



Communicating with Objects



When to begin:

- Child begins to focus on items
- Child turns towards sounds
- Child begins to reach for items

What are some examples:

- Real Objects (Bottle, Toy, Empty Cereal Box)
- Toys (pretend food, plastic animals)
- Miniature items for older children (dollhouse)
- Object found within the task (ex: toothbrush for brushing teeth, spoon for eating)
- People (standing opposite sides)
- Adaptation (Talk My Way Object Communication)

How to build receptive skills:

- Show object to child and name it
- Use different tones of voice when naming different objects
- Where is Mommy? Where is Daddy? What animal makes the sound ___ ?
- Describing objects (big, little, red, pretty)

How to build expressive skills:

- Show two objects separate to see if child will turn head towards desired choice
- Place objects near child's reach so they can grab or swat at it.
- Praise child when make attempt to grasp object or look at it.
- State what their intentions are but are having difficulty expressing (angry cry: "I know you are sad the toy broke.")

Vocabulary

- Requesting
- Meaningful objects-bottle, toys, pacifier
- Animals
- People
- Food
- Describing

When to move on:

- Frustration due to not being able to show an object when expressing themselves
- Expressive language is greater than just naming objects
- Stops using objects to communicate



Communicating with Picture Symbols



When to begin:

- After pairing picture symbol with real object
- Child is learning to look at a picture and beginning to understand it represents object.
- Expressive language includes verbs and describing words

What are some examples:

- Photographs (color and black and white) (not always easiest!)
- Line Drawn Images
- Mayer Johnson Boardmaker Symbols
- Eye Gaze Frame
- Tab/Flip Book
- Choice Board

How to build receptive skills:

- Reading books and naming pictures within the book
- Labeling objects with picture symbols
- Using a picture symbol schedule
- Playing games (Simon Says, I Spy)
- Singing favorite songs
- Matching picture to real object

How to build expressive skills:

- Ask child which one they want when presented with more than one choice—encourage verbalization but don't require
- Provide two choices: one preferred and one not preferred (ex: Pudding or Mashed Potatoes)
- Ask “wh” questions

Vocabulary:

- Naming and Requesting
- Objects (Animals, People, Toys, Car, Stroller)
- Adjectives
- Verbs

When to move on:

- When child can not get someone's attention to show them a picture
- If the child becomes frustrated because pointing to object and intended listener misunderstands
- When peers are making sounds and talking
- Expressive language has outgrown symbols
- Child stops using the symbols



Communicating with Single Message Devices



When to begin:

- Child is learning cause and effect
- Beginning to learn how to use a switch
- Peers are babbling and first words
- Demonstrates ability to “speak” wait for response (turn-taking)

What are some examples:

- Talking Picture Frame (Radio Shack)
- Ablenet (Talking Symbols, Big/Little Mac, Talking Brix)
- Attainment (Express One, Go Talk One, Go Talk Card, No Touch Talker, Personal Talker, Go Talk Buttons)
- Enabling Devices (Big Talk/Small Talk, Say It Play It, Put-Em-Arounds)
- Adaptation (Lex, Chipper)
- AMDI (Partner Plus)
- Saltillo (Chickadee)

How to build receptive skills:

- Record different sounds on device
- Read repetitive books (ex: Eric Carle’s Polar Bear, “What do you see?”)
- Talk about your daily activities as you are doing them
- Use words with multiple meanings (chips, pet, dress, pound)

How to build expressive skills:

- Give time to respond
- Minimize the prompting
- Always acknowledge “hit” even if it was a mistake
- Play games like “Peek-a-boo”
- Provide many meaningful opportunities to express (greetings, take advantage of excitement, joy, and unhappiness moments)

Vocabulary:

- Social and Single Message
- Greetings
- My Turn
- “I want”
- More/Finished
- Go
- I don’t like

When to move on:

- Child needs to say more than one thing
- Having to constantly re-record message to meet communication need
- Using multiple communicators at once



Communicating with Sequencing and Randomizing Devices



When to begin:

- Peers are putting words together
- Peers are singing songs
- Learning to activate a switch
- Single messages are clearly limiting

What are some examples:

- Enabling Devices (Big Talk Triple Play, Small Talk Sequencer, Announcer, Mini-Com, Step Talking Sequencer)
- Ablenet (Step by Steps)
- Adaptation (Randomizer, Sequencer)

How to build receptive skills:

- Expand the sentence when child says one word
- Sing and say nursery rhymes
- Describing activities in steps (ex: First that dog jumped, then he barked.)

How to build expressive skills:

- Start the song or rhyme and have the child finish it.
- Praise each time they activate the button
- Ask child to choose between two things to tell a story (ex: Do you want to tell Daddy about what you ate for lunch or what you did after your nap?)
- Commenting likes/dislikes

Vocabulary:

- Songs
- Nursery Rhymes
- Telling Story
- Jokes

When to move on:

- When child is frustrated by lack of choices
 - When child appears bored—refuses to activate switch, uninterested, pushes it away
 - When child needs to make choices or practice identifying objects
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Communicating with Static Devices



When to begin:

- Child needs to put phrases together
- Multiple choices are available
- Learning social interactions
- Child needs to ask questions

What are some examples:

- Talking Photo Ball (Brookstone)
- Attainment (Go Talk, Talker, Talking Photo Album)
- Enabling Devices (Talkables, Communication Builder, Talk 4/8, Cheap Talk, Compartmentalized Communicator, Hip Talker, Take or Place N' Talk)
- Ablenet (Lingo, Fl4sh, Super Talker, iTalk2, Com Board)
- Adaptivation (VoicePal)
- Logan (ProxTalker)
- AMDI (Tech Talk/Speak)
- Saltillo (VocaFlex, Bluebird, Chatbox)

How to build receptive skills:

- Model how to make choices
- Ask “wh” questions
- Introduce new vocabulary and experiences
- Give one-step and two-step instructions to follow

How to build expressive skills:

- My Turn/Your Turn
- Directing play (Fast, Slow, Stop, More, Finished)
- Choice making (food, colors, TV program)
- Singing choices (What animal for Old MacDonald?)
- Make each choice meaningful and rewarding
- Facilitate or support expression through demonstration

Vocabulary:

- Categories (colors, animals, toys)
- Feelings
- Greetings
- Questions
- Object functionality

When to move on:

- When having to change levels and overlays frequently
 - When child looks for a word that is normally in that stop but it is wrong level
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Communicating with Dynamic Devices



When to begin:

- When child is learning to make choices
- When child needs to access through scanning
- When peers' have extensive vocabulary
- Sometimes you begin at this level because aptitude surpasses access
- When new and novel sentences might need to be created
- Academic needs can not be met through traditional techniques

What are some examples: (maybe covered by medical insurance)

- Cyrano Communicator
- Dynavox (M3, V, Tango, Xpress)
- Prentke Romich (Springboard, Vantage, ECO)
- Saltillo (Chat PC)
- Tobii
- Jabbla
- I-Touch Applications (Proloquo2Go, Speaking Images, Locabulary, I-Communicate)

How to build receptive skills:

- Make time for conversations
- Tell them about what you are doing or your day
- Read books and ask questions while reading
- Use longer sentences and more words in your speech
- Make up stories about things

How to build expressive skills:

- Encourage combining sentences
- Let the child say what their peers are saying (“slang,” jokes)
- Ask questions and give them response time
- Include academic material

Vocabulary:

- Limitless—let the child help choose
- Introduce parts of speech to build sentences (Noun, Verbs, Adjectives, Prepositions)
- Receptively and expressively use words across settings (ex: surf TV channels, surf at the beach, surf the internet)

When to move on:

- If it is a non-speech generating device (like the M3 or Springboard) then may need to get more advanced device to allow for novel messages to be created by combining words and spelling.
- Increase access to vocabulary by using specific device features (ex: Word lists, quickfires, 2-Hit Unity)