

Systematic Processes for Enhancing and Assessing Communication Supports (SPEACS) is a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) that was awarded to the ACCESS Project at the University of Delaware. SPEACS is a low incidence initiative designed to improve communication and educational services to students with the most significant disabilities in Delaware public schools. It is built on the premise that all students can communicate.



The main objective of SPEACS is to assist school teams in progressing students from pre-symbolic and emergent communication to symbolic communication.

To accomplish this goal, SPEACS focuses on training teams to work with targeted students with complex communication needs who participate in the state's alternate assessment.

SPEACS staff provides:

- Training to district level teams comprised of speech/language pathologists, special and general educators, other related service personnel, and the student's family
- Technical assistance in the form of coaching calls on a tri-weekly basis to district teams
- Classroom observations
- Progress monitoring
- Lending library of assistive technology equipment

The framework for SPEACS begins with an application process comprised of:

- School Team Application
- Parent Application and Questionnaire
- Learning Characteristics Inventory
- Communication Matrix

Selected teams receive an initial **two day training** that will focus on:

- Recognizing communicative competence and intent
- Interpreting communicative behaviors
- Developing strategies and action plans for communication
- Exploring augmentative & alternative communication options
- Infusing communication skills and targets into academic curriculum

Beyond the training, coaching calls provide teams with the opportunity to review data and adjust strategies for implementing action plans.

For more information on SPEACS, please email deaccessproject@udel.edu or call (302) 831-1052.

SPEACS Guidelines

Considerations for Student Selection

- Students participating in the alternate assessment (DCAS-Alt1)
- Students who have the most significant communication needs and are working on the following:
 - Answering questions with a reliable yes/no response
 - Initiating requests
 - Making choices
 - Responding to social interactions/cues
 - Progressing toward the next level of communication over an extended amount of time
- Please consider students all of ages as well as those that may be close to exiting a program

Considerations for School Team Selection

- Select team members who are motivated and open to trying various communication strategies and techniques

Each school team should include:

- Administrator (at least one required)
- Teacher(s) (at least one required)
- Speech/Language Pathologist (required)
- Parent/guardian of student (preferred)
- Assistive Technology Specialist
- Paraprofessional
- Psychologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Other related service providers (if applicable)