



# Communication Strategies for the Nonverbal Students

Practical Strategies for Teachers and  
Speech/Language Pathologists



# What is Augmentative Communication?

- ◆ A system that builds on existing communication skills, but gives the student another way of communicating.
- ◆ Enables participation, encourages inclusion, fosters independence.

# Which Children Will Benefit?

- ◆ Physically Impaired
- ◆ Language Delayed/Apraxic
- ◆ Pre-Verbal and Emergent Verbal
- ◆ Autistic
- ◆ Developmentally Delayed
- ◆ Mentally Handicapped

# Benefits of AAC?

- ◆ Increases output
- ◆ Improves understanding
- ◆ Facilitates speech development
- ◆ Improves behavior
- ◆ Increases participation
- ◆ Concrete
- ◆ Multisensory
- ◆ Motivating
- ◆ Social



# Myths About AAC

- ◆ Students won't learn to speak.
- ◆ AAC is done only with the SLP.
- ◆ High tech is better than low tech.
- ◆ Students don't need training.
- ◆ There is no funding available.
- ◆ Students will be self-motivated.



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# Barriers Affecting AAC

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- ◆ Opportunity
- ◆ Policy
- ◆ Practice
- ◆ Attitude
- ◆ Knowledge



# Vocabulary Selection

- ◆ Day Mapping
- ◆ Varied Settings
- ◆ Joint Effort Between Home, School & Student

# Symbol Selection

- ◆ Objects
- ◆ Object Representation
- ◆ Photos
- ◆ Colored Drawings
- ◆ B & W Drawings
- ◆ Symbol + Word
- ◆ Word
- ◆ Size
- ◆ Color
- ◆ Type of Picture

# Device Hierarchy

- ◆ Eye Gaze
  - ◆ Calendar Box
  - ◆ Single Target
  - ◆ 2, 4, 8 Target
  - ◆ Variable Targets
- ◆ MCB
    - Individual board
    - Activity based
    - Choice making



# Engineering the Classroom

- ◆ Day Schedule
- ◆ Adapted Books
- ◆ Visual Strategies
- ◆ Props

# LAT Screening Test

- ◆ Administered to every student considered for AAC.
  - School SLP will obtain kit from lead.
  - Send results to LAT Referral Coordinator.
  - Team reviews for system trial if device is needed.



# LAT Team

- ◆ Local Assistive Technology Specialists
  - LAT Referral Coordinator
  - Lourdes Day, Technology Specialist
  - Lorrie Prince, Speech/Language Pathologist
  - Judy Sanders, Occupational Therapist
  - Joanne Stidham, Speech/Language Pathologist



# Goals

- ◆ Augmentative Goals available on Excent
- ◆ Responsibility of Classroom Teacher
- ◆ SLP Role
  - Consult with teacher
  - Provide drill and practice with students receiving direct service



# Implementation



- ◆ Drill and Practice
- ◆ Functional Situations
- ◆ Motivating Activities
- ◆ Modeling
- ◆ System Trials
- ◆ Frequent Monitoring



# Conclusion

- ◆ Language, and the ability to communicate, are woven into every aspect of education.
- ◆ It is the responsibility of every educator to facilitate the communication process to ensure the success of all students.