

Collaboration brings technology to a young girl's school program! A nonprofit organization in Alaska had a grant that could help supply some of the specialized equipment. A state special education support service could help determine the specific equipment needed by M and the school district would provide the detailed information about M's school program.



Here is M, introduced to the switches, pressing a switch to ask for her toy so she could play with it.



M is in the kindergarten program at her local elementary school in rural Alaska. M's educational program encourages the use of objects, pictures and auditory information for communication. The team wants M to be able to continue learning and participating in a variety of school programs. She has a unique learning style and to continue expanding her ability to share her interests and needs the school needs to supplement traditional kindergarten materials with unique materials suited to M's abilities. A partnership of three organizations worked together to supply these special materials.

The Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (AKCBVI) is a statewide resource for vision rehabilitation for all Alaskans with sight loss. Since 1977 they have been helping clients from youth through seniors meet their goals and contribute their talents to family and community. In the Center's "Independent Youth" program they implement a grant to provide selected school districts with high-tech equipment for students to access learning materials.

The Special Education Service Agency (SESA) is a state agency that provides special education support to rural and remote school districts. The Center has partnered with SESA's Vision Impairment Specialists since 2001 to implement this grant in different schools and has benefitted from SESA's unique knowledge of the needs of visually impaired students being served by rural school districts

The special education staff at the elementary school worked with SESA specialists to develop the equipment request submitted to AKCBVI. Moving quickly, AKCBVI obtained the equipment for use at the school. It is now being used at elementary.

M's educational program encourages the use of objects, pictures and auditory information for literacy and communication. The AKCBVI grant provided a laptop computer to move with M as she moves between several classrooms. two Ablenet Switches to connect to the laptop for Megan to use, instead of the keyboard, to use programs on the computer, and an Ablenet BIGmack® that can be used to record any single message and then pressed to make the switch talk. Megan will use a BIGmack switch to participate in reading interactive books, to participate in show 'n tell, and to make requests.