

Breakout Session I - (11:00 – 12:00)



Daily Transitions & Change: Why It's Hard & What Makes It Easier Gym/Auditorium/Main Space

Dr. Rebekah Cummings – Appalachian State University Department of Reading & Special Education

Find out what creates transition challenges and ways to support those on the Autism Spectrum as they go through day-to-day and bigger life transitions, both expected and unexpected. This presentation draws heavily from the lived experiences of those on the spectrum.

Dr. Rebekah Cummings has a Ph.D. in Child Development and a graduate certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorders. She has supported both children and adults on the spectrum in handling transitions while providing training to parents and professionals on this topic.



Evidence-Based Practices to Support Functional Communication for Preschoolers with Autism/Room 1

Sherry L. Street-Tobin, CCC-SLP – Appalachian State University Department of Communication Sciences

This session will discuss strategies for teaching functional communication skills that are individualized and meaningful in home, community, and inclusive classroom environments.

Sherry has been a speech-language pathologist for 34 years and has worked with many children with autism over those 34 years. She coordinates the Preschool Language Classroom at the Appalachian State University Communication Disorders Clinic.



How Speech Generating Devices Can Be Helpful To People with Autism Room 2

Katie Lee, MS, CCC-SLP, CBIS– Assistive Technology Works, Inc.

This session is an overview of PRC and Saltillo speech generating devices.

Katie is a speech-language pathologist specializing in augmentative and alternative communication. She is currently an AAC consultant for Western North Carolina, parts of South Carolina, and Virginia with Assistive Technology Works Inc.



Technology Supports for Teens and Adults with ASD that Support Success at School, Home, and Work/Room 4

Dr. Susan Hedges – Appalachian State University Department of Reading & Special Education

This presentation will provide information regarding ways to use technology as a support in the areas of communication, social interaction, and independence. It will include helpful tips for practitioners, caregivers, and individuals on the spectrum.

Dr. Hedges researches supportive uses of technology to increase the independence of adolescents and young adults on the spectrum. She presents nationally and internationally on the topic. Currently she is teaching courses for the graduate certificate in autism at Appalachian State University.



Hands-On Make and Take Dining Room Area

Jana Duke and the Autism Problem Solving Team – Watauga County School System

Visual schedules have many advantages both to the individual with ASD and to their families. Visual schedules use a series of pictures to communicate a series of activities or the steps of a specific activity. They are often used to help children understand and manage the daily events in their lives. They can be created using pictures, photographs, or written words, depending upon the ability of the child. We will spend time making visual schedules in order to increase skills and independent functioning while decreasing anxiety and difficult behaviors.

The Autism Problem Solving Team is a team made up of special education teachers, a school psychologist, speech therapists, and class room teachers serving in the Watauga County School System. The focus of the team is to provide information and coaching for parents and professionals who work with students on the Autism Spectrum.