Supporting AAC Users: Collaboration between school district & hospital evaluation center

Vicki Haddix, M.S., CCC-SLP
Assistive Technology Coordinator, Boston Public Schools
@VickiBostonSLP on Twitter

Rebecca Therriault McCarthy, M.S., CCC-SLP
Augmentative Communication Program, Boston Children’s Hospital
Rebecca.McCarthy@childrens.harvard.edu

The individuals involved in this presentation do not have a financial involvement in any of the information shared.
School-Based AAC Evaluation

- Use of the SETT framework
- Account for multiple settings across the school day

School-Based AAC Evaluation

- Knowledge of the student over a longer period of time
- Can facilitate team buy-in
- Easy access to school records
**Hospital-Based Evaluations**

- Family-centered
- Availability of a vast array of technologies, loan library
- Collaboration with other AAC specialist in related disciplines (OT, ATP)

**Hospital-Based Evaluations**

- Ease of access to medical records
- Support services: Interpreters, social work, related medical specialties, etc.
Given that our assessments capture different aspects of the communicative interaction...it’s not surprising when the recommendations differ!

How can we take advantage of our strengths, to collaborate and get the best outcomes for AAC users and their families?
Barriers to Success

- Lack of time and resources
- Lack of clarity of roles/ownership
- Lack of aided language input
- Lack of understanding of AAC tools
**Working together:**

**Administrative notes**

- Coordination of paperwork (medical insurance funding of devices)
- Creating a plan for care and maintenance of AAC tools

**Working together:**

**Administrative notes**

- Contingency plans
- Trial implementation planning
- Data collection plan
**Working Together: Ownership**

- Establishing primary SLP
  - Who is in charge of vocabulary development, programming?
  - What is realistic and achievable?
- IEP goal planning
- Planning for language growth

**Working Together: Training & Support**

- System trainings
- Technical supports
- Ongoing implementation plans
**Working Together: Training & Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>IEP goal/language targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning meeting</td>
<td>1:1 aide</td>
<td>Share news</td>
<td>Create 3-4 word utterances Engage in reciprocal social exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music class</td>
<td>Music teacher</td>
<td>Request songs/instruments</td>
<td>“Play + fast/slow/loud/quiet” Use adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide descriptors for music activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free play</td>
<td>Primary teacher</td>
<td>Choose activity Comment, direct, and engage with aided supports</td>
<td>Use verbs, adjectives, and nouns to comment and direct during play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where do we go from here?**

- Develop organization systems for sharing information and coordinating collaborative efforts
- Clearly delineate TEAM roles
- Provide on-going trainings, cross-settings visits, and support material
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/School contact</th>
<th>JP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent identified goals/questions/concerns</td>
<td>Communicate about food preferences, what she did at school, and to use more age-appropriate language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of evaluation recommendations</td>
<td>Change user file to increase grid size from 15 to 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible barriers</td>
<td>Teacher resistance/knowledge, SLP changeover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainings required</td>
<td>1x/semester trainings on device use and implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up plan</td>
<td>Teacher data collection sheets reviewed at consults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Possible barriers**
Child resisted device in school/home setting, implementation of an eye gaze device in the classroom, expectations for conversation were low enough that he did not require AAC.

**Trainings required**
Shift device focus to curriculum adaptation

**Follow up plan**
Monitor CW’s buy-in to use of the device and continue to support access to the curriculum
## ACP-BPS Communication Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACP-BPS Communication Log</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student/School contact</td>
<td>ZS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent identified goals/questions/concerns</td>
<td>Improve communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of evaluation recommendations</td>
<td>Initial recommendation - picture communication book; Parent expressed interest in iPad following initial eval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible barriers</td>
<td>Differences in ZS communication in different settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainings required</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up plan</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Contact Information

**Vicki Haddix**  
Boston Public Schools  
VHaddix@bostonpublicschools.org  
Follow on Twitter: @VickiBostonSLP  
Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/acp

**Rebecca McCarthy**  
Boston Children’s ACP  
Rebecca.McCarthy@childrens.harvard.edu  
Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/acp