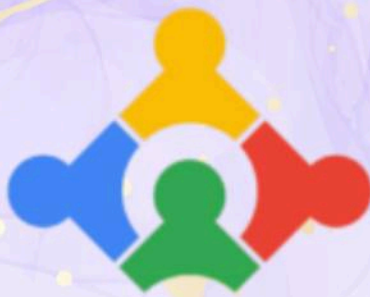


Accepting the SPECTRUM

May 2026 Newsletter
By: Grace Majewski, RBT



COLLABORATIVE
ABA SERVICES, LLC

Welcome to May! In this month's newsletter, we are going to talk about communication, which is so much more than spoken words, especially for those with autism. Every day, individuals communicate through gestures, facial expressions, AAC programs, body language, pictures, sign language, behavior, and so much more. As we continue to grow in understanding and acceptance, it's important to recognize that communication looks different for everyone. With this being said, every form of communication deserves to be respected and supported. This month, we're highlighting the many ways communication can develop and how families, staff, and communities can help create environments where every voice is heard.

Communication Comes in Many Forms....

All Communication is Valid

Communication does not have to look a certain way to be meaningful. Whether someone uses words, signs, AAC, or other methods that work for them, their communication is valid. When we honor all forms of communication, we help build confidence, connection, and independence.



AAC Myth-Busting...

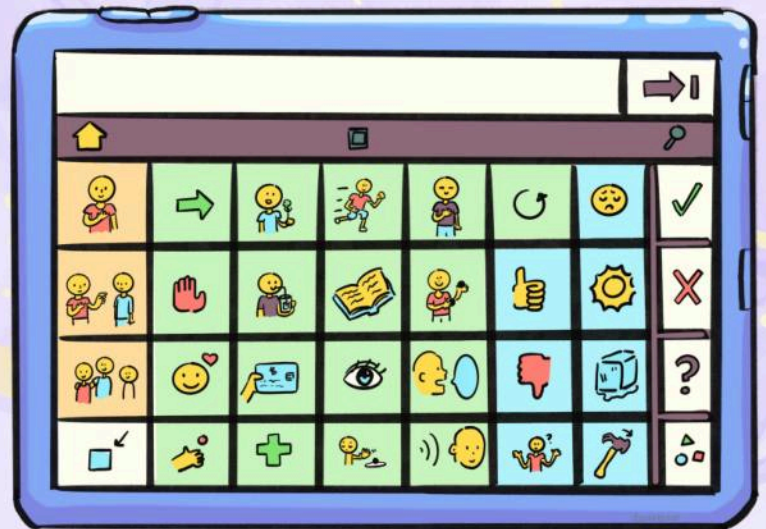
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems, such as communication devices, picture-systems, or speech-generating apps are proven to actually support communication instead of replace it. One common myth or misconception is that AAC prevents spoken language development, but research shows that AAC can actually encourage and strengthen communication skills while reducing frustration and increasing participation in communication methods.

"All Behavior is a Form of Communication."

This is a common quote in Applied Behavior Analysis as behavior often communicates something a person may not yet have the skills or methods to express. A child may be communicating that they are overwhelmed, frustrated, confused, excited, tired, or in need of support, but unsure how to get it. By looking beyond the behavior itself and considering the message behind it, caregivers and professionals can better understand and support an individual's needs. Teaching functional communication skills can help replace challenging behaviors when children have the means necessary to express wants, needs, and emotions effectively. This is why allowing them to do so with the methods that they find most comfortable is so important!

Functional Communication Skills

No matter what method is used, functional communication skills are an important aspect of life and wellbeing. Functional communication focuses on helping individuals express their wants, needs, feelings, and choices in effective ways. This may include asking for help, a break, expressing discomfort, or gaining attention appropriately. Through consistent modeling, prompting, and reinforcing communication attempts, functional communication can help reduce frustration and increase independence. Remember - all behavior is a form of communication!



Tips for Creating Communication Opportunities at Home

- Keep favorite items visible but out of reach to create opportunities to have the learner request them.
- Offer two choices and have the learner explicitly pick one instead of anticipating wants or needs automatically.
- Pause during songs, games, or familiar routines (example: "Ready, set.....")
- Narrate activities throughout the day using simple language (example: "Mommy is cutting up carrots for lunch. You are reading a book, you like this book!")
- Celebrate all attempts at communication, even if prompted or not perfect!
- Follow your child's interests and their lead in play to create even more opportunities for interaction.

Agency News

See us at the Autism Walk and Resource Fair!

Where?

Quinnipiac University
North Haven, CT

When?

Sunday, May 17, 2026
8:00 - 1:00am
Walk starts at 9:30am

Click the logo to register for free:



Join us for our next Sensory Friendly Night!

Where?

Adventure Palace, Meriden CT

When?

June 26, 2026
5pm-8pm

Don't forget to check out...

CollabWait



COLLABWAIT

Clarity, Support, and Real Updates

— All in One Place

CollabWait is a new software launched by Collaborative ABA Services, LLC that helps navigate services with confidence by showing waitlist positions, agency availability, and important updates in real-time. Agencies and families can learn more about CollabWait at www.collabwait.com

Lisa's Coaching Center

The #1 Autism Advocacy Lesson I Learned in 18 Years Advocating for My Son

When it comes to support for your child with autism, you will not receive anything you do not ask for multiple times and in writing.

Alright, maybe from time to time you will get lucky.

But that is the exception, not the rule.

The importance of this cannot be overstated.

I talk to autism moms every day who are exhausted, frustrated, and confused.

They want to know why their autistic child's school is not following the IEP, offering additional supports, or proactively problem-solving.

"It's in the IEP," they say.

"It's the law," they say.

"They are the autism experts," they say.

I get why they are frustrated, but I also see so many autism parents get stuck here.

Here is what I tell them: Maybe they should, but the fact is, they are not.

Why?

Maybe it is limited staffing, pressure from administration, competing demands, budget constraints, or a team that does not yet understand the level of support your child needs.

You will likely never know.

That's why I coach clients to focus on what they do know. And that is this: their child is struggling; the status quo is not working, and something needs to change.

This is what autism advocacy is all about.

You ask. You put it in writing. You follow up. You ask again.

You document what happened, what was promised, what was missed, and what still needs to change.

Because schools and systems rarely move just because a child is struggling. Systems move when ignoring the problem becomes harder than dealing with it.

That is why a written record is critical.

That is why I tell autism moms all the time: put it in writing.

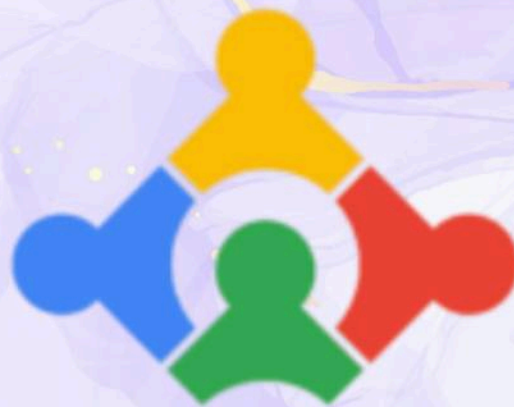
Even when you already said it on the phone. Even when you already said it during the IEP meeting. Even when you think everyone already knows.

Ask again, in writing, and copy everyone.

Rinse and repeat.

Does this mean you will always get what your child needs? Unfortunately, no.

But this is where advocacy starts.



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