

**Module:**    **Communication and Emergent Literacy:  
Early Intervention Issues**

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## **Session 2: Communication Development and the Impact of Visual Impairments**

### **Activity E: Case Story: Johanna**

#### **Participant Guidelines**

The purpose of this activity is to compare and contrast communication development in a child without disabilities and a child with a visual impairment and additional disabilities.

**Materials.** “Case Story: Johanna” (attached)

#### **Directions**

1. Read the case story about Johanna.
2. Answer the questions listed below and turn them in to the instructor.
3. Discuss the answers in class or via an online discussion.

#### **Questions**

1. List the methods Michelle used to communicate and put a star next to her most-common communication method.
2. List the methods Johanna used to communicate and put a star next to her most-common communication method.
3. How did Phyllis and Lynn communicate with their daughters?
4. What strategies did Phyllis use to encourage Johanna to communicate?
5. What communications of Johanna did Phyllis miss?
6. How do you think Johanna’s visual impairment influenced her communication?
7. How do you think Johanna’s additional disabilities influenced her communication?
8. Do you think the trip to the park was a good opportunity for Johanna to develop communication skills? Why or why not?

## **Case Story: Johanna**

Michelle and Johanna sat in the sandbox at the park. Michelle poured sand out of her bucket and watched it slide into a low pile. Johanna was propped in the corner of the sandbox for support. She wore a sunbonnet and prescription sunglasses, but still kept her head down to block the light. She wiggled her fingers in the sand.

The girls' mothers, Phyllis and Lynn, sat on a bench a few feet away from the sandbox. They had been friends for several years, ever since Lynn moved into the apartment next door. They were excited when they found that they were both expecting their first babies just a few weeks apart. Phyllis was terrified when Johanna was born and the doctors told her something was wrong. They even said that her precious little girl might die. She was afraid for her tiny baby daughter and unsure of how she and Mark would take care of her. There were so many medications and so much medical equipment in the hospital, and much of it came home with them. Along with all her fears, Phyllis still felt a pang of jealousy knowing Lynn had an easy delivery, and Michelle was healthy. Michelle was such a beautiful, perfect baby—able to go home the day after she was born. Phyllis and Mark spent every minute they could at the hospital for months until they were able to bring Johanna home.

Once Johanna was home, Lynn made a habit of coming over a couple of days a week. The first time, she left Michelle with her boyfriend, Scott. She worried Phyllis might think she was flaunting her healthy daughter, and she didn't want to hurt her friend. Phyllis, however, insisted that she bring Michelle, and on the next visit, she did. Phyllis cried after they left, grieving for the healthy child she had always imagined, but she never told Lynn her feelings. Phyllis and Lynn started spending time together several days each week, and their girls grew up sharing playpens, toys, and clothes. Johanna was so much smaller than Michelle that she could always wear Michelle's hand-me-downs. This helped Phyllis and Mark, who were feeling the financial strain of raising a child with so many special needs.

This trip to the playground was a regular event for the girls when the weather was nice. The girls and their mothers enjoyed the trips though Phyllis and Lynn worried about the girls getting hurt. Phyllis was afraid that another child would run over Johanna and injure her. Lynn worried about Michelle starting to run and climb herself. Despite their motherly concerns, Phyllis and Lynn knew it was important for their girls to get out and to explore their world.

Back in the sandbox, Johanna was beginning to squirm. The plastic braces on her legs were getting hot in the sun. Michelle had stopped pouring the sand and was peering intently at a dark object in the sandbox. She picked up the piece of gravel and held it out to Johanna.

"Ook," Michelle said.

Johanna stopped squirming and leaned forward to see the object her friend was holding. She started to reach for the rock, but she was off balance and had to put her hand back down to keep from falling.

"Here," said Michelle, placing the rock on Johanna's lap and searching for more rocks buried in the sand.

Johanna picked up the rock and looked at it. She held it up and looked around for her mother. Even though her mother's shape was blurry, Johanna could hear her talking and knew where to look. Johanna then started to put the rock in her mouth.

"No, honey," said Phyllis. "Don't put that in your mouth."

Phyllis got up and quickly walked the few steps to the sand box. Johanna had stopped with her hand a few inches from her mouth. When Phyllis reached the sandbox, she crouched down and put out her hand.

"Give it to me," she said.

Johanna squinted at her mother's face, then looked back at her rock. She started to move her hand toward her mouth again.

"No," Phyllis said firmly. "Give it to me."

After a few seconds, Johanna stretched out her arm and dropped the rock a few inches from her mother's fingers.

"Thank you," said Phyllis with a big smile and lots of enthusiasm. "You are such a good girl."

Johanna smiled back at her mother and made a few sounds.

By this time, Michelle had lost interest in the sandbox and had climbed out. She headed toward the small climbing area for toddlers. Phyllis patted Johanna, handed her Michelle's bucket, and then went back to talk with Lynn. Lynn was watching her daughter intently as she and Phyllis resumed their earlier conversation. Michelle stopped climbing and looked around for her mother. Michelle waved at her mother then happily went back to climbing. Johanna, still sitting in the sandbox, dropped the bucket. She didn't know what to do with it. She was still hot and the sand was starting to itch on the backs of her legs. Michelle had left, and Johanna was bored. She started squirming again and then began to whine. After a few minutes, Phyllis came over again and smiled at Johanna.

"Are you tired of that sandbox?" she asked. "Let's go see what Michelle is up to."

She reached down and scooped up Johanna. She carried her over to the baby slide. Lynn was already at the slide standing behind Michelle as she climbed the four steps to the top of the slide. Michelle hesitated at the top of the slide then slid down. At the bottom, she rolled off and clapped her hands.

"Yeah!" said Phyllis clapping her hands as best she could while holding her daughter. "Did you see Michelle slide?"

Johanna looked at her mother then slowly brought her hands together and clapped twice, though she had trouble bringing her hands together smoothly. Johanna shifted in her mother's arms and tried to twist away from her.

"Do you want to slide?" Phyllis asked.

Johanna continued to try to twist away.

"Here let's get on the slide." Phyllis said.

She placed Johanna on the top of the slide and kept both hands on her to help her balance.

"Are you ready?" she asked Johanna.

Phyllis waited until Johanna began to rock back and forth. Phyllis then helped Johanna push off and supported her trunk as she slid down the slide.

“Whee!” said Phyllis at the bottom, swinging Johanna back up into her arms.

Lynn clapped her hands, and said, “Yeah, Johanna!”

Michelle jumped up and down and clapped her hands, too. Johanna looked at her mother with a big smile on her face and tried to clap her hands again. Then she squirmed and turned away again.

“You liked that slide. Let’s do it again,” said Phyllis.

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## **Session 3: Communication and Language Interventions**

### **Activity B: Encouraging Communication in Daily Routines**

#### **Participant Guidelines**

The purpose of this activity is to identify strategies that will help families incorporate their child's communication goals into daily routines.

**Materials.** "Intervention Chart" (attached)

#### **Directions**

1. Read the case story of Raul below.
2. Identify four ways that Raul's parents can incorporate his language goals into their existing routines (the language goals are listed in the case vignette along with examples). You may also identify additional routines not listed below that are appropriate for children his age.
3. Record your answers on the attached intervention chart.
4. Submit the completed chart to your instructor on \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Be prepared to share and discuss your findings in class or via an online discussion.

#### **Vignette**

Raul is a 22-month-old with anophthalmia and mild developmental delays. He spends most of his time at home with his mother, father, grandmother, and two older sisters. Raul's family primarily speaks English, but they do speak Spanish occasionally at home. He has a vocabulary of five words, which include *sí*, *mama*, *papa*, *more*, and *hot*. Typical activities that Raul enjoys with his family include eating at the table with his family, bathing with his older sisters, playing at the park with his cousins, listening to music in his rocking chair, and being carried by his grandmother when the family goes into the community. A speech-language pathologist and Raul's family have identified the following goals for Raul: (a) increase his vocabulary from 5 to 15 words and (b) follow simple one-step directions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Intervention Chart**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Increase vocabulary from 5 to 15 words</b>	<b>Follow simple one-step commands</b>
Example	Identify objects that are meaningful to Raul (e.g., a favorite bath toy). Select one or two objects at a time and have all family members use the same name for the toy around Raul.	Help the family task analyze diaper changing. From the list, identify simple commands Raul could follow while changing his diaper. Examples: "Hand me the diaper," "Pull the wipe," "Pull your legs up."
1		
2		
3		
4		

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## **Session 3: Communication and Language Interventions**

### **Activity A: Case Story About a Child With Nonlinguistic Communication**

#### **Participant Guidelines**

The purpose of this activity is to identify different forms and functions of expressive and receptive communication.

**Materials.** “Case Story: Paul” and “Communication Chart for Paul” (attached)

#### **Directions**

1. Read the attached case story about Paul.
2. After reading the case story, use the attached communication chart to identify the forms and functions of Paul’s expressive and receptive communication. The communication chart includes a few examples. For each communicative attempt or description of Paul’s behavior, identify
  - the communicative forms,
  - the communicative function,
  - whether the communication was expressive or receptive,
  - whether the communication was appropriate or inappropriate, and
  - if intervention is needed.
3. Turn in your communication chart in to the instructor.  
The assignment is due \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Be prepared to discuss the findings in class or via an online discussion.

## **Case Story: Paul**

Lynda held Paul's hand as they walked across the parking lot at the preschool. She was so glad that the county had a preschool that would take children with special needs. As new foster parents, Lynda and her husband, Rob, were not sure they would have been able to keep Paul if his social worker hadn't found a childcare center that would take him 3 days a week. She believed that many of Paul's behaviors would resolve after he lived in a safe home for a while. Paul came to them after being removed from his biological parents for severe neglect and then moving through four different foster homes in five months. Lynda could sympathize with the previous foster parents; Paul was not an easy child to live with. He bit himself when he was upset, often drawing blood. He preferred to sleep during the day and stay up most of the night. Almost everything he found went directly into his mouth. Paul never spoke, so it was hard to know what he needed or wanted. Watching Paul constantly while also caring for their two elementary-age children was wearing Lynda out.

As they entered the building, Lynda could hear the sounds coming from Paul's classroom. Children were talking, laughing, and occasionally squealing. A crash made Lynda think some of the children had just knocked down a tower of wooden blocks. The tape player was on, and the sounds of "Old McDonald Had a Farm" were drowning out all the other noises. When Lynda opened the door to the room, the noise level increased, and Paul squeezed Lynda's hand, moving closer to her. They walked together to his cubby, and Lynda helped him hang up his coat and backpack.

"Hi, Lynda," said Karen, Paul's teacher, walking over to them. "And good morning to you, Paul," she added, bending down to look into Paul's face. "How are you this morning?"

Paul kept his head down and began to rock gently back and forth.

"Robin," Karen called to her assistant. "Would you come take Paul to play?"

As Robin and Paul walked together across the room, Paul looked around a little and squinted at some of the children they passed. One little girl waved at Paul, and he continued to stare at her.

"I'm really glad Paul is in my class," Karen began. "But I don't always know what to do with him. I've never had a child with a visual impairment in my class before, and he doesn't seem to want to play like the other children. Unless one of the adults is with him, he only wants to sit in the rocking chair by the window."

"That's such a surprise," Lynda responded. "At home, Paul is into everything—he climbs on the furniture, he crawls under the cabinets. He even tries to get out of the yard when we play outside."

"Here he stays in that rocking chair listening to the tape player almost all day. Then, when they have rest time, he wants to get up and wander around the room. I wish he would use up some of that energy earlier and rest with the other children. His physical therapist is coming with the TVI today. Maybe I'll ask them for some ideas."

"I wanted to ask you about the other children in the class," Lynda said. "Paul's second birthday is next week and we want to have a party for him next Saturday."



Unfortunately, our house isn't big enough for the whole class, so we were wondering if Paul has any special friends we should be sure to invite."

"Paul doesn't really play with the other children. In fact, he usually just ignores them."

"Oh," Lynda said, disappointed. "I was hoping he'd really gotten to know some of the kids now that he's been here a few weeks."

"I think some of the children would play with him. He just doesn't seem to know how. When some of the kids try to talk to him, he just ignores them. Even with me and Robin, he usually only does what we ask if we touch him first. Most of the other kids are really starting to talk up a storm, and they're pretty good about listening to us, but Paul just doesn't seem to understand that we are trying to tell him something. I know he can hear. He jumps when there is a loud noise, and he'll stop when he hears his name."

"You said some of the kids try to play with him. Maybe those would be good kids to invite to his party."

"That's a good idea. I'll think about it today and have a list for you when you pick him up."

"Thanks. I really appreciate it. I'll see you about one."

Lynda turned to check on Paul one more time as she left, and she saw one of the other boys in the class hand Paul a toy car. Paul brought the car up close to his eyes for a few seconds, then put it down and went back to staring out the window. Lynda sighed and closed the door.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Communication Chart for Paul**

Form of communication	Function of communication	Expressive (E) or receptive (R)	Appropriate (A) or need intervention (NI)
Bites self	Behavior regulation: expresses frustration	E	NI
Mouths object	Precursor to joint attention: expresses interest in object	E	Depends on other developmental levels
Squeezes hand	Behavior regulation/social interaction: expresses discomfort/seeking comfort	E	A