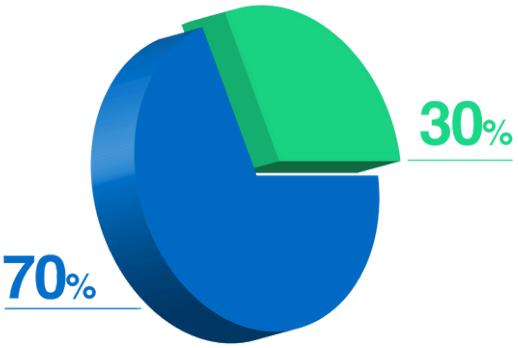
WHAT IS SPELLING TO COMMUNICATE?

Spelling to Communicate (S2C™) empowers nonspeakers to overcome communication barriers posed by traditional oral communication by pointing to letters on a board as an alternative means of communication. This innovative method promotes synchrony between cognitive and motor systems. Through repeated practice, new neural pathways become myelinated. By teaching the motor skills necessary to point on a letterboard positioned in front of them, nonspeakers improve motor planning and control, enabling them to communicate their thoughts and ideas quickly and accurately.

Spelling to Communicate is taught by skilled and rigorously trained S2C Practitioners who work with nonspeaking kids and adults. They begin by teaching the purposeful motor skills of pointing accurately at a letterboard. An S2C practitioner can then teach someone to be a Communication Regulation Partner (CRP). A CRP is someone, such as a parent, family member, or friend, who facilitates communication with a nonspeaker by holding a letterboard. They also help regulate spellers by being calm and supporting their motor skills for spelling.

Once spellers build a solid foundation of motor skill accuracy and communication, they are introduced to new skills like independent keyboarding, handwriting, and reading aloud. When students have achieved the motor skills for autonomous communication, the focus expands to develop whole-body purposeful movement for daily living and achieving personal goals. Integration of cognitive and motor skills leads to improved physical fitness and emotional regulation.



WHO BENEFITS FROM S2C?

About 70% of current spellers are autistic, the other 30% have other disabilities; such as Down Syndrome, Angelman Syndrome, Pitt Hopkins, Phelan-McDermid, and other genetic conditions or symptoms that affect motor-sensory skills. We would like to see that 30% grow. S2C teaches the motor skills necessary to spell communication by using a letter board and is not limited to use with autistic students.

NONSPEAKING ≠ NONTHINKING

We believe all individuals can and want to learn and communicate regardless of their perceived limitations. By **presuming competence,** typing and spelling embraces a nonspeaker's cognitive function and focuses on purposeful motor movements. *Not being able to speak does not affect your ability to understand and think!*

Nonspeaking is an umbrella term used to describe people who do not use speech as a reliable means of communication. Including:

- **Little to no speaking**

A person who does little to no speaking has very limited speech. They may or may not be able to produce a small number of words and struggle to communicate using speech.

- **Minimally Speaking**

A minimally speaking person may be able to use some speech to produce a number of words or phrases but does not have enough speech for robust and flexible communication.

- **Unreliably speaking**

A person who is unreliably speaking may have the ability to speak but cannot always access their speech intentionally or with the correct communicative intent.

TERMINOLOGY

Language-language is a cognitive ability. It is a rule-based system of shared spoken, manual, or written symbols through which human beings represent thoughts, ideas, and experiences**.**

Speech- speech is the physical production of sounds or phonemes that combine to form words, phrases, and sentences. Speech is one means used to communicate. Speech relies on motor skills to produce, sequence, and mix sounds that represent meaning.

Communication- Communication is the exchange of information between two or more people. Communication can include speech, writing signs, spelling, and gestures. All forms of communication require purposeful motor skills.

Motor Skills- Motor skills involve specific movements of the body's muscles to perform certain tasks. Gross motor skills involve the body's arms, legs, and trunk. Fine motor skills involve the fingers and articulators (the moving parts for speech and eating).

Apraxia- Apraxia is a neurological motor condition that happens when the body is not able to execute and adapt to plans made by the brain. The brain is telling the body what to do but the body cannot carry out the plan.