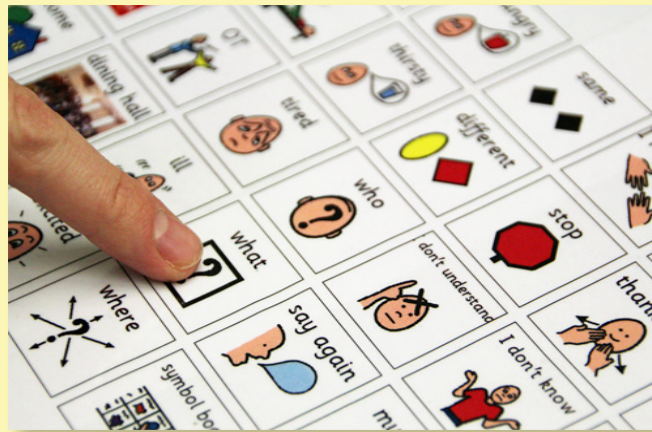


# Communication Matters

## AAC & Literacy Best Practice Study Days



**Wednesday 29 April 2020**

**Lockleaze Sports Centre, Bonnington Walk, Lockleaze, BRISTOL, BS7 9FJ**

The fourth in a series of AAC & literacy based days.

This day will address the needs of children in both special & mainstream schools and be suitable for both professionals & family members.

**Keynote Speaker: Maureen Donnelly**

**Costs: £65 members, £75 non-members and £40 family members.**



## Summary

Communication Matters is delighted to present our fourth AAC and Literacy Study Day. This event has been organised as a response to the interest generated by Karen Erickson, our keynote speaker at the Communication Matters International AAC Conference held in September last year. Karen addressed “.....the importance of spelling and writing as an integrated part of AAC”. Our speakers will be addressing the literacy needs and the implementation of literacy instruction for children as well as older learners in both special and mainstream schools.

### **Who is the study day aimed at?**

The whole team!

- Parents and family members
- Teaching and Learning Staff from both mainstream and special schools
- Health professionals including Speech and Language Therapists

### **Proposed learning outcomes:**

- Increased understanding of the wider issues surrounding literacy acquisition for AAC users and the opportunity to discuss with other practitioners
- Develop knowledge of teaching literacy and awareness of effective practice
- Practical experience of literacy learning resources available to support AAC users

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## Provisional Timetable

### **Keynote Speaker: Maureen Donnelly (Tobii Dynavox Ltd)**

Write On! Supporting AAC Users as Beginning Writers Today, Tomorrow, and Beyond



In this session, we'll talk about the role and importance of writing in the lives of people who use AAC. Whereas many people hesitate to introduce writing instruction, this session will highlight not only the relevance of writing to AAC users, but also how to support all students in getting started. Firstly, outlining how writing drives and informs literacy and language development. Next, introducing the concept and requirements of alternative pencils as well as identify some key instructional priorities for getting started. Finally, charting how parents, teachers and therapists can support the developmental writing needs of students across the spectrum of beginners.

Maureen Donnelly is an early childhood educator who has taught students of diverse abilities and ages. She received a B.S. from Cornell University and an M.Ed from the University of New Hampshire, where she studied under Karen Erickson, the Director of the Center for Literacy & Disability Studies at Chapel Hill.

### **Parallel Sessions**

Presentations on the issues and strategies that relate directly to the challenges faced in delivering comprehensive literacy instruction to those who use AAC and the challenges faced in acquiring those skills.

### **Plenary Speaker: Helen Hewson**

Literacy - An AAC User's Perspective

Like many people with severe physical disabilities and communication problems, my literacy story is a slow, long and complicated one. In this session I will share the story of my own early literacy journey, and the many challenges and struggles that I faced as a child learning to read.

Helen works for Just Different, a charity founded by her husband Toby Hewson. Just Different is a charity Toby set up in 2007, which delivers workshops to children about disability awareness, in a fun and interactive way.

### **Table Top Sessions**

Short practical sessions that will provide delegates the opportunity to work in small groups looking at resources, equipment, thoughts and strategies currently available to support and encourage the teaching of literacy to AAC users. These sessions will be repeated throughout the day. Incorporates an exhibition of products that directly relate to AAC and literacy.

### **Panel Discussion**

Two parallel Q and A sessions on literacy instruction; one focusing on children and the other on older learners.

## Timetable

9.00am	Registration & Tea/Coffee
9.30am	<b>Welcome and Keynote Presentation</b>
10.25am	<b>Table Top Session 1</b>
11.00am	<b>Table Top Session 2</b>
11.30am	Tea/Coffee & Networking
11.50am	<b>Parallel Session 1:</b> Choose session 1.1 or 1.2
12.25pm	<b>Parallel Session 2:</b> Choose session 2.1 or 2.2
1.00pm	Lunch & Networking
1.40pm	<b>Plenary Presentation</b>
2.15pm	<b>Table Top Session 3</b>
2.50pm	<b>Table Top Session 4</b>
3.25pm	<b>Panel Discussions:</b> Choose Panel 1 (younger learners) or Panel 2 (older learners)
4.00pm	Finish

## Parallel Sessions

Session 1.1: It's Never Too Late! Supporting the Literacy Learning Needs of Tweens, Teens and Young Adults

*Session led by Maureen Donnelly*

This session will examine the priorities and practicalities of supporting the literacy learning needs of older students. First, we'll provide an instructional frame for thinking about the needs of these learners. Then, we'll discuss where and how to begin. Finally, some tips and strategies for engaging all learners in meaningful, contextual literacy instruction will be provided.

Session 1.2: Getting Through to Schools! Overcoming schools' institutional challenges in order to affect greater change

*Session led by Joe Doran*

Teachers are at the frontline of implementing AAC and Literacy strategies with pupils, but when external professionals visit to provide specialist advice, they can find it challenging to improve school practice. This session will explore why forming effective connections with teaching staff can be challenging, and how external professionals can work within schools' existing frameworks and routines to allow school staff to implement new approaches more easily.

Joseph Doran is an Advisory Teacher for the Communication Aid Service East of England (CASEE), Joe worked as a special needs teacher before joining the specialised AAC service for the East. He works as part of a multidisciplinary team assessing and supporting school-age users of communication aids and works with teachers to help maximise support for their pupils with a communication device from CASEE. Alongside his colleagues, he also co-delivers training packages on decision-making and implementation of AAC, based on identified needs across the East of England.

## Parallel Sessions

Session 2.1: Strategies and systemic approaches to teaching reading to all pupils  
*Session led by Michelle Mann and Natalie Fry*

This session will give you many practical ideas for simple activities and lessons that can be implemented in the classroom, or any learning environment, all to increase engagement in reading and phonics. Working with both conventional and emergent readers who use AAC, the session will provide you with tips and tricks for moving children's reading skills on.

Michelle Mann qualified as a teacher in Canada, before moving to the UK where she continued her career in special education. She has worked at Richard Cloudesley school for nine years, working across the primary and secondary age groups. She is currently the Early Years teacher, and the curriculum lead for English, across the school.

Natalie Fry has worked at Richard Cloudesley school for over ten years, in various roles, currently as an Assistant Head. Natalie played a key role in the introduction and implementation of systemic approaches to communication and the use of AAC. She works alongside Michelle on the implementation of a strategic approach to literacy instruction across the school.

Session 2.2: Developing writing skills for AAC users  
*Session led by Marion Stanton*

After a quick overview of the UK National Curriculum and OFSTED requirements for writing in the UK, this session will focus on the way in which they can be made accessible for students who rely on AAC. A key theme will be examining blocks to developing writing skills and how they can be overcome including:

- The importance of the physical effort required for writing being minimised, and how to do it
- Phonics versus other approaches to recognising letters and words and writing them
- Making the best use of word prediction
- Integrating communication and writing
- Breaking down writing tasks into manageable chunks
- Progression including examples of outcomes

Marion Stanton is the Lead Trainer and Assessor as well as Managing Director of CandLE, a not-for-profit company supporting the communication and learning needs of students throughout the UK. She has recently completed a UK based assessment framework for literacy along with UK based emergent and conventional literacy programs for students who rely on AAC.

## Table Top Sessions

Short practical sessions that will provide delegates the opportunity to work in small groups to get hands on experience of resources and equipment. These sessions will be repeated throughout the day.

Liberator - Low-Tech communication support books and manual boards to support high-tech  
*Session led by Mark Street*

We will be looking at how attendees can utilise our free computer emulation software to create symbol supported stories for individuals who are using our vocabularies. Both our NuVoice and Chat Editor PC emulation software are free to download and give users access to all our vocabularies and symbol sets.

Built in to each software are tools to save symbols or symbols sequences. This means you can easily take the symbols from someone's vocabulary and paste them into other documents to create resources. By doing this we can create individualised resources which reflect the symbol system within an individual's own AAC vocabulary.

These can be further personalised to either focus on key words within stories or represent the entire text, dependent on the needs and abilities of the individual. The session will include a demonstration of this in action, pre-made resources to illustrate what can be done with the symbols which attendees can explore and opportunities to ask questions.

Smartbox - Early literacy with Look to Read and Super Core

*Session led by Adam Waits*

In this practical session, we will explore ideas around early literacy exposure for AAC users. Early literacy begins with the experience of picking up a book, exploring it and turning the pages. Using Look to Read, we will demonstrate some ideas for how AAC users and those with physical difficulties can share in those early literacy experiences right from selecting a book and engaging with the content.

We will then move on to look at how you can make the best out of what you already have! Ideas for using existing, non-literacy specific resources to support literacy learning – using an AAC vocabulary alongside a range of resources to broaden the literacy experience.

Using Super Core (symbol based AAC vocabulary) as both a hi-tech and low-tech AAC resource, attendees will come away with ideas and activities to support literacy learning. For example, exploring story grids that enable a learner to participate in a literacy activity - by shouting out repeated lines, or anticipating the next line.

We'll also look at how you can adapt high-tech AAC resources to support literacy. Making it easier than ever for AAC learners to participate in literacy-based classroom activities alongside their peers.

sCandle - Literacy for AAC users in the UK

*Session led by Marion Stanton*

Candle has been working on a literacy system that has been developed after staff members attended the 5 day intensive 4-blocks training in 2016. We also have training in the use of the UK based systematic phonics process as well as many years of experience of successful teaching of literacy to students who rely on AAC using our own approaches.

We will be demonstrating our mobile predictable charts which we combine with our alternative pencil. These are literacy learning techniques for the very early, preliterate/emergent, learners. We will also be showing the literacy assessment procedures we have developed for students who rely on AAC. These graded activities include single word reading, diagnostic spelling and comprehension activities. We will also be sharing the phonics program we have developed for Grid 3 and Mind Express. Finally, we will share some of the activities that we use with readers that are becoming conventional literacy learners including our groundbreaking 'Leap to Literacy' program.

## Table Top Sessions

Ace Centre - Access Methods and Paper based Alternative Pencils

*Session led by Karen Bailey, Senior AAC Consultant, Ace Centre*

This session will provide an opportunity to explore how representing the alphabet in an alternative way can support successful access to literacy for a range of individuals. It will be a practical session allowing for discussion and hands on with a range of alternative alphabets. On display, we will have paper-based resources to suit both symbol and text users with a range of access needs. Members of the Ace Centre training and assessment team will be on hand to explain how to use, train and implement these, mainly, free to download resources.

Techcess - Using the Score Communication System and its accompanying implementation plans in supporting teachers, support staff and parents to teach language acquisition in a practical teaching session

*Session led by Ian Foulger*

Score provides a clear pathway of language and communication development from single words to full sentences. It is a complete paper and power based symbol communication system providing the user with single word core vocabulary and a large range of easily accessible topic vocabulary. The range of everyday words is in the same position on both the paper and power based systems. This makes Score a highly consistent system which encourages motor planning and automaticity. Its robust structure enhances learning and enables the user to explore and develop language and communication. Score has been developed through research and is also evidence based.

Teach Us Too

*Session led by Chantal and Jonathan Bryan*

As a charity Teach Us Too supports and promotes the rights of all students to receive effective, high quality literacy teaching regardless of their educational labels. 14-year-old Jonathan Bryan, labelled as having Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities, received very little literacy education in his special school setting. Removed from school at the age of 7 and taught to read and write by his mother at home, Jonathan now attends mainstream secondary school and is the author of *Eye Can Write*, a memoir of his literacy journey. In 2018 he founded his charity and has made it his mission to campaign for the rights of other children like him to a literacy education, seeing himself as a voice for the voiceless. Come along to the Teach Us Too table top session with Jonathan, his mother and teacher; a practical and experience led workshop on how and why literacy education for all students is life transforming.

TobiiDynavox - Reading Avenue: An Avenue to Successful Reading for All

*Session led by Tina Voizey, Education Manager and Cameron Smyth, Account Manager, Tobii Dynavox*

Reading Avenue is an accessible, comprehensive literacy instructional program that supports all beginning readers and writers regardless of their communication skills as they learn to read. Developed in partnership with the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, headed by Karen Erickson, it is designed to support all learners whilst specifically addressing the challenges of those who use AAC.

During this session we will look at how Reading Avenue:

- offers a roadmap for implementing instructional routines
- was created with AAC and eye gaze users in mind
- provides materials that supports literacy, language, and communication development





Communication  
**Matters**

## BOOKING FORM

# AAC & Literacy Best Practice

Wednesday 29 April 2020, Lockleaze Sports Centre, Bristol

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (including Postcode): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email (must be given): \_\_\_\_\_

I heard about this event from: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Requirements:  Vegetarian  Vegan  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Delegate Fee** (includes lunch and refreshments; no VAT payable):

- £75 not a current member of Communication Matters
- £143 delegate fee + Individual Membership of Communication Matters for Jan to Dec 2020
- £65 current member of Communication Matters - membership number: MB** \_\_\_\_\_
- £50 AAC user / family who is not a current member of Communication Matters
  - I will be bringing a Personal Support Assistant  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Vegetarian  Vegan  Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - I have never been a member - I wish to apply for 1 year's free membership
- £40 AAC user / family who is a current member of Communication Matters - membership number: MB** \_\_\_\_\_
  - I will be bringing a Personal Support Assistant  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Vegetarian  Vegan  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Contact us to check your membership status or number, or to join Communication Matters.

### Payment:

- I enclose a **cheque** made payable to 'Communication Matters'
- I enclose a **Purchase Order** document; please invoice me
- I am paying by **online banking** (quoting my name as reference) to:  
Account Name: ISAAC UK/Communication Matters | Sort Code: 30-99-55 | Account No. 00195792

**Data Protection:** Your data will be stored in a secure database which will be accessed by Communication Matters personnel only. We may contact you in matters related to the event. Please read our full Privacy Policy: <https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/privacy-policy>.  
I AGREE / DISAGREE to Communication Matters sending me literature on courses, events and other relevant information (delete as appropriate).

**Cancellation:** Notify in writing by 29 March for a refund (less 10% admin fee); no refunds thereafter.

Please send this form (with cheque or purchase order, if appropriate) to:

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T: 0113 343 1533 E: admin@communicationmatters.org.uk [www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)