Emergent Balanced Literacy:
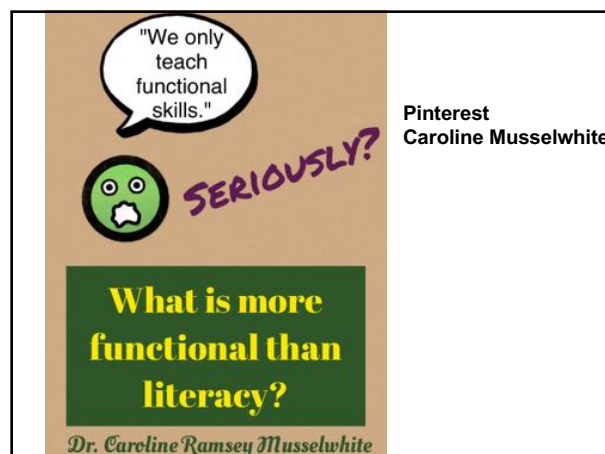## Supporting Students with Significant Disabilities

Dr. Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite
www.aacintervention.com
http://aacgirls.blogspot.com
carolinemusselwhite1@me.com

"We only teach functional skills."

SERIOUSLY?

**Pinterest
Caroline Musselwhite**

What is more functional than literacy?
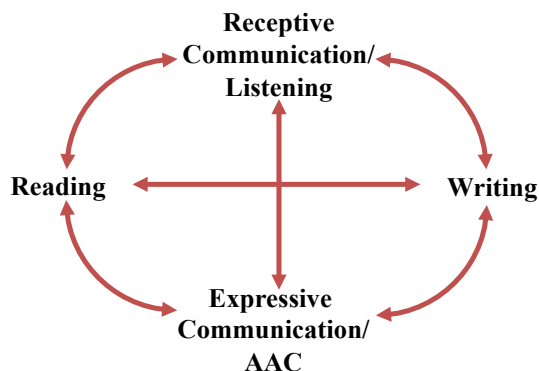
Dr. Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite

ALL Students Need . . .

- A way to communicate via a **robust language system** . . . And people to **model** use of that system for conversation and literacy!

- A **way to read**, supporting **independent story listening,** and progressing to **silent reading with comprehension**

- A **way to write**, using communication systems, but also engaging in **generative writing with the alphabet**

www.aacintervention.com

Augmentative/Alternative Communication Intervention

Oral and Written Language Development
(Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman & Yoder, 1991, adapted from Teale & Sulzby, 1989)

Receptive Communication/ Listening

Reading

Writing

Expressive Communication/ AAC

Emergent Balanced Literacy

Shared Reading

Self-Selected Listening

Phonological Awareness

Emergent Writing

National Findings

Conventional Literacy
"Fab Five"
National Reading Panel Report (NRP, 2000)

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Vocabulary
- Fluency
- Comprehension

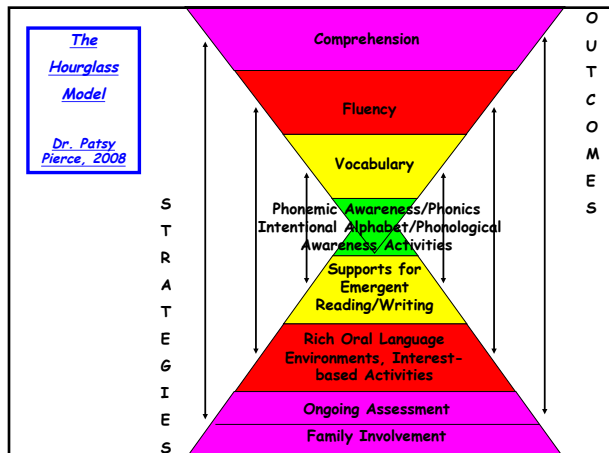**Emergent Literacy**
"Thrilling Three"
National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2005)

- Oral Language/AAC
- Alphabetic Code/ Phonological Awareness
- Print Knowledge/ Concepts

5 Research-Supported Interventions

Areas supported by research for promoting early literacy development (NELP Report)

- **Code Focused Interventions** (breaking alphabetic code – phonological awareness!)
- **Shared Reading Interventions** (reading books to / with children)
- Parent & Home Programs
- Preschool & Kindergarten Programs
- **Language Enhancement Programs** (writing, also during shared reading)

The Hourglass Model

Dr. Patsy Pierce, 2008

OUTCOMES

STRATEGIES

- Comprehension
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Phonemic Awareness/Phonics Intentional Alphabet/Phonological Awareness Activities
- Supports for Emergent Reading/Writing
- Rich Oral Language Environments, Interest-based Activities
- Ongoing Assessment
- Family Involvement

Literacy Rubric (Staugler, 07)

Are Students Emergent or Conventional???

It's on the CD!

What is Shared Reading?

"The interaction that occurs when a child and adult look at or read a book together."

Ezell & Justice, 2005

Based on home reading activities

Goals of Shared Reading

- Sharing the process of how books work
- Building language & background knowledge
- Supporting concepts about print
- Lots of discussion on every page

WHY Shared Reading?

Volcanoes

Ebbony M

- Supports language
- Helps build background knowledge
- Teaches children how books work
- Supports concepts about print
- Teaches how meaning is made from print
- Helps children take on more responsibility in reading across time

(Clay, 1993)
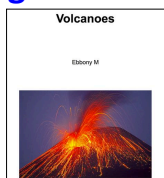
Did you know . . .

- good teachers read from at least 12 texts a DAY?

- children from literate homes have heard their favorite stories 200-400 times??

- reading aloud to children during day care, preschool, or school can impact their reading ability!

It's All About the *Interaction*

- Give student a way to interact/communicate throughout the book
- Models using student's AAC system
- Adult Responsiveness
  - Follow the child's interests
  - Attribute meaning to all student attempts - accidental or intentional
  - Communication symbols

- Be Animated!
- PAUSE, PAUSE, PAUSE
- Select Great Books
- Involve the Student with Manipulating the Book

**SHARED READING:
It's All About the
Interaction!**

January 14, 2016
Dr. Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite

angelman
SYNDROME FOUNDATION | angelman syndrome foundation | COMMUNICATION TRAINING SERIES

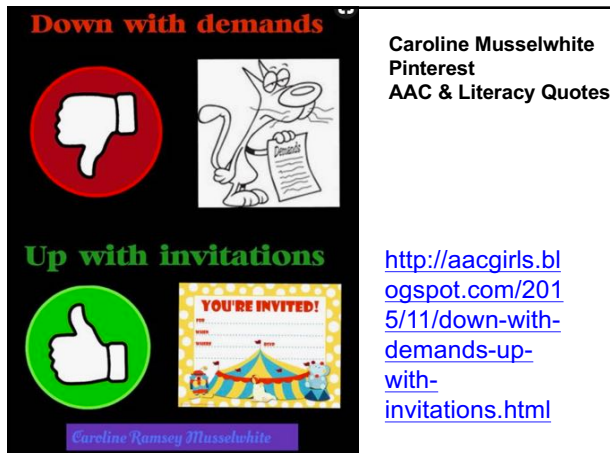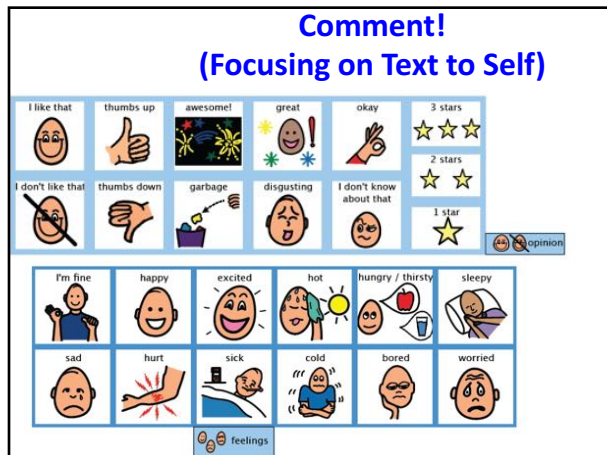www.angelman.org

Follow the CAR!

- Research supported strategy

- **Comment** on the text / what the student is doing (oh YUCK!; or Ohhh, a dinosaur!
  - wait at least 5 seconds
- **Ask** a question (Wonder how they FEEL? WHAT is THAT?)
  - wait at least 5 seconds
- **Respond** by adding more (DON'T LIKE!)

CAR strategy (Notari-Syverson, Maddox, and Cole, 1999)

Sample Goals: COMMENTING
(Download from the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies website)

- **During shared reading, student will use a communication system to make 3 or more comments, with <insert level of prompt>, on 3 out of 5 days.**

- Sample core language for comments:
  - *Positive:* GOOD   LIKE IT   LIKE THAT   I LIKE
  - *Negative :* BAD   NOT LIKE

- Sample customized language for commenting:
  - *Positive:* COOL   WOW   EPIC   AWESOME
  - *Negative:* BUMMER   GROSS   DISGUSTING

Comment!
(Focusing on Text to Self)

- Speechless Video: Cerebral Palsy Foundation
- http://yourcpf.org/speechless/topic-of-the-week

Caroline Musselwhite
Pinterest
AAC & Literacy Quotes

http://aacgirls.blogspot.com/2015/11/down-with-demands-up-with-invitations.html

Direct Qs to "I Wonder"

- Think about changing direct Questions into "I wonder" statements because:

- It feels less directive and confrontational

- For students with apraxia, the question format can make it worse

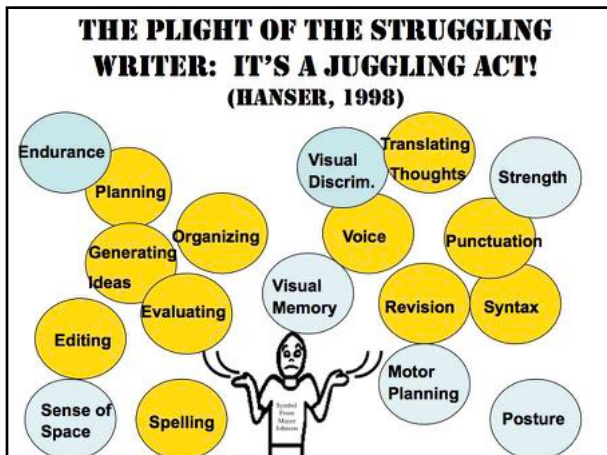- Completion is a great format for students with apraxia!

Emergent Writing

- **Emergent Writing**
  - Using symbols, words, and drawings to write
  - Scribbling with the alphabet
  - Practicing forms of writing: notes, poems, signs
  - Learning the **function** as well as the **form** of expressing the self through print

Using AAC is More Like Early Writing Than Early Speech

- Writers require us to translate our thoughts into a visual symbol

- Writing is expressive communication for those who cannot speak

- Writing removes the real-time demands of communication

Erin Sheldon, 2016

THE PLIGHT OF THE STRUGGLING WRITER: IT'S A JUGGLING ACT! (HANSER, 1998)

Endurance · Planning · Generating Ideas · Organizing · Evaluating · Editing · Sense of Space · Spelling · Visual Discrim. · Translating Thoughts · Voice · Visual Memory · Strength · Punctuation · Revision · Syntax · Motor Planning · Posture · Symbol From Mixed Islands

Important Concepts of Emergent Writing
(Hanser, 2010)

- Squiggles can be "read"- not the picture
- Squiggles have a purpose
- Squiggles are for sharing information and ideas
- You can express what is inside your head
- Something happens when you write
- Concept of a pencil - what it is and how it works
- People write for LOTS of different reasons
- It's More than Letter Identification

Important Concepts of Emergent Writing
(Hanser, 2010)

- Concept of the alphabet
- Concept of a letter
- Concept that squiggles can be put in many different orders
- Squiggles have names
- Squiggles make sounds
- Alphabetic principle-Each squiggle has a name and a sound

Writing Pyramid

Word Banks

Core + Content: Words from Device / Set
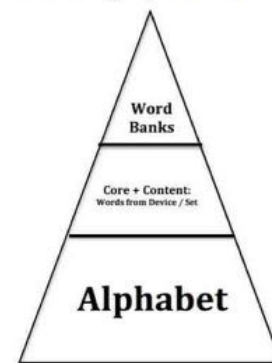
Alphabet

Dr. Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite
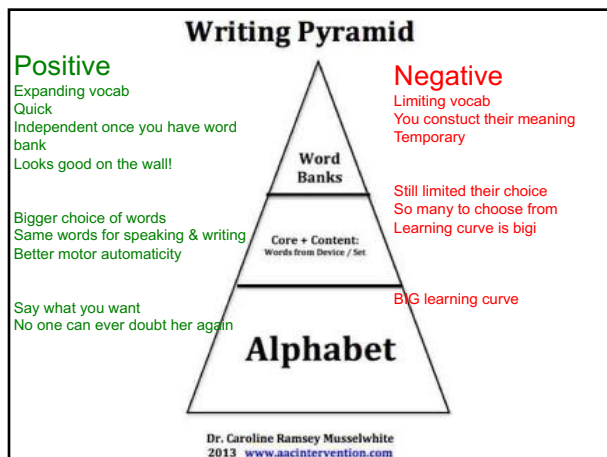2013 www.aacintervention.com

Try to avoid *temporary* language!

here   today   gone   tomorrow

The Power of 26 !

Using the __alphabet__ is the one way that students can express ANYTHING they want!

Writing Pyramid

Positive
Expanding vocab
Quick
Independent once you have word bank
Looks good on the wall!

Bigger choice of words
Same words for speaking & writing
Better motor automaticity

Say what you want
No one can ever doubt her again

Negative
Limiting vocab
You constuct their meaning
Temporary

Still limited their choice
So many to choose from
Learning curve is bigi

BIG learning curve

Word Banks

Core + Content: Words from Device / Set

Alphabet

Dr. Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite
2013   www.aacintervention.com

Help is on the way! Get an "*Alternative*" Pencil!

Pinterest: Accessing the Alphabet

The PRINT Alphabet Flip Chart

- What is it?

- Who can write with this pencil?

- How does it work?

AlphaBook

Developed by Kevin Arnold, SpEd teacher, District 75, NYC

Form and Function in Writing

- **Form**: how writing looks and is created
- **Function**: the purposes of writing

- Form follows function in language development
- For students with significant disabilities focus is often on form due to motor difficulties
- A primary focus on form may interfere with the development of understanding of function

- Pick a pencil that has the least brainpower going to form.

Gretchen Hanser   36

Predictable Chart Writing

- Predictable Chart Writing is a shared, group writing activity that results in a classroom book.
- This writing activity has been adapted by CLDS (Gretchen Hanser, PhD) for students who are unable to speak and unable to hold a pencil.
- It has been modified from the activities described in Predictable Chart Writing, by Williams, Carson & Dellosa.

https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/deaf-blind-model-classroom-resources/predictable-chart-writing

Steps for Predictable Charts

- Day 1: Write Chart (ex: I like _____, with each student contributing)
- Day 2: Reread the Sentences
- Day 3: Working with Cutup Sentences
- Day 4: Be the Sentence
- Day 5: Make a Book

https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/deaf-blind-model-classroom-resources/predictable-chart-writing

Kid in Story App, $6.99

Who? How?

- I do
  - Teacher (or other) models language, models writing

- We do
  - Think-aloud as you explore vocabulary and write down words (give choices, use devices)

- You do
  - Offer time for students to choose their own words (or letters)

CONNECTING TO TEXTS
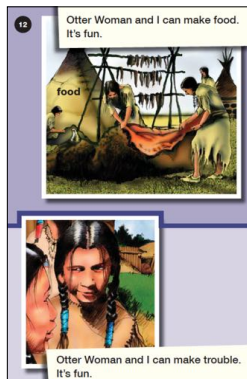
She Can

She can make a boat.

She can make food.

She can make trouble.

She can walk.

She can ride.

She can talk.

She can not fly!

Great Resources for Predictable Chart Writing: Angelman.org
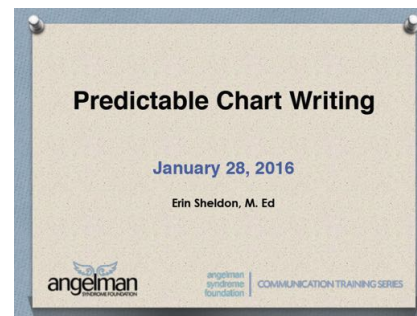
www.angelman.org   Communication Training Series # 25

Self Selected Listening

- **Self-Selected Listening**

  - Student select reading materials
  - Building language & background knowledge
  - Supports include: peer readers, books on tape, computerized books

  - Supports vocabulary, concepts about print, listening comprehension, but is NOT independent reading

WHAT Should Be Included?

- Teacher read-alouds

- Students reading at own level from a variety of books

- Teacher conferencing with students

- Opps to share what they are reading

Problem-Solving Motor Access

- **Book Access**
  - Adapted light tech books
  - Books online
  - Books on iPads
- **Choicemaking Access**
  - Partner assisted scanning
  - Switches
  - Eye Gaze

Did you know . . .

- 'good' 1st grade teachers have more than 1500 books in their classroom libraries!

So What??

Personal Experience Books

- Light Tech or High Tech
- Make it engaging and rich
- Save them for reading over and over and over

TAR HEEL READER: GET A BOOK-NOW!
from University Of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

- Developed by Gary Bishop & Karen Erickson

- Free resource for easy, easy, easy books

- Appropriate for beginning readers, especially those who are older

- Accessible via switches and Intellikeys

- Authoring tool for teachers

www.tarheelreader.org

Save Your Faves!

[158617,144590,144536,134314,135515,90892,1](#)
[25451](#)

Tarheel Reader

Collections in Tarheel Reader

Book Bridge

- Created engaging, picture supported chapter summaries
  - *Hatchet, Shiloh, Tuck Everlasting*, etc.
- Placed summaries at Tarheel Reader (ex: About Hatchet)
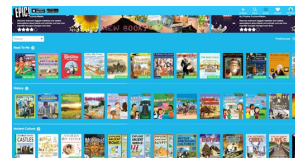
Boardmaker Online / Boardmaker Instructional Solutions

Epic Books, Free for Educators!
$5/month for Others

- **Has range of topics & genres**
- **Can set student preferences**
- **Switch accessible for page turning –use left & right arrows**
- **Has read outloud feature**
  - Con: when read outloud is on-book goes by itself

Letter of the Week Club???

"Today is brought to you by the letter 'D'."

"Hey, it's D / duh week!!"

Tip: www.aacintervention.com   November, 2014
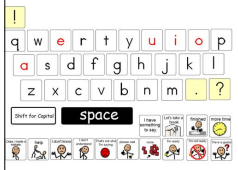
Alphabet Books for Older Students

Tip: www.aacintervention.com December, 2014

Using Alternative Pencils for Alphabet Activities
(Hanser, 2010)

- Teaches
  - Locating and selecting a letter
  - Letter knowledge (concept, name, sound)

- It's about building **meaning**

- Talking about letters and connecting it to something they know helps give the letter meaning

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Alphabet Action Man!

- AAC Intervention

Alphabet Action Man Game
Alphabet Action Man!
Lose the Drill & Kill - Make it FUN!!

WHAT AND WHY: Too often, students with significant disabilities are taught the alphabet through flip-cards and other boring, inauthentic tasks. The Alphabet Action Man Game is a quick activity for making alphabet instruction fun and meaningful.

WHO IS THIS FOR: This game is great for students who are learning the alphabet, but needing to connect letters to meaning. It's also great for students who find it difficult to attend to lengthy instruction. The game offers a quick chance to engage with the alphabet while taking a 'movement break.'

HOW TO PLAY IT:
1) When the students are starting to get antsy, let one student pick a letter. Note – be sure to let students pick from the entire alphabet. Sample ways to pick are:
   a) Alternative pencils (ex: Alphabet Flipboard)
   b) Magnetic ABCs app
   c) Alphabet page on their AAC device / app
   d) Word Wizard app
   Note: Don't spend long picking a letter – this should be quick!
2) Have two people call out an action to go with the letter. For example, if the letter is J:
   a) Teacher calls out 'Jog'
   b) Para calls out 'Jive'
   c) One student quickly votes for Jog
   d) All students 'jog' as leader holds up letter J (on popsicle stick) and chants "Let's jog, jog, jog for J"

REMEMBER! This should be quick and fun! Play this for 2-3 minutes, several times a day

Dr. Caroline Ramsey Musselwhite 2013   www.aacintervention.com

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Definition

Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words

National Reading Panel Report, p. 2-1

What's important is conscious, analytic knowledge

Research Findings

PA Training works BEST when
- teaching is EXPLICIT
- teaching is FOCUSED (2 - 3 kinds of activities)
- MORE is not always BETTER
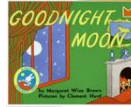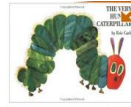 - (5-18 hours most effective)
- LETTERS are included

PA WORKS:
- In small GROUPS
- With teachers or COMPUTERS

Good news from Marilyn Adams

- the activities that seem to lead most strongly to the development of phonemic awareness are those involved in learning how to read and spell" (1990, p. 331).

What Should We Read?

- Poems
- Hand claps
- Songs
- Other rhyming texts

Caroline's Big 4 Poets

- **Jack Prelutsky**
  - *New Kid on the Block*

- **Ogden Nash**
  - *The Ogden Nash Treasury*

- **Shel Silverstein**
  - *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

- **Kenn Nesbitt**
  - *www.poetry4Kids.com*

Developmental Spelling

Voting during shared reading

Vote for animals:
-Read a book w/ animals
-Vote for favorite
-Choose / write letters

Voting during writing – what will be our topic?

Vote By Letters: How

Tips
1) Use photos without text – students pick what they want (pointing, eye gaze, partner scanning)
   (e.g., burrito vs. pizza)
2) Eat the elephant in small bites – limited letters from the full alphabet
   (e.g., AlphaBoard with cover up; 1 line of the alphabet flip chart; 5 letters on computer or device keyboard)

AlphaBoard Sample

P Q R S

• AlphaBoard with cover-up; student chose picture of 'pizza' – now trying to find the letter that starts pizza
• Use 'evaluative feedback'
-Student points to S; partner says 'That would be 'sizza'. We're looking for 'pizza' <pause>
-Student points to P; partner says
- '/p/ - pizza' – yes, we need a P for pizza!

Tip: April, 2011 www.aacintervention.com

Insta-Charting: Letters

C H M

ABCDEFGHIJKLM
NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

How To:
• Settings
• Turn off all but 1 color
• Close app & x it off in toolbar
• Reopen & voila! 1 color only!!!

Magnetic Alphabet

Insta-Charting: Sounds

c h   b   a

q w e r t y u i o p
a s d f g h j k l ⇧
z x c v b n m ' . -
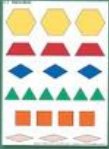
How To:
• Settings
• Choose Qwerty or Alphabet

Word Wizard