AAC Services: What is out there?

Kati Skulski, M.S., CCC-SLP
Workshop Objectives

- #1: Options for service and funding
- #2: Obtaining an AAC evaluation
- #3: AAC Service Models
- #4 AAC Competencies
- #5: Ideas for AAC Intervention
Objective #1

- Options for funding
- Where can I get services?
Options for funding/services

- Insurance
- School Districts
- Private Pay
- Regional Centers
- Non-profit/For-profit centers
- Any others?
Regional Centers

- “Regional centers shall be the payor of last resort after all other public sources for payment have been reviewed to determine if a referral shall be made by the service coordinator and/or the parent. Referrals may include but not be limited to California Children Services, Medi-Cal, or other public agencies that may have responsibility for payment.” Section 52109 - Title 17 Section (www.dds.ca.gov - California Department of Developmental Services)

- After the age of 3 years, services transition from RC to the school system.

- “Eligibility is established through diagnosis and assessment performed by regional centers.” (www.dds.ca.gov)
Educational vs. Medical

- Educational Necessity
  - “Educational necessity is usually claimed when access to communication services and supports enables an individual to participate in and benefit from public education.” (ASHA: NJC, 2014)
  - “Devices and services are deemed educationally necessary when they allow the child to benefit from a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.” (ASHA: NJC, 2014)

- Medical Necessity
  - “Treatment would be medically necessary when the diagnosed condition (for example, cerebral palsy, brain injury, apraxia, ALS) impairs the individual's ability to communicate effectively.” (ASHA: NJC, 2014)
Medical Necessity

- Insurance

- Required Benefit:
  - Speech Generating Device (SGD)
  - Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

- Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) report is completed following Medicare procedures

- Individual demonstrates use of and medical need for SGD

- Insurance companies often have differing qualifications for obtaining an SGD
Objective #1 Overview

- Organizations and institutions where services may be provided
- Medical vs. Educational necessity
- Insurance
  - DME benefit
Objective #2

- Obtaining an AAC evaluation
When to consider an AAC evaluation...

- Speech and language disorders which may necessitate AAC may include but are not limited to (Buzolich, 2006)
  - Dysarthria
  - Apraxia (aka Dyspraxia, Developmental Apraxia of Speech)
  - Aphonia
  - Aphasia
  - Aglosia
  - Developmental Language Disorder
  - Other Developmental Articulation Disorder
  - Mixed Expressive/Receptive Language Disorder
When to request an AAC evaluation...

- Documented evidence of:
  - Moderate-Severe expressive speech/language disorder(s)
  - Expressive/Receptive Gap: understanding more than you can say
  - Limited speech improvement with therapy
  - Frustration
Who can administer an AAC evaluation...

- Medicare National Coverage Guideline (2001)
  - Licensed Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)

- Internal Funding with School Districts
  - AT Specialist
  - Licensed SLP

http://aac-rerc.psu.edu/index.php/pages/show/id/26
Objective #2 Overview

- Speech/Language Disorders
- Indicators AAC is warranted
- Who can provide an AAC Evaluation
Objective #3

- The Collaborative Team
- AAC Service Models
  - Direct Service
  - Indirect Service
  - Consultation
  - Push-In
  - Inclusion Setting
The Collaborative Team

- Essential for AAC success
- Team meetings and open communication
- Includes:
  - User
  - Family Members
  - Teacher
  - AAC Specialist
  - SLP
  - OT
  - And more…

- Role Delineation and Overlap
  - Roles are assumed by various team members
  - These roles are shared with team members (i.e. OT shares access with team)
  - Team members implement roles to ensure success (e.g. SLP implements access with SGD)

AAC Services: Direct Service

- **Direct Service**: work 1:1 with the student

- **Indirect Services**:  
  - Program/create communication systems  
  - Collaborate with the educational team  
  - Provide training  
  - Modify the language of curriculum

- **Group Services**: work with more than one student (communication group)

- **Consultation Model**: provide support to and train direct service providers

Adapted from: http://www.asha.org/njc/faqs-idea.htm
Objective #4

AAC goals and objectives are based on Janice Light’s Communication Competency Model (Light, 1989)

- Operational Competence
- Strategic Competence
- Social Competence
- Linguistic Competence
Operation Competence (Light, 1989)

- Skills required to operate and use AAC
  - Turn device on
  - Activate the message window/buttons
  - Navigate a SGD
  - Use a SGD to access a phone or computer
  - Access a SGD
  - Make gestures/signs
  - Etc.
Strategic Competence (Light, 1989)

- Strategies to facilitate communication
  - Communication rate
  - Access vocabulary not in system
  - Manage communication breakdowns
  - Utilize various AAC systems for various activities/environments
  - Etc.
Social Competence (Light, 1998)

- Use of AAC systems to communicate wants, needs, thoughts, questions, knowledge etc. to others
  - Expand communicative functions
  - Interact with others (familiar and unfamiliar partners)
  - Increase communicative participation
  - Meet social communicative needs

- Video
Linguistic Competence (Light, 1998)

- Development of linguistic skills
  - Develop novel language use
  - Increase mean length utterance
  - Reading, writing
  - Increase vocabulary repertoire
  - Etc.

- Video
Objective #4 Overview

- AAC Competencies
  - Operational
  - Strategic
  - Social
  - Linguistic
Objective #5

- Ideas for Intervention
  - Participation Plan
  - Language Rich/Total Communication Environment
  - Communication Groups
  - Partner Augmented Input

Intervention must be a motivating, supportive and positive experience
Participation Plan

- A plan developed by the educational team that delineates portions/activities of the day to various AAC systems.

- AAC system(s) to be used
- Communicative expectations
- Strategies used by staff (e.g. prompting)

Adapted from Light, J. & Binger, C. 1998
## Participation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/Time</th>
<th>Equipment/Tools</th>
<th>What Student Does</th>
<th>How staff facilitates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrival and Free Play 8:45-9:10</td>
<td>Free Play Activities Choice Board for Activities and ‘What I think’.</td>
<td>Upon arrival Ann will wave hello to classroom staff and peers. Ann will use the choice boards to choose a free play activity and comment on the activity.</td>
<td>Classroom staff will wave and say hello to Ann. They will wave hello to her to model waving. Staff will present Ann with the free play choice board to choose a free play activity. During or after completing an activity, staff will ask Ann what she thinks of the activity and provide her with the ‘What I think’ choice board to comment.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Morning Circle Time 9:15-9:30</td>
<td>TechTalk 8-peer overlay</td>
<td>Ann will use her TechTalk 8 to say ‘hello’ and to say her name and classmates name.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Song Choice Board</td>
<td>Staff will present Ann with the song choice board to choose a song.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage Ann and peers to greet everyone in the morning. Use Ann’s peer overlay in her TechTalk. Ann may require modeling and visual prompts to select the correct button.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ann will choose a song using the Song Choice Board.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language Rich/Total Communication Environments

- **Language Rich Environment**
  - Visual supports (environmentally placed icons, PECS; conversation scripts)
  - Avoid yes/no questions
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - Word walls
  - Reading aloud
Language Rich/Total Communication Environments

- **Total Communication**: to make use of many means of communication depending on the abilities and needs of the individual
  - Decreases frustration
  - Facilitates communicative success

Communication Groups

- 2-6 users
- AAC users and non-users

Encourage
- Communication
- Peer engagement
- Problem solving
- Learning
- Fun
Partner Augmented Input

- Using AAC systems when talking to a user
- Model using the AAC systems
- Use Partner Augmented Input to provide linguistic models:
  - Ask questions
  - Comment
  - Greet
  - Request

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Thanks!!

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References