



## Spotlight on Jules Whicher

*Jules Whicher was the winner of the 2019 Communication Champion of the Year Award and the overall winner of the Pearson Outstanding Achievement Award at the Shine a Light Awards.*

Jules, mother to Charlie aged 10, who lives with Angelman Syndrome and has complex needs, is a tireless advocate for her son and hundreds of other children in helping not only their voice be developed and heard but importantly that they are also respected and supported.

Always thinking about what a child would want to say, rather than what an adult might think they want to say, Jules has developed bespoke communication books for children and adults who are beginning their Augmentative and Alternative (AAC) journey and has created her very own 'hangry', 'dab', 'floss' and 'mic drop' symbols. These symbols have since been adopted by AAC supplier, Boardmaker and are now available in their global symbol libraries!

Jules has first-hand experience on what it feels like to have a child with special educational needs (SEN) and one that requires use of an AAC device. Wanting to reach out and help other parents and carers who found themselves in a similar situation, Jules took it upon herself to support, guide and share ideas with others.

Jules is a pillar of strength to hundreds of families across Nottinghamshire and is always happy to share examples from her home life and learning.

She has spoken at national conferences and presented at specialist literacy study days and hosted two specialist AAC courses. Jules has even organised her own hugely successful conference for families and professionals on AAC, bringing together keynote speakers, local providers and AAC suppliers to motivate and inform her community!

Outside of the conference room, Jules spends time organising social outings, open to all individuals with complex communication needs and their families across Nottinghamshire. She has arranged trips on a barge and steam train and visits to the local farm, funfair and circus whilst also spending time raising awareness about what it means for a child to use AAC for all children so they can recognise children like Charlie as their peer and understand that he too has a voice the deserves to be heard.

Never losing sight of the individual or their right to be heard, Jules continues to work hard with sensitivity and enthusiasm to find out what more can be done to support children and young people. She manages all of this whilst planning her own innovative, fun and educational AAC and Literacy camp for young people in the UK, which is due to take place next year in the summer!

**For further information about the 2019 Shine a Light Awards visit [www.shinealightawards.co.uk](http://www.shinealightawards.co.uk) and follow us on Twitter #awards\_SAL**