

Welcome to the third quarter newsletter! Let's hope summer is here to stay!

Welcome to late summer newsletter. In June the President of International Society of Augmentative Alternative Communication spoke at the United Nations. She was part of the first ever AAC program. When I watched her on line I thought boy the AAC community has come a long way. There was maybe a book with a character that used AAC to one of those morning show news stories about an AAC communicator. Today we have the hit tv show Speechless, a lot of books written by and/or featuring AAC communicators and a speech by Meredith Allen, ISAAC President, using her device at the United Nations. Our community is full of adults who live, work and volunteer in their communities. Therapists and educators your job is to find them. They are the mentors and role models young AAC communicators and their families need. Families be open to connecting with a mentor, read books by and about AAC communicators and keep the conversations flowing. Encourage your communicator to reach for the stars!

By Mike Hipple

AAC Tip- Take a picture of your AAC Communicator's home page and make it the home screen on your phone, so you can model any time when you are on the go!

Closing the Gap Conference

Just a reminder we have a great learning opportunity right in our back yard. Closing the Gap 2019 37th Annual Conference in Prior Lake, Minnesota. Dates are October 2-4.

Mentor Connections

This area of the newsletter is for AAC Communicators, their family members to connect with mentors. If your child would benefit from interacting with a more advanced communicator or if you would like to mentor a younger communicator email us. We will try to make the connection. If you are interested in being a mentor you can e mail me at mikehipple4@gmail.com and please tell us about yourself and why you want to be a mentor. We also would like to know what kind of communication device you are using and what level you communicate, intermediate or advanced. We will try our best to match AAC communicators that live in the same area. If you are a professional that knows someone who would be a great mentor please e mail me.

By Mike Hipple

The Good Life

What do we use every day and only miss when they are infringed on? Yes you guessed it our rights. There are many kinds of rights but do you know about the Communication Rights (see attachment and rights are in bold in this article). These fourteen rights are the building blocks for our communicator's journey for health, happiness and a life of purpose-the good life. So in your daily connections with your communicator **give them real choices**. Yes is not always an option but there is dignity **to be heard and responded to even if the answer is no**. And remember **to say no, refuse and reject**

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choices extends to our communicators too! Provide opportunities for them to **ask for what they want and share their feelings**. Communication can only happen when **the communicator has and uses their speech system all the time and to have their speech system in working order and a backup**. To ensure they are **a full and equal members of our community** they need to know they can **ask for and get interaction**. They can **ask and know about their schedule and the world**. Communication rights ensure they are **treated with respect and dignity**. In daily interactions **speak with, not about them**. Always remember it is their life. When there are times a difficult discussion needs to happen **communicate it in a sensitive manner**. So whatever your role in the communicator's life, **teach them how to communicate** but more importantly teach them their communication rights so they are on the road to their good life.

Sue Hipple

Wanted your AAC story

We have featured some of our own Wisconsin AAC success stories and we would love to share yours. We learn so much when we share with others. Please email us your story so we can include it in future newsletters.

WSHA Membership

A reminder that it is now membership renewal time for the Wisconsin Speech Language Hearing Association (WSHA). WSHA is THE professional organization for communication disorders in the State of Wisconsin. Did you know that WSHA recently took an active role in an extensive policy revision for coverage and prior authorization for synthesized speech generating devices (SGD)? The Department of Health Services (DHS) requested the expertise of the WSHA Medicaid Team to collaborate with SLPs across various practice settings to provide

cogent and research-based content in updating this critical policy.

The revision became effective 7/1/2019 which now: Aligns policy and content requirements with current best practices including the "feature matching" approach.

Provides clear guidance related to content requirements to streamline SLP documentation and achieve consistency within the review process.

Provides flexible reporting options to support SLPs across practice settings.

Provides SGD funding approval criteria that is based on documented progress in using the recommended SGD versus achieving a specific, uniform standard of performance for all communicators.

WSHA's Medicaid Team offers a member forum specifically for those interested in networking and receiving support related to Medicaid funding issues, such as for speech generating devices. This is a benefit exclusively for WSHA members!

You can renew today here:

<https://www.wisha.org/page/Membership>

For questions about membership or WSHA, please contact:

Sarah Marshall, MA, CCC-SLP

WSHA President-Elect

Clinical Speech-Language Pathologist

Communication Aids & Systems Clinic (CASC)

UW-Madison, Waisman Center Clinics UCEDD

Let's get reading

Rules is geared for fifth grade and up. Author is Cynthia Lord. Catherine, the main character has a brother who has autism. She writes rules for her brother to live by so he knows how the world works. She likes to come to his occupational therapy sessions and meets Jason who is in a wheelchair and used a communication book to communicate. She creates new cards to expand Jason's world. They become friends and this friendship helps her with feelings she has towards her brother's disability. Note: honest feelings of siblings explored.

Cinnamon Freckles book series for preschoolers and up. Author is Sarah Leal. This picture book series is written by a mother to help her daughter through hard times in her life. What I like about these books is you can email Sarah to get the book on a child's communication device so they can read it to themselves or a peer.

Just a reminder to always use person first language

I just cringe when I hear "the wheelchairs sit over there". Always model person first language. Simply, say "the children who use a wheelchair sit where? So model, model, model.

Sue Hipple