

Accessing Literacy through Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC)

Classroom instruction in the early elementary grades simultaneously develops children's oral language and literacy skills. This presents additional challenges, however, if the student is either non-verbal or sufficiently low verbal to necessitate use of an Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) system. Meaningful literacy experiences for these children require:

- access to Connecticut's general education curricular standards and high quality general education instruction;
- interaction with peers in a grade-appropriate general education class;
- accommodations and/or modifications;
- specialized instruction interfacing oral language and literacy through AAC and other forms of assistive technology (AT); and
- joint responsibility among the professionals providing collaborative instruction, supports, and services, including the student's general and special education teachers, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, and others.

This professional development opportunity involves a multi-year commitment to developing, implementing, and sustaining literacy instruction in general education for a student with a significant disability (e.g., intellectual disability, autism, multiple disabilities, etc.). It includes two days of training and technical assistance provided by Sherry L. Purcell, Ph.D. and Debbie Grant, M.A., authors of the *Using Assistive Technology to Meet Literacy Standards* series (2002, 2004, 2007), and facilitated by CSDE and SERC consultants. Day One will introduce the essential elements of AAC/AT and literacy, focusing on IDEA requirements and shared professional roles. Team members will present a case study of their student, consider Connecticut's curricular standards, and examine their district's literacy program and the array of literacy materials used in general education. Participants will then task analyze the essential cognitive, communication, and motor skills these require, focusing on the individual needs of their student. Low-tech literacy tools will be demonstrated and technical assistance, customized for each team and focused on designing instruction and materials, will be provided.

During the interval between Days One and Two, teams will implement the communication/literacy instruction they developed, utilizing technical assistance via email as needed. Participants reconvening for a second day of training from Dr. Purcell and Ms. Grant will reflect on their student's progress, problem solve solutions to instructional barriers, and revise or expand their plan. Additional AAC/AT tools will be explored.

During subsequent years, teams will be asked to sustain their student in meaningful general education literacy instruction and share their successes and challenges with colleagues in their school, district, or to Connecticut's broader educational community.

In order to increase general education access and improve learning outcomes for students with significant disabilities in grades 1, 2, or 3, team members will:

- analyze an individual student's strengths and areas of concern relative to communication and literacy skills;
- collaboratively design and implement literacy instruction in general education using AAC/AT systems; and
- revise or refine methodology, supports, and services as needed in ensuing school years to sustain programming.

Please see the application form on the next page. The team configuration **must** include the student's general education teacher (grades 1, 2, or 3 only), special education teacher, and speech-language pathologist. The other two team members may be an occupational therapist, literacy coordinator/consultant, ELL teacher, physical therapist, administrator, AT coordinator, or district inclusion facilitator. The application process requires submission of a case study with the team application. Please include either a copy of the student's most recent IEP (with confidential information deleted) or describe the information on the IEP (student's grade level, exceptionality, strengths, areas of concern, goals and objectives, time with non-disabled peers, special education supports and services [including AAC and AT], and other pertinent information).

(Continued on next page.)

Dates, Time, Location:

Wednesday, October 24, 2007
and
Tuesday, January 29, 2008
9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Crowne Plaza, Cromwell

Presenters:

Debbie Grant, M.A., CCC
Santa Barbara County Education Office

Sherry L. Purcell, Ph.D., CCC
Los Angeles Unified School District

Audience: Grades 1-3

Eight (8) teams of five (5) members, including a general educator, special educator, speech-language pathologist, and two (2) additional professionals (see description at bottom of page)

CEUs: 2.5

Includes:
Full Attendance (Both Sessions)
Literacy Plan Implementation

Registration Fee:

\$200.00 per team
(Fee includes a copy of the presenters' text.)
Payable to Rensselaer at Hartford
Payment is due prior to the session upon confirmation of participation.

Questions/ Special Needs:

Contact: April Judd
Education Services Specialist
(860) 632-1485, ext. 282

Register By:

October 17, 2007



www.ctserc.org



Integrated Student Support Services Initiative

Accessing Literacy through Augmentative Alternate Communication (AAC) *(continued)*

Team Application Form



Please return application and case study information to SERC, ISSS Initiative, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457-1520. Participants will be selected on a first come, first served basis with regional consideration. Applicants will receive written confirmation regarding participation shortly after the registration closing date. The registration fee is payable upon notice of acceptance.

(08-23-007 – FN/ISSS)aj

(Please print clearly.)

District/Region _____ School _____ Student's Grade Level _____

Contact Person _____ Work Phone (____) _____ Email _____

In which region do you receive/provide services? __ACES // __CES // __CREC // __EASTCONN // __ED CONNECTION // __LEARN

Release time is approved for the team: Administrator's Signature is required _____

General Education Teacher _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Work Phone (____) _____ Email (Please Print.) _____

Special Education Teacher _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Work Phone (____) _____ Email (Please Print.) _____

Speech-Language Pathologist _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Work Phone (____) _____ Email (Please Print.) _____

Professional #1 _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Work Phone (____) _____ Email (Please Print.) _____

Professional #2 _____ Home Phone (____) _____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Work Phone (____) _____ Email (Please Print.) _____