



# T/TAC Bulletin

The Training and Technical Assistance Centers at Virginia Tech and Radford University

Spring 2001 Vol. 9, No. 3

## Changing Attitudes and Creating Opportunities for Real Communication

by Lora Kingma

We all use a variety of ways to get our messages across to others. We use gestures, facial expressions, speech, noises, and pictures to help others understand what we are talking about. We know that if we only used one of these methods that the probability of others understanding us fully is minimized. Many of our students use various methods to communicate too, but may need the additional benefit of an augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) system to supplement their communication. Particularly when we have students in inclusive settings, the use of an AAC system becomes even more of a necessity. These students have lots of folks to talk to, more opportunities for communication, and there are many things to talk about. But the question is - *how do peers perceive those students who use AAC to communicate?*

A recent study at Illinois State University, Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, researched that very question. Their study focused on what factors positively affected peer's attitudes towards students using AAC. One of the primary goals of providing students with an AAC device should be to enhance their ability to participate with peers. The researchers at Illinois State attempted to determine the attitudes of peers towards those who use AAC so that teachers and other professionals could better plan participation activities. Their

findings give us many things to consider.

One of the main factors in positively influencing non-disabled students' attitudes towards students who use AAC is *exposure* to children with disabilities! Those students in inclusive settings who were familiar with students with disabilities reported more positive attitudes than those who were not familiar.

Another factor in influencing positive attitudes towards students who use AAC is an important one - *the length of the message recorded in the device*. How often do we see articles, go to workshops and to conferences where the presenters stress the importance of the messages we record into devices! We play an extremely important role when we program AAC devices to help our students get their messages across. But now research shows that even the length of the message is a determining factor in whether non-disabled peers think positively about the students we serve.

Think about it though - it would seem only logical that when we talk to someone, we are having a dialogue consisting of phrases and sentences. We do not, however, talk using only one word at a time. How would you respond to someone if all they said to you were "Eat!" or "Bathroom."? The conversation cannot continue

unless the listener has more information on which to respond. When programming devices, keep in mind that we are helping a student carry on a conversation. Do not forget to include those open-ended statements, questions and humor when programming

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Funding provided to the T/TAC at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Radford University through a grant from the Virginia Department of Education #883-SY98TAC.

devices. The research suggests that teaching the student to produce phrases of 2-4 words on an AAC device might be a factor that could increase the positive nature of other children's attitudes. As teachers and therapists also need to monitor the attitudes of non-disabled peers carefully to make sure that our students who use AAC are as accepted by their peers as is possible.

The communication partner of a student who uses AAC must be supportive of their efforts to communicate. The more supportive that person is, the more effective that person will be. Pat Mirenda, Ph.D. gives us five basic principles to follow when we are communicating with a person who uses AAC.

1. *Everyone* is capable of communicating and has something to say. There is no such person as one who cannot communicate.
2. The key to communication is *opportunity*. Provide opportunities like letting students make reasonable choices; exchange information with others and have social interactions; support students to make friends and build social networks.
3. Be a good *listener*. No matter how well a person communicates, if no one listens, then what's the point?
4. Assume that students can understand *everything* you say. Modeling good communication and respecting students even when they aren't able to communicate well are important communication principles that are often overlooked.
5. *Adjust* your communication style as necessary. You may need to use words that are easier to understand, use shorter sentences or fewer words, or use pictures/signs to make your message clearer. Of course, the methods you use will depend on the individual student.

Use these guiding principles whenever you plan ways to provide communication supports. Build on the student's message length and continue to work on all factors that will increase the positive attitudes of peers. The benefits will be numerous both for you and your students.

### References:

Beck, A., Kingsbury, K., Neff, A., & Dennis, M. (2000). Influence of Length of Augmented Message on Children's Attitudes Toward Peers Who Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 16, 239-249.

Mirenda, P. (1999). Augmentative and alternative communication techniques in inclusive classrooms. *Disability Solutions*, 3, 1-9.

**Please share**  
the *T/TAC Bulletin*!  
Route it, pass it to a  
friend, post it on a  
bulletin board!  
There are at least 2  
copies in every school.  
Let others know that  
T/TAC services are  
available to educators.

## T/TAC Technology Network: Destination Success

June 21-22, 2001

Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center

### Who should attend?

Teachers, therapists, service providers, administrators, and paraprofessionals who want to learn more about using technology to support students with disabilities or students who are at-risk for school failure should plan to attend this conference. Information presented will be relevant to all age groups, pre-K through post secondary.

### Topics include:

Using voice recognition software, portable word processors in your classroom, *Kidspiration*, what's new in augmentative communication, writing IEPs to include assistive technology, and much more!

### Share your talents and knowledge!

Do you have an assistive technology skill or technology success story that you would like to share with others? *T/TAC Technology Network – Destination Success* would be a great way for you to share your knowledge with others. A Call for Proposals can be found online at: <http://tac.elps.vt.edu/ttactechtechnology/proposals/tactech.html>. Don't wait! Submit your application now. Deadline for proposals is March 16.

**Registration information is coming your way soon!**

# Characteristics of Children with Apraxia of Speech

by Sharon Getz, [Apraxia.org](http://Apraxia.org)

While there are many reasons that some children fail to develop age-appropriate speech and/or language skills, the following are characteristics of children with apraxia of speech (not every child will have all characteristics.)

- Receptive ability far exceeds expressive ability (child understands at a much higher level than he or she is able to express)
- Limited vocalization and sound play during infancy (parents often describe their child as a “quiet baby”)
- Limited repertoire of consonant sounds
- Possible difficulty in feeding during infancy
- Vowel errors
- May have developed elaborate nonverbal or gestural communication
- While repetition of sounds in isolation may be adequate, connected speech is more unintelligible than one would expect on the basis of single-word articulation test results. (Although the child may be able to produce sounds perfectly by themselves, he or she may make errors on these same sounds when combining them in longer units like words or phrases.)
- Initial and final consonant deletion, cluster reduction, syllable omissions, substitutions (speech errors in children with apraxia of speech are often referred to as inconsistent or unpredictable)
- Increase in errors with increase length of utterance, including problems producing multisyllabic words
- Voicing errors (i.e.: Some sounds are produced very similarly except one may use the vocal cords—“voiced”—and one may not—“voiceless.” For example, “P” and “B” are produced similarly. “P” is a voiceless consonant and “B” is a voiced consonant; “B” uses the vocal cords. Children with apraxia of speech can confuse or substitute these.)
- Errors vary with the complexity of articulatory adjustment. (Articulatory adjustments means the extent to which the articulators—lips, tongue, etc.— must shift between sounds in a word or phrase. A word like “baby” does not require much adjustment. A word like “dog” requires more adjustment.)
- Groping, trial and error behavior, struggling to deliver speech. The child in this struggle may make sound prolongations, repetitions, or silent posturing. (For instance, the mouth appears to “grope” or be searching for positioning. Or the child may use short sounds or words repeatedly, using the time to try and find the motor position for the next sound or word he or she wants to make. An example: “I, well, well, well, can’t do it.” This is not the same as stuttering. Silent posturing means a child’s mouth may move silently while he or she is searching for proper motor position.)
- Slow rate and incorrect sequencing, called diadochokinesis. (For example: ask the child to say “pah, tah, kah” three times, or a word such as “buttercup”. The child may get the sequence right the first time, but on subsequent attempts it will break down and the rate will be slowed.)
- Prosodic disturbances. Prosody is the melody of speech and includes rate, stress, pauses, and intonation. (Children with apraxia of speech may speak too slow or too fast. They may not put stress on the correct syllables. Their voices may sound monotone.)
- Oral apraxia sometimes, but not always, can accompany verbal apraxia. Oral apraxia is the impaired ability to, on command, perform nonspeech tasks like puffing out cheeks, licking lips, protruding tongue, puckering lips, etc.
- Apraxia of speech may occur in isolation or in combination with other speech and language problems. The incidence of “pure” apraxia of speech is reportedly low. Most typically, children will exhibit a number of problems that contribute to their difficulty with speech.
- Other “soft” neurological signs. Sometimes these children are described as awkward, uncoordinated, or clumsy. They may have difficulty organizing and coordinating fine motor skills too. Some parents report that their child may have sensory problems, poor body awareness, dislike toothbrushing, or seem sensitive to touch in their facial area.

## References:

- Hall, P. (1989) The occurrence of developmental apraxia of speech in a mild articulation disorder: a case study, *Journal of Communication Disorders* 22 , 265 - 276.
- Helfrich-Miller, K. (1996). “Diagnosis of children with apraxia of speech,” presentation at Apraxia of Speech in Children: Clinical Challenges, Pittsburgh, PA, November.
- Hodge, M. (1994). Assessment of developmental apraxia of speech: a rationale. *Clinics in Communication Disorders*, 4 (2), 91-101.

*Continued on page 4*

## Early Childhood Corner: Knock-Knock... Wanna play?...

By Selina Flores

Many of our children in early childhood special education by this time of the year have become competent labelers and requestors. Most of their communicative interactions are primarily with the adults in the class, which is exactly what we've taught them to do. Reviewing IEP goals and objectives, more often than not, they identify benchmarks that can be measured and are found on most developmental assessments and curriculums. For example will label primary colors; will label 10 common objects; will be able to request food, drink, or activity, etc. Now that they have this strategy under their belts, so to speak, consider expanding the children's communication skills with each other.

An early childhood program is an ideal setting to facilitate opportunities for children to practice and learn how to invite an agemate to play with them; tell "knock-knock" jokes; tell each other "secrets;" or ask the whereabouts of a special friend, family member, or teacher, etc. Most programs give children choices regarding in which activity or center they are to play; consider having the child invite a friend to the center with them. Teach the children what to say, how to say it, and follow through with the invitation.

You can introduce this activity during circle, model the language and appropriate actions, and then have the children practice the process. Children with more verbal skills can practice their pragmatic skills. Children whose communication is supported by pictures, signing, or a voice output device can practice the same process using their individualized system. This is a terrific opportunity to teach everyone what a specific picture or sign means so everyone can meaningfully interact with each

other. Of course there are other teachable moments in small groups, during transitions, or at the end of an activity where you can rehearse the process with the children and then facilitate the opportunity for them to practice the skills.

Many of our children in early childhood special education programs have difficulty with this communication dance. The child may not know how to initiate an appropriate greeting or need, how to wait for a response or give a response, or how to repeat or continue the interaction in order to get their message understood. We need to expand our roles as facilitators of opportunities and supporters of the communication dance to enhance the social communication skills of all our children.

Don't forget to checkout the T/TAC library online at <http://tac.elps.vt.edu> for resources to assist you with additional ideas.



## Cancellation Announcement

*The Early Childhood Partnership Conference*, previously scheduled for July 26-27, 2001 in Roanoke has been cancelled.

A major statewide conference on family literacy with a focus on both educators and parents is planned for a future date. Watch for information about this exciting new family literacy initiative.

## Families Are Special Too! Conference

**March 30-31, 2001**

### Williamsburg

For families with young children receiving early intervention or early childhood special education services

### Keynote Speakers:

Carmen Rioux-Bailey and Clare Talbert

### Tentative workshop topics

include language development, self-determination, inclusion, technology, assessment, temperament, challenging behavior, and more!

### For information contact:

Jaye Harvey, VaDEC President, at 540/831-5313 or [jharvey@radford.edu](mailto:jharvey@radford.edu)

Susan Petersen, VaDEC Past President at 703/218-5446 or [rspnet@earthlink.net](mailto:rspnet@earthlink.net)

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Rosenbek, J. & Wertz, R. (1972). A review of fifty cases of developmental apraxia of speech. *Language, Speech and Hearing Service in Schools* 3, 23 - 33.

Strand, E. (1995). Treatment of motor speech disorders in children. *Seminars in Speech and Language*, (16) 2, 126 - 139.

Velleman, S. *Developmental verbal dyspraxia: general information for parents* <http://www.cs.amherst.edu/~djv/DVD.html>



# Consider the Role of Language and Story...in Poverty

by Deb Schwabe

Ruby Payne, in her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, devotes a chapter to the role of language and story in understanding poverty. Her detailed description of registers of language (formal vs. casual), patterns of discourse, and story structure emphasizes that many of the key issues in schools and the work place are “related to these three patterns that often are different in poverty than they are in middle class.” (p 42)

Formal register is explained as the standard sentence syntax and word choice of work and school. It has complete sentences and specific word choice. Casual register on the other hand is described as the language between friends and is characterized by a 400-800 word vocabulary. Word choice is general, not specific. Conversation is often dependent upon non-verbal assists and sentence syntax is often incomplete. Payne discusses how some students from minority groups and poverty do not have access to formal register at home and in fact cannot use formal register—the significant impact on these students is that formal tests, job applications and job interviews are all conducted in the formal register. Payne describes the ability to use formal register as a “hidden secret of the middle class.” (p. 43). When students are asked to move from the casual register to the formal register, it is incumbent upon teachers to direct/teach the formal register. A list of suggestions for schools and teachers appears at the end of this article.

In the formal register discourse pattern the speaker or writer gets straight to the point. In the casual register discourse, the speaker or writer goes in a round about fashion to get to the point. Understanding this difference may be key to successful parent-

teacher relationships. When teachers, using the formal register discourse pattern, get right to the point, parents, particularly those from poverty, may feel this directness is rude and shows a lack of caring. These same parents may need to beat around the bush first. (p. 45).

Story structure in the formal register has a beginning and moves along in chronological order to the end. “The most important part of the story is the plot” (p. 46). In the “casual register story structure begins with the end or the part with the most emotional intensity. The story is told in vignettes, with audience participation in between. The story ends with a comment about the character and his/her value. The most important part of the story is the characterization.” (p. 46)

“Cognitive studies indicate that story structure is a way that the brain stores memories.” (p.49) The orderly sequencing of events in the formal register helps develop the cognitive skills of problem solving and inference. By contrast, the casual register story structure underscores thinking patterns that indicate episodic, random memory.

Ruby Payne, in her chapter, “The Role of Language and Story,” concludes with the following:

What can schools do to address casual register, discourse patterns and story structure?

Because there is such a direct link between achievement and language, it must be addressed. The following suggestions from Ruby Payne are not exhaustive, but rather a place to begin.

1. Have students write in casual register, then translate into formal register (To get examples of casual register down on paper, ask them

to write the way they talk.)

2. Establish as part of a discipline plan a requirement that students learn how to express their displeasure in formal register and therefore not be reprimanded.
3. Use graphic organizers to show patterns of discourse.
4. In the classroom, tell stories both ways. Tell the story using the formal-register story structure, and then tell the story with the casual-register structure. Talk about the stories: how they stay the same, and how they're different.
5. Encourage participation in the writing and telling of stories.
6. Use stories in math, social studies, and science to develop concepts.
7. Make up stories with the students that can be used to guide behavior.

What does this information mean in the school or work setting?

- Formal register needs to be directly taught.
- Casual register needs to be recognized as the primary discourse for many students
- Discourse patterns need to be directly taught.
- Both story structures need to be used as a part of classroom instruction
- Discipline that occurs when a student uses the inappropriate register should be a time for instruction in the appropriate register.
- Students need to be told how much the formal register affects their ability to get a well-paying job. (p. 49-50)

## Reference

Payne, Ruby K. (1998) *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. Highlands, TX: RFT Publishing.

# Communicating an Introduction to the Reviewer

by Glenna Gustafson, Lora Kingma, and Leslie Daniel

A Student Introduction to the Reviewer is a required piece of evidence in the English entry of a Collection of Evidence (COE) for the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). The purpose of the Introduction to the Reviewer is for the student to introduce him or herself and describe the contents of the COE. The Introduction should be in the student's primary mode of communication. The student might write, dictate, collaborate with a peer without a disability, point at pictures, use sign language, answer yes/no questions, smile and frown, or raise their eyebrows. There needs to be clear involvement of the student in generating her or his own Introduction (p. 53).

Everyone needs an effective mode of communication. (The SOL detail ever increasing skills in oral language from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade for all students.) Communication is a vital skill in order to access any curriculum. For those students with less formal communication methods, ongoing instruction is needed to develop communicative skills. You don't have to be a speech therapist to teach and encourage communication skills! The requirement of the Introduction to the Reviewer in the VAAP has highlighted the necessity for the expansion of communication systems for all students. The Introduction is not meant to be a burden, but to encourage students to develop a formal, appropriate means of communication.

For those students who can write or speak verbally, creating an Introduction may not be difficult. Some students communicate via alternative or augmentative communication. Still other students may not have a formal mode of communication and use primarily non-verbal communication. For these students generating an Introduction may seem

more complicated or even impossible. It's not impossible—every student communicates in some way. As teachers, parents and therapists our responsibility is to shape the student's appropriate communication skills.

For examples of Student Introductions see the VAAP Implementation Manual, p. 137-141. Following are examples of how some students might create Introductions for their COE.

## Daniel's Introduction

Daniel is 8 years old and communicates via directed eye gaze and a voice output communication device. He has a yes/no response.

The special educator made an overlay of each of Daniel's classmates using photographs from the yearbook. She arranged 4 of these at a time on an augmentative communication device. Daniel activated the device to ask another student to give a sentence or two for his introduction. The class assistant took a picture of Daniel as he activated the device. This continued until Daniel indicated he was satisfied with his introduction. The students' comments were audiotaped and the teacher prepared a script of the tape. Daniel later used directed eye gaze with the speech therapist to choose photos, taken throughout the year, to accompany the students' comments. The SLP made anecdotal data notes regarding this exchange. All of this is included as the Introduction to the Reviewer.

## Andrea's Introduction

Andrea is 10 years old, has a degenerative syndrome, uses a wheelchair for mobility, and has limited use of her hands. She experiences frequent seizure activity. Andrea communicates with directed eye gaze. She also uses non-verbal communication

such as smiling, and excited body movements to indicate agreement and pleasure, and holds her head down and her body still when she disagrees. She cries and has a sad expression when she is unhappy or uncomfortable.

Andrea's Introduction was a videotaped interview of Andrea and 5 peers (who had worked with her on group projects) regarding what is included in her COE. Andrea and her friends went through all the evidence that had been compiled. Andrea used directed eye gaze (with verbal prompting from her peers, such as "I worked with you on that") to choose which of her peers should speak next. Andrea smiled or frowned in response as the peer told something about the piece of evidence. If Andrea frowned at a particular description another student was asked to add to the introduction. The teacher prepared a script of this video sequence according to the protocols on pp. 151-156 of the *VAAP Implementation Manual*. The video and script became Andrea's Introduction to the Reviewer.

## Jesse's Introduction

Jesse is 19 years old. He communicates with 1-2 word phrases, gestures, some signs, and pointing at picture/word cards.

Initially the special education teacher laid out 3 pieces of evidence at a time that related to a core area and selected IEP goal. Jesse identified, by pointing, which activity he wanted included as a piece of evidence, then the teacher added relevant supporting documentation such as data sheets, captions, and structured observation notes. She also made notes of the manner in which Jesse selected his evidence. From there Jesse created his introduction to the reviewer by answering questions in structured

interviews with his father, older brother, and special educator. He used words, and some signs to indicate his meaning. Each interviewer expanded on Jesse's meaning and asked yes/no questions to ascertain their accuracy in depicting Jesse's Introduction. The results of the interviews were written down and reviewed with Jesse for his approval. The interview questions, Jesse's short answers, and the expanded final version were submitted as Jesse's Introduction to the Reviewer. This process was completed over a 3-day period, with 2 work sessions each day.

### Reference:

Virginia Department of Education & Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment (2000). *Virginia Alternate Assessment Program: Implementation manual*. Richmond.

## Autism Conference

**April 24, 2001, Roanoke**

The Autism Society of America Greater Roanoke Valley Chapter presents a full day conference in celebration of Autism Awareness Month

### Keynote Speaker

Dave Hamrick will speak about his personal experiences living with autism. Dave is currently a student at Christopher Newport University.

### Topics include

Person-centered planning, visual strategies, creating and using social stories, functional behavior assessments and positive behavior supports, and many more!

### For information contact:

Angie (540) 977-2701 or email IROXPRODUCTS@aol.com

## Facilitate Nonsymbolic Communication

by Diann Eaton

Everyone communicates even those individuals who seem to have no communication skills are communicating every day. These students may be communicating primarily through nonverbal and nonsymbolic means. It is important that individuals respond to a student's nonverbal communication consistently. Acknowledge their communication by providing them with a response that matches the intent. For example, if a student uses eye gaze to request an object, respond physically to assist them in getting the object and provide a natural verbal response such as, "I'll get that for you." Observe and note the student's reaction to your response. This will help you to determine if your interpretation of the message is accurate.

Getting to know a student's style of nonverbal communication takes careful listening and observing. It is helpful for teachers to maintain a communicative intent log as a way of documenting a student's communication. This involves making notes regarding the student's observable communicative attempts and the possible intent of their message. You might do this via a 2 column anecdotal "dictionary." For example someone might note and interpret: when she cries, fusses, looks/moves away she is protesting, rejecting, showing distress or displeasure. When she looks at what/whom she wants, reaches, moves towards, or makes a vocal sound, she is requesting an object or person's attention.

Follow the student's lead when you observe their communicative attempts. In *Learning Language and Loving It*, the author notes 4 ways to follow a child's lead:

- Imitate the child's action;
- Interpret the child's behavior as if it is purposeful and intentional;

- Comment verbally to the child's initiation;
- Join the play.

Additionally these practical suggestions (from an unknown author) can facilitate nonsymbolic communication.

1. Don't waste time working on prerequisites. (attending, eye contact, turning to sound)
2. Believe that "All Behavior Communicates" ... Look at what the student is doing in terms of the present situation. Form a hypothesis, and respond.
3. Communication training should be done in the natural environment.
4. Communication training should occur across the day.
5. Increase opportunities for communication. (provide choices / don't anticipate all needs)
6. Use a pairing of nonsymbolic and symbolic when communicating with a student who is nonsymbolic.
7. Use consistency in class routines.
8. Use time delay procedures.
9. Make sure each student has a way to indicate these functions: attention, request, reject/protest.
10. Be responsive. When a student communicates, stop what you're doing and listen. Interpret their nonsymbolic behaviors and respond in a sensitive manner.

### Reference

Weitzman, E. (1992). *Learning Language and Loving It: A guide to promoting children's social and language development in early childhood settings*. Hanen Centre Publication

# Bits and Bytes

by Glenna Gustafson

"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't being said." unknown

## Internet Resources for Communication

American Speech Language Hearing Association <http://www.asha.org/> The mission of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association is to promote the interests of and provide the highest quality services for professionals in audiology, speech-language pathology, and speech and hearing science, and to advocate for people with communication disabilities.

Speech Paths <http://www.speechpaths.com/> This website is dedicated to providing information to speech language pathologists and audiologists.

Speech Teach <http://www.speechteach.com/> This site is intended to be a resource for parents, college students of Speech/Language Pathology, and practicing Speech/Language Pathologists.

Speech and Language Disorders <http://www.mankato.msus.edu/dept/comdis/kuster2/splang.html#articulation> Links and resources to information about a wide variety of speech and language disorders.

Aided Simulation Overlays for Language <http://lserver.aea14.k12.ia.us/atteam/at/al.html> Pre-made overlays on a variety of topics that you can download for use with *Boardmaker* or *Picture It* software.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices <http://www.rit.edu/~easi/ak12/k12/k12adaptlog.html> A great overview of a variety of augmentative communication devices and links to obtain additional information about these devices.

AAC Intervention. Com <http://aacintervention.com/> Great hands-on ready to use information and resources! The mission of this company is to provide time-saving, easy-to-use, affordable intervention materials to support children and adults in their functional use of augmentative/alternative communication systems.

Creative Communicating <http://www.creative-comm.com/> Patti King-Debaun's own website with wonderful practical tips for augmentative communication. Sign up for the free monthly newsletter.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication Centers <http://aac.unl.edu/> A wonderful resource that provides you with tutorials on a variety of aug com devices, research updates, and vendor links.

## AT Team Training

Eight school divisions in our regions have been accepted for Assistive Technology Team Training. Each team will gain knowledge and skills in the use of AT by students with disabilities. The teams will participate in four major trainings, receive an assistive technology kit to use in their school division, and receive three graduate hours of credit from George Mason University for completing the training. Funding for this project was provided through a VDOE grant. Congratulations to the following Assistive Technology Teams:

Bristol City  
Carroll County  
Floyd County  
Franklin County  
Henry County  
Montgomery County  
Roanoke County  
Roanoke Regional Program

## What do you think?

What would you like to see in Bits and Bytes? Send an email to [gsgustaf@vt.edu](mailto:gsgustaf@vt.edu) with your comments and suggestions.

Bits and Bytes can be found online at <http://tac.elps.vt.edu/htmldocs/UsefulInformation/BitsBytes.shtml>

Share the Joy:  
Celebrate Learning  
Together

June 18-20, 2001, Radford

A Southwest Virginia Summer Institute on Special Education in High-Poverty Rural and Urban Schools for Students with Complex Needs

## Two strands offered

1. Classroom strategies

- Developing IEPs based on person centered planning
- Increasing and augmenting the student's means of communication
- Accessing the general education curriculum and environment
- Promoting meaningful interactions with peers without disabilities
- Teaching functional and age-appropriate activities
- Encouraging participation and independence with appropriate supports

OR

2. Positive Behavior Supports

- Assessing the message behind the behavior
- Developing positive plans
- Preventing behaviors
- Teaching replacement skills
- Developing non-aversive reactive strategies
- Reassessing and revising the PBS plan

Watch for brochures!

## Frequently Asked Questions

answered by Leslie Daniel and Lora Kingma

**Q.** Who should record messages on devices for a student with a disability?

**A.** It's best if someone of the same age and gender as the person using the device records messages. Therefore it's more appropriate for an 8 year old boy to record a message for another 8 year old boy, rather than a 38 year old female. However, it is better to have any voice than none at all.

**Q.** Will using an augmentative communication device, picture communication, or sign language decrease the chances for my student to acquire verbal speech?

**A.** No, the introduction of an alternative system correlates with improvement in natural speech. Children learn the power and intent of communication through effectively communicating regardless of the mode. Speech and alternative modes should be used side by side to enhance communication and comprehension.

**Q.** If the student has some speech, should I focus on that as the primary means of communication?

**A.** Not necessarily. Individuals will use the quickest and most accessible mode of communication. Vocal speech is much quicker and more readily understood by a wider audience than other forms. Trouble can develop when there is no formal mode of communication, or no fall back means of communication when words fail an individual. If a student doesn't have a means of getting his or her message across they may become withdrawn, or exhibit puzzling behaviors in order to communicate.

**Q.** Should I encourage speech at the same time as I am teaching a child to use an augmentative device?

**A.** Absolutely! Determine who can understand the child's speech and who has more difficulty, or in which environments the student has more difficulty getting their message across. Often family members and close friends understand the student's speech, while those who are less familiar with an individual find alternative communication necessary. Let environments and the audience help guide the type of speech language instruction offered in particular situations.

**Q.** Does my student need to have cause and effect skills before I introduce augmentative communication?

**A.** No, there are no cognitive or other prerequisites required for a child to learn to communicate. There is no way to accurately predict whether or not a child will learn to use augmentative communication. Systems must be individualized to maximize the student's strengths and to meet their needs. All children must be given the opportunity to learn effective communication skills. Communication skills should be age-appropriate, almost immediately effective, and offer choice and control.

### Virginia's Alternate Assessment Program Electronic Newsletter

In order to subscribe, please send the following command in the body of a message to: [subscribe@snider2.elps.vt.edu](mailto:subscribe@snider2.elps.vt.edu)

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## Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities Scaffolding Success

**March 2 & 3, 2001**

Holiday Inn: Tanglewood  
Roanoke, Virginia

### Onsite registration is welcomed!

Featuring 24 Workshops and Sessions on strategies to assist ALL students to be successful in the classroom!

### Keynote Speakers

Margo Mastropieri, Ph.D. & Tom Scruggs, Ph.D.

Co-authors *The Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Effective Instruction* (2000, Prentice Hall)

### Questions should be directed to:

Helen Barrier, VCLD Conference Chair at [Hbarr@vt.edu](mailto:Hbarr@vt.edu)

## Additional State Conferences

Virginia's Transition Forum  
March 7-9, 2001  
Williamsburg, VA  
Contact: [www.lions.odu.edu/~dnethert/forum2001index.htm](http://www.lions.odu.edu/~dnethert/forum2001index.htm)

43rd Annual SHAV Conference  
March 22-24, 2001  
Fredericksburg, VA  
Contact: (800) 487-4637

New Approaches to Natural Supports for Quality Jobs for Youth with Disabilities  
March 28, 2001  
Abingdon, VA  
Contact: Katie (877) 544-1918

New Horizons  
May 2, 2001  
Abingdon, VA  
Contact: Diane (540) 645-4745

## Call for Entries...Children's Artwork

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Student Services is seeking children's artwork for the 2001-2002 edition of the Family FUNdamentals Calendar. Early childhood educators are invited to submit their student's artwork for the calendar. Classrooms submitting winning entries will receive a \$50 prize for the purchase of instructional materials specifically for the preschool classroom.

### Eligibility requirements:

- Student must be between the ages of two and five and have an active IEP.
- A completed entry form signed by the teacher and a parent/guardian must accompany each entry.
- The following artwork guidelines must be followed:
- Original artwork completed during the current school year must be submitted (no photocopies). It should be completed in the classroom and may not be brought in from home.
- Artwork must be on sturdy, standard-size (no larger than 8.5" X 11") white paper.
- Media may be of a variety of colorful materials (markers, crayons, etc.).
- Please do not use tempera paint or neon colors since they are difficult to reproduce.
- Identification (artist's and teacher's names and school/program name) must appear on the reverse side of each piece submitted.
- Artwork should adhere to the theme assigned to the month for which it is submitted.
- Entries must be postmarked no later than May 1, 2001.
- Entries cannot be returned to the entrant (child or teacher).

### Categories

The calendar will focus on basic concepts. Each classroom may submit up to 13 entries (one for each month plus the cover). Entries may include several pieces from one child, several children, or the class as a whole. Fourteen winners will be selected from the following categories:

**September** Size: big, little/small, tall, heavy, fat, etc.

**October** Colors: basic colors associated with common objects/themes

**November** Prepositions: in/out; on/off, under; in back of; around; through; over/under

**December** Shapes: circle; square; triangle; rectangle; corner; crooked/straight lines

**January** Numbers: counting 1-10; more/most; none; another; enough; some; all

**February** Opposites: up/down; fast/slow; inside/outside; wet/dry

**March** Following directions: my turn/your turn; stop/go; same/not the same; choose one; front/back; wait; start/finish/done

**April** Time and distance: now/later; morning/daytime/night; yesterday/today/tomorrow; never; near/far

**May** Prepositions: in a row; first/last; at the front/in back of; in the middle; next to; in between

**June** Sequence: beginning/middle/end; first/next/last; before/after

**July** The senses: see(light/dark); hear (loud/soft); taste (sweet/salty/sour); feel (smooth/bumpy/hot/cold/goosey); smell (good/sweet, bad/yucky)

**August** More opposites: high/low; quiet/loud; soft/hard; happy/sad

### For an entry form, contact:

Andrea Lazzari  
2165 Kelly Ridge Road  
Richmond, VA 23233  
(for further information, e-mail amlazz@aol.com)

**If you are an ECSE provider and if you have not received a copy of this early childhood calendar in the past, and would like a copy, contact Selina Flores at the TTAC to be added to the mailing list.**

## Building Collaborative Partnerships for Children

This training will help local partners learn how to come together to use the state inter-agency agreement and its recommended practices to strengthen local agreements and ensure implementation.

### Content

Background on the Virginia State Interagency Agreement

Showcase of communities implementing recommended practices

Focus group discussion on key recommended practices

Process for upgrading local interagency agreements

### Who Should Attend

Special Education Administrators, Early Childhood Special Educators, Early Intervention Professionals, Head Start and Early Head Start staff, and others who provide services to young children with disabilities and their families

### Dates and Locations

March 1, 2001 Dumfries  
Registration cutoff February 8

April 5, 2001 Wakefield  
Registration cutoff March 8

May 3, 2001 Wytheville  
Registration cutoff April 10

### For more information

Lisa McKean 800-237-7273  
Fax 757-566-8710 [lisam@cdr.org](mailto:lisam@cdr.org)

### Cost

\$20 per person (includes lunch)  
No on-site registration  
Sorry we cannot offer refunds

## T/TAC Staff Directory

### Virginia Tech

*College of Human Resources and Education*

222 Lane Hall, Mail Stop 0254

Blacksburg, VA 24061

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*Department of Special Education*

Box 7006, Radford, VA 24142

(877) 544-1918 Locally (540) 831-5333 FAX: (540) 831-5124

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 Blacksburg, VA 24061

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The mission of Virginia's Training and Technical Assistance Centers is to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth–22 years) and children who have disadvantages or are at-risk for school failure (birth–9 years). The Centers provide quality training and technical assistance in response to local, regional, and state needs. T/TAC services increase the capacity of schools, school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth.

## T/TAC Services

- ✓ on-site consultation
- ✓ T/TAC-based consultation
- ✓ telephone consultation
- ✓ team planning
- ✓ library loans
- ✓ assistive technology loans
- ✓ information searches
- ✓ regional workshops
- ✓ long range planning
- ✓ transition services
- ✓ referral services
- ✓ linking & networking resources

## School Divisions Served

### *Region 6*

Alleghany Highlands  
 Botetourt  
 Covington  
 Craig  
 Danville  
 Floyd  
 Franklin  
 Henry  
 Martinsville  
 Montgomery  
 Patrick  
 Pittsylvania  
 Roanoke City  
 Roanoke County  
 Salem

### *Region 7*

Bland  
 Bristol  
 Buchanan  
 Carroll  
 Dickenson  
 Galax  
 Giles  
 Grayson  
 Lee  
 Norton  
 Pulaski  
 Radford  
 Russell  
 Scott  
 Smyth  
 Tazewell  
 Washington  
 Wise  
 Wythe