

Early Communication Checklist

PINK= Intentional behavior but not intentionally communicative

BLUE= Unconventional communication used with intent to affect caregivers

YELLOW= Conventional communicative gestures used with intent

OBTAIN (to get what you want)

- a) Request object (e.g., asks for toy)
- b) Continue action (e.g., wants more swinging)
- c) Request more (e.g., more crackers)
- d) Requests new object (e.g., leads you to different toy)
- e) Makes choices (e.g., pointing to or looking at preferred choice)

BEHAVIORS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smiles | <input type="checkbox"/> Pulls you to an object |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Takes item | <input type="checkbox"/> Takes your hand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looks at desired item | <input type="checkbox"/> Gives you something |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approaches item | <input type="checkbox"/> Holds out their hand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocalizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Points |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cries | <input type="checkbox"/> Nods head "yes" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looks at you | |

REFUSE (to stop what you don't like)

- a) Reject (e.g., doesn't like their hair being brushed)
- b) Express discomfort (e.g., communicate when hungry, in pain, startled)
- c) Protest (e.g., doesn't want broccoli)

BEHAVIORS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in facial expression (frown/grimace) | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocalizations (whine, fuss, scream) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocalizations (whine, fuss, scream) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pushes object away |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pushes object away | <input type="checkbox"/> Turn head away |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turn head away | <input type="checkbox"/> Stamp/kick |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stamp/kick | <input type="checkbox"/> Moves away from person/object |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moves away from person/object | <input type="checkbox"/> Gives unwanted item to you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in facial expression (frown/grimace) | <input type="checkbox"/> Shakes head "no" |

SOCIALIZE (connect with others)

- a) Show interest in other people (e.g., likes when grandma comes to visit)
- b) Show affection (e.g., puts hands on your face)
- c) Attract attention (e.g., screaming when upset)
- d) Greetings (e.g., waving goodbye)
- e) Sharing (e.g., offering food to a friend)

BEHAVIORS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smile | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocalizations (scream, cry, squeal) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking at a person | <input type="checkbox"/> Looks back and forth (you + object) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocalizations (scream, squeal) | <input type="checkbox"/> Gives or shows something to you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approaching person | <input type="checkbox"/> Waves "hi" and "bye" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smile | <input type="checkbox"/> Hugs, kisses, pats someone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looks at person | <input type="checkbox"/> Points to something |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Touches person | |
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SEEK INFORMATION (questions & comments)

- a) Answer "Yes/no" questions (e.g., "Do you want more juice?")
- b) Asks questions (rising intonation for "Mommy?")
- c) Names things (e.g., looks at books and tries to say words)
- d) Makes comments (e.g., "it's hot.")

BEHAVIORS

- Facial expressions (smiling/sticking tongue out)
- Looks back and forth between you and object
- Nods head "yes"
- Nods head "no"
- Shrugs shoulders
- Points to something
- Uses rising intonation (sounds like a question)

This is a screening tool adapted from the Communication Matrix.
For more in-depth assessment, go to communicationmatrix.org.