

THE CITY SPEAKS

A PARENT NEWSLETTER BY DISTRICT 75 SPEECH-LANGUAGE PROVIDERS

Richard A. Carranza, Chancellor

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The Parent and Language Committee (PAL) writes "The City Speaks" newsletter to provide you with current information, tips, and ideas that relate to this year's focus on communication throughout the day. The theme for this issue is "High Technology Communication Systems." Citywide Speech Services (CSS) is committed to maintaining a strong home-school connection. If you have any questions regarding speech, language, and/or communication issues contact your child's speech-language provider.

"Independence is one of the greatest things a person with a disability can have so don't hold them back from reaching their potential."

Types of High Technology Communication Systems

Our previous issue discussed how to incorporate low technology communication systems, such as symbols, pictures and static devices (communication systems with pictures and symbols). This year's other issues introduced levels of vocabulary and communication systems that do not use technology. In this issue we will be discussing purposeful communication using aided high technology systems that allow students to access a large amount of vocabulary in one device using a touch screen. Often when a child has become skilled and/or feels limited using a low-tech device, his/her school team may recommend a high technology device (i.e. iPad with special apps). High technology includes dynamic display devices. Dynamic display devices have touch screens that allow a child to access a large amount of vocabulary using a communication application (app). Selecting a picture on a dynamic display can lead to a page with more images. For example, clicking on the symbol for food can open up another page containing specific foods. We will also list high technology devices you may already have at home that can be used to enhance or teach communication.

When students are introduced to a communication device when you are building language, it is important to have exposure, repetition and time to learn to use how to find the words to build phrases and sentences. This will help a student to learn to communicate on his/her own. Skills require practice over time. For all children to build language skills it is important that communication be encouraged in school, at home and in the community with a variety of people to increase skills.

High technology devices use various means of accessing the vocabulary, such as touching, pointing, scanning, and the use eye gaze. Devices can be used on a table or placed on a wheelchair. Below are examples of communication systems that your child may use in the classroom, at home and in the community.

Communication Systems: This includes Language Acquisition Motor Planning - Words for Life (LAMP-WFL), Proloquo2go, Proloquo4text, Touch Chat, Go Talk NOW, Sonoflex, and Compass. All of these systems can be used on a tablet device and contain a combination of core and fringe vocabulary. Core vocabulary are common words used throughout the day such as want, more, stop, yes, no. Fringe words are nouns, such as cookie and crayon. Your child's school team will ensure that your child is matched to the appropriate app when he or she is ready to use one. The keyboard with word predictability can help with typing and spelling. Most of these systems are preprogrammed with vocabulary and have a variety of features that fit your child's individual needs. Speak to your child's speech therapist to find a good fit for your child. Some students will change apps and/ or devices as their abilities change, other students will outgrow the need for an augmentative and alternative communication system.

Dear City Speaks,

My daughter's speech therapist evaluated her for a device and she now is using a tablet with a communication app. I was recently invited in for a training, and it was very informative but I am still feeling overwhelmed with this new device. How can I support my daughter at home?

Not-Tech Savvy Mom

Dear Not-Tech Savvy Mom,

You brought up an important issue that many parents can relate to. It is great that your child's speech therapist brought you in for a training. You can always ask for additional trainings from your daughter's therapist and those offered by District 75. There are online trainings (even YouTube) to access when it is convenient for you. The online trainings can teach you about navigating, accessing icons as well as using the device throughout your daughter's daily routines. (You can find a list of resources on the right side of this newsletter). After you are trained, find ways to incorporate the device during meals, play time and activities of daily living.

Now that your daughter is bringing home the device, there is some important information that you should remember about the device. It is a school-based device and should be brought to school every day. The device will be sent home daily, as well as during school breaks and summer vacation. It is important to charge the device when it is not being used so that it can be available for use during the entire day. If anything happens to the device, please contact your speech therapist as soon as possible. These tablet devices are used for communication purposes. It is important that your daughter knows that this device is for communication and not playing games, surfing the web or watching videos. Many of these other applications will be blocked on your device so your daughter will understand the device and the applications are to be used at school or at home only for communication. Good luck!

-City Speaks

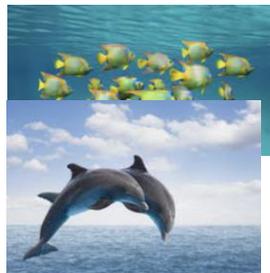
Joke Zone!

Q: Do fish go on vacation?

A: No, because they are always in school!

Q: Why did the dolphin cross the beach?

A: To get to the other tide!



Resources

About AAC: www.asha.org, www.aac institute.org, www.aacandaustism.com, www.autismspeaks.org, www.communicationmatters.org.uk, www.prentrom.org, www.tobiidynavox.com, www.assistiveware.com, www.touchchatapp.com

Communication Books and Boards: www.connectABILITY.ca, www.setbc.org/pictureset, www.praacticalaac.org

Free and Discounted AAC Apps - Coughdrop, SoundingBoard, GoTalkNow Lite, QuickTalk AAC, Verbally, Verbal Me, Sonoflex Lite, Snap + Core First, Visuals2Go, Alexicom AAC, EESpeechChat AAC, Niki Talk

Systems for Communication at Home: desktop/laptop computer, smart phones, smart speakers (i.e. Alexa, Echo), text-to-speech

Plan Ahead for Summer!

Chapter 683 Summer School Dates:

First Day of School: Tuesday, July 2, 2019

Independence Day (Schools Closed): Thursday, July 4, 2019

Eid-al-Adha (Schools Closed): Monday, August 12, 2019

Last Day of School: Tuesday, August 13, 2019



If you have any questions or topics that you would like us to address, please send an e-mail to: or BMandel6@schools.nyc.gov
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