

# The All Means ALL Podcast Season 1, Episode 1

## A Welcome from Sarolyn

### Audio Transcript

Carolyn: Welcome to All Means ALL. I'm Carolyn O'Hearn.

Sara: And I'm Sara Pericolosi. We are two inclusive education enthusiasts striving to shift mindsets

C: Challenge the status quo

S: And open more doors for all students

C: In all settings

S: All of the time.

C: Yesssss. We're doing it! We're here. We're actually recording. Hii everyone again I'm Carolyn O'Hearn and with me is Sara Pericolosi and we are so excited that you are joining us on our quest for inclusive education and just, I don't know, learning more and doing better by knowing better.

S: So like Carolyn said, we're really excited to be here and so on this very first podcast, we just want to talk a little bit about what is our why. Why did we decide to record a podcast, record it together, why do we want to talk about inclusive education? but I think before we dive into the why, maybe focusing on who...who are we? So Carolyn, tell me a little bit about yourself.

C: Thanks Sara. So I am a speech language pathologist by training. I knew I wanted to work with those with communication needs from an early age, from my babysitting days, and didn't even know that speech therapy was a career and found out my junior year at Colgate. I was taking a special education course, found out it was even a job I could pursue, shifted everything. So then I did a graduate degree in Kent State in Ohio and now thankfully worked at a center based program here in Michigan for a few years before joining Alt+Shift, which is where I met you, which has been delightful. But yeah, I just, I think knowing that there's this disconnect between those who have a voice and have a way to express themselves and a way to communicate and share what they want and their ideas versus those that don't have that voice yet which is, you guys will find out in the in this series of podcasts, that's my favorite word. So yeah helping helping these individuals find their voice and help figure out the right path for them to be able to express themselves and share their ideas. How about you, Sara? Tell us a little bit about who you are and how you got to this point and meeting me.

S: Alright, so yes, I am Sara Pericolosi. If you are listening to this and you hear my accent, I hail from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, right on the border of Wisconsin. I grew up knowing that I wanted to work with people. I love serving people, I've always loved helping people and so I came to the field of Speech Pathology actually as a senior in high school. My mom had a friend

whose daughter was born deaf and she was looking for a speech pathologist to help provide support in her home. I live in a pretty rural place and there aren't a lot of SLPs out and about in this area and so she started talking to my mom about my career choices and what I had thought. As a senior, I started going in and observing with our local speech therapist and I went to undergrad, with the idea that I was going to come out as a high school history teacher, with an undergrad in communication disorders. Thankfully, I met a really smart guidance counselor who said you will never be a history teacher. You will always use your speech path degree. So I started diving down that road and in undergrad and grad school, I really fell in love with AAC. This idea of being able to provide individuals who don't have a voice yet a voice and to be able to partner with them and with their families and walk that journey with them. It was just something that spoke to me and really lights a fire. There are so many things that we as speech therapists can do, which is one of the things that I love about this field. But I really just fell in love with that idea of finding a voice for all learners. And in terms of how I came here, I worked at a Dickinson Iron ISD in the upper peninsula and I partnered with Alt+Shift before joining Alt+Shift so if you guys keep hearing Carolyn and I say Alt+Shift, we met each other about three years ago, a little over three Carolyn because I was still at Dickinson Iron. And then over the last three years, Carolyn and I have worked together really closely and we have the ability in our full-time jobs to partner with Intermediate School Districts throughout the state and with educators - being a part of their journey and their path towards helping their students develop autonomous communication and we started to recognize that we want to share that journey with more people. This is something that we're passionate about and it also can't start and end in schools. We want to help inspire people to think about how do we create inclusive communities for all learners so that everyone is included.

C: Yeah that networking piece is so big and so you'll hear us talk to people in the community and people in various roles because one person can't and won't and shouldn't have all of the answers. And so we are here to help open the doors and open lines of communication for those who have complex communication needs. So in the series like Sara said, you'll hear us talk to people about inclusive education and complex communication needs, special education, and just individuals, in general and making this world a more accepting and inclusive place. Period. So Sara did a really great job explaining what we do with work and you know we met with Alt+Shift first, Sara was at the ISD we were partnering with surrounding assistive technology, which is great. And we just want you to know, that at this moment, again at this time of the recording, we are still currently with Alt+Shift, but all of the conversations and ideas and opinions are our own. They will probably, mostly, align with what we do with our work for Alt+Shift, that's why we like where we work and we are excited to continue to make change, but this is not affiliated with that organization. This specific podcast is not, so we are actually recording this in the dark on a Friday night, enjoying our evening spoils, after a long fun and rewarding week but after a long week for sure.

S: Alright, so Carolyn, tell me a little bit - how did we come to this idea of inclusive education and an inclusive education podcast?

C: Well gosh, inclusive education is such a buzz word, or buzz phrase. right now and I think the best educators and speakers and topics and conversations are coming out about inclusive education. And really, you know working with special education and special educators - inclusive education is in IDEA, it's part of our job as educators. When we're writing an IEP, we have to think about the least restrictive environment and how being included can actually support growth and help students reach their goals. So rather than just focus on AAC or speech language pathology or building capacity, which is a lot of what we do during day jobs, we, I remember we had these conversations in DC, gosh we've been planning this for so long, but we've had these conversations of why limit ourselves to one specific sector of what ended up being inclusive education. You know if we take a step back from AAC, if we take a step back from building capacity, really at the heart of it, it's inclusive education. And so we found out through conversations that we are enthusiasts about this. We wholeheartedly believe in it and thankfully, we're not alone. So we're excited for you, the listener, to be along on this journey as we're growing in this area, but also as others are growing along with us. Sara, can you talk a little bit about how this podcast name even was brought up. So all means all...all means all what? What does that mean?

S: So like Carolyn said, we have had the good fortune of traveling this year and meeting different educators throughout the US. So Carolyn and I had been talking about doing a podcast for months, you guys. And we've been talking about what would the topic be and once we opted for "it really needs to be inclusive education," we were sitting at a pizza place in D.C. talking about, okay so what is the name? what is going to capture what we're after? And the first one we threw out was "No Yeah Buts" because that is one of my favorite phrases, I know Carolyn says it a lot. There are no yeah buts. When we talk to educators about comprehensive literacy instruction, when we talk about autonomous communication, it is really this idea that we mean there are no yeah buts - all means all - and that's where this really came from, is that we aren't talking about this group but not this group. We are being inclusive and saying this is each and every person, every individual. And it's not only directed at the students that we serve but it's also looking at their educators, at their families. It's taking and removing those silos to start thinking beyond the classroom, beyond a brick-and-mortar building into how can we create inclusive environments so that regardless of where individuals with disabilities or different abilities are, there are people who are surrounding them that really know how to support them and to accept them and to really challenge them to grow as well.

C: Yeah, I mean I think, just to piggyback off of what Sara said, all means all, you know we're talking about all students, all individuals who might need additional supports, but we're also talking about all meaning all of you: all communication partners, all community members, all educators. It's really going to come down to the fact that everybody plays a role in the growth of every other person. I was just fortunate enough to hear Shelley Moore speak so really it comes back to learning from each other and so what Shelley was saying is that we are all different and we are, like our goal is not assimilation. We're not all trying to be the same. We don't want students to be robots and all fit in these categories together. I identify as one way. I'm, you know, I enjoy volleyball and maybe you enjoy cheerleading or football and you know, yes we like sports, but we're not the same within those sports. We all like different things. So if I'm blue and

you're pink, you know, can I learn your pinkness and can you learn some of my blueness? And so all of our, all of our perspectives are valid and right and we will talk in depth about coaching and partnership principles, so just you wait. But just knowing that my perspective, and my opinion, what happens to me, what I experienced, is true. It's valid. And so with inclusive education, it's seeing that what you also experience and your opinions and your perspectives are also valid and so having these conversations, having these, these are really great dialogues is what we need versus just assuming that parents don't think *this* or administrators don't think *this way* or educators think *this way*. It's really coming back and saying we are one person - we can't represent all of the educators or all of the administrators but we represent a voice in that sea. So yeah when we mean all means all, we want all of the perspectives. We want to hear that we're not speaking for everybody; that there are different views and that's how it kind of gets approached and gets viewed from us, anyway, which will be great.

S: And I think that's one of the things about what turned us on to this podcast. Carolyn and I listen to a lot of podcasts, we've had the ability to really expand our network throughout the last six months, and that has brought forth different perspectives. It's brought people into our lives that have challenged our thinking, that have helped expand our knowledge and our perspectives, and that's partly what we want to give to you guys as listeners. So we're going to interview a variety of perspectives from the field, right? So we want to talk to coaches. Carolyn mentioned that we're going to talk about instructional coaching and how does that fit in. We want to talk to AAC users, to family members, to educators and we want to help people understand that different perspective and really start to celebrate that we're going to move away from this idea of disability and starting to move towards this understanding that we all have different abilities and that my abilities are different than Carolyn's, which are different than somebody else listening to this, and we need to celebrate those different abilities versus really creating us silos, where we suddenly think that somebody is more than something else because of what they bring to the table. And so that's part of what we're going to do is we're going to celebrate the differences that we see in this world, we're going to challenge you to think differently, to listen to other people's perspectives, to really dive in, to sit, to reflect, to really have those conversations.

C: Yeah, we're not just going to challenge you. We're going to challenge each other.

S: Amen!

C: Man. We are excited to share even here, you'll hear little snippets of tension, but that's, again, it goes back to having those dialogues and being able to see oh i never thought of it that way, or that's interesting that that's your view on things and I need to sit with that a little longer before I can digest it personally. So yeah, this podcast will be short and sweet. We don't want to take up all your time. We know your time is precious, you the listener. So yeah, we want short manageable chunks that you can listen to on your lunch breaks, if and when you get lunch breaks, on your commute to and from work. We want you guys to be able to know that we are going to have a wide range of topics that all come back to supporting and celebrating the diverse needs of all learners so... All means all.