

Sarah Alderman

Health and Care Professions Council number: SL24716

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
registration number: RC0020107



Personal Profile

I have worked as an independent Speech and Language Therapist for the past 13 years within both mainstream and special school settings as well as with individual clients. My specialism is working with children who have complex needs, such as PMLD, Autism and physical disabilities. My passion for supporting children to communicate using alternative forms of communication led to me completing a Post Graduate Certificate in AAC and Assistive Technology in 2012. I helped to set up and run a local assessment service for children and young people who require technology to support their communication. I have also designed an AAC vocabulary package for children called 'Steps to Language' which is used widely across Europe. My work in the field of communication and technology has led to me speaking at a number of conferences such as the TES SEN Education show and events for the Department for Education's EdTech scheme.

I like to approach therapy from a creative perspective, using evidence-based practice in fun and functional ways. I have excellent interpersonal skills and enjoy working as part of a multi-disciplinary team to ensure that the best outcomes for the child are reached.

Professional Qualifications

2003-2007 University of Ulster, Jordanstown

Bachelor of Science, Speech and Language Therapy 2:1

2012 Manchester Metropolitan University

Post Graduate Certificate in AAC and Assistive Technology

Training Provided:

- Accredited Elklan training courses to Teachers and Level 4 Teaching Assistants- 'Speech and Language Support for 5-11s' and 'Speech and Language Support for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties',
- A series of webinars for the EdTech Demonstrator Project across the U.K, focusing on using technology to support students with communication difficulties,
- Regular training of other professionals including teachers, speech and language therapists, support assistants and other health professionals in topics related to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).

ATtherapy Head Office
Chambers Business Centre, Chapel Rd
Oldham
OL8 4QQ
0161 494 6489
Sarah@ATtherapy.co.uk



- Person-Centred Planning training sessions run online to groups of Newly Qualified Speech and Language Therapists.
- Inset day training for school staff on topics such as Total Communication, The Blank Language Model, Social Stories, the SCERTS approach and Colourful Semantics.
- Presented at the national TES SEN Education Show, AAC SIG meetings and ACE Centre Network days.
- Parent and Professional training course on creating and using Communication Passports with children with complex needs.

Training Received:

- Accredited AAC training at Ace Centre North
- Accredited Access and Control training at Ace Centre North, exploring alternative access methods to AAC
- AAC software training including Grid 3, TD Snap and Mind Express 5
- The SCERTS model (Medbridge Online)
- Makaton Stages 1 + 2
- Zones of Regulation training
- Elklan Tutor training
- Selective Mutism (Maggie Johnson)
- Attendance at AAC SIGs
- Attendance at ACE Centre Network days (ACE Centre)

Work experience

ATtherapy –2022- Present

Northern Ireland Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. At ATtherapy I support individual clients in their homes / school / community with complex needs including AAC.

Highfurlong Special School 2008 - 2022

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. I managed a caseload of around 40 children with complex needs, including children with SLD, physical disabilities and ASC. Many of these students had limited verbal communication so my role involved assessing for AAC needs, applying for equipment and implementing a wide variety of approaches including PODD books, communication apps and electronic communication aids. I provided an outreach service to local mainstream schools, offering advice and support re: AAC. I frequently contributed to EHC Plans and liaised daily with other professionals including teachers, NHS SLTs, physios and OTs.

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[JABBLA \(AAC software company\) 2019- 2022](#)

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. I designed and created an AAC vocabulary package called Steps to Language for children and young people with complex communication needs alongside a team of software developers. This also involved writing a manual for users and creating videos for their website about how to support students who use AAC.

[Waterloo Primary Academy 2013- 2019](#)

Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. I managed a large caseload of approximately 100 children at this mainstream primary school. I oversaw a team of teaching assistants who provided targeted support to children with SLCN. I trained many of the team using the Elklan 5-11s course.

[Devonshire Primary Academy 2017-2019](#)

I managed a caseload of approximately 80 children, providing frequent targets for a team of teaching assistants and delivering therapy to the children with more complex needs. I regularly provided full staff training on strategies such as Colourful Semantics, Cued Articulation and the Blank Language Model.

[Dungannon Health Centre 2007-2008](#)

NHS Speech and Language Therapist, working in a busy community clinic assessing and providing therapy for children with SLCN.

[Additional Skills](#)

During the 14 years I have worked as an SLT, I have gained a broad range of experience in conducting formal and informal assessments with children with a range of communication needs. This has often involved considering alternative access methods to communication equipment due to physical disabilities.

I have experience in using a wide range of software for communication including symbol software, AAC vocabulary packages, AAC apps and programmes designed to develop access skills such as eye-pointing or switching. I keep up to date with the ever-evolving field of AAC software and hardware by attending SIGs, conferences and CPD training.

I enjoy writing and have been publishing articles on a Speech and Language Therapy blog called A Grain of SaLT over the last few years, with a focus on supporting children who use AAC. I also enjoy training other professionals and parents and frequently run courses for schools across the U.K. This experience has enabled me to have confidence in public speaking and presenting to different audiences.

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