

# Necessary Components of Successful AAC Consideration (Part 1 )

May 9, 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

(Note: This time frame is different from our usual TechKnowledge webinars)

**Skill Level: “Beginintermediate”**

If a student is not successfully using verbal speech as her or his primary form of expression by the age of 3, the educators working with that student should be considering augmentative/alternative communication. All too often, the belief that a child is too young, too disabled, or simply not ready, prevents or delays the implementation of a robust AAC system to help learn language.

In the first of a two-part session, we will examine practices for coaching educational professionals and families in the selection and use of robust communication systems for early language learners which embed the concept of presuming an individual’s competence by adopting the philosophy of the *Least Dangerous Assumption*.

Participants will explore the importance of core vocabulary for all early language learners, as well as how to integrate fringe vocabulary that enhances and enriches successful communication. This session will embed current research in the use of AAC. The importance of aided language stimulation, motor planning, and engineering the environment for communication will be highlighted throughout the session. Leave equipped with effective methodologies, strategies, and perspectives necessary to consider AAC systems that work to usher students down a path and into a world where they become functional communicators.



# Necessary Components of Successful AAC Consideration (Part 2 )

May 10, 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

(Note: This time frame is different from our usual TechKnowledge webinars)

**Skill Level: “Beginintermediate”**

Working to provide students with a way to communicate is often a difficult task wrought with barriers and challenges. Learning language is less like one person opening a locked door and more like a team of construction workers building a house. Rarely is it the case that a dynamic augmentative communication device is put in place and then suddenly scores of language come spilling out of a student without persistent, focused support. It takes a consistent, collaborative effort to implement a functional language system. Together we’ll explore proven strategies for teaching even the youngest students how to become effective, functional communicators by teaching them language and by engineering the school, home, and community environments so that all communicators have opportunities for rich, meaningful practice of language in the context of everyday routines.

This session will embed current research in the use of AAC. We will take an in-depth look at coaching communication partners and how coaching practices empower parents and educators to take ownership of promoting the use of AAC systems in every lesson, activity, and endeavor all day long in all environments. Leave equipped with effective methodologies, strategies and perspectives necessary to implement AAC systems that work to usher students down a path and into a world where they become functional communicators.

**Presenter: Christopher R. Bugaj, MA, CCC-SLP, is a founding member of the Assistive Technology Team for Loudoun County Public Schools.**



Christopher R. Bugaj, MA, CCC-SLP, is a founding member of the Assistive Technology Team for Loudoun County Public Schools. Chris hosts *The A.T.TIPSCAST*, <http://attipscast.com>, a multi-award-winning podcast featuring strategies to design educational experiences. Chris is the co-author of *The Practical (and Fun) Guide to Assistive Technology in Public Schools* published by the International Society on Technology in Education (ISTE) and has designed and instructed online courses for ISTE on the topics of Assistive

Technology and Universal Design for Learning. Chris is also the author of *ATEval2Go*, <http://bit.ly/ateval2go>, an iPad app that helps professionals in education perform technology assessments for students. Chris co-authored two chapters for a book published by Brookes Publishing titled *Technology Tools for Students with Autism*. Chris co-produces and co-authors the popular *Night Light Stories* podcast, <http://nightlightstories.net>, which features original stories for children of all ages. Chris has presented over 250 live or digital sessions at local, regional, state, national and international events, including TEDx, all of which are listed at <http://bit.ly/bugajpresentations>. His latest book, *The New Assistive Tech: Making Learning Awesome For All*, <http://bit.ly/thenewat4all>, also published by ISTE, will be available in the Spring of 2018.

