## Hierarchy of Expressive Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Skill Level</th>
<th>Types of Behavior/Communication the Person May Use</th>
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</table>
| **Pre-Intentional Behavior**                                  | • Changes position  
• Head, leg and arm movement  
• Facial expressions  
• Vocalization                                                              |
| *(Person reacts or has reflexive response)*                   |                                                                                                                                 |
| **Example:** Someone starts talking to the person and he smiles |                                                                                                                                 |

| **Intentional Behavior**                                      | • Changes position  
• Head, leg and arm movement  
• Facial expressions  
• Vocalization                                                              |
| *(Person responds on purpose but may not realize he can control another’s behavior)* |                                                                                                                                 |
| **Example:** Someone familiar says, “good morning” and person turns toward the person speaking every time it happens |                                                                                                                                 |

| **Unconventional Communication**                              | • Changes position  
• Head, leg and arm movement  
• Facial expressions  
• Vocalization  
• Looks at or interacts with another person  
• Uses person as a tool to get what he wants  
• Activates switch  
• Other unconventional gestures                                  |
| *(Person communicates on purpose but may use a behavior that is not socially acceptable in the adult world)* |                                                                                                                                 |
| **Example:** Food is put in front of the person; he looks at it or smells it and starts to vocalize loudly. |                                                                                                                                 |

| **Conventional Communication**                                | • Conventional gestures (i.e. pointing to or giving object to another person)  
• Facial expression (i.e. lifting eyebrows to indicate a question)  
• Intonated vocalization  
• Looks at or interacts with another person (i.e. waves goodbye)  
• Uses person as a tool to get what he wants  
• Other conventional gestures                                      |
| *(Person communicates on purpose and the behavior is socially acceptable; the person also orients self between an object [topic] and a person)* |                                                                                                                                 |
| **Example:** Food is put in front of the person; he looks at it, looks at the person who put it there and frowns. |                                                                                                                                 |

| **Concrete Symbols**                                           | • Touch cues  
• Object cues  
• Partial object cues  
• Symbolic gestures  
• Textures  
• Pictures  
• Line drawings: color, black/white  
• Vocal mimicking                                                |
| *(These objects, touches, gestures or pictures resemble the topic [want of person])* |                                                                                                                                 |
| **Example:** A small ball represents physical therapy time.    |                                                                                                                                 |

| **Abstract Symbols**                                           | • Spoken word  
• Written word  
• Manual or tactile sign  
• Braille word  
• Abstract, two or three-dimensional symbol (picture or object) |
| *(Symbols that do not resemble the topic, but represent the topic, and are used one at a time)* |                                                                                                                                 |
| **Example:** The sign “eat” means the person wants to eat.     |                                                                                                                                 |

| **Language**                                                   | • Connected symbols  
• Braille  
• Spoken or written language  
• Visual or tactile sign language                                 |
| *(Symbols are used in combination according to grammar rules)* |                                                                                                                                 |
Basic Reasons for Communicating

Initially, when a child is born, there are four major reasons for their communication:

1. Refusal or Rejection
2. Obtain or Get
3. Engage in social Interaction
4. Provide or seek Information

1. REFUSAL OR REJECTION

Can you tell when your child is uncomfortable (in pain, wet, hungry, startled?)

If yes, what does your child do to make you think he’s uncomfortable?

2. OBTAIN OR GET

Does your child intentionally indicate that he wants you to perform a new action (one that you have just not been engaged in)?

If yes, how does your child request (or command) a new action?

3. SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Does your child intentionally direct your attention to something that she is interested in (as if saying “look at that”)?

If yes, how does your child direct your attention to something?

4. PROVIDE OR SEEK INFORMATION

Does your child spontaneously (without being asked) provide information to you about things in the form of comments (“that’s pretty”, “hot”, etc.)?

If yes, how does your child make a comment?

Ways of Communicating

Receptive

Expressive

Ways ___ can be best understood by others

Ways ___ can best understand others

Adapted from:
Ways of Communicating for "John"

RECEPTIVE:

- Few signs if signed in his visual field and knows to look
- Actions: Demo (Hand-under-hand is best)
- Presenting objects such as keys when going bye-bye in the car
- Few gestures like pointing
- Few 2 word phrases in quiet and in familiar routines

EXPRESSIVE:

- Ways "John" Can be Understood
  - Beginning babbling sounds
  - Vocalizations that represent moods such as crying or cooing
  - Gestures, body actions
  - Body language & facial expression

Adapted by Kathee Scoggin from