

Remote AAC Therapy- 4 approaches to supporting the child and their family

Sarah Alderman-
Specialist Speech and Language
Therapist



@sazalder

1

A little bit about me...

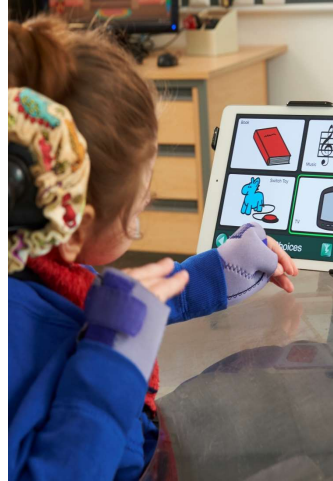
- Speech and Language Therapist for 12 years.
- Worked in Special Education for 11 years with a specific interest in AAC.
- Currently based in Highfurlong School, Blackpool.
- 42% of students use some form of AAC.



2

School closures...what happens next?!

- Discussion with the Senior Leadership team about continuing to support children and their families,
- Flyer sent to parents with contact details.
- Follow parents' lead re: the amount and type of input that they wanted.



3

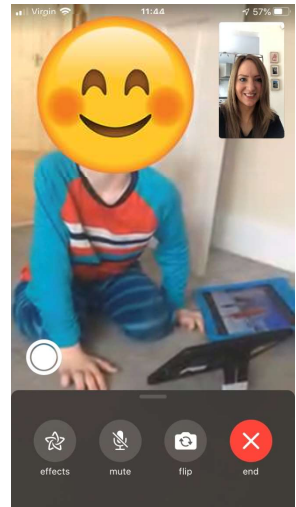
Different approaches for different needs...

1. Direct teletherapy
2. Training parents and families
3. Remote editing and provision of resources
4. Whole school support



1. Teletherapy

- Using Zoom
- Sharing the screen to model AAC,
- Consider how to meet the child's targets during these sessions or how to demonstrate skills such as modelling or expanding to parents.



5

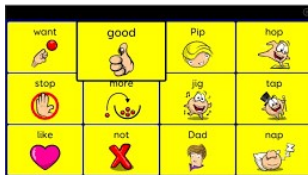
Teletherapy resources

- **Choice-making**
 - Mr Tomato (like Mr Potato head),
 - Pizza Maker
 - Grid 3- choice-making and cause & effect



Commenting/describing...

- Barbie Fashion
- My Home (Bedroom design)
- YouTube – music videos
- Books and Stories- Look2Read from Smartbox



7

Core Words...

- Apps and games
- Boardmaker Online Core Word books
- Encouraging parents to model key core words during the week- emailing core word communication boards to use for modelling alongside child's device or book.



2. Training parents and families

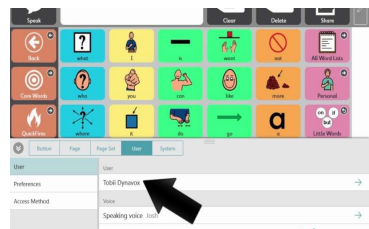
- Video therapy training sessions- editing software, using communication books, Makaton, etc.
- Making training videos for school platforms such as See-Saw,
- Making and distributing 'How to' handouts.



9

3. Remote editing and provision of resources

- All software can be edited remotely. Consider vocabulary needed at home or vocabulary related to current routines, worries or concerns in the current climate.

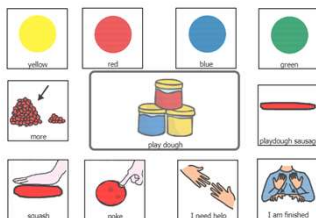


- Communication boards for home activities, tailor made to interests or targets.

10

4. Whole school support

- Resources to benefit all students- social stories re: Covid 19 and school closure, visual resources such as visual schedules and Now and Next boards.
- Sensory Sacks for younger students. Communication boards made that were relevant to each activity.



11

Handouts and videos on ideas for using equipment....

- Ideas for using switches at home,
- Simple video tutorials of using software such as HelpKidzLearn,
- Supporting school loan bank- Switch toys to develop cause and effect, Lite tech devices, communication based games.

Using single message switches for communication at home



Your child may have a single message switch that is used for recording home/school news. Did you know there are lots of ways that you can use their switch to support communication at home? Here are a few ideas:

- **Continuing an activity:** Record a simple message such as "I want some more!" on the switch. During a motivational activity such as bubbles, nursery rhymes or reading a favourite book, pause and wait. Encourage your child to use their switch to let you know they want some more.
- **Joining in with a favourite song or story:** Record a familiar repeated line of a song or story on the switch e.g. "E.I.E.I.O" from Old MacDonald. When the line in the story or song is coming up, pause and wait for your child to join in by pressing their switch.
- **Controlling a game:** Record the word "Go!" on the switch. Before starting an activity such as winding up a toy train, blowing bubbles or starting a musical toy, say "Ready, steady..." and then pause. Start the activity when your child presses the switch to say "Go!"
- **Environmental control:** Switches can be used alongside devices such as Alexa or Google Home for a fun, motivational activity. If you have a single message switch you could record a message like: "Alexa, play the next song" so your child can control the music. If they have a switch that you can record multiple messages on, your child could scroll through the messages until they find the option that they want e.g. "Alexa, tell me a joke. Alexa, play Taylor Swift. Alexa, what noise does a cat make?", etc.
- **Gaining attention:** Record a message such as "I want to play" on your child's switch. Show your child how they can use this to attract your attention. Have the switch nearby when they are watching TV or when you are engaged in another task. That way, your child can let you know when they want to interact and play with you while working on the important skill of initiating communication.
- **Role Play:** During role play, you could record a message that is relevant to the activity. For example, if you were playing shop, you could record a message such as "That's £5, please!" or if you were playing with toy cars you could record sound effects such as "Beep beep!"

Pros of Remote Working...

- Therapy provision continued- the feedback from most families is that they feel supported,
- Improved relationships with parents and families,
- Families more confident in using equipment and resources.



13

Cons of Remote Working...

- Missing our pupils and team approach!
- Maintaining attention during teletherapy,
- Technical issues!
- Adapting resources can be time consuming,
- No group therapy sessions; No classroom support.



Thank you for listening!

Any questions?