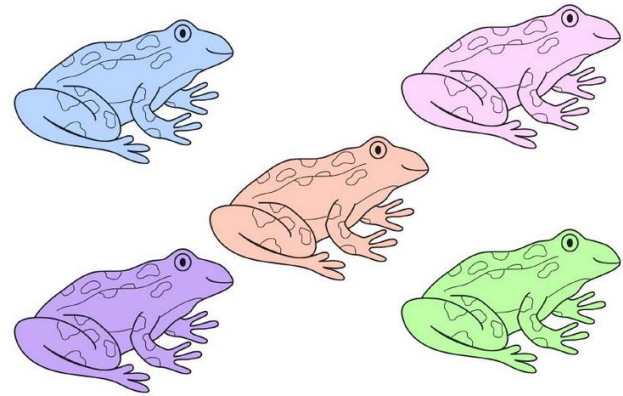


words and pictures  
by mo willems

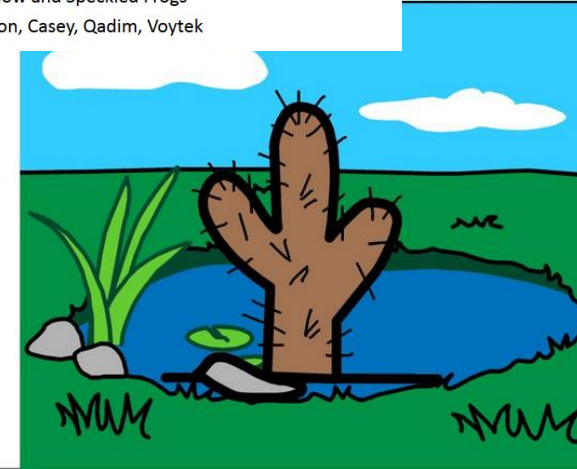
SCHOLASTIC



Some dinosaurs are green. (Abi)



Five Rainbow and Speckled Frogs  
By Abi, Alison, Casey, Qadim, Voytek



In the pond, I see a cactus. (Oliver)

# 2020 Fall

I asked parents if they wanted me to continue. I knew some families returned to in person schooling, and some were attending virtual school.

The unanimous decision was that they wanted something. We decided to work on the Alphabet.

Our group was loosely based on the work of Jones et al. and the Enhanced Alphabet Knowledge Instruction.



# Agenda

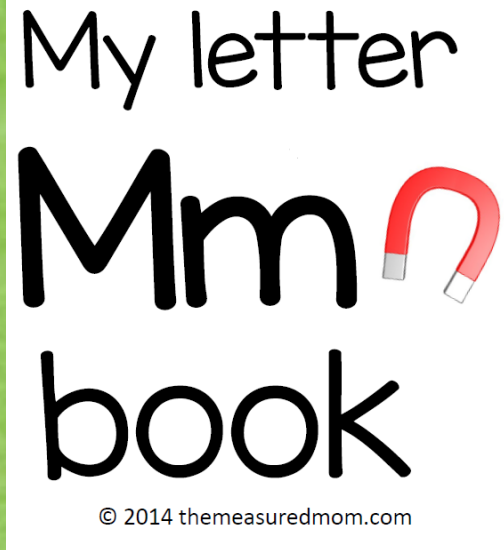


- 1) Alphabet video based on the children's interest
- 2) Introduce the letter of the day, upper case and lower case, the sound it makes (you can say it in your head)
- 3) Where can we find the letter on an alphabet flip chart, and in various AAC apps (I will model with my iPad up to the screen)
- 4) Jack Hartman's Letter of the Day Video



# Agenda con't

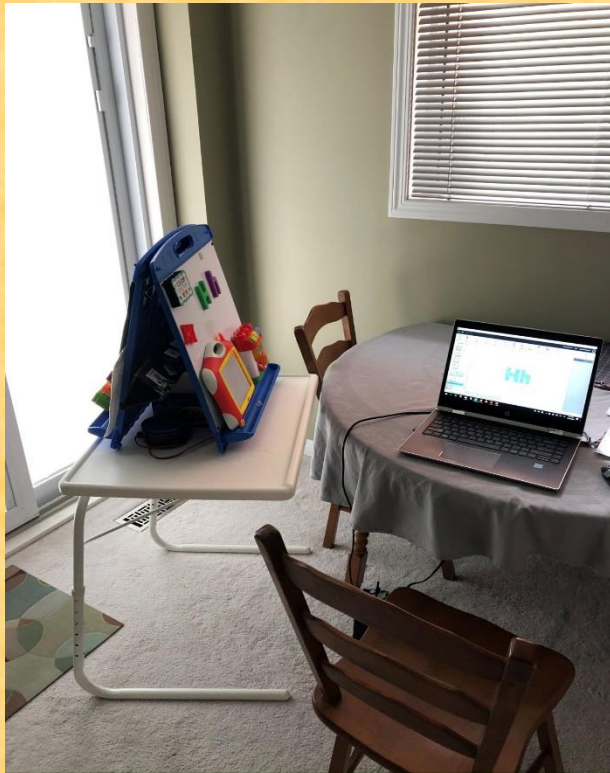
- 5) I read a book about the letter
- 6) We talk about things we have seen with the letter OR it can have the letter in it
- 7) Create a poster about the letter in Boardmaker Studio
- 8) Recap about the letter and review what starts with that letter
- 9) Next week's letter and some socialization before we say  
Goodbye





# Challenges

- 1) Limited to the books that were available within my library
- 2) Setting up the environment for the best camera angles (no glare, I can see but I can also share items)



# Celebrations

- 1) Parents enjoyed the time to connect and see other families. Therefore, I usually allowed the last 5 or so minutes for anyone to socialize
  
- 2) Approximately 25 minutes was ideal for virtual literacy groups
  
- 3) Parents reported:
  - “love it love it love it!!!! Thanks Alison! Wow!”
  - “YOU ARE AMAZING, ---- was totally into it.”
  - “I can’t believe I missed it, I so look forward to this group”
  - “... a very positive bi-product of the group is parents connecting and supporting each other.”



# Celebrations

4) I considered the key elements that contribute to successful literacy learning. With this in mind, we were able to address the following elements:

- a) knowledgeable other
- b) means of communication and interaction
- c) repetition with variety
- d) cognitive engagement
- e) personal connection to the curriculum



# Next Steps:

- 1) Important to maintain children's engagement through personalization of content (children's voice and choice)
- 2) Continue with online classes as long as parents and children are still interested and willing to attend
- 3) Reiterated to myself and the families the importance of using a robust communication system

Thank you for listening to my presentation and remember as Dr. David Yoder said “no one is too anything to be able to read and write.”







# Stay Tuned!

**MORE**

*Coming Soon!*





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International Society for  
Augmentative and Alternative Communication



**ISAAC** is pleased to announce that **ISAAC 2020**, the 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, has been rescheduled for 2021. As originally planned, the Conference will be held at the Cancún International Convention Centre (ICC) in beautiful **CANCÚN**, adjoining the Riviera Maya on México's Caribbean coast.

**JULY 31 – AUGUST 1, 2021**

AAC Camp, Pre-Conference Workshops, Executive and Council Meetings

**AUGUST 2 - 5, 2021**

Main Conference at the Cancún ICC, México

Surrounded by Mayan culture and with easy access to beautiful beaches, tours, shops and restaurants of both Cancún and the Riviera Maya, the ISAAC conference will feature AAC events and perspectives; cutting edge research and clinical innovations; workshops, seminars, exhibits, social events, and entertainment, all in a unique cultural setting.

**Mark your calendar today, and save  
the date for ISAAC 2020 (now 2021) in México!**

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