

INTRODUCTION TO EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

GOAL

Understand the definition and basic components of expressive communication, and become familiar with related ABA terminology.

BACKGROUND

Expressive communication refers to the way your child interacts with those around him to fulfill his needs, share his thoughts and engage socially with others.

Although speech is the most common form of expressive communication, many children who have difficulty with speech can learn to use alternative methods of expressive communication such as:

- Sign language
- PECS and
- Communication apps

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR YOUR CHILD?

Being a parent is hard. Being a parent of a child with autism sometimes feels overwhelming. Communication delays are common in children with autism which makes parenting even more difficult.

Many parents say they want their child to speak, but what is it they really want? Sure, speaking is the easiest form of communication for us, but what if their child can't speak?

They want their child to be:

- happy
- healthy
- independent
- successful and
- accepted.



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

What would you do if you were dropped into another country where no one spoke your language? Not only do these people not speak your language, they have signs, customs and gestures you've never seen before.

What would you do if you needed to find a bathroom? How would you get this need met?

When faced with an inability to get your needs met using communication, would you rely on behavior to get what you need? There's no other way. This is why so many children with autism engage in challenging behavior. They aren't bad kids. They just don't know how to get their needs met in a more appropriate way.


CHOOSING AAC

AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)

Although each child develops communication differently and there is no guarantee that speech develops for all children, many children do develop at least some spoken language.

Alternative communication methods provide a structured teaching approach and the opportunity to teach the importance of communication for your child.

HOW DOES YOUR CHILD COMMUNICATE NOW?

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray border, intended for the user to write their child's current communication methods.

WHAT WORDS, GESTURES OR BEHAVIOR DOES YOUR CHILD USE TO COMMUNICATE NOW?

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray border, intended for the user to write the words, gestures, or behaviors their child uses to communicate.

WHY TEACH COMMUNICATION?

At this point, you probably have gotten pretty good at figuring out what your child wants so you might be asking yourself, why should I go through the process of teaching communication if I already understand what my child wants most of the time? Communication for your child is so much more than just getting what he wants.

WHAT YOUR CHILD GETS FROM LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE:

Opens Doors to New Opportunities

Communication allows him to engage with the world around him in a variety of new ways and helps him be more independent.

Communicate Exactly what He Wants

He can tell you exactly what he wants.

Eliminates Guessing Games

When your child communicates effectively, you no longer need to guess what he wants based on how he behaves. He can share his thoughts, ideas and desires.

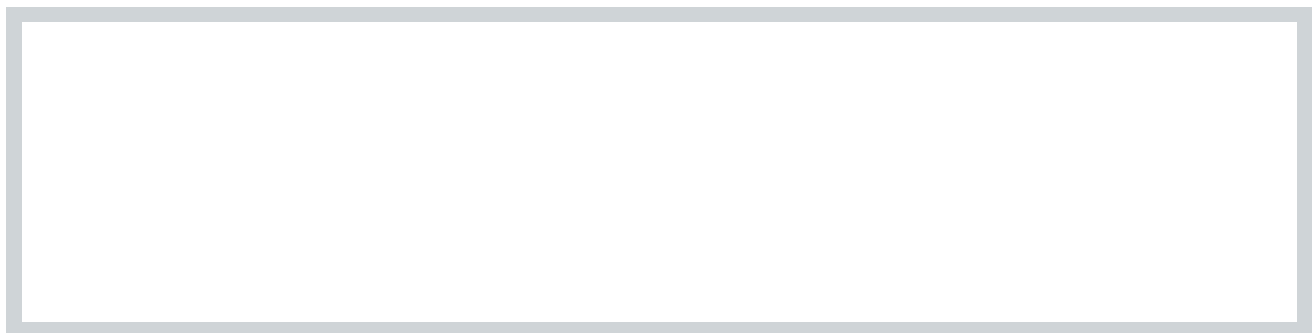
Interact and Develop Relationships

Communication is the foundation of friendships. It allows him to share his wants, thoughts and ideas. Teaching communication helps him see interactions with others as valuable.

Reduces Problem Behavior

Problem behavior may be caused by your child's inability to effectively communicate. Communication gives him a better way to get what he wants.

HOW WILL YOUR CHILD BENEFIT FROM LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE?



PARTS OF EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

Requesting

In ABA, requesting is called manding. A child requests when he wants something such as an object, activity, or an interaction. Requests can include attributes such as color, shape, size, quantity, or quality.

Requesting is often the first communication skills young children learn.

Imitating

In ABA, imitating is called echoics. A child imitates when he hears a word or sound and repeats it verbally. This is the only type of communication that can't be done using an alternative communication system. This is a spoken skill. It can include a simple speech sound, whole word, or even phrases.

Labeling

In ABA, labeling is called tacting. A child labels when he takes in something through his senses and gives a name to it. It can be something the child sees, smells, tastes, hears or feels. Labeling can also include attributes such as color, shape, size, quantity or quality.

Responding

In ABA, responding is called intraverbal. A child responds when someone says something and the child says something that is different but related. This is what makes it different from imitating. The words are different from what the child hears.

You will learn more about each of these parts of communication in future lessons.



COMMUNICATION IS VITAL!

Your child must have effective communication skills to experience success at school, develop relationships with others and become as independent as possible as an adult.

A child who does not learn to communicate effectively relies on someone else to guess what he needs or wants. This reduces autonomy and promotes dependence.

Images are of models for demonstration purposes and do not depict children with autism.