

October 2011

Volume 1, Issue 4

Vlinder Connections

October is...

International AAC Awareness Month



An estimated 2.5 million Americans experience speech disability to the extent that they have significant difficulty being understood by others. Many of these people have no speech at all and also have other physical disability that precludes expressive communication using hand signs, writing, or typing.

National Sensory Awareness Month

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a brain condition that affects more children than ADHD or autism but is much less known, a situation that leads to the misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment of untold numbers of children every year. Help is available from occupational therapists trained in sensory integration.



Vlinder Communication Therapies, PLLC

Speech & Language, AAC, and Communication-based Behavior services for individuals with communication challenges

The Power of Communication

Communication is a powerful tool. It helps us get needs met, gain access to things we want, and exchange information or ideas with others. Most of us give little thought to the ease with which we communicate our needs, wants, thoughts, and feelings on a daily basis. A bout of laryngitis is annoying, but usually infrequent and short lived. Imagine your life if you could not talk. At all. Ever. Some individuals require supplemental or alternative methods to communicate because they are unable to effectively use speech some or all of the time.

What is AAC? AAC stands for *augmentative and alternative communication*. AAC includes anything used to supplement or enhance speech or writing, including electronic devices, picture boards, and sign language. The goal of AAC is to enable the most effective communication possible.

Who is AAC for? AAC is for anyone having difficulty communicating effectively for any reason, whether due to a physical or cognitive disability, inability or difficulty producing speech, word-finding difficulties, language organization issues, or other causes.

AAC interventions range from unaided solutions (e.g. gestures or sign language) to aided solutions which include "no tech", "low tech", and "high tech" options:

- * "No tech" options are relatively "easy" to make or require little materials and involve no technology, such as pen & paper, picture communication books, eye gaze boards, visual supports, etc.
- * "Low tech" options can record and playback a human voice, are usually small and battery-powered or rechargeable
- * "High tech" devices are electronic (computer-like) and can usually speak using digital software that produces a natural sounding voice

AAC can help decrease frustration (sometimes expressed through challenging behavior) and increase social interaction, school performance, and feelings of self-worth.

AAC systems can be powerful tools. But the system will only be as good as we make it...and will be rendered useless without appropriate training and a supportive environment. Integration of the system at home, school, in the community, and consistent implementation are crucial to success. Implementation is an ongoing TEAM process. For more information, consult an AAC professional like Cassandra Stafford at Vlinder Communication Therapies.

Vlinder
Communication Therapies

LOCATION:

Lake City Professional Center
2611 NE 125th Street
Suite 103
Seattle, WA 98125

INFORMATION:

(206) 257-4078
cassandra@vlindertherapies.com
www.vlindertherapies.com

I'm a Sensational Kid!

I have **Sensory Processing Disorder** - SPD, for short. That means my brain can't process sensations the way other people's brains do. When my brain gets information through any of my senses - sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, movement - it doesn't always know what to do with the information. I can become very disorganized and confused! Sometimes I over-react to all this sensory input or maybe I don't react enough. Depending on what senses are involved, I may have trouble with jobs that come naturally to other kids, even feeding myself or putting on clothes. This makes it really hard for me to function at school, in public, and even at home. I might have trouble learning or making friends, and I may have a lot of tantrums and meltdowns. I can be really shy and withdrawn from everyone, even my own mom and dad! Because I never know what's going to set off my sensory alarms, I'm often afraid of activities all the other kids enjoy. It's tough being sensational.

www.SPDFoundation.net



2611 NE 125th Street
Suite 103
Seattle, WA 98125