

Implementation of an Eyegaze Loan Program to increase exposure, access and experience with eyegaze technology

Eyegaze systems developed over recent decades offer exciting possibilities for those with severe speech and physical impairments (SSPI), whose direct access options to speech generating devices, writing systems, educational and leisure activities and/or environmental controls have been limited in the past.

At a Canadian AAC clinic, clinicians realized that while many of those with SSPI and their families were very excited and optimistic about the potential this technology, successful functional use remained out of the reach of most. Although prices have come down in recent years, the cost of this technology still makes it an unattainable option for many. The availability of informed and skilled facilitators to ensure proper set up, troubleshooting and ongoing support is rarely available even for those who manage to get the funds to purchase a system.

Through social media, parents hear what is available and dream of finding a solution to their child's struggles with independent access to their environment and technology and ultimately having their child be recognized as capable. Clinicians recognize the parent's wishes. They also see that it is not just a question of putting the technology in front of the children, Often potential users need time and experience with the technology to learn to use it. This is especially true for children who may just be in the early stages of interaction with technology. Therapists also feel they need time with their clients and the equipment in order to judge whether it is in fact a good fit and to feel like their clients are given a fair evaluation.

This poster will describe the first year of a program developed at OCTC, whereby an AAC team applied for funds to buy an eyegaze system which could be loaned out to their clients and families. It was made available to children with SSPI to take home for a period of three weeks. The goals for the loaner period varied for each child and family, depending on their individual skills and abilities. Access to the system allowed them to experiment for a few weeks, in the comfort of their own house and the reality of their daily life, and consider if this equipment could represent a viable option for their child and family. At the end of their loan period, parents were asked to complete a questionnaire related to the training received and their overall experience. The information obtained from these questionnaires will be shared.

The authors disclose they have no financial or other interest in objects or entities mentioned in this paper.

Amita Furgoch and Carole Chabot



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Program Planner/Instructional Personnel’s Name: Amita Furgoch

Course Title: Implementation of an Eyegaze loan Program to Increase exposure, Access and Experince with Eyegaze Technology

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Signature Amita Furgoch

Date June 27/16



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Signature *Carole Chabot*

Date