

64TH CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE STUDENT SUCCESS

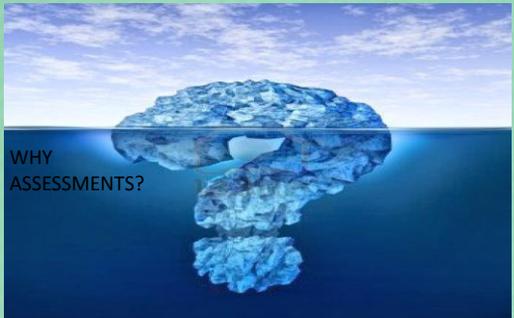


Assessment of Children with Severe Disabilities

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
State Office of Education | Department of Public Instruction

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2014

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WHY
ASSESSMENTS?

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Assessments: Questions to ask?

- Will the assessment **help** the family and service providers to **interact better** with the child?
- Does the assessment include materials and activities that are **motivating** to the child?
- Is the **pacing appropriate** for the child (i.e. health, alertness level, time of day, etc.)?
- Will the assessment answer questions that the parents or service providers have regarding **functional skills** (i.e. those skills that enable the child to function independently in their natural environment)?
- **Will the assessment lead to interventions that make sense?**

The "Why" of assessments is "to determine strengths and next steps."
Van Dijk approach

Taken from the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation, Inc. 2001

Communication occurs when there is a **communicator** and a **partner**...when a **change** in **actions** or **state** results...when there is a **frequency** of **exchange** and a variety of actions are used.

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The Communication Puzzle

Communication occurs when.....

- there is a communicator and a communication partner
- a change in actions or state occurs
- there is a frequency of exchange
- a variety of actions are used (voice volume, sounds, gestures, inflections, body positions, facial expressions, words)

Wanda Fendergrass, Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing

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Definitions

Communication exchange process

- 1)Directed (get someone's attention)
- 2)Expressive (say /do something)
- 3)Expectation (wait for a response)
- 4)Reciprocity (say/do something else)

Spontaneous communication – on his own
How, when, where, why s/he communicates

Elicited communication – prompting or “set up”

Pragmatics – social communication
Greetings, asking for help, thank you, etc

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Communication Functions

Refuse: express discomfort, protest, refuse or reject

Obtain: express comfort, continue an action, more of something/action, make choices, request objects that are absent

Social: express interest in others, attract attention, request attention, show affection, greet, share, polite social forms

Information: answer yes/no, ask questions, name things, make comments

Taken from the Communication Matrix

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Questions to Consider in the Selection of a Communication and/or Language System

- Requirements for Intentional Communication**
 - Does the individual use communicative signals (gestural or vocal) intentionally for one or more functions (i.e. behavior regulation, social interaction, joint attention)?
 - Does the individual demonstrate repair strategies when communication intentions are not understood?
 - Is the individual's current communication system (combination of nonverbal and verbal/vocal communication) readable to familiar people?
 - Does the social environment provide opportunities for the individual to communicate for a variety of reasons?
- Requirements for Language**
 - Does the individual demonstrate the nonverbal and/or verbal (spoken, signed) symbolic capacity for a language system?
- Requirements for Speech**
 - Does the individual use differentiated vocalizations intentionally to communicate?
 - Does the individual demonstrate the ability to imitate speech?
 - Does the individual demonstrate the sensory abilities to comprehend speech?
 - Does the individual demonstrate the motor abilities to produce speech (i.e. oral reflexes, breath support, control of phonation, differentiation and independent muscular control of jaw, lips and tongue)?
 - Does the individual demonstrate motivation and interest in speech?
 - Does the individual's age and educational history indicate a good prognosis for speech?

Adapted from Mirenda & Schuler, 1988; Wetherby & Hayden, 1990

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What do I do with the gathered information?



- Teach concepts in naturalistic settings
- Teach systematically
- Motivate the child to increase the frequency of communication
- Reciprocity
- Teach communication functions
- Promote skills generalization



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**Getting Started with
Communication**

Early Presymbolic Communication

(Taken from "First Things First" Early Communication for the Pre-Symbolic Child by Charity Rowland and Philip Schweigert)

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Early Communication

- More
- Getting attention
- Making choices
- Yes/no (symbolic)



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Asking for More

- Often the first clear communicative intent that a child learns to express
- Pause/wait time to allow child to indicate that they want more of _____
- Repetition of an activity helps the child to make the connections needed to be an interactive partner in the communication process

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Asking for more activity with mom



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Gaining Attention

- Deliberate use of behavior to get attention
- If the child doesn't have a natural behavior that can be used you need to consider a device that can be activated to serve that purpose
- Remember...getting attention is the first step in the communication exchange process!

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“That’s What I Want” Making Choices

- Making a choice involves making your preference known, not just grabbing an object but communicating your choice to another person
- We must choose choice making opportunities based on the strengths of the learner
- Do the choices need to be visual, auditory, tactile, all three
- Even learners with good functional vision may need the added information given by touching the objects

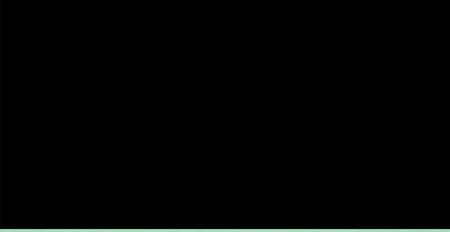
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Making Choices continued

- The learner needs to have had a great deal of past experience with the choices offered.
- If the learner is using eye gaze, you must check to make sure the child can shift gaze between the objects
- If you are offering two toys, let the learner activate the toys to give him more of an informed choice

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Making choices with eye gaze



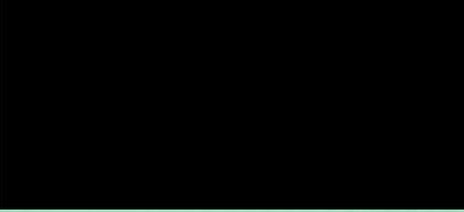
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Switching from eye gaze to pressing with her hand on objects.



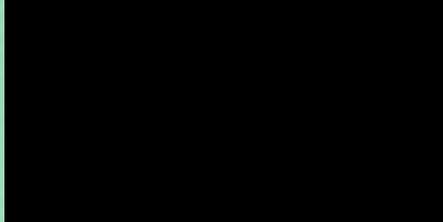
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Making choices by pressing with her hands using switches



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Making Choices with Assistive Technology Devices



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Indicating Yes and No

- A yes/no response is not part of the early presymbolic communication book by Rowland and Schweigert because yes/no is symbolic
- If you have a learner who is ready for this it becomes extremely useful for finding out what the learner wants and to help him demonstrate his knowledge of almost anything

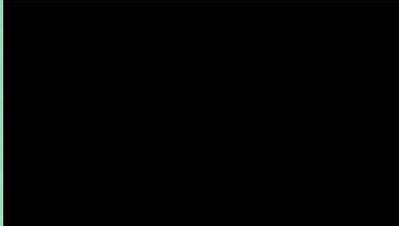
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Brian indicating yes and no



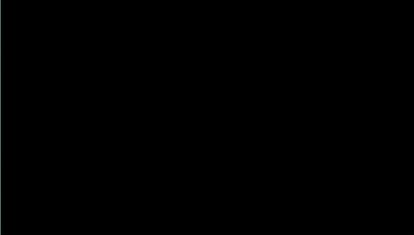
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Yes/No continued



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Yes/No Choosing a Book





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