



July 10, 2012

Dear ISAAC Members,

Re: Facilitated Communication Position Statement – Update and Next Steps

We would like to thank all of the ISAAC membership who submitted input on the development of a position statement for ISAAC on Facilitated Communication (FC). Over the past decade, members from different parts of the world have, on several occasions, asked the ISAAC Executive to provide its input around FC as an AAC strategy. As the authenticity of authorship of messages is central to AAC intervention, we believe that ISAAC has a role in strengthening awareness of authentic communication in the use of AAC strategies.

We need to acknowledge that the ISAAC membership represents a diverse group of stakeholders including users of AAC, their families, professionals from different disciplines and manufacturers/developers. This diversity is what makes ISAAC unique. Respect and tolerance for the views of different stakeholders is central to furthering our field and the development of the ISAAC community we serve. To accommodate multiple perspectives on FC within one framework and methodology can however be challenging. The process thus needs to ensure that the development of a position statement is open to sequential phases of input in which stakeholders can provide diverse perspectives to illuminate existing evidence in the field.

The ISAAC scientific community has a responsibility to ensure that members, who are interested in using alternative communication strategies like FC, are aware of potential risks attached based on scientific evidence. The ISAAC Executive regards the development of a position statement as an opportunity for the incorporation of a broad diversity of perspectives in helping us move forward on issues like authorship and authenticity in the field of AAC.

Thank you for the responses we have received based on the call for input into the proposed position statement on FC. We appreciate the effort that went into the formulation and development of these submissions. We received numerous and very diverse input on the proposal for the development of an FC position statement for ISAAC which necessitates more in-depth discussion with ISAAC stakeholders.



In particular, we would like to recognize the valuable input from our Chapters on this subject, notably those in the United States and the United Kingdom. Based in part on the received feedback to-date, ISAAC is pleased to announce the following:

- The FC Committee will continue its work and prepare a first draft Position Statement.
- Once completed, the first draft Position Statement will be released to the ISAAC Council. In addition, and at that time, *the names of the Committee members will also be shared*, along with all documentation and correspondence that was relied upon in the conduct of their work.
- Members of Council will be encouraged to seek input from their respective membership on the first draft Position Statement.
- Members will have ample opportunity to provide any additional input that they deem appropriate, including in languages other than English. ISAAC recognizes that pertinent documentation may be available in other languages, and this input process will allow for those submissions.
- The ISAAC Executive will continue to work collaboratively with the Council in the timing and process in developing the final Position Statement.

To conclude, we do want to assure ISAAC members that the intent of the position statement is not to deny anyone the right to communicate: ISAAC's mission in this regard is very clear in the promotion of diverse AAC strategies. None of the ISAAC Executive members have any vested interest in FC or any other AAC strategy for that matter. The intent is to try and move forward on an issue that has been of concern for our members for some time.

We would like to call on all ISAAC members to work with us to ensure that ISAAC moves forward in addressing one of the central issues of concern for people who use AAC and in the field of AAC - authorship and authentic communication.

### *ISAAC Executive Board*