

Amplifying Voices: Caregiver Strategies for Supporting AAC Users

April 22, 2026
7:00-8:00 p.m. EDT

PRESENTED BY:

**Tracy Rackensperger, David McNaughton, Lance McLemore
And Hannah Springfield**

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS:

Tracy Rackensperger, Ph.D. is a public service faculty member at the Center on Human Development and Disability (IHDD) within the David Ralston Institute on Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities at the University of Georgia (UGA). Dr. Rackensperger is the Employment Initiatives Coordinator and Alternative AAC Outreach Specialist for the Center. She is the Co-Leader of Training and Dissemination for the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Augmentative and Alternative Communication. The center supports a research and development program addressing three areas of rehabilitation science and engineering. Dr. Rackensperger has been involved in studies related to employment and telework as well as self-determination. She also serves as the UGA Principal Investigator for the Holographic Augmentative and Alternative Communication (HAAC) Library project. Dr. Rackensperger is an instructor in the Disabilities Studies Certificate program. She is the President of USSAAC.

David McNaughton, Ph.D. is a Professor of Special Education at Pennsylvania State University. Dr. McNaughton's teaching and research focuses on the development of effective educational programs for individuals with significant support needs. He is especially interested in how AAC can be designed and supported to achieve important educational and vocational outcomes. He is a Project Co-Leader of Training and Dissemination for the RERC on AAC.

Lance McLemore, B.A. provides support to the RERC on AAC. He graduated from the University of Alabama in Huntsville with a Bachelor of Arts in studio art and philosophy. He has used AAC since college. He is a recipient of the Prentke AAC Distinguished Lecture Award.

Hannah Springfield is a graduate of the University of Georgia and is currently working for a medical research company. She also provides direct support to Dr. Rackensperger on business and extreme sports trips. She is an aspiring medical student and hopes to become a doctor

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION: This webinar builds directly on our 2024 session, which examined the critical roles Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), and Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) play in supporting AAC users' participation across daily life and community settings. In this follow-up webinar, we extend that conversation by shifting our focus to caregivers' practical roles in ensuring AAC users are supported, without being spoken for or silenced. We will highlight concrete resources, tools, and strategies caregivers can use to reinforce autonomy, respect communication preferences, and create environments where AAC users' voices are centered. Drawing on lessons from our earlier findings, we will translate research-informed insights into actionable practices that caregivers can apply across home, community, and support contexts.

MODERATED BY: Betsy Caporale

SLPs who are USSAAC/ISAAC members may have their participation in this webinar reported for ASHA CEUs at no charge. Non-members must pay a \$25 reporting fee.

This course is offered for 0.10 ASHA CEUs (Introductory level; Professional area).

PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Describe at least two caregiver communication practices that support autonomy and participation across home and community settings.
2. Differentiate between AAC partner strategies that amplify AAC users' voices and practices that unintentionally limit or silence communication.
3. Identify at least three evidence-informed strategies or resources caregivers can use to support AAC access and shared decision-making.

TIME ORDERED AGENDA:

- 5 minutes: Introduction of Speakers, USSAAC and topic
- 7 minutes: Brief recap of the 2024 webinar focus on DSPs and PCAs
- 13 minutes: Translating research into everyday caregiving decisions
- 20 minutes: Practical strategies to support ongoing learning
- 10 minutes: Resources to support ongoing learning
- 5 minutes: Q & A

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) CEUs in speech-language pathology and audiology are awarded by the ASHA CE Registry upon receipt of the CEU Participant Form from the ASHA Approved CE Provider, USSAAC. CEU Participant Forms are available online at Registration or via the QR Code displayed during the presentation. ASHA CEUs are provided to full registrations. This program is offered for .10 ASHA CEUs (Introductory Level, Professional Area). Participants must stay for the entire presentation and complete the questionnaire at the end of the webinar.

ASHA Disclosures:

Speakers

Financial

Lance McLemore and Hannah Springfield are paid by the RERC on AAC through Pennsylvania State University.

David McNaughton is a salaried faculty member at Pennsylvania State University, and a portion of his salary is paid by the RERC on AAC.

Tracy Rackensperger is a salaried faculty member at the University of Georgia and is indirectly compensated by the RERC on AAC through Pennsylvania State University.

Nonfinancial:

Tracy Rackensperger is the President of USSAAC

David McNaughton has no nonfinancial disclosures to report

Lance McLemore has no nonfinancial disclosures to report

Hannah Springfield has no nonfinancial disclosures to report

Moderator

Financial: Betsy Caporale has no financial disclosures to report.

Nonfinancial: Betsy Caporale is a USSAAC board member and chairs the Education Committee.

webinar SERIES presented by

USSAAC
THE VOICE OF AAC

To register for this Webinar please go to the following link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aGz_Qob4ROiMltKafg8Xmw

PLEASE NOTE: Only the first 150 attendees to log into the webinar will be guaranteed spots.

USSAAC EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

Amy Bereiter, Betsy Caporale, Kate DeJarnette, Nicole Gallagher, Richard Hurtig, Michelle Phillippy, Wendy Quach, Sharon Redmon

about USSAAC

The United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (USSAAC) is the national chapter of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). As the United States' only non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the entire AAC community, USSAAC provides an invaluable role, working to ensure that individuals who could benefit from AAC have access to the technology and services they need.

Benefits of membership include, but are not limited to:

- *Free access to USSAAC webinar series with ASHA CEUs and USSAAC Twitter chats*
- *Advocacy for maintaining & expanding access to AAC systems and services*
- *Discount to ISAAC Conferences*
- *SpeakUp publication/Blog*
- *Information updates on USSAAC website, social platforms and member finder*
- *Membership in ISAAC with their additional benefits*

FOLLOW US:

@USSAAC
#USSAACChat

CONTACT US:

info@ussaac.org

JOIN US:

ussaac.org/membership



ASHA CE
APPROVED PROVIDER

**United States Society for
Augmentative and Alternative
Communication**