

## CR20-43 Augmentative and Alternate Communication for Kids with Complex Communication Needs

**PRESENTED BY****Christopher R. Bugaj****SERIES SESSIONS**

Date	Time
February 10, 2020	9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
February 24, 2020	12:30 PM - 3:30 PM
May 08, 2020	9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

**LOCATION****Online - Your Computer****FEE****\$325.00****QUESTIONS?****Contact Us:****780-623-2248****REGISTER ONLINE****Visit our website to register:****Ines.ca**

### Program

This descriptor provides the 'overall' focus for these conversations. Exact session breakdowns, will be determined by the presenter and participants as they progress through the three sessions of this series! If a student is not successfully using verbal speech as her or his primary form of expression, the educators working with that student should be considering augmentative/alternative communication. 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 construct a functional language system. 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 this session we will examine practices for coaching educational professionals and families in the 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. 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 use of AAC. We will take an in-depth look at the role of SLPs and others in how to coach 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. 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. The importance of aided language stimulation, motor planning, and engineering the environment for communication will be highlighted throughout the session. Explore tools and strategies to collect data to demonstrate progress and next steps needed. 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.

This learning opportunity is being offered through a grant from Alberta Education.

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## Presenters

### **Christopher R. Bugaj**

Christopher R. Bugaj, MA CCC-SLP is a founding member 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 and co-hosts the Talking With Tech (<http://bit.ly/twtpod>) podcast featuring interviews and conversations about augmentative and alternative communication. Chris is the co-author of The Practical (and Fun) Guide to Assistive Technology in Public Schools(<http://bit.ly/chewatamazon>) 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 app for iPad 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 300 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: Make Learning Awesome For All (<http://bit.ly/thenewat4all>), also published by ISTE, is available for order now!

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## Registration Notes

Registration includes a continental breakfast and lunch on May 8, 2020.