Enhancing Communication

St. Anthony
OBJECTIVES

➢ Increased understanding of communication for individuals with ASD and other development delays.

➢ Increased understanding of strategies and interventions to support our students with communication deficits, and what we are using at St. Anthony.

➢ Increased understanding on the use of iPads to increase expressive and receptive communication.
Communication

- Impairment in verbal/nonverbal social communication are key features of ASD: 33%-50% of children with autism do not develop functional speech.
- Impairments often lead to a variety of challenging behaviours.
- Increasing receptive and expressive communication opportunities will decrease maladaptive behaviors.
- Communication skills are imperative for community participation, increased independence, relationship development, understanding routines and expectations etc.
- The exposure and use of AAC devices increase verbal communication oppose to decreasing verbal language development.
- Research shows that children with ASD who continue to show verbal language deficits by age 6 are likely to continue to struggle in this area.
Dr. Temple Grandin: Thinking in Pictures

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJ90_mX8gQk
Dr. Temple Grandin: Thinking IN Pictures

- Limited Verbal Language
  - Follow Hierarchy of prompting
- Focus on Visuals
- Avoid *abstract* terms
  - Avoid sarcasm
  - Use direct and clear language
  - *Ex.* Do not **hit Adam**
  - **Instead:** Tell them what they should be doing, or redirect to schedule.
What is Communication?

The ability to use symbols (spoken words, nonverbal gestures, pictures, etc.) and to convey to or receive a feeling or idea from another person.

Messages can be conveyed via
- Speech
- Sign language
- Written words
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Braille
- Signs or symbols
- Body movement
When the function of the behavior is deemed to be communicative, teach an alternative communicative response that serves the same function.

Communication interventions need to be individualized.

Non-verbal children with ASD also fail to compensate for ineffective communicative attempts (they need to be taught).

This is why we tend to see increased behaviors related to communication difficulties.

Student behavior at St. Anthony (stats)
Interventions should target functional, spontaneous communication

Interventions should provide communication skills instruction across settings

Active engagement in intensive intervention with many learning opportunities

NRC, 2001
Supporting strategies

Increase active engagement:
- Allow student to initiate or lead interaction
- Use motivating learning materials (special interests, tangible reinforcers)

Structure learning setting to promote understanding:
- Physical boundaries
- Visual supports
- Clear task organization

Plan for data collection:
- Systematic system for tracking and analyzing

Communication:
- Share intervention data
- Anecdotal reports in all settings
- Engage all in problem solving
Strategies to facilitate communication

➢ Ensure that a communication system is in place (written, photos, visual representation, iPad apps, PECS, objects)
➢ Use visual schedules and supports (BoardMaker, photographs, written words, first/then, consequence maps, social stories, modeling)
➢ Use clear, concise language
➢ Allow processing time
➢ Provide social scripts for spoken language
➢ Using visuals to support communication is a helpful and successful strategy for all students with ASD despite level of functioning and ability.
Supporting Communication

Visuals:
- Written
- Photos
- Visual representation
- PCS/PECS
- Visual schedules
- Social stories ™
- Social scripts
- Self-modelling

iPad applications:
- First Then Visual Schedule (HD)
- Choiceworks
- Sounding Board
- SPEAKall!
- Proloquo2go
- Touchchat
- LAMP
Picture exchange communication system (PECS)

PECS was designed for children with ASD and other social-communication deficits who have limited or no functional communication. There are six specific phases:

- I Physically assisted exchange
- II Expanding spontaneity
- III Picture discrimination
- IV Building sentence structure
- V Responding to questions
- VI Responsive and spontaneous commenting
Phase 1: teaching the Physically Assisted Request

- Gather or identify a selection of items that are favorable for the individual
- Ensure that training takes place across many different daily routines and activities (settings).
- The request is prompted by physically interrupting the learners reach toward the desired item and redirecting the learner to touch the picture symbol instead.
- Do not provide verbal prompts
- The learner is immediately rewarded with the item after the exchange.
Several iPad applications designed to facilitate its use as a communication system.

Providing augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for people who have difficulty speaking.

Customize applications to needs of student.

iPads are inexpensive in comparison to other devices.

Portable.

Studies show that spoken language will still increase when using AAC devices.

Ideal for students to have understanding and be able to use both high and low tech communication systems. (low tech - PECS, high tech - iPads).
iPad Tips

❖ Use a clear voice with minimal background noise
❖ Have capable students verbalize expressive and receptive communication matched with photos only when they are CALM.
❖ The iPad is their “voice” therefore it should be with the student at all times.
Visual Schedules

➢ For receptive communication and increasing student independence. Excellent for transitions, building routines and waiting skills

➢ $16.99
➢ Teacher and/or parent created
➢ Easy to create individual schedules for activities and easy to manipulate schedule
➢ Unlimited amount of activities available to enter for each schedule, built in timer, able to back up schedules through drop box
➢ Suitable for any age
➢ List of steps for small activities (tie shoes, locker, chores, routines)
➢ Personalized audio and photos
For receptive communication and increasing student independence. Excellent for transitions, building routines and waiting skills

$7.99

Has options for schedules, waiting, feelings, social story-esque feel
Built in timers, can be backed up on itunes.
Can only have a limited number of pictures for each page, would need several schedules to complete one day of activities.
Animated but has ability to enter in own photos and personalized audio
Communication apps: Expressive

➢ Each communication system should be created individually and catered to fit the program, needs, and goals of each student.
➢ Apps MAY require a large amount of teacher/parent set up and maintenance.
➢ Many students require adult support when learning how to use the applications. Similar to PECS training/hierarchy of prompting.
➢ Start students out by offering choice boards for preferred activities or foods (very few options).
➢ Increase options (food items, break choices, bathroom needs, school staff, home requests, family, outing requests, feelings, etc.) as students begin to request independently and understand its function (requesting or communicating appropriately will get me what I want, or get a response).
Sounding Board
- No cost
- Create unlimited choice boards
- Sounding board is a good place to start as it is free
- Personalized audio and photos

Proloquo2go
- $299.99+
- Advanced, works great for students who can read and write.
TouchChat

➢ $400.00, typically goes on sale twice a year for half price.
➢ Can add personalized audio and own photos.
➢ Easily customized to fit the needs of a variety of students and levels.
➢ Communication vs. Basic Requesting and choice boards.
➢ Core vocabularily and modelling communication.
➢ Hiding Vocabulary.
➢ We will discuss touchchat further in our small groups as this is the application we are primarily using for expressive communication.
Tips: Guided ACCESS

➢ Guided Access: Teachers are able to lock iPad on specific apps, to restrict students from leaving desired communication apps. (Instructions on how to enable this feature can be found in the Resource Guide).
➢ Protective durable iPad case
➢ Backing up FTVS HD in dropbox, and Choiceworks on itunes, TouchChat can also be backed up.
Professional and Parental Attitudes

➢ Exploring parental and professional attitudes on ipad use - results showed favorable attitudes towards wanting to use these devices as a tool for communication for students with ASD.
➢ Technology related anxiety was identified as most significant predictor of attitudes for both parents and professionals.
➢ Training or professional development in the use of iPads for professionals working with children with ASD may increase confidence and utilization of applications.
Choosing the right app for your student

Current research indicates there are five important considerations for evaluating what app. is best for your students.

➢ The ability to customize the application
➢ The motor skills the student will need to operate the system
➢ The resources and time needed for the intervention
➢ The research or evidence based practices behind the application
➢ The cost of using the device and application
Instructions on how to program guided access, TouchChat, Sounding Board, First Then Visual Schedule, and Choiceworks

AAC Does Not Hinder Natural Speech Development

Family Centered Approach to AAC

Using an AAC Device at Home

AAC Camp

We will now work in small groups to provide the opportunity to work alongside your child’s teacher to discuss the communication programs being used to support your child, and discuss any concerns, with a focus on TouchChat.
iPad Apps in Early Intervention and School-Based Practice

LAUREN BOUVAT, MOT, ANDREW J. KANGAS, MOT, AND CHRISTY SZCZECH MOSER, PhD, OTR, FAOTA
Occupational Therapy Department, Concordia University, Mequon, WI

The use of iPads as a therapeutic tool in occupational therapy practice has become increasingly prominent in helping children with disabilities (Amerih, 2013). The iPad, along with various applications (apps), has been and continues to be used as an intervention method to help individuals who have deficits and/or limitations in communication, handwriting, motor skills (both fine- and gross-motor), coordination, visual perception, cognition, activities of daily living, and to improve participation in academics (Amerih, 2013). The iPad became commercially available in 2010 and, since then, has been used with children with a variety of disabilities ranging from those with communication deficits (to provide an alternative communication method) to those with autism (to teach basic life skills; Hager, 2010).

Apple’s app store has 500,000 apps available for download, with an increasing amount of these apps being developed for young children (More & Travers, 2013). As the use of the iPad/apps as a technology device for those with disabilities is expanding on a daily basis, it was a challenge to capture the best, the latest, and the most useful information. We very much enjoyed the challenge, and hope you find the following review beneficial!


* POPARD (Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders)
  www.autismoutreach.ca (resources and then apps)

* Autism Speaks
  www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/pedagogy_wheel.pdf

* Glenwood Autism & Behavioral Health Center