



Establishing a library-based story book reading program for AAC users and families: a tutorial.



Sabena DSouza
Polina Rubanova
Elena Dukhovny
Connie Roth

“Speak AAC to Teach AAC”

Today

5 min Introduction of participants

10 min Storytime with AAC purpose

35 min Procedure description, materials sample and video demonstration

Survey Results

25 min Team member responsibilities and perspectives

Conclusions: successes and challenges

15 min Q&A



Learning outcomes



- Describe the processes and materials necessary to start a storybook reading program with AAC in a public library
- Describe the roles of the interdisciplinary team leading a library program for AAC users
- Describe the needs and perceptions of caregivers involved in the Storybook reading with AAC program



The Team



Sabena D'souza
Program
Coordinator



Himani
Hitendra
Volunteer



Polina Rubanova
Librarian



Connie Roth



Elena Dukhovny
LISTEN with AAC
Program Director

Readers:



Carley Biblin



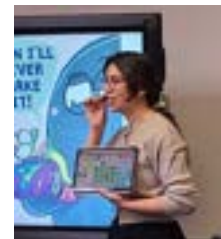
Misha Kiyomura



Trang Tran



Jia Qiu



Renata Rodriguez

Background information

Statistics

Success in
AAC



Aided Language
Modeling

Story Book Reading

Our Free Community Program:
StoryTime with AAC

About Myself



- My name is Himani.
- I am a non-speaking, Autistic girl.
- I use a speech generating device, Accent 1000 with Unity 84 sequenced.
- I am a PRC Ambassador.
- I am passionate about self advocacy and AAC awareness.
- I helped start the “Storytime with AAC” program at Union City library.

My role as an AAC user in “Storytime with AAC”



- Help the librarian understand how AAC users communicate.
- Share the joy of interaction through book reading.
- Socializing with other AAC users.
- Being a role model and peer mentor to my friends.
- Forming a community.



My AAC presentation at the Library



Introducing AAC advocate and author Tiffany Hammond for a Storytime with AAC event

About Me: Sabena D'souza



- Parent of a teen AAC user.
- Program Coordinator/Volunteer for Storytime with AAC, Social hangout and Adaptive Yoga at Union City library.
- Worked as a paraeducator with Fremont Unified School District.
- Worked as a Business Analyst in the Insurance Sector.

Why “Storytime with AAC”?



- Participate in the community
- Develop a love of reading books
 - Build communication skills
- Socialization opportunity
 - See other AAC users communicate
 - Interact with other AAC users
- Offer Caregiver support
 - Develop modeling skills
 - Provide resources



What is Storytime with AAC?



What is Storytime with AAC?



Engaging the participants using Shared Reading strategies

What is Storytime with AAC?



We model on our AAC devices

What is Storytime with AAC?



We build community connections

What is Storytime with AAC?



We play fun games to build language and interaction.

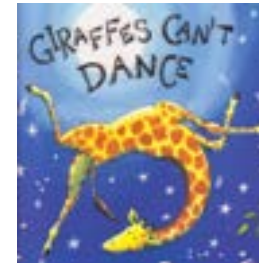
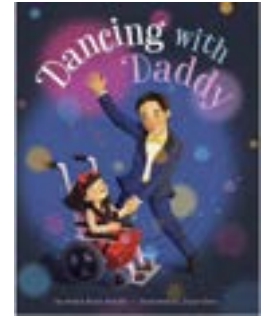
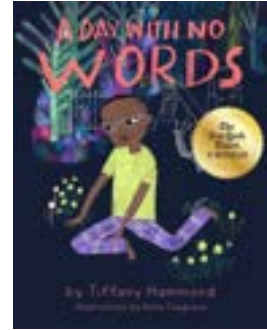


Program Details

Book selection



- Age appropriate
 - Theme
 - Vocabulary
- Characters with disabilities / Neurodivergent characters
- Cultural / Ethnic representation



About me: Elena Dukhovny



- SLP, faculty at SLHS, Cal State East Bay
 - AAC as area of clinical and research interest, e.g. ConversAACtion group
- Co-director of LISTEN with AAC interdisciplinary training grant
 - Readers are grant-funded graduate students in SLHS and SpEd
- Big fan of stories and storytelling



Reader preparation



- Reader recruitment - at least 3-month commitment
- Reader training pre-first reading
 - Video and in-person observation of experienced reader
 - Resource packet review
 - First book - co-creation of questions and core vocab with faculty
 - Observation of reader, with feedback

Reader preparation



- Reader role prior to every reading
 - Generate core vocabulary list
 - Generate core vocabulary sequence sheet
 - Produce target vocabulary on either Proloquo2Go or TouchChat until fluent to prepare for modeling during reading
 - Create game for after-book reading



Core vocabulary - selection

- The week's reader selects 8-10 words. Principles for word selection:
 - Key words important to story retell and discussion
 - Many reusable (high frequency / core) words
 - Must include some actions / descriptive words (not just nouns)
 - Must include a question word (e.g. What, Who, How, etc)
 - It's OK and appropriate for some of the vocabulary to be the same week to week

Core Words Sheet
Book: *The Little Butterfly That Could* by Ross Burach
Language System: *Satillo WordPower SS - Level: SS Basic*

Target Vocabulary	Icons			
no				
wait				
again				
try				
stay				
go				
scared				
travel				
what				
outside				

Core Words Sheet
Book: *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtisaj Muhammad
Language System: *Proloquo2Go 7x11 grid size*



Target Vocabulary	Icons			
Hello				
Sister				
Strong				
Whisper				
Yell				
Blue				
Wear				
Why				



Comment-Ask-Respond



Core vocabulary - sharing with families



- Reader (previously - coordinator) creates core word sheets
- Librarian sends out to registered families ~3-5 days before StoryTime
- At session, before reading:
 - Printed sheets available at the door for TouchChatWP 60 and Proloquo2Go Intermediate
 - (New) guided pre-practice
 - Reader demonstrates each word on one app before beginning reading and families practice each word three times

Shared reading strategies



Within two weeks before reading:

- Review the book to plan 4-5 fun discussion / opinion question for the listeners (one for every 3-4 pages). Include questions/comments that
 - Have no wrong answer
 - Highlight interesting aspects of the book, or
 - Explore personal connections that listeners may have with the book
 - Do not require fringe vocabulary for response
- Participants are encouraged to answer AND ask questions, e.g.
 - Butterfly was impatient. Have you ever been impatient?
 - What do you think is going to happen next: Is he going to stay or go?
 - Who makes you happy in your circle?

Shared reading and interaction

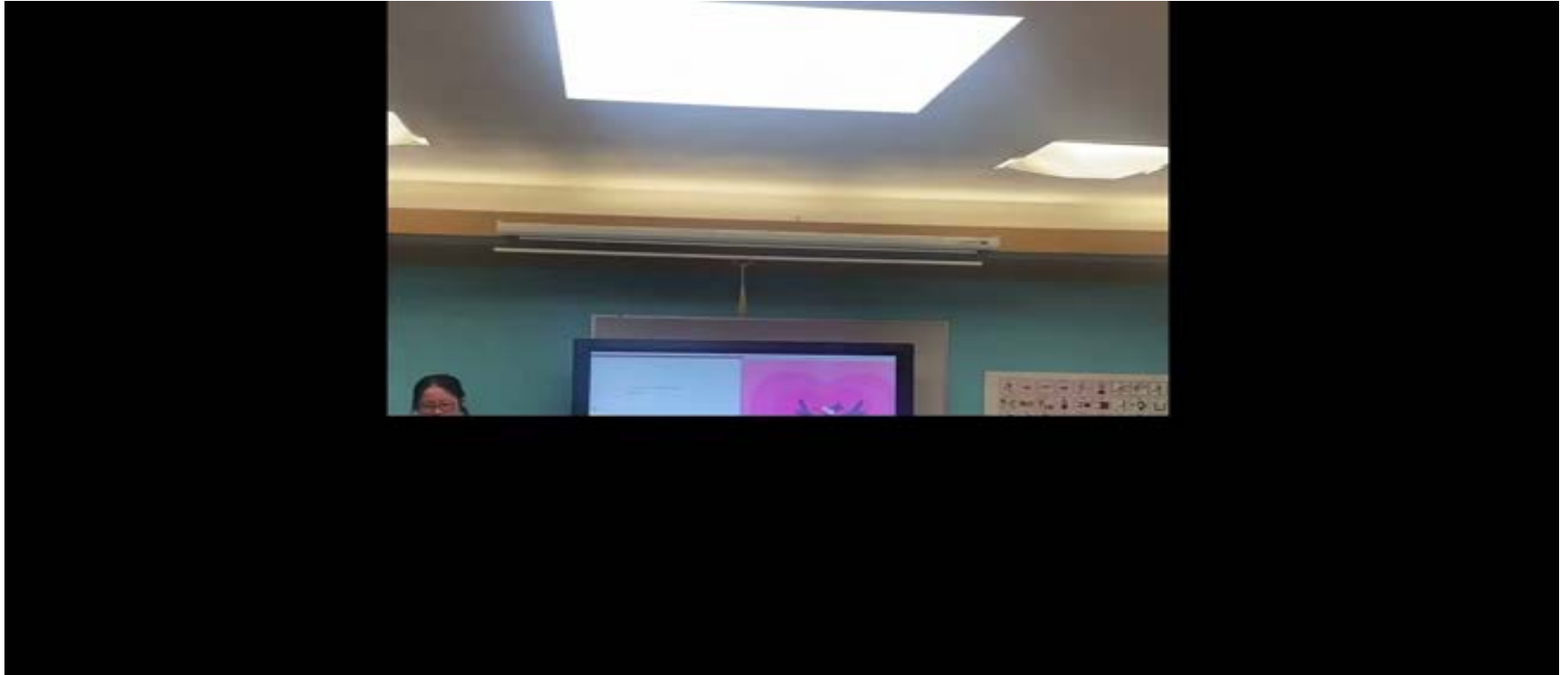


Shared reading strategies



- Aided Language Modeling - key word modeling
- Wait!
- CAR - Comment - Ask (for participation!) - Respond
 - C: “The BUTTERFLY looks so TIRED”
 - A: “Do you think he will FLY to where he needs to GO, or NO?”
 - (wait for responses from several listeners)
 - R: “B says NO, he won’t FLY. Oh no, he won’t catch up with his friends, then!”
- Encourage children to ask at least one question to each other / parents
- Proximity / intonation / volume for management of large group

Aided language commenting



Game creation



- ~20 minutes - a game or activity
- Considerations for games:
 - Ideally something that uses the day's vocabulary
 - Uses mostly available library resources, few perishables, no extensive prep
 - Ideally something that one of the participants can lead
- Some games we've played:
 - Topical Bingo (templates available on Canva, etc)
 - Movement games relevant to the books (beware of mobility limitations)
 - MadLibs



Bingo



Retelling the story
with scarves and
music



Mad Libs



About Me: Polina



- Children's Services Librarian at Union City Library (Alameda County Library system)
- Working with the community to conduct programs for children with neurodiverse and complex needs since 2018

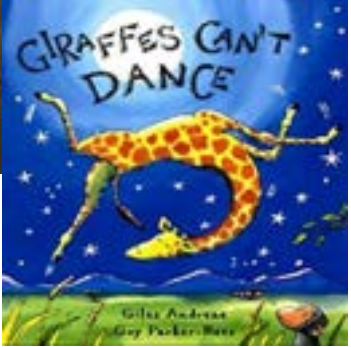
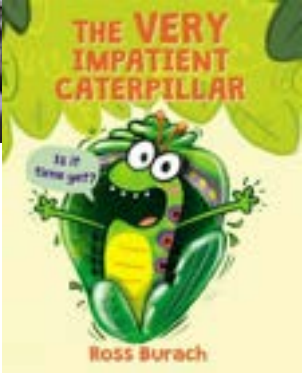
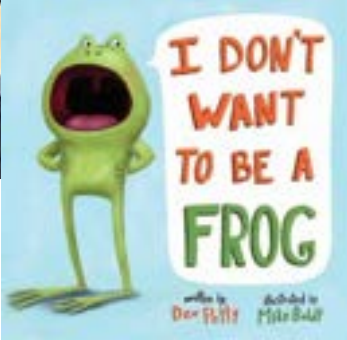


Sensory Corner & Themed Props



“...We’re thoroughly enjoying the environment [Storytime with AAC] provides. The sensory room has been especially beneficial for our son...”

Sensory Corner & Themed Props



Sensory Corner & Themed Props





Program Overview: Materials and Procedures

Materials - before program



Storytime with AAC

Saturdays, 10:30am-11:30am

Feb. 10, 2024, Feb. 24, 2024
March 2, 2024, March 16, 2024

Union City Library
34007 Alvarado-Niles Road,
CA 94587

AAC stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Build your child's communication skills through Shared Reading! "Storytime with AAC" aims to support families/caregivers of AAC users in demonstrating language on their child's AAC device, along with developing a love for reading and building language through shared interaction and connection. This program is conducted by graduate students in the Speech-Language Pathology program at Cal State East Bay.*

Who Can Attend? This program is designed for emergent communicators four years old and up (emergent communicators are new/existing AAC users who typically communicate with single words). Open to children of all abilities! Please note that communicating with an AAC device is usually very slow, and we will pace storytime with this in mind.

A parent/caregiver must accompany the child for all the sessions. Due to limited seating, we request only 1 caregiver per child. For questions or additional accommodations, please contact Polina at prubenne@aclibrary.org or 510-745-1464, ext 6.


Please register online at <https://bit.ly/storytime-with-aac>




*Funded in part by Department of Education training grant "LITTEEN with AAC." Contents do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Education.



Events › Storytime with AAC (Special Needs Friendly)



Storytime with AAC



REGISTRATION
⊗ This event is full.
[Join Waitlist](#)

CONTACT INFO

Contact: Polina
Telephone: (510) 745-1464 ext. 6
Email: prubenne@aclibrary.org

Union City

Address:
34007 Alvarado-Niles Road
Union City, CA 94587

[Get Directions](#)
Main: (510) 745-1464

Monday:	Closed
Tuesday:	10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Wednesday:	10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Thursday:	10:00 AM - 8:00 PM
Friday:	12:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Saturday:	10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sunday:	Closed

Description

Build your child's communication skills through Shared Reading! "Storytime with AAC" aims to support families/caregivers of AAC users in demonstrating language on their child's AAC device, along with developing a love for reading and building language through shared interaction and connection. This program is conducted by graduate students in the Speech-Language Pathology program at Cal State East Bay.*

Who Can Attend? This program is designed for emergent communicators four years old and up (emergent communicators are new/existing AAC users

Suitable for: Kids
Type: Storytime
Language: English
Additional Details: Inside meeting room

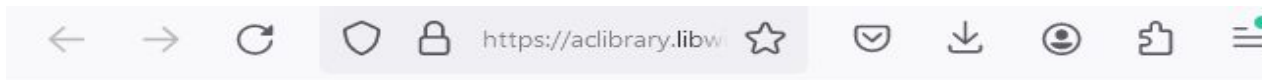
[Share](#)
[Permalink](#)

Saturday, March 2, 2024 [Add to Calendar](#)
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Union City

Flyer

Registration

Materials - after registration



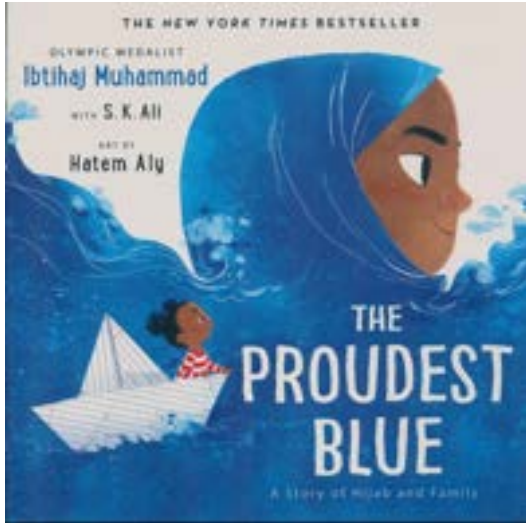
Storytime with AAC Survey

Please help us tailor Storytime with AAC to all participants by answering the questions below.

All information you provide will only be used for adapting the program and deleted in accordance with library policy. If you need to request any accommodation please reach out to Polina at prubanova@aclibrary.org

Preparing for Storytime with AAC Survey (optional)

Materials - after registration



Core Words Sheet
Book: The Proudest Blue by Ibtihaj Muhammad
Language System: Sabir's WordPower 20/Track-Chan-Level: All Basic

Target vocabulary	→	Words			
Hello	HELLO	hello			
Sister	PEOPLE	sister			
Strong	DESCRIBE A-Z	s	strong		
Whisper	ACTIONS A-Z	w	whisper		
Yell	ACTIONS A-Z	y			
Blue	Color	Blue			
Wear	ACTIONS A-Z	w	wear		
Why	QUESTION	why			

Core Words Sheet
Book: The Proudest Blue by Ibtihaj Muhammad
Language System: Protospaz20s 7x11 grid size

Target vocabulary	→	Words			
Hello	Color	hello			
Sister	People	sister			
Strong	Describe	s	strong		
Whisper	Actions	w	whisper		
Yell	Actions	y			
Blue	Color	Blue			
Wear	Actions	w	wear		
Why	QUESTION	why			

Core Words Vocabulary and Book Title

Materials - after registration



Storytime with AAC Schedule

	Greetings
	Storytime
	Break
	Activity
	Goodbye

Participation during Storytime with AAC

 	
Be comfortable	Reader reads
	
Listen and Connect	Modeling on AAC
	
Comment / Respond	Share your thoughts

Participation during Storytime with AAC

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Caregiver Guidelines for "Storytime with AAC"



1. Demonstrate story words to your child on their AAC device
-Use the vocabulary words we provide and/or words your child finds most interesting
2. Support your child when they let you know they need it
3. Enjoy the Storytime!

Important note:

Many of our group participants are very sensitive to noise and distraction and will need time and concentration to say what they need to say. To give kids space, let's keep adult talking to a minimum. [We hope the adults can converse during break or after the program!] We also suggest you let the story reader and participants interact directly with each other as much as possible. You may even move to the back of the room and observe, if your child does not need you for a part of the story.



Caregiver and Participant Guidance Materials

Visual schedule



Storytime with AAC Schedule

	Greetings
	Storytime
	Break
	Activity
	Goodbye

Participation schedule



Participation during Storytime with AAC

 <p>Be comfortable</p>	 <p>Reader reads</p>
 <p>Listen and Connect</p>	 <p>Modeling on AAC</p>
 <p>Comment / Respond</p>	 <p>Share your thoughts</p>

Caregiver guidelines



Caregiver Guidelines for “Storytime with AAC”



1. Demonstrate story words to your child on their AAC device

- Use the vocabulary words we provide and/or words your child finds most interesting

2. Support your child when they let you know they need it

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Important note:

Many of our group participants are very sensitive to noise and commotion and will need time and concentration to say what they need to say. To give kids space, let's **keep adult talking to a minimum.** (We hope the adults can connect during break or after the program!) We also suggest you **let the story reader and participants interact directly with each other as much as possible.** You may even move to the back of the room and observe, if your child does not need you for a part of the story.



Materials - during program



AAC Materials & handouts

TouchChat Core Board



prc-salttilo

16 Locations Based on WordPower™100 Based for NovaChat & TouchChat

what	when	where	ABC 123	PEOPLE	QUESTN	ACTIONS	SOCIAL	PLACES	TIME	GROUPS	DESCRIB
I	me	how	who	why	again	please	thank you	problem	now	bad	good
my/mine	am	to	be	feel	give	listen	happy	sad	tired	okay	cool
it	is are	will	come	hurt	hear	know	that	a	the	and	more
you	can	eat	drink	finish	get	love	make	need	all	at	some
your	do	go	help	open	put	say/talk	see/look	first	then	for of	on
here	have	like	play	read	stop	walk	show	walk min	in	up	off
yes	no/Don't	want	take	tell	turn	watch	wear	work	out	down	with

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Proloquo2Go Core Board



PRC Literacy Planner



PRC-Salttillo Calendar



prc-salttillo

2024
CALENDAR

Hit it Out of the Park
with AAC!

A photograph of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and light-colored shorts, smiling broadly as he swings a tennis racket. He is standing on a playground with blue and brown metal railings. The background shows green trees and a clear sky.

Supporting WordPower® on NovaChat® & TouchChat®


Modeling handouts



AAC Modeling: Read Together

- Get Attention!**
 - LOOK!
 - UH OH, OH NO!
 - WOW!
- Invite Participation!**
 - WHAT THINK?
 - WHAT NEXT?
 - WHO HELP?
 - WHAT FAVORITE?
 - YOU LIKE?
 - WHY DO?
 - WHERE GOING?
- Comment on the story!**
 - THAT COOL
 - FUNNY STORY
 - SURPRISE!
 - LIKE YOU!
 - HE SILLY
 - YOU DO THAT
 - THAT SCARY
 - EXCITING
 - HE LUCKY
 - SMART
 - NAUGHTY
 - GROSS!
- Ask for things!**
 - THIS BOOK
 - WANT SEE
 - DIFFERENT BOOK
 - READ MORE
 - AGAIN AGAIN!
 - YOU READ
 - DO MYSELF
 - YOU CHOOSE
 - WANT DONE

Reading together is a wonderful language learning activity. It offers endless of opportunities to model AAC for your learner. It's also critical for literacy development. For learners at an emergent level, it is so important for them to experience the joy of reading and start to see themselves as readers. Read together. Invite participation. Don't force it. If they don't respond, model a possible response. Above all have fun! Connect with each other and the story!

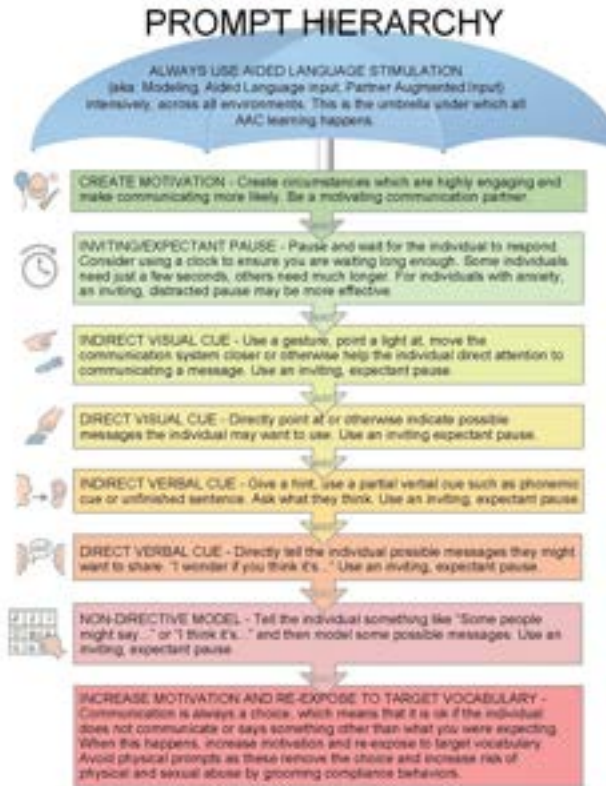


AAC
COACH

@the.aac.coach

Credit:
The AAC Coach

Prompt Hierarchy handout



(C) Kate Ahern, M.S.Ed 2016 with Shelane Nielson

(C) Kate Ahern, M.S.Ed
2016 with Shelane
Nielson

Materials - after program



Storytime with AAC Feedback

We appreciate your input about Storytime with AAC and how we can improve it.

1a. On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how would you rate this program?

1 (poor) 2 3 4 5 (excellent)

1b. Please explain you rating.

2. What can be done to improve this program? (Please feel free to tell us about seating arrangements, book visibility, or any other suggestions or accommodations you might need.)


3. Are there any considerations you'd like us to know to improve services to you and your child?

Storytime with AAC Feedback Survey



Research Results: The Impact of Storytime with AAC

The Research Survey



Storytime with AAC questionnaire

We would appreciate your input to gather information on the effectiveness of our program. This questionnaire should take about 10 minutes, and your feedback is anonymous. Please answer whichever questions are relevant. Please fill out this survey if you have attended at least **three times**.

croth@horizon.ccsueastbay.edu [Switch account](#)

🔒 Not shared

* Indicates required question

The purpose of this survey is to get your opinion about the Storytime with AAC program. The researchers are Sabena D'Souza (program coordinator), Polina Rubanova (librarian), Elena Dukhovny & Connie Roth (researchers, CSU East Bay). The survey questions will ask about your opinions and the impact of the Storytime with AAC program. The information gathered will be used for research to develop community programs for children who use AAC and may be presented at a scientific conference/meeting and/or in a paper. You have been invited to participate because your child has attended this program at least three times. The total time to complete the survey is estimated 10 minutes. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. There are no risks or benefits to you in participating in this survey. You may choose to participate or not. You may answer only the questions you feel comfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. If you do not wish to participate, you may simply not complete the survey. Your participation in the group does NOT depend on filling out the survey. If you do participate, completion and return of the survey indicates your consent to the above conditions. By clicking YES, you are indicating consent.

YES

NO

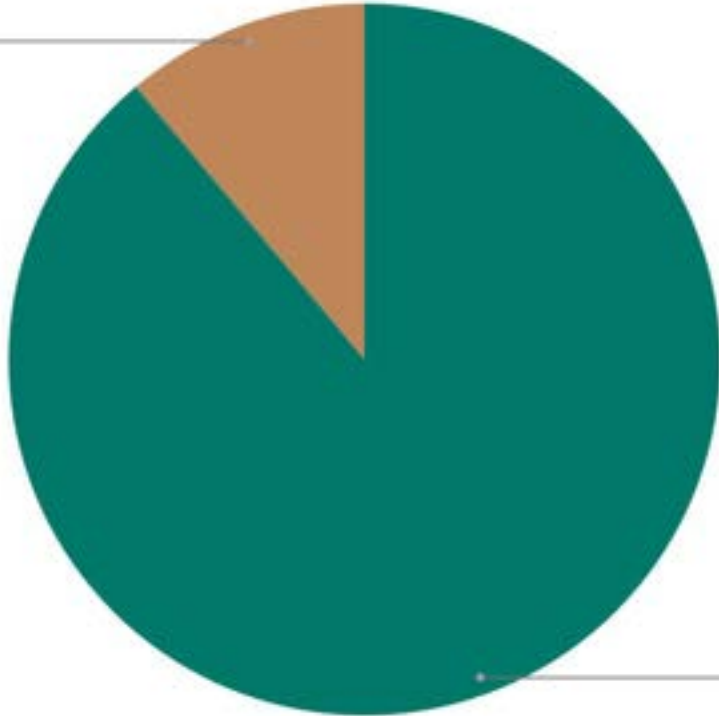
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Survey Participants



non participants
11.1%

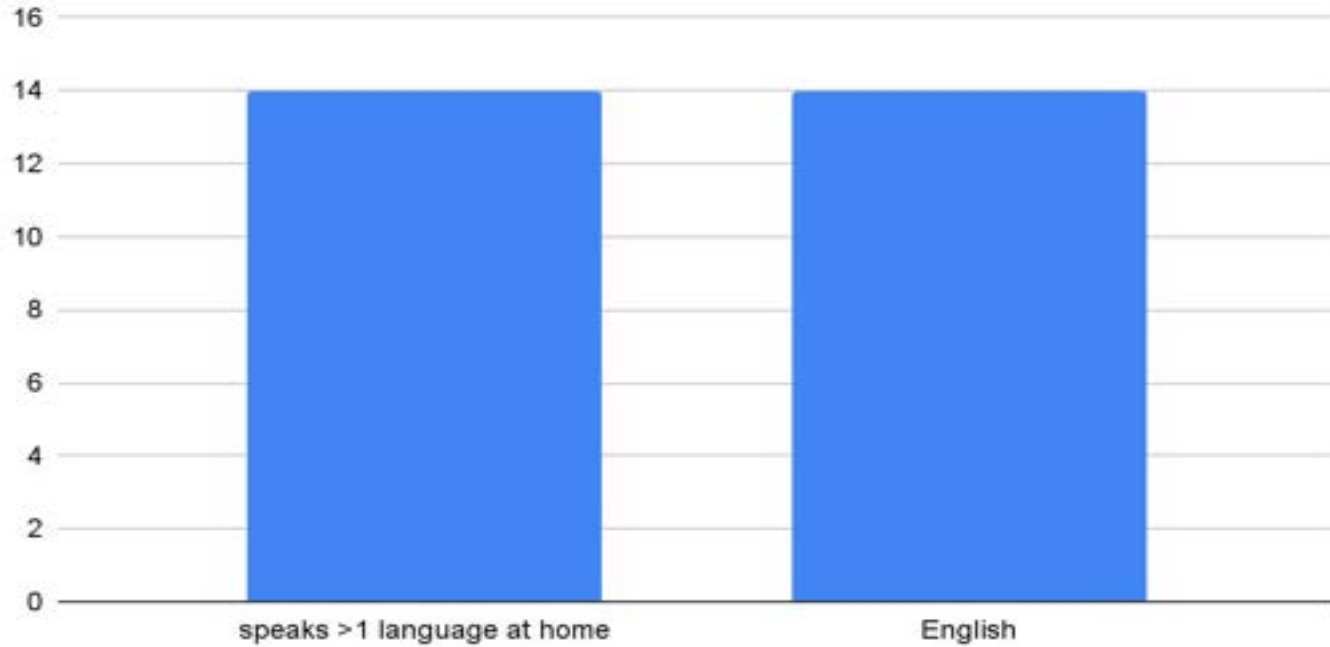


participants
88.9%

Criteria: 3 sessions or more

Survey Participants

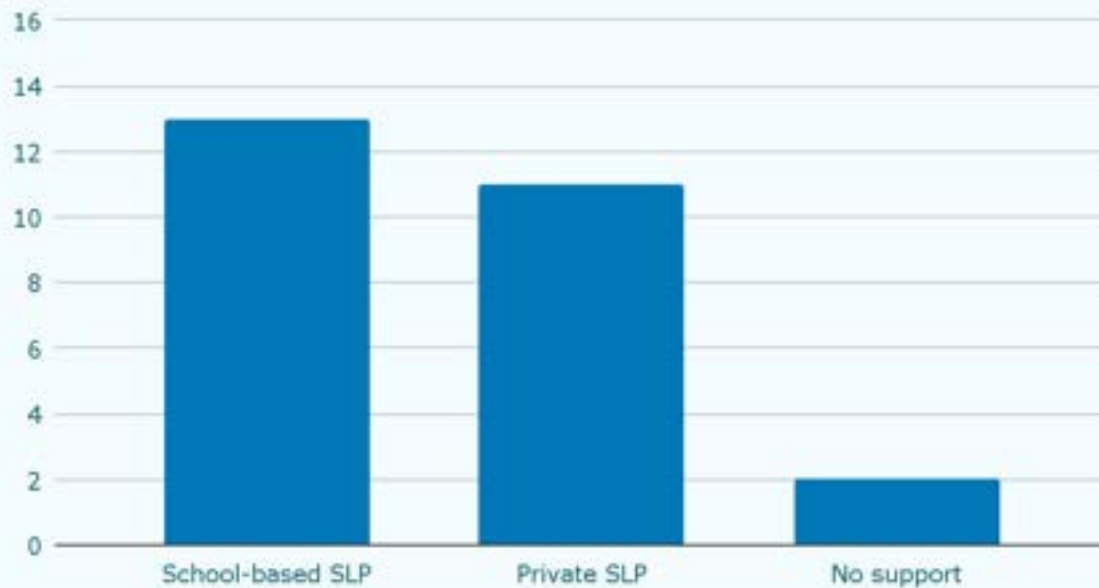
Language representation



Survey demographics



AAC Support



Survey - usefulness of supports



Overall results: 4.5+

Sending out core words vocab in advance 4.75

Vocabulary modeling on AAC device by the reader 4.5

Socialization opportunity for the child 4.5

Receiving Shared Reading handouts 4.75

Receiving additional resources on AAC (e.g. PRC Literacy Planner or other flyers), including both emailed materials and those available in hard copy at Storytime with AAC sessions. 4.63

Seeing other AAC users 4.56

Meeting other parents 4.5

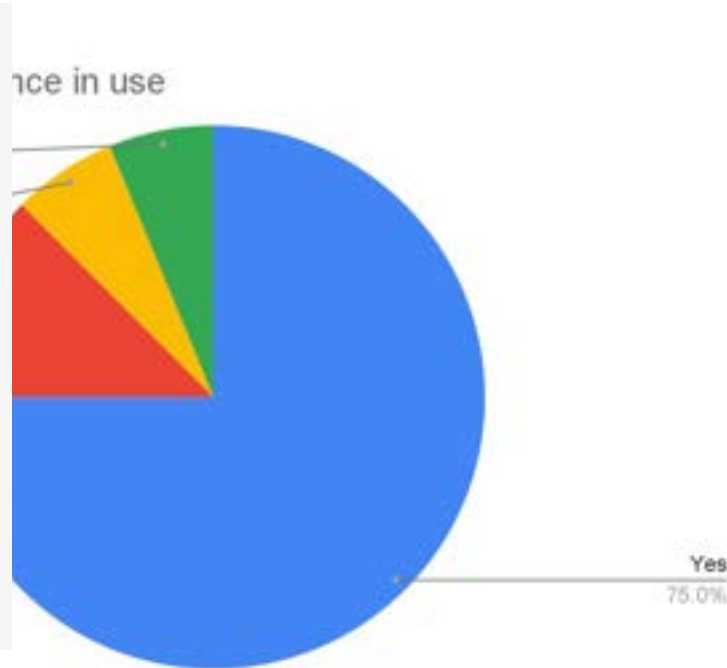
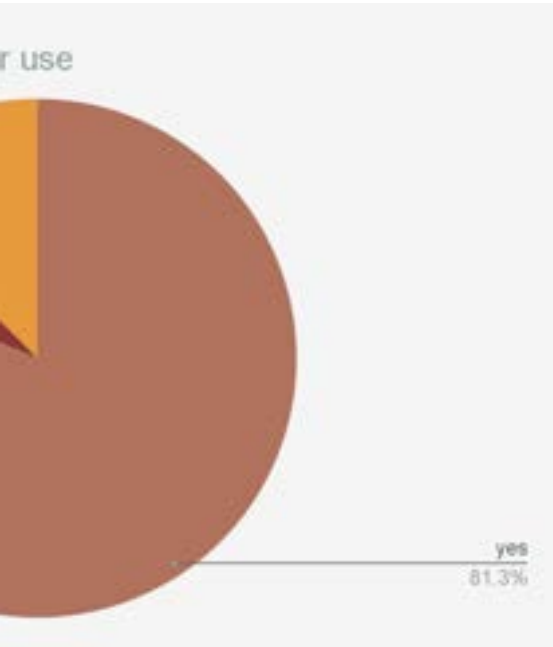
Puppets/props to go with the books 4.5

Playing games or doing other activities after Storytime 4.44

Survey - generalization



Are skills extending outside of the StoryTime?



How your child communicates

no
12.5%



Overall perception



Overall perception: 4.75

Summary of positive comments / summary of suggestions

Safe place

Encouraging to see other AAC users use their devices

Helpful to see other parents interact with their children using AAC

Resources

Social time and modeling with AAC

Fully booked

More modeling for question & answers (outside of our scope)

Book visibility & modeling at a slower pace

Having a child model

Some highlights



“Participating in Storytime with AAC has transformed our family dynamics. We joined the pilot phase, witnessing our son progress from non-speaking to effectively expressing his needs. As a mother, I gained valuable skills in efficient communication, navigating and modeling AAC. The program encourages me. It makes me believe my child can learn to use AAC too. This experience facilitated the development of communication both my child and me but also enabled us to connect with friends within the community. The support and communication from the team have been beneficial throughout this journey.”





It Takes a Team:
Roles and Perspectives

Program Coordination



- Scheduling dates for Storytime with AAC
 - Allocate readers for the program
- Props for the book
- Volunteer training
- Reviewing feedback
 - Implementing suggestions





Program Promotion



- Email to library families (Polina)
- Facebook
- Email to specialists across the Bay Area
- School District SELPA
- Disability Rights organization



Author of the book "A Day With No Words"

Celebrating AAC Awareness Month in October 2023



October is AAC Awareness Month!

In celebration of AAC Awareness Month,
Storytime with AAC

will have fun activities
for participants after
every storytime:



Union City Library
34007 Alvarado-Niles Road,
CA 94587

AAC stands for Augmentative
and Alternative Communication



October 7

We will screen the award-winning documentary *This is Not About Me*. The film follows Jordyn Zimmerman, who communicates with her iPad using an AAC app. Find out more at <https://thisisnotaboutme.film>



October 14

AAC Advocate and Storytime with AAC program volunteer Himani Hitendra will be sharing about her experience as a full-time AAC user.



October 21

Learn about community resources with Family Resource Navigators and CRE's Voice Options/Assistive Technology programs; explore AAC vendor booths with PRC and Tobii Dynavox.



October 28

Come in your costume and enjoy Halloween-themed carnival games and sensory activities!

There will be surprise, free book giveaways on certain days!



Events are for Storytime with AAC participants.
Please register online at <https://bit.ly/storytime-with-AAC>



The library is wheelchair accessible. An ADA interpreter will be provided for this program if requested at least 7 days in advance. Please contact your local AC Library at accessibility@ucplibrary.org.



[ucplibrary.org](https://www.ucplibrary.org)

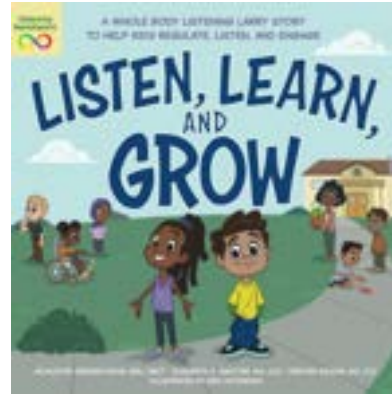


LIBRARY

Certificates and free book give-aways in October



April is Autism Acceptance Month



- Self representation with books that have autistic and neurodivergent characters.
- Perspectives of self advocates, siblings and friends
- Strategies on self regulation and mindfulness.

Connecting with your local library



- Need to serve a neurodiverse population.
- Help librarian to understand how AAC users communicate.
- Sharing resources on AAC.
- Training on modeling during Shared Reading.

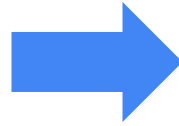


Library Role: Logistics



- Point of Contact for Participants – flyers/registration
 - If parents have questions, accommodation requests or other considerations, there is a dedicated library staff member to answer them
 - Preparation survey (AAC system, accommodations, etc.)
 - Feedback survey (what is working, how to improve, etc.)
- Ensure a Quality Program Experience
 - Library support and resources for basic program needs:
 - Sensory corner and themed props
 - Quantity of books (enough for all participants)
 - Screen and sound system (may not be needed depending on size)
 - Listening to and implementing feedback
 - From seating to program components, it took us many months to get to our current set up!

Library Role: Logistics



Library Perspective: the Library needs your expertise!



- Libraries want to expand the equity and accessibility of their services.
- We are looking for partnerships that allow us to offer quality programs beyond our traditional services and expertise. We need you!
- Programs like Storytime with AAC are a stepping stone for improving access and raising awareness in the community.



October is AAC Awareness Month at the Library

University Perspective



- Excellent unique interdisciplinary training opportunity for
 - graduate students (as readers) and
 - undergraduate students (in the future, as volunteers)
- Necessary reader resources / infrastructure at the university
 - iPads for practice
 - Training materials, including videos
 - Time between sessions for coaching and occasional trouble-shooting

Preparing SLP/SpEd professionals



StoryTime readers learn to...

- conduct best-practice shared reading
- interact with individuals who use AAC and their families
- choose story-appropriate vocabulary
- develop fluency with an AAC system
- conduct aided language modeling in natural contexts
- coach and be coached by caregivers

Initial feedback from reader(s)

- learned to be more confident navigating various AAC devices
- better perspective on how to support individuals who are AAC users
- learned to collaborate and interact with caregivers
- experience being a Storytime reader [helped] in my school internship
- can be tricky to choose ideal books (e.g. themes) for the audience... very helpful that Sabena organized an Excel sheet with books

Lessons Learned / Successes



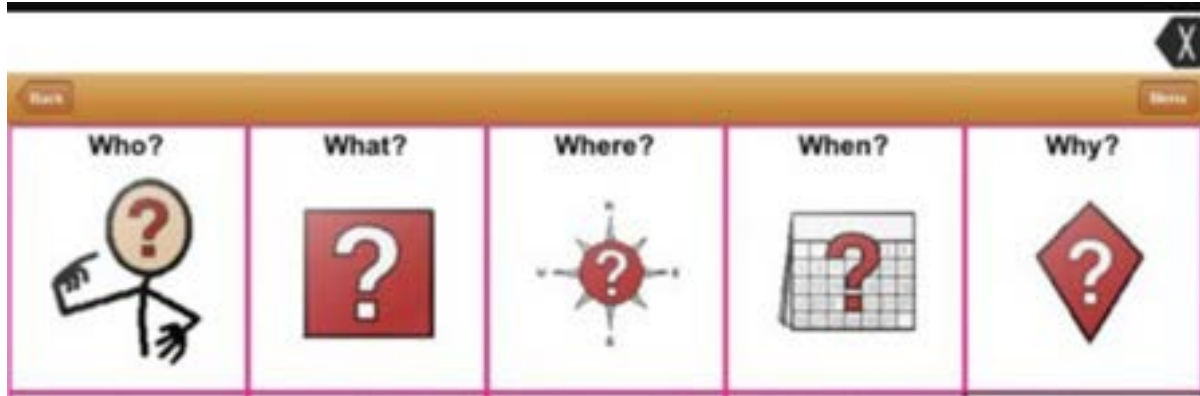
- Storytime with AAC continues to be full weekly
- Program can change with time, in consultation
 - e.g. shifting responsibilities
 - e.g. adding vocabulary practice before shared reading
 - e.g. continuing to streamline processes such as reader training, scheduling, outreach
- Age range is very wide
 - Open a separate group for younger children, if resources allow
- Shared Interaction with a large group of participants (average 10-12 families)
 - Open a separate group for younger children, if resources allow

Thank yous



- Readers: Carley Biblin, Trang Tran, Misha Kiyomura, Renata Rodriguez, Jia Qiu
- Union City Library's (former) Manager: Blane Wentworth
- Union City Library's (current) Manager: Nidya Gonzalez
- Families: Sameena & Adnan, Krithika & Brihus, all families for survey response
- AC Library's Graphic Designer/Photographer: Joshua Lieu
- Community Volunteers: Nidhi, Sai

Questions?



Handouts

