

PARENT PERSPECTIVES: SUPPORTING YOUNG ADULT & ADOLESCENT AAC PARTICIPATION



ASHA CE
APPROVED PROVIDER

Pennsylvania
Speech-Language-Hearing
Association

Intermediate Level
.05 ASHA CEUs

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Learning Objectives:

- Learners will be able to explain how adolescents and young adults who use AAC can participate in their local and regional communities.
- Learners will be able to identify potential barriers to participation adolescents and young adults who use AAC experience in their local and regional communities.
- Learners will be able to identify three key recommendations to facilitate community participation adolescents and young adults who use AAC.



Course Abstract

Adolescents and young adults who use AAC risk restricted participation in activities crucial for quality of life, including limited access to vocational, recreational, and school opportunities. Research indicates AAC users may experience fewer social interactions, smaller networks, and increased loneliness related to participation patterns (Mirenda, 2014; Ballin & Baladin, 2007). Access to participation opportunities improves quality of life and social interactions. Little research exists on facilitating participation across transitions for adolescents and young adults who use AAC. Parents play critical, long-term roles in their children's lives and likely have key insights about accessing participation opportunities (Beukelman & Light, 2020). This study gathers parent perspectives to inform clinical practice. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight parents (four of adolescents, four of young adults) recruited from online forums across the United States. A phenomenological approach explored lived experiences through conversational questions like "What is your approach to collaborating with professionals?" and "What peer support opportunities has your child had?" Transcripts were verified and analyzed using Applied Thematic Analysis (Guest et al., 2011). Through iterative coding and team discussion, six primary themes emerged. For this presentation, sub-themes within "participation and engagement" are discussed: activities, technology, advocacy, social networks, supports, future planning, and unique considerations. This presentation discusses these sub-themes with concrete examples from parent interviews, providing an important step toward increasing inclusion for this under-researched population.

Speaker Bio

Eric J. Sanders is an Associate Professor and Interim Associate Dean of the School of Rehabilitation Sciences at Moravian University. He specializes in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), child language, and literacy development. His current lines of research include exploring aspects of service delivery for children who require AAC and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Jennifer Seale, PhD, CCC-SLP directs the augmentative and alternative communication program at the University of Wisconsin's Waisman Center. In addition to practicing AAC for over 15 years, Seale's research evaluates cultural, systemic and product design factors contributing to challenges and opportunities experienced by individuals who use AAC and key stakeholders.

David Hajjar is an Associate Professor in the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Department at Ithaca College and holds his Certificate of Clinical Competence from ASHA. Dr. Hajjar earned his Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Sciences from Ohio University and specializes in AAC research, teaching, and clinical practice.

Speaker Disclosures

Eric is a salaried employee of Moravian University.

Jennifer Seale is a salaried employee of the Waisman Center at the University of Wisconsin.

Dr. Hajjar is a salaried employee of Ithaca College.