



NEWSLETTER

**CENTRE FOR
AUGMENTATIVE &
ALTERNATIVE
COMMUNICATION**

**INTERFACE
Pretoria
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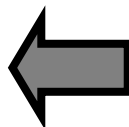
PRACTICAL HINTS

AAC IN ACTION

The training of 20 community health nurses from the Moretele health district in the use of the BCIP (Beginning communication Intervention protocol) was completed. During this training the nurses gained knowledge and skills pertaining to the different communication means and functions, how to increase communication partners and the creation of deliberate communication opportunities. After the initial training at UP's Hammanskraal campus, all nurses were visited thrice at their respective clinics. A distance of 1039 km's was covered each time! Apart from seeing how the nurses gained knowledge skill and confidence in handling children with severe disabilities and their parents, other exciting and interesting experiences included getting lost near Kgomo-Kgomo (with only cows to show the way) , witnessing the birth of a new baby and getting stuck in the mud!

Although this project has ended for 2000, we hope that a similar initiative will be launched in 2001. Thanks to all involved for making it a worthwhile and memorable project.

FROM THE EDITORS...



**COMMUNICATION FROM A NURSING
PERSPECTIVE**

AAC: What is it and where does one start ?

When the CAAC team met Tienie van Wyk in 19## for the first time, he was a non speaking boy with severe disabilities due to a tonsillectomy that went wrong. Although he obviously had so many factors against him, he had a strong and very positive factor in his favour: parents who believed in him and were willing to try everything, this included AAC. Today Tienie is an active boy who is fully intergrated into mainstream schooling with many friends. His mother, Ester is now holding seminars where she introduces other parents, who find themselves in a similar predicament, to the various available intervention seminars and approaches. It was at one of these seminars where the CAAC staff gave the participants a feel for AAC and its benefits. New friends were made and we hope that those parents can reap the benifits of the van Wyk's family's experiences.

CONGRATULATIONS

The CAAC staff would like to congratulate all our students who performed so well during the exams! This goes for all the students enrolled in the FDE in severe disabilities, BA (Hons)AAC and the MA(AAC). We are looking forward to seeing all the first years back as second year's and our besst wishes accompany those who will be graduating. We are pround of you and are looking forward to seeing you make your mark in the AAC field in South Africa ! Don't dissappear and remember to keep in contact! Remember together we cab create a

better life for those less fortunate than ourselves – all the severely disabled people in South Africa and in particular those with little or no functional speech.

Susan (mom to Ben(6), Abby(3), and Luke(2 w/DS))

ISAAC 2000

A quick introduction. My name is Shakila and I have recently joined the dynamic team at the Centre for AAC. I was amongst the few who managed to attend the International Conference for AAC in Washington from 2-6 August 2000. My traveling companions included Erna, Munyane, Elmarie, Margi, Jenny, Maureen, Marsha, Emile & Jill.

The conference was most enlightening both at a professional and personal level. It was an excellent opportunity to meet AAC users from various countries and too see that the issues relating to AAC implementation are similar across contexts in terms of lack of AAC professionals, funding issues, resistance to AAC and the dedication of groups and individuals to advancing the field of AAC.

It was wonderful to see so many active AAC users active in ISAAC, active in leadership roles, active in mentoring younger AAC users, active in developing the field of AAC...active in writing their stories published in Breaking the Surface (included South African contributions) ...active in innovatively highlighting the vulnerability issues relevant to the severely disabled through Heather Rose's movie " Dance me to my song".

Carol Goosens & colleagues pre conference workshop was a wonderfully practical and dynamic presentation with many ideas on how to actively involve young children in the learning process. It was also an excellent opportunity to see the poster and verbal presentations of experts in the field of AAC. There were many excellent ideas that were presented to address both the practical and theoretical issues in AAC
....however, some were a bit too theoretical for me !!##??

Overall it was a wonderful opportunity to visit a new country and learn something new simultaneously.

Hope to see you in Copenhagen in 2002.....best start saving now.

Take a Walk in My Shoes
by Susan Drumright

I am a kid with "mental impairment" and it is not something I would choose. But I'd like you to know me better, would you take a walk in my shoes?

Great! You've got my Nike's on, and we even wear the same size. Let's take a walk together, and you can see things through my eyes.

Be patient as I am talking. I often get tongue-tied. If you can wait long enough, you'll see what I have inside.

I get frustrated in school, learning stuff that is new. In my world, things happen more slowly than for you.

So if you see that I'm in trouble and I need a little clue,
Just draw me a picture, or show me what to do.

But I can learn almost anything, and I just love to play,
with special friends like you who help me along the way.

Don't worry if I tell you not to give me a hand.
Sometimes I don't want your help. My motto is: "I CAN!"

Once I decide to learn a skill, I won't settle for anything less.
And I would be so proud if you would celebrate my success!

Smiles, hugs, pats-on-the-back... they all make me grin.
And I give back all of these things, multiplied by ten.

My world is full of fun things, like movies, pizza, and swings.
I love my life and I look forward to what each day brings.

Thank you for putting on my shoes, because I wanted you to see... that I really need a friend like you who likes me as me.

Here is my list of tips for parents to encourage AAC use at home. I know the list could go on and on, but I thought thought these summed up most of the advice I received and have learned over the years.

1. Believe in your child's ability to communicate.
2. Expect your child to communicate.

3. Make sure the child has access to his or her communication system at all times.
4. Acknowledge all attempts to communicate, with or without the device.
5. Learn to program the device. Do not leave it up to speech pathologists or school personnel.
6. Include your child in decisions about what messages to program into the device.
7. Program pet names and commands, such as "come," "sit" and "stay."
8. Make displays to go along with your child's favorite books. As you read, encourage your child to use his or her device to read along with you.
9. Make displays so that the child can request favorite snacks, toys, TV shows, etc., and expect them to display manners like other children by saying "Please" and "Thank you."
10. Make displays to correspond with activities such as trips to the grocery store, grandparents house, the zoo, and church activities.
11. Set a specific time for each family member to share about his or her day and make sure your child has the vocabulary available to participate.
12. Program jokes to encourage sequencing and turn-taking. Have a questions and an answers programmed in, such as "Knock, knock" (Who's there?) "Scooby" (Scooby who?) "Scooby Doo, not Scooby Who!"
13. Network with other parents and professionals who are knowledgeable about AAC. Join online discussions groups such as DynamicDuos and Augmentative Communication On-line Users Group

(ACOLUG).

EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND THERAPISTS

CAROL GOOSENS TRAINING SESSIONS

WHEN: 22+23 February 2001

DAY 1: Creating an interactive AAC classroom

DAY 2: Engineering story and circle time

COST: R200 per day
R350 for both days

ERROR

In our last newsletter we included the incorrect email address for ClaSH (Association for children with language, speech and hearing impairments of Namibia). The new address is as follows: clash@mweb.com.na

NEW AAC DEVICES

The dynavox is a dedicated communication device which utilizes dynamic displays. It has a touch screen which allows users to select an item by pointing on the screen. The process is similar to using a menu system on a computer. Words and graphics can both be used and adapted in terms of size. In addition it is possible to customize the amount of options presented

on each display an allows for an unlimited amount of vocabulary to be available to the user.

The dynavox makes use of digital speech and allows for the high quality recording of speech.

Have you considered furthering your education during 2001

Consider the wide range of formal training opportunities offered at the CAAC

- ☞ Further Diploma in Education with Specialisation in Learners with Severe Disabilities (Prerequisite: M+3 qualification)
- ☞ BA Honours in AAC (Prerequisite: Any relevant bachelor's degree)
- ☞ MA in AAC
- ☞ MSc in Early Childhood Intervention: A multi-professional course aimed at equipping professionals with specialized knowledge and skills in the field of Early childhood intervention, to function optimally in a challenging and changing social context. [Requirements: An honours degree OR equivalent 4-year degree.

For more information contact the Centre for AAC for a free pamphlet and application form.



*For more information and on-line application forms visit our website at:
www.up.ac.za/academic/caac*

JOINING THE AAC LISTSERV

This is meant for all users, significant others and professionals – and as a capacity building for us so that we can all do some brain storming together.

If you are interested in joining please contact Elmarie van der Merwe at vdmerwee@postino.up.ac.za

JILL ROSE & ELAINE COBB
(Editors)

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