

Walking Together on the Road to Communication Autonomy

Hannah Gutke

Claire Andersen¹ and Claire Gutke

¹ Claire Andersen Speech Pathology

Short Abstract

The journey of developing AAC competency is not a sprint—it's a marathon. Reflecting on Jane Korsten's insights, an 18-month-old child typically receives 4,380 hours of oral language exposure, but for a child with AAC who receives therapy twice a week, it could take 84 years to match this level of exposure. This reality underscores the importance of consistent AAC modelling.

This presentation will focus on the story of Claire, a 14-year-old multimodal communicator whose communication toolkit includes PODD accessed via eye gaze and partner-assisted scanning. Claire's exposure to AAC modelling became more consistent from 2017 when she was 6 years old. Despite slow initial progress there have been significant gains in Claire's communication abilities. These have been attributed to persistence, collaboration, and Claire's determination to have her voice heard.

While taking some big leaps and some sharp turns, and while seeing many small steps of progress, Claire's team have continued to expose her to AAC modelling. Claire's experience reveals that progress is not just possible but inevitable when stakeholders persist, reflect, and celebrate together.

By sharing Claire's progress and some of the paths we have walked together, we aim to inspire others to continue their AAC efforts, knowing that every step, no matter how small, moves us closer to a world where every voice is heard and valued.

Long Abstract

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