

Road Map #3: Individuals with Emerging Communication

(Individuals who rely on non-symbolic modes as they explore symbolic communication in AAC)

Interview partners and observe individual to understand current communication:

- ❖ Identify current non-symbolic communication methods, signal inventory
- ❖ Identify current communicative intents Resources 1,4
- ❖ Identify current communication partners and contexts
- ❖ Identify which non-symbolic methods work/don't work with which partners
- ❖ Learn history of any trials with symbolic communication methods
- ❖ Clarify the value of reliable, symbolic communication to entire team

On-going intervention strategies for all stages

Identify Potential Communicative Acts (R19)	Communication Dictionary or Signal Inventory (R: 1,4,5,19)
Shape more advanced signals (R:19,20)	Partner Training (R: 1,4,5,18,22,28)
Always model more advanced communication	Always give early literacy exposure (R: 9,10)

Developing use of visual symbols: From means-end use to discriminated use of symbols

Assessments that are essential as transition into visual symbols R 1,2,4,11

- a) **Hearing Testing:** Unidentified impairment affects comprehension as well as use of voice output (R: 1,4,5,6,26,27)
- b) **Vision Testing:** Hidden vision impairment affects what is salient in visual symbols to individual (R: 1,4,5,6,26,27)
- c) **Motor Assessment:** Signing possible? Picture exchange? Direct select? Indirect select necessary? 1,4,5,6, 15,26,27)
- d) **Speech & Language Assessment:** Diagnosis, prognosis, receptive language (if possible without symbols) response to intervention for underlying impairment, communicative intents, symbolic play (if motor allows)
- e) **Context & Vocabulary:** determine fun activities and then identify vocabulary that would be powerful to the individual: interview, observations, likes & dislikes checklist, analysis of PCAs. (R: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11,21,22,23)
- f) **Symbol Modality:** Identify the preferred modality: signs, PECS, visual symbols with or without voice output.

To explore use of symbols as a means-to-an-end (no discrimination) R 1,2,4,11

Trials with means-end use of symbols: Just having fun with symbols is important, so incorporate them into any play or environmental control activity that you can. The activity must be **engaging**, part of a natural interaction that matches **pattern of attending**; vocabulary must match **interests** and **communicative intents**, symbols must be **salient** and introduced by **labeling**, then accessed in ways that match **motor ability**, using prompts/cues (shaping) in **modes** (auditory, visual) most effective for individual. with **natural Rf**. **Be sure to take the next step:**

To explore discriminated use of symbols R 1,2,4,11

Trials in discriminated use of symbols: Still important are: **engagement, receptive skills, interests, intents, symbols, labeling, motor ability, shaping modes, natural Rf**. In addition: Differences in symbols must be **salient** to the individual; **consequences** for different symbols must be different and that difference must be **important** to the individual; there must be **foils** and/or **undesirable** items to determine reliable discrimination. R: 1-9

Communication Goal Achieved: 1st reliable means of symbolic communication

Note: Goal says nothing about technology, but it says everything about reliability. If you move to the next level without demonstrated reliability the approach may eventually fail.

To Context-Dependent Communication

R = Resources from the accompanying resource list.

© 2013 Patricia Dowden, Ph.D., CCC-SLP Speech & Hearing Sciences, University of Washington

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