

## A Communication Success Story

### NOT IF, BUT HOW... OUR AAC SUCCESS STORY

By Alison Burgess

My son received his AAC just about a year ago. It is hard to imagine our life with out it now. Wyatt took to his "talker" immediately. He quickly learned how to ask for his needs and wants, and we were thrilled. Our non verbal, visually impaired son, living with autism finally had a voice. But, that was just the beginning. A few months into using his talker, Wyatt started to tell us stories. Stories about his day, what he liked, events he remembered, and the best was when he started to talk about his friends.

We are amazed at what he is able to say with his talker. He had an exciting Fourth of July, at a monster truck show with some friends of ours. I had stayed home with his baby brother. He excitedly burst into the door, ran to his talker and announced "I go there, Becky, Addison, Mike, Brandon, Daddy, Landon, Dylan (all the people that went to the show with him) July, color red color white, color blue." Now, that is not a perfect sentence but wow, I totally understood what he was saying, and was thrilled that he was able to share that with me.



We have loved discovering his unique sense of humor, his favorite thing right now is to refer to me as "driver" as in "driver, go to therapy" he thinks this is hilarious, and tonight

he told us "go potty, go outside" evidently our recent camping trip, made quite an impression:) These are not things he could ever convey with other AAC programs. We feel so blessed to have this form of communication for him.

The most impactful part of having an AAC is the verbal language, it has fostered. Before receiving Wyatt's talker, he had a few grunts, that represented a handful of words. As he learned to motor plan sentences, and receive the auditory confirmation on his talker, something started to happen. He started to speak real words. At first he was really hard to understand, but with practice, they have become much more clear, and now not even a year later, he is able to speak sentences, and echo almost anything. His talker is now working as a bridge between what he can say, and when he wants to convey a more complex thought.

Wyatt has not all been easy for us. Like many kids on the spectrum, Wyatt struggles to generalize, and it has been no different with his AAC. He is needing extra help to use his talker at school as proficiently as he does at home. But, he has a committed team, and we have made great strides in that area in the last few months.

We use to think in terms of "if" our son would communicate, and now we know it is only a matter of "how."

Thank you. We have loved getting to know our son!

*Wyatt received an AAC evaluation from the Children's Center in Bethany, OK. He is using a Vantage from PRC. His mother and educational team attended a LAMP training.*

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