

Early Communication
for Children with Severe
Disabilities
-Day 2-

Generic Intervention Goals

Level of Communication

Intervention Goals

I. Pre-intentional (Reactive) Behavior

Establish purposeful behavior by creating highly responsive environments.

II. Intentional (Pro-active) Behavior

Respond to potentially communicative behaviors so that the child becomes aware of their communicative purpose.

III. Nonconventional Presymbolic Communication

Shape nonconventional gestures into conventional gestures and/or target symbol use.

IV. Conventional Presymbolic Communication

Teach 1:1 correspondence between symbols (concrete or abstract) and referents.

V. Concrete Symbolic Communication

Teach 1:1 correspondence between abstract symbols and referents.

VI. Abstract Symbolic Communication

Teach the combination of symbols into two- and three-symbol utterances.

VII. Formal Symbolic Communication (Language)

Expand semantic and syntactic abilities.

Planning Intervention

Goal setting

- What level of communicative competence to target (I-VII)
- What communicative behaviors and intents/functions to target

Considerations:

- Is the learner ready to move on to the next level or do we need to focus on increasing his/her competence at this current level?

- Does the learner readily exhibit her current communication skills whenever the opportunity arises or does it only occur when she is given very specific prompts
- Is the learner able to use his present skills across a variety of topics settings and with different partners

What about the Communication Behaviors

- Is the learner able to communicate in a variety of ways
 - Are these behaviors that are easy for him to do
 - Do others recognize these behaviors as communicative
 - Are these the most natural behaviors he could use to communicate
 - Are the behaviors being considered within his
 - sensory abilities
 - cognitive abilities

What messages will the learner communicate

- Do you continue to target only the existing functions/intents or do you add new functions?
 - What other functions does she have the need the need for
 - What opportunities does the environment provide her to use other communicative functions/intents

Where to target communication opportunities

- Ideally any- and every- where
- If necessary pick those situations where the child's interests are the greatest
- AND where you can insure the most consistency from the social environment

Pre-Symbolic Communication

Key Elements of Individualized Instruction

- **MOTIVATION:** What are reinforcing topics and settings for the learner to communicate about?
- **POTENTIAL RESPONSES:** How will the learner express himself/herself?
- **GAINING ATTENTION:** How will the learner initiate communication with others?
- **REINSTATEMENT:** How will the learner indicate to another person that s/he would like to continue an interaction?
- **REQUESTING/CHOICEMAKING:** How will the learner indicate his/her preference between two or more objects?
- **PROMOTING PROGRESS:** How do you design instruction to promote steady progress?

Pre-Symbolic Communication

Key Elements of Individualized Instruction

- **MOTIVATION: What are really important or exciting things that the learner may want to communicate about**

- **The materials or activities are highly motivating**
- **Conduct a preference probe to determine the learner's interests**
- **Opportunities for instruction should occur regularly for consistency**
- **Opportunities should occur frequently enough to insure adequate practice**

Pre-Symbolic Communication

Key Elements of Individualized Instruction

▪ POTENTIAL RESPONSES: How will the learner express himself/herself?

- **The behavior may allow the learner to act directly on a person or on an object**
- **The absence of the behavior during interaction may mean “No thank you, try again.”**
- **The behavior should be readable or**
- **Other people may need to be trained to recognize and respond to the learner’s behavior**
- **The behavior should be do-able for the learner and it should not be difficult for the learner to do over again**
- **This may include: Body movement* Emotional responses* Vocalizations* Gestures* Switches**
- **The behavior should be acceptable to you and others in that setting**

7 -Levels of Communicative Competence and Generic Intervention Goals (Matrix2004©)

Level	Salient Behavior	Intervention Goal
I. Pre-intentional Behavior	Pre-intentional or reflexive behavior that expresses state of subject. State (e.g. hungry or wet) is interpreted by caregiver	Establish purposeful behavior by creating highly responsive environments

Early social/communicative interaction for the infant with sensory impairments

- The infant lacks many of the cues from the parent (visual and auditory)
- The infant may respond differently in response to the cues they do perceive (quieting rather than turning toward the source or increasing movements)

Pre-Symbolic Communication

Key Elements of Individualized Instruction

- **REINSTATEMENT: How will the learner show you that s/he would like to continue doing something they like?**

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- **Reinstatement activities can let the learner know about new games and toys**
 - **Behaviors that let you know they want to keep going are used to maintain a desired interaction once it has begun**
 - **How often the learner let's you know they want to keep going with certain activities can tell you about how much they really like something or not**
 - **It is important to expect that the learner can let you know in some way**
 - **It is important to give the learner enough time to let you know**

Reinstatement may be introduction to conversation

- Turn-taking
- Initiating
- Maintaining
- Ending or changing interactions

Why reinstatement activities may be important

- Parents of a child with sensory impairments may be less likely to label the environment for their child
- The child may be less likely to direct their parent's attention to things in the environment
- Resulting in child lacking experiences and familiarities with his world

Vocabulary/Materials

List the specific materials used in this activity to teach or practice the target skills

Instructional Cues:

Describe what the teacher does to
elicit a response from the learner

Consequence

How does the partner respond to the child's behavior?

Target Behavior:

Describe how the learner is to respond.