

Forms of Communication: Stages of Development

Stage 1 - Recognitory Communication: The student shows that she/he is aware of another person through one or more of the following ways:

| | Demonstrates | If Yes ... How? |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| • Visual orientation | Yes/No | |
| • Touching | Yes/No | |
| • Smiling | Yes/No | |
| • Vocalizing | Yes/No | |

Stage 2 - Contingency Communication: The student is beginning to anticipate that something will happen if she/he does something. During the early phases of teaching, the adult *starts* a motivating activity, *stops*.... *WAITS* for some behavior from the student:

| | Demonstrates | If Yes ... How? |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| • Body movement | Yes/No | |
| • Vocalization | Yes/No | |
| • Facial gestures | Yes/No | |
| • Assistive device | Yes/No | |

Stage 3 - Instrumental Communication: The student begins to realize that an adult can serve as a tool or an instrument to get something. The student has to act directly on a person or on an object ... he/she cannot coordinate object and people to communicate.

| | Demonstrates | If Yes ... How? |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| • Touch people | Yes/No | |
| • Touch objects | Yes/No | |
| • Manipulate objects | Yes/No | |
| • Assistive device (1 switch*) | Yes/No | |

Stage 4 - Conventional Communication: The student begins to coordinate objects and people. At first, the objects and person need to be in close contact. Gradually, the student can distance the object and the person. Later, the student can refer to an object or person at a distance.

| | Demonstrates | If Yes ... How? |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| • Extending objects | Yes/No | |
| • Touching the object and person | Yes/No | |
| • Pointing | Yes/No | |
| • Gesturing | Yes/No | |

| | | |
|---|--------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a 2-4 switch Assistive Device | Yes/No | |
|---|--------|--|

Stage 5 - Emerging Symbolic Communication: The student is beginning to learn that concrete symbols can signify an action or an object.

| | Demonstrates | If Yes ... How? |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex gesturing | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using pictures or line drawings | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using miniature objects (if there is enough vision) | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using other tactile symbols (shapes, textures, part-whole objects) | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using proto words | Yes/No | |

Stage 6 - Symbolic Communication: The student uses symbolic forms to communicate.

| | Demonstrates | If Yes ... How? |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-word speech | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-word signs | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed words | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other abstract symbols | Yes/No | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lo-tech or Hi-tech Assistive Device | Yes/No | |

Adapted from Katleen Stremmel – Communication Modules