
Everyone Needs a Way to Communicate

- Difficulty with receptive and expressive communication leads to behavioral issues
- Often overestimate students without ID and underestimate concrete learners



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Why Might Communication Be Difficult

Behavior

- Tantrums
- Does not respond to social gestures by others
- Repeatedly asks the same questions
- Talks incessantly about one topic

Autism

- Social Communication Difficulties
- Restricted or Repetitive Behaviors and Interests
- Learning Styles:
 - Implicit learning (rule-based learner)
 - Auditory processing
 - Attention
 - Executive functioning
 - Social cognition



What types of behaviors have you experienced related to communication challenges?

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Impact of Learning Styles on Social Communication

- Difficulty with implicit learning
- Auditory processing difficulties
 - Morphology, phonology, semantics, syntax
- Executive functioning challenges
 - Differences in attention
- Difficulty with social cognition
 - Theory of mind
 - Joint attention
 - Inference



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Uneven Patterns of Development Across and Within Skills



"But he must know how ..."

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Overall Teaching Process

- Assessment of spontaneous/initiated communication
- Develop a teaching goal
- Create motivation/meaning
- Strategies to address communication challenges

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Assess Spontaneous Expressive Communication

- HOW does the autistic person communicate when not prompted?
- WHERE or in WHAT SITUATIONS does the individual communicate?
- WHY or WHAT is the individual trying to communicate?



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HOW (System) Does the Individual Communicate?

- Physical
- Gestures
- Object
- Pictures
- Written words
- Augmentative communication
- Verbalizations

Concrete/Behavioral



Abstract/Language

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WHERE (Context - Location) Does the Individual Communicate?



- Independent work
- Working with teacher
- Centers
- Play (inside or outside)
- Snack/meals
- Transitions

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The “Why” or Intent Of Communication (Function)

Beginning (Basic) Communicator



- Request
- Reject
- Gain attention

More Advanced



- Comment
- Give information
- Seek information
- Predict/hypothesize

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TEACCH Communication Sample Spontaneous and Directed Communication

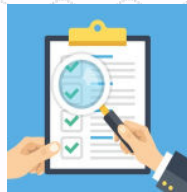
Communicative Acts	Location (Context)	Form	Function
WHAT did student say or do?	WHERE? <i>work, play, snack, transition</i>	HOW did they communicate? <i>motoric, gestures, objects, pictures, signs, written words, speech</i>	WHY/WHAT Communicate <i>request, reject, seek information, give information, gain attention, making choices, predicting/hypothesizing.</i>
	w p s t		
	w p s t		
	w p s t		
	w p s t		

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Analyze Assessment

- Look for patterns
 - System
 - Function
 - Context – location
- Other Considerations
 - Was there intent –a message
 - Was it spontaneous, initiated by the individual
 - Was the communication directed
 - If so, to whom



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Overall Teaching Process

- Assessment of spontaneous/initiated communication
- Develop a teaching goal/activity based on the assessment
 - A communication goal needs to explicitly state the system, context and function

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Develop a Teaching Goal/Activity from the Assessment Information

- HOW... (which meaningful system) to help the individual initiate most independently?
- WHERE...will communication take place?
- WHY...what is the function, how does the communication meet their needs?
- WHAT...interested in or motivated by?

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Select System (HOW) for Individual on His or Her Worst Day

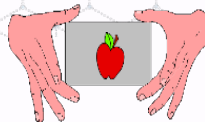
- Assessment of comprehension: can they...
 - Understand objects go with specific activities?
 - Give an object when named?
 - Match an object to an object/picture/word?
 - Identify pictures?
 - Use verbal language to express needs/thoughts?

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Develop a System That Is...

- Easy to use
- Individualized
- Visual
- Accessible and portable
- Meaningful to the autistic person and others



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Determine WHERE (Place) to Teach the Skill

- Controlled (less distracting)
 - Teaching area (or therapy room) where student understands that an adult is part of the routine
- Natural
 - Where student does not have to generalize the learned skill to another or "real" environment



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Overall Teaching Process

- Assessment of spontaneous/initiated communication
- Develop a teaching goal/activity
- Motivation: reason (why) to communicate
 - Make people meaningful
 - Disrupt a routine
 - Meet a need/desire
 - Incorporate the individual's interests

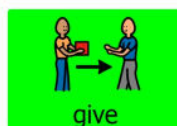
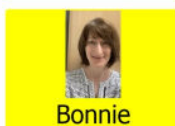
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Make People Meaningful

Model language that highlights people and actions

- Identifying communication partner
- People's names and verbs



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Make People Meaningful

- Create engaging routines
 - Movement
 - Sensory activities
 - Surprise and anticipation
 - Silly and fun!
- Encourage reciprocity

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Incorporate Individual's Interests

After the dance, make one comment to a friend about their dancing.

Cinderella might say,
"That was a great dance move" or
"That was fun" or
" _____ "

Then give the wand to the next person.

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Overall Teaching Process

- Assessment of spontaneous/initiated communication
- Develop a teaching goal
- Create motivation/meaning
- Strategies to address communication challenges
 - Gaining attention and directing communication
 - Process of exchange
 - Making a choice
 - Generalization
 - Conversation

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Gaining Attention and Directing Communication

- Gaining attention and directing communication
 - Who to communicate with?
 - How to gain the person's attention?
 - What to say or do?

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Who to Communicate With



When I am confused or need help...

FIRST Ask classmate sitting at my table

If I still need help...

THEN Ask teacher

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How to Gain the Person's Attention

There are several ways to get someone's attention. In school I can raise my hand. But sometimes a teacher cannot see my hand in the air. Then I need to try a different way.

I can go to the teacher and say, "Excuse me" or I can say, "I need help"

I can tap them on them on the shoulder if they are turned away from me.

I can hand them a card.



Visual Cue/Reminder



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Clarify What to Say or Do

I need help.

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Clarify What to Say or Do

On-Topic Question Game

Take a card. The picture will show the topic. Kathy will say something about the topic. Luke will ask ONE on-topic question with WHAT or a WHERE to learn more information.

TOPIC	Finished Questions
<p>movies</p>	

Asking On-Topic Questions

WHAT examples	WHERE examples
What _____?	Where did you go?
What is your favorite _____?	Where is _____?
What happened?	Where are you going?

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Strategies to Address Communication Challenges.....

- Gaining attention and directing communication
- Process of exchange.
 - Use a shadow
 - Teach reciprocity: give something to get something
 - Simple language to support exchange

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Use a Shadow to Teach Process of Exchange

- Use two staff when possible.
- Help the individual SEE “back and forth” in action

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Exchange Routines

- Teach reciprocity - give something to get something
 - Child gives an object/picture/written word that represents what child wants
 - Adult responds by giving child what he/she requests and by modeling language



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Strategies to Address Communication Challenges

- Gaining attention and directing communication
- Process of exchange
- Making a choice
 - Visualize options
 - Offer non-preferred
 - Routine to initiate choice and clarify choice

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Visualize Options



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Routine to Make and Initiate Choice

- Point or gesture
- Hand visual cue of choice



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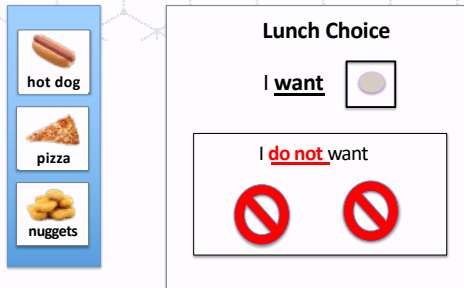
Offer Non Preferred Option: What I Request is What I Get!



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Making a Choice Clarify What Not Want



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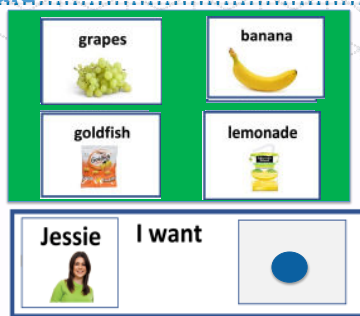
Strategies to Address Communication Challenges

- Gaining attention and directing communication
- Process of exchange
- Making a choice
- Generalization
 - Build on familiar routines with visuals
 - Multiple opportunities across people, places and materials
 - Portable and accessible visual cues

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Build on Familiar Routines with Visuals



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Multiple Opportunities

Meeting New People

Each day at the Sheraton, I will meet five or six new people. When I meet new people, they want to know my name.

I can say, "Hi, my name is Austen"


Shaking hands is a nice thing to do when I meet someone new. I can shake their hand while I am introducing myself.



After I introduce myself, the other person will say hello and then I can say, "It is nice to meet you"

Meeting New People

1. Look and Smile
2. Hello
3. Shake Hands
4. Listen
5. Nice to meet you



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Strategies to Address Communication Challenges

- Gaining attention and directing communication
- Process of exchange
- Making a choice
- Generalization
- Conversation (social pragmatic) skills

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Strategies to Explicitly Teach Conversation (Social Pragmatic) Skills

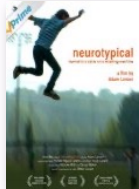
- Why or purpose
- Initiating and maintaining topic of conversation
- Listening and responding (turn allocation)
- Explicit teaching and planned opportunities



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Conversation and Pragmatics

- Why or purpose of conversation?
 - Connect to the individual's interests and understanding of the world.
- <https://www.pbs.org/video/pov-neurotypical-small-talk/>



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Why or Purpose: Understanding the Perspective of Others

- Social Narratives
 - Describes the perspective of the autistic person and others
 - Describe desired response rather than problem behaviors
 - Goal is to teach social understanding and perspective rather than compliance

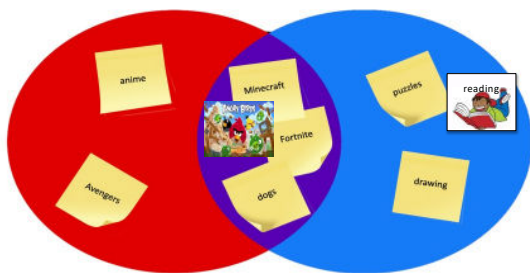


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Initiating and Maintaining Topic of Conversation

- Finding common interests



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Initiating and Maintaining Topic of Conversation

Strategies that assist in initiating and maintaining conversations and improving reciprocal interactions with peers: Conversation Starters and Social menus

- Pre-teach how to use/access visuals
- Provide fun topics
- Offer social menus to all individuals



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Listening and Responding Turn Allocation

FIRST say **Excuse me (name)**. Then ask **Do you have a pet?**

	YES	No
Chris	What pet do you have? dog What is your pet's name? brutus	If you had a pet, what would it be? What would you name it?
	END THE CONVERSATION	
Brenda	What pet do you have? What does it look like?	If you had a pet, what would it be? cat Do you like snakes? no way
	END THE CONVERSATION	
Julie	What pet do you have? dog How old is your pet? 5 years	If you had a pet, what would it be? Do you like animals?
	END THE CONVERSATION	

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Explicit Teaching and Planned Opportunities

Buddy Reading Questions



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Overall Teaching Strategies

- Use visual supports to aid language, processing and initiation
- Explicitly teach the social expectations and hidden rules
- Explicitly teach perspective of person with autism and of others
- Plan for the generalization of communication skills across environments and situations.

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Activity

- With your group
 - Discuss something new you can try to support communication for the individuals you serve.
 - Provide suggestions and feedback for one another.

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