SMOOTH TALKERS

An Innovative Social Group for Young AAC Users and Their Families
Back to the Beginning
Unique Needs, Unique Program: Nate's Story
YEAR ONE

- Budget
- Location
- Who’s Invited
- Themes and Activities
YEAR TWO AND BEYOND

- A small pot of money
- Professional partners
- Community partners
- A slightly different day
CHOOSING OUR ACTIVITIES

- Turn taking
- Any language level
- Hands-on
- Fun and engaging
- Peer interaction
- Easily replicated at home

Homemade Snow

Getting to know you

Riddles and Jokes

20 Questions

20 Questions
WHY IT MATTERS TO PARENTS

- Connections
- Information Sharing
- Skill Building
- Reduced isolation/increased hope
WHY IT MATTERS TO AAC USERS

• Family support is critical for AAC success

• Device abandonment is higher when there is NOT family support and training

• Communication partners are directly responsible for AAC success
SURVEY RESULTS: Better connected

I have connected with other families who have AAC in their lives.

11 responses

- 27.3% Strongly agree
- 72.7% Agree
SURVEY RESULTS: Helpful for all

I consider Smooth Talkers to be helpful for me, my child, our family, and our community.

11 responses

- 90.9% Strongly agree
- 9.1% Agree
- 0% Neutral
- 0% Disagree
- 0% Strongly disagree
SURVEY RESULTS: More engaged

Participation in Smooth Talkers has helped me engage my child in communication.

11 responses

- 54.5% Strongly agree
- 27.3% Agree
- 9.1% Neutral
- 9.1% Disagree
- 5.5% Strongly disagree
SERVING THE LATINO COMMUNITY
Smooth Talkers En Español

- This is the second year serving the Latino community

- Parents have the opportunity to attend Smooth Talkers in Spanish, and to experience culturally relevant activities.

- Time for parent connections, and to ask questions about services and available therapies
- Don’t forget the coffee time at the end of the meeting!
SMOOTH TALKERS EN ESPAÑOL
Sample Activity

Attendees participated in an advocacy-focused activity, using their devices to create “All About Me” projects to share with their legislators.
Moms perspective before Smooth Talkers En Español:

“My daughter have a AAC at school and since we are able to understand what she want and what she says, we don’t see the importance for her to use it in the community. I just want for her social activities where she can enjoy and being able to participate.”
SMOOTH TALKERS EN ESPAÑOL
Meet Sonia S.

Since attending Smooth Talkers En Español:

Now we have a Smooth Talker parent leading the activities, and a mom who is very happy to collaborate in the group as a volunteer. She has a girl who has a history of tantrums, and she’s using the ACC. With Smooth Talkers the dynamic has been changed in a positive way because even if the meetings are not a therapy, the parents feel enthusiastic to participate and all are waiting for their turn.
Parents now have different perspective of ways their kids can communicate.

They don’t see the AAC just as a device to play with, but being the mouth of their kids.

Parents are more aware about the importance of team work between individual, parent, and therapists.

Parents are challenging themselves to use more with the AAC at home and at the community.

This year we’ve hired an SLP to attend, and families are enthusiastic and excited.
LOOKING AHEAD
What’s next for Smooth Talkers?

• Additional locations and language/cultural-based groups
• Teen/young adult-focused groups
• Accomplished AAC-using guest speakers and mentors
• Formalized support around AAC use in schools
• Formalized support around financing opportunities when getting started with AAC
• Self-running groups?
FOR MORE INFORMATION

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