

Strategies for Increasing Communication in Natural Environments





Communication Characteristics

Communication

Communicative intent

Means/Mode

Message

Language

Vocabulary

Syntax

Speech

Sounds

Prosody

Key behaviors for understanding communication

- Looking where other people look
- Joint attention
- Imitating others actions
- Functional Play



What we know about young children with autism

What skills do they have?

What skills do they lack?

Toddlers with ASD at 18-24 mo.

- Exhibit marked deficits in
 - Imitation of other behaviors
 - Orienting to people who speak to them
 - Functional and symbolic play
 - Social engagement with others

Toddlers with ASD at 18-24 mo.

- Using gestures or words for communication
- Directing varied facial expressions to others
- Responding to joint attention attempt by following eye gaze or finger point

Correlation to Expressive language skills

- Joint attention
- Functional play
- Imitation skills (body movement)

Communication functions rooted in intent

- Behavior regulation
- Joint attention
- Social interaction

Did the child respond when you?

- Spoke more slowly
- Used shorter sentences
- Repeated certain words
- Used gestures
- Provided motivation
- Used communication in routine context

Other important pieces to the puzzle

- Caregiver interview
- Caregiver – child observation
- Communication Sampling

Strategies, strategies and
more strategies

Surprise? Probably NOT!

- Promoting responsive interaction strategies in parents promotes the growth of communication development in children.

What are responsive interaction strategies?

- Linguistic mapping
- Complying with the child's communication intent
- Imitating the child's prespeech vocalizations

Follow the child's lead

- More likely to correctly map linguistic input.
- Increases the likelihood that the child is interested and motivated in the activity.

Behavior is communication

When a child does not use words or conventional gestures to communicate these functions, he frequently uses problem behavior.



Understanding the Function of Communicative Behavior

When assessing behavior, ask yourself:

- What is happening?
- What is the child actually saying or doing?
- What are the functions of the behavior, (attention, escape, request items/activities, self stimulation, communicate illness and pain)?

Understanding the Function of Communicative Behavior

- How is the behavior reinforced?
- What does the child need to learn to improve communication/social skills?
- How can the caregiver support the child's learning?

Understanding the Function of Communicative Behavior

What is Happening	Behavior (said or did)	Function (purpose)	Reinforcement (what happened after the behavior?)	Replacement Behavior
Play with Bubbles	Grabbed bubble wand and bottle	Get more bubbles	Caregiver put bubbles away, so child grabbed harder and had tantrum	Teach child how to wait his turn and how to request more bubbles using gaze, picture card, sound, gesture, or word.

Caregiver Support (what can caregiver do to support learning)

Teach child to use gaze and/or sound, picture card, gesture, or word to request more bubbles.
Teach child to wait his turn by adult taking quick turn and using verbal and physical cues to extend wait time, then rewarding child's waiting by praising and facilitating his bubble blowing.
Teach the child how to anticipate the end of play.

Communication Teaching Strategies

Establish routine; then stop and wait for communication

- Blowing bubbles
- Swinging
- Dropping blocks in a bucket
- Pushing trains along a track

Set up obstacles to desired objects or activities

- Things that are out of reach, but in view
- Containers that child needs help opening
- Toy child needs help operating/activating

Communication Teaching Strategies

Set up problem-solving situations

- Remove a piece of puzzle, toy, or game
- Remove needed tool/object (e.g., spoon, cup)
- Give wrong item/food to child

Teach child to communicate dislikes

- Offer disliked food and teach acceptable ways of rejecting
- Teach child strategies to indicate “no” or desire to end activity

Communication Teaching Strategies

Offer choices (make it visual) throughout the day

- Clothes to wear (e.g., choice of two pants, shirts)
- Foods and drinks (e.g., choice of cereals, juices, different kinds of fruit)
- Toys, tapes, books, crayons
- Places to go

Communication Teaching Strategies

Practice turn-taking (ways to teach turn-taking)

- Imitate child's play using similar toy
- Use phrases "my turn" and "David's turn"
- Take turn with similar toy (child and adult each have a toy)
- Take turn with shared toy
- Use anticipatory phrases like "ready, set, go!" or "1-2-3!" to teach child how to wait.
- Alternate turn taking with solitary play

Skills to Practice

- Labeling
- Repeating
- Answering
- Requesting
- Greeting
- Protesting





Questioning for Facts

- How many eggs?
- What is on his head?
- How big are the eggs?



What did you learn?

- Please share one strategy or piece of information that you learned today.