

# Find Your Student's Voice



By: Miller & Zander

## **Some simple questions to assess about the student's communication**

- What is the student's length of utterance? Does the child take turns during conversation?
- How does each child communicate his/her wants and needs hungry (hungry, tired, ready to play etc..?)
- How does each child communicate with adults/peers?
- How does the student respond to books? Does he/she hold the book correctly, turn pages, point to pictures and words, identify basic concepts about print like holding books upright etc..?
- Does the child try to write/scribble letters? Does the child seem to understand that print has meaning?

## **Why Use Visual Strategies**

- Visual strategies can be used to prevent challenging behavior.
- Visual strategies are helpful in supporting and increasing both receptive and expressive communication.
- Visuals serve as a reminder of the verbal direction.
- Visuals assist children in knowing exactly what is expected of them.
- Visual supports provide predictability and structure in the daily routine.
- Visual supports help children organize their thoughts, expand ability to communicate, and increase their independence.
- Visual information can support reading and help make meaning of text.

## **How Schedules Support Literacy Development**

- Visual schedules are excellent tools for developing the ability to talk about events.
- Visual schedules expose children to text early as they see words associated with pictures.
- Visual Schedules pair meaningful activities which helps to teach the meaning of those words.
- Visual Schedules outline information in a sequence of events in a visual format which is an important precursor for reading.
- Visual schedules teach concepts such as 'First, Next, Last', 'Before, After' which can be abstract and challenging to understand without a visual representation.

## **Strategies and adaptations during book-reading for children with special needs**

- Use visual props, large pictures, adaptive books or other materials for children who are learning to listen and engage.
- Allow children to bring a favorite toy or stuffed animal to story time to help them sit and attend.
- Have children take turns turning the book pages.
- Give children frequent praise and encouragement for sitting and listening.
- Read the same book several days in a row and ask children to help you finish telling the story or fill in words they know either verbally/visually.
- Speak clearly and slowly for children who have hearing impairments or who are dual language learners. Check for understanding often.
- Use Braille, large print, textured books, or big books for children who have visual impairments.
- Have children with autism or language delays repeat words or phrases.

## **Motivating Opportunities for Communication to Occur during Motivating Activities while using Low Tech Communication Tools**

- Initiating
- Requesting (choice making)
- Turn-taking (social/pragmatic)
- Commenting (expressive language)
- Vocabulary learning (receptive language)
- Yes/No (e.g. Do you want the red one?)

## **Circle Time Inclusive Activities**

- Encourage meaningful activities like the Daily News, Who is at School Today graph, message of the day, daily news etc...
- Plan activities that require participation by the whole class.
- Make the activity as meaningful as possible for the child with special needs. Props, visuals, adapted books, scarves, instruments etc...
- Incorporate movement and music during large group instruction.
- Require interaction with Fill-in-the-blank from text, simple communication boards, choice boards, eye gaze, single word/sign or phrase (verbal or augmented)
- Ask open-ended questions when appropriate; e.g., “What do you think will happen?”, “How did this happen?”
- Increase the child’s opportunities/abilities to physically interact with literature (props, interactive books etc...)

## **Language and literacy experiences are prominent throughout the classroom**

- A rich assortment of age appropriate children’s books and meaningful print materials are available in interest areas.
- There is a listening area that children can access on their own that includes books and audiotapes.
- Teachers take dictations from children and post them in visible locations.
- Children use books independently or teaching staff read to children in small groups in addition to group story time.
- Centers are equipped with various writing materials in order to encourage children to create print during play (e.g. name, shopping lists, tickets, envelopes, etc.).
- A photo album can be added to each center area to document the children engaging with the materials.
- Visual supports are available throughout all areas to support communication (communication boards, a picture exchange system, picture schedules)
- Materials that encourage children to communicate are evident throughout the class.
- Displays and books reflect people of different professions, cultures, ages, genders, and abilities.

**WEBSITES:**

**Language and Communication Articles:**

<https://www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/comm-lang-development/lesson-4>

<https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/Parent-Stim-Activities.htm>

<http://www.playingwithwords365.com/how-to-help-your-child-talk-providing-opportunities-for-communication-in-daily-activities>

**Visual and Language Communication Supports**

<http://www.boardmakeronline.com>

<https://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/>

<http://www.do2learn.com>

<http://theautismhelper.com/tag/adapted-books/>

<https://supersimpleonline.com/free-teaching-resources/>

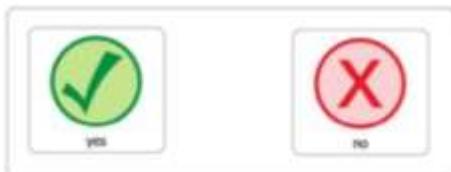
**Picture Exchange Communication**

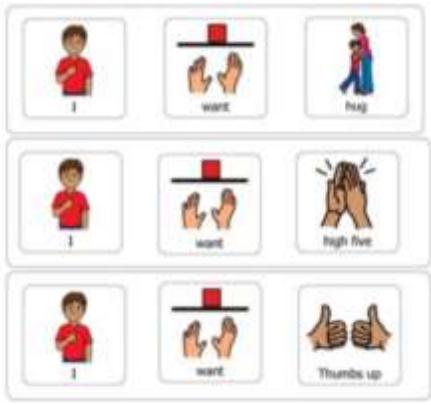
<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/What-is-the-Picture-Exchange-Communication-System-or-PECS>

**Social Stories**

<http://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/social-stories/>

[http://headstartinclusion.org/social\\_stories](http://headstartinclusion.org/social_stories)





I am working for:



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