

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 <i>starts</i> a motivating activity, <i>stops</i> <i>WAITS</i> 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	
• 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?
• Complex gesturing	Yes/No	
• Using pictures or line drawings	Yes/No	
• Using miniature objects (if there is enough vision)	Yes/No	
• Using other tactile symbols (shapes, textures, part-whole objects)	Yes/No	
• Using proto words	Yes/No	
Stage 6 - Symbolic Communication: The student uses symbolic forms to communicate.		
	Demonstrates	If Yes ... How?
• One-word speech	Yes/No	
• One-word signs	Yes/No	
• Printed words	Yes/No	
• Other abstract symbols	Yes/No	
• Lo-tech or Hi-tech Assistive Device	Yes/No	

Adapted from Katleen Stremmel – Communication Modules