



## Literacy and Communication for Students with Complex Multiple Disabilities including Visual Impairments or Deaf-blindness

### Session abstract

Students with the most complex multiple disabilities are often excluded from literacy and communication research, especially when their disabilities include significant vision impairments. When included, the focus is often on teaching individual symbolic referents or isolated communication acts or literacy skills. This session will focus on practical strategies for building early symbolic communication and emergent literacy understandings among students with complex multiple disabilities including visual impairments and deaf-blindness, with an emphasis on naturally occurring routines and emergent literacy interactions that build general understandings that build over time.

### Presenters

Karen Erickson, PhD, Yoder Distinguished Professor, Director - Center for Literacy and Disability Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A former teacher of children with significant disabilities, Karen's current research addresses literacy and communication assessment and intervention for students with complex communication needs and significant cognitive disabilities

Sofia Benson-Goldberg is a speech-language pathologist who is pursuing her PhD at UNC - Chapel Hill and working as a research assistant at the Center for Literacy and Disability Studies. She has worked with families of children and adolescents who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for 5 years.