

Assessing and developing communication interventions for pre-verbal toddlers

Kelley Henry, Psy.D., BCBA-D, LABA
Brooke Littleton, SLP-D, CCC-SLP
Tiffany Barry, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCBA

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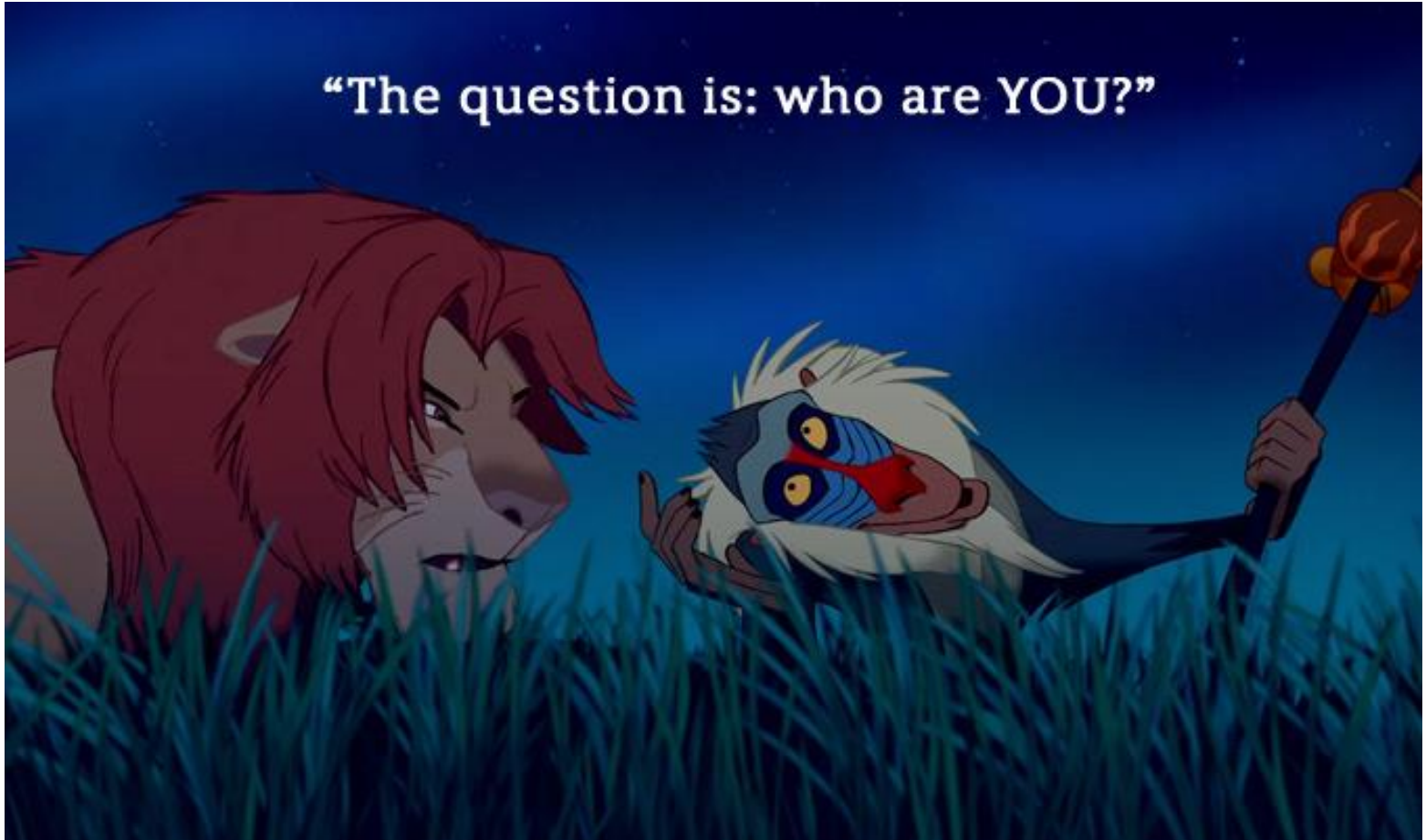
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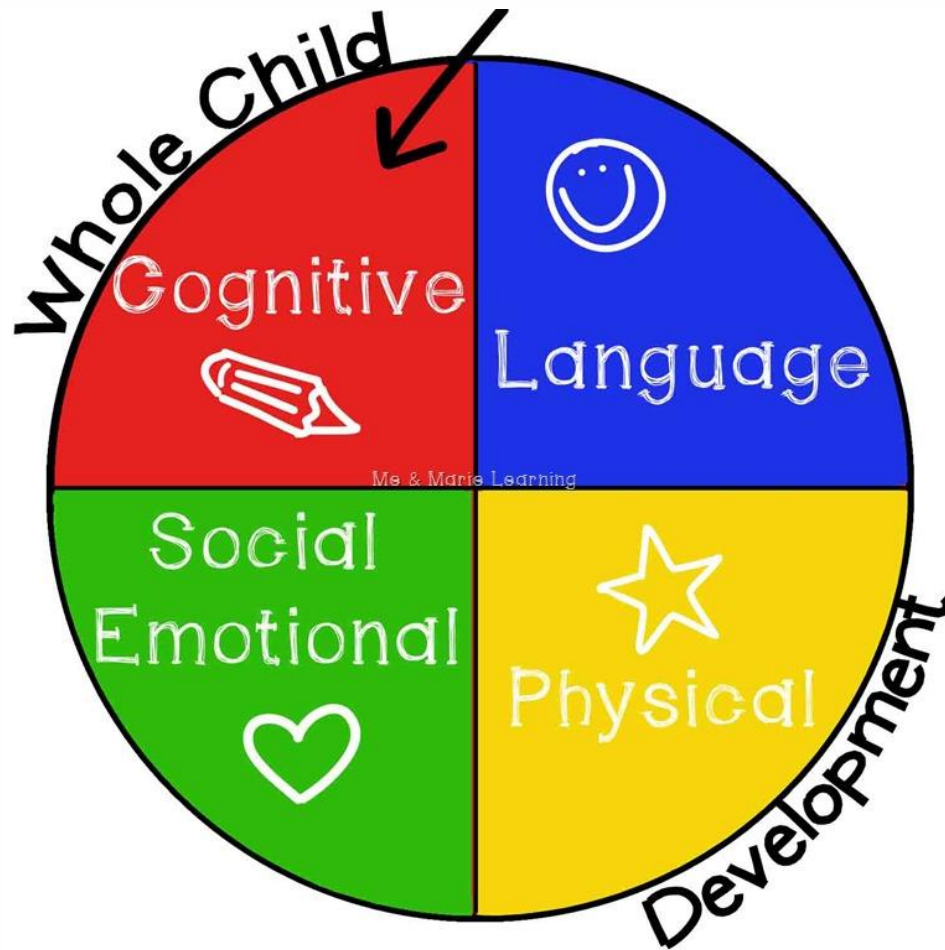
Who Are We?



“The question is: who are YOU?”



Evaluation



Assessment Complete

- What do we look for when starting to work with that child?
- Environment and Caregivers role?
- Where do we begin?



What is Social Communication?

- concepts of social reciprocity, social interaction, social skills, communication skills, or language skills.
- For toddlers this is...



Core Social Communication Skills

- » eye contact
- » joint attention
- » turn taking
- » gaining attention
- » requesting
- » rejection

Cognitive Skills

- Object permanence
- Sorting
- Matching
- Classification



Early Classification



Informal Assessment of Language Skills

- Responding to the Environment
- Spontaneous Communication
- Symbolic Understanding
- Function of Communicative Attempts

Responding to the Environment

1. Sounds

- Are responses appropriate to loud noises, familiar sounds, songs, and names of objects

2. Name

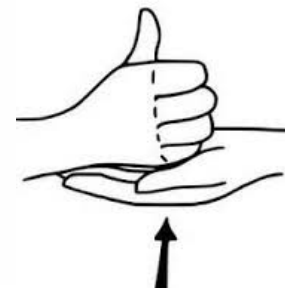
- Communication partners, context, tone of voice

3. Gestures

- Unconventional
- Conventional

Spontaneous Communication

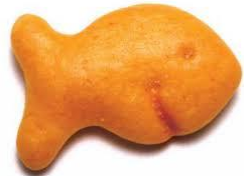
1. Use of Sounds and Words
 - Number of Different Words
2. Use of Signs
 - Imitative and Non-imitative
 - Consistency of use
3. Use of Gestures
 - Convention and Unconventional
4. In what context?
 - **CONTEXT** is the **MOST IMPORTANT**



Symbolic Understanding & Use

1. Concrete versus Abstract

- Objects, pictures, words, signs, gestures



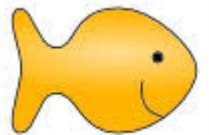
2. Matching and/or correspondence

- Object to object, object to photograph, object to symbol/referent



3. Sorting

- Semantic features, categories, locations



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlwmuexLo>

goldfish

Function of Communicative Attempts

Pragmatic Language or Social Communicative Intent

- Refuse/Reject
- Request (action, object, or person)
- Seek Recurrence
- Choose
- Comment/Share Information
- Command Others Behavior
- Respond to Questions
- Greeting
- Repeating

First Words Project©

16 by 16 series

- Gesture
- Actions

Social Communication

Growth Charts

- Handouts
- Videos

<https://firstwordsproject.com>

Communication Matrix©

- 4 communicative intents: refuse, obtain, social, informative
- 24 communicative functions
- 7 levels of behavior
- 9 communication modalities
- Parent/provider questions

<https://www.communicationmatrix.org/>

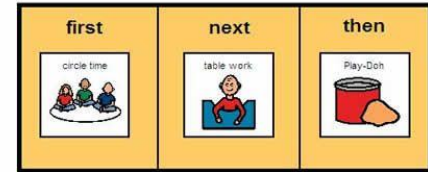
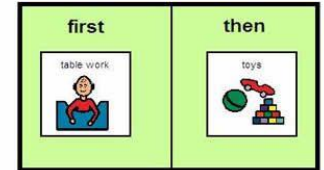
Visual Supports

- Used to aid comprehension of spoken language, maintain attention
- Used to communicate expectations
- Used to augment or as an alternative form to spoken language



Hodgdon (1995)

Visual Supports to Support Receptive Language



Visuals for Expressive Language

- Gestures rather than signs
- Objects, photographs, or symbols



VISUAL SUPPORT FORMATS		
OBJECT		
SYMBOL		
SOCK	WORD	PUZZLE
BOOK		APPLE



Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

"Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) includes all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. We all use AAC when we make facial expressions or gestures, use symbols or pictures, or write." (ASHA.org)

Who could benefit from AAC?

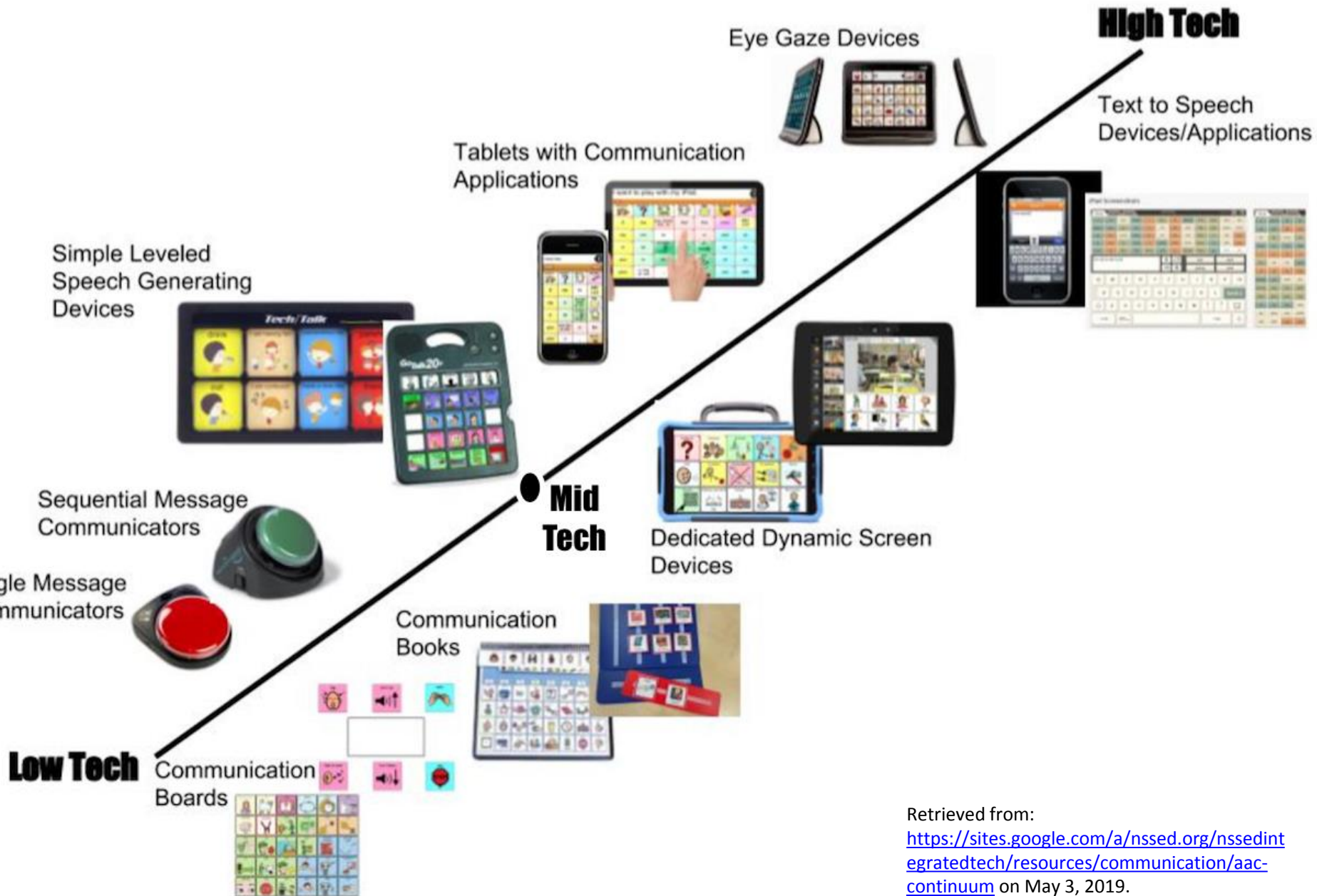


Anyone!

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

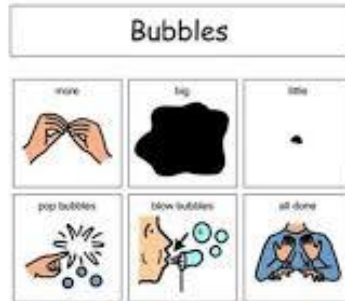
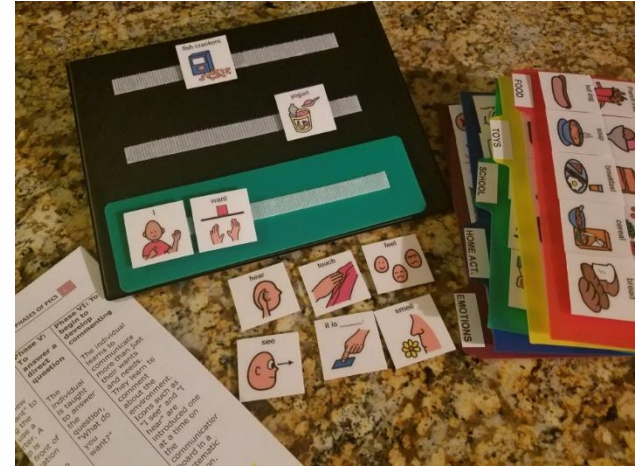
- Augmentative v. alternative
- Modalities
 - Aided and unaided
- Expressively and receptively
- Communicative functions
- MANY options
 - High tech, mid tech, low tech





Retrieved from:
<https://sites.google.com/a/nssed.org/nssedintegratedtech/resources/communication/aac-continuum> on May 3, 2019.

Low tech systems



Mid tech systems



High-tech systems



Assessment - Trials



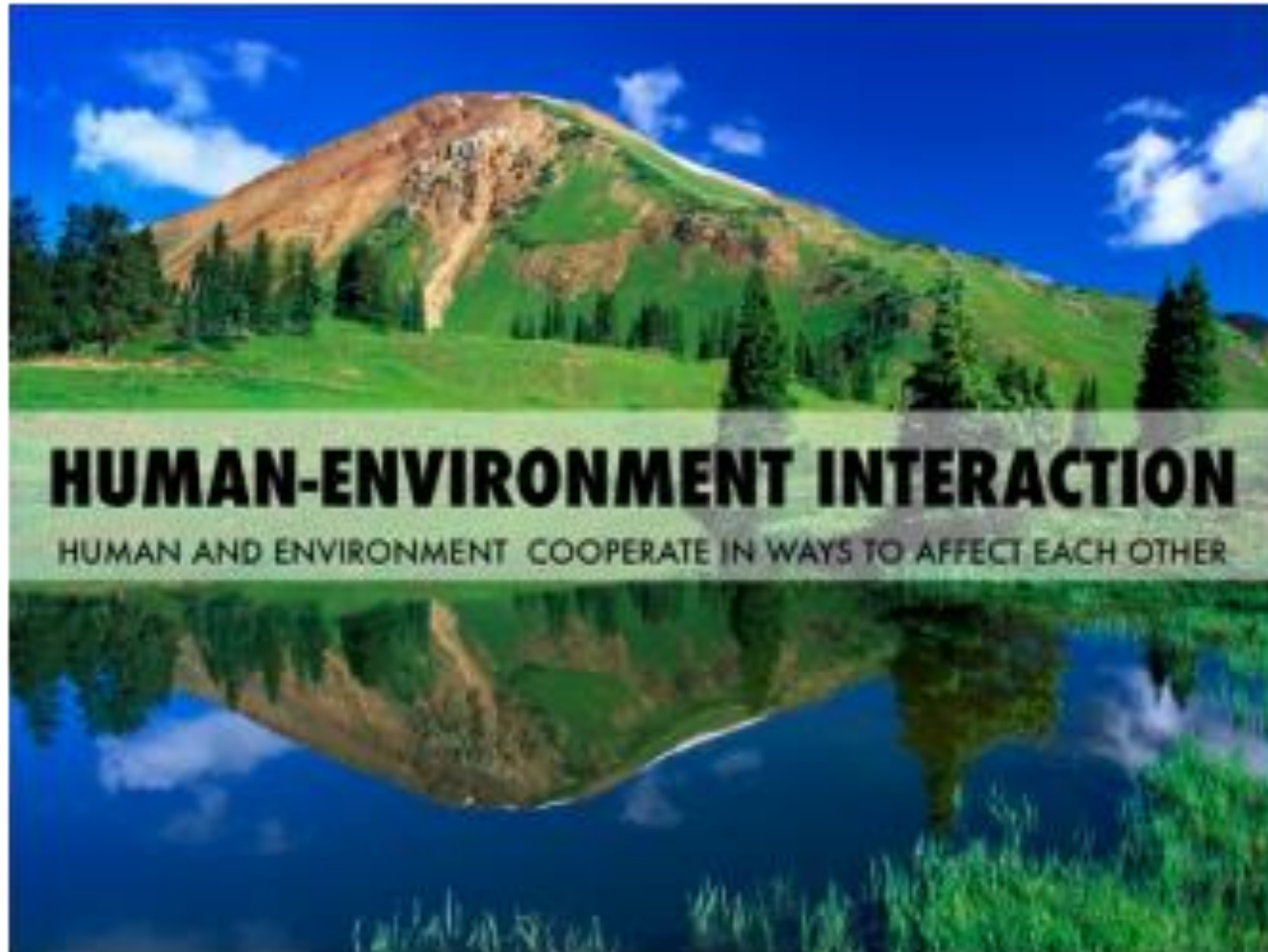
Assessment – What are we looking for?

- Communicative Competence (Light, 1989)
 - Operational Competence: skills needed to operate AAC system
 - On/off, charging, navigating
 - Social Competence: social interaction/pragmatics
 - Initiating, maintaining, terminating conversation
 - Linguistic Competence: language skills
 - Recognize symbol sets, reading
 - Strategic Competence: knowing when and how to use adaptive strategies
 - FCT, resolving breakdowns, using multimodal communication

My client is using AAC... Now What?!

- Identify reinforcers
 - Toys, activities, songs
- Environmental modifications
- Limit Access
- Reinforce!!!!
- Aided Language Stimulation/Aided Language Input
- Core AND Fringe Vocabulary
- Parent/caregiver training
- Pair visuals with toys/songs/activities

Environmental Modifications



Human/Environment Interaction

● Depend on Environment



● Modify the Environment



● Adapt to Environment



achievement house

Limit Access



Find what is
motivating and
engineer the
environment!

Reinforce

- Use preferred activities, toys, games, etc. to teach targeted skill
- Be consistent & playful
- **HAVE FUN!**



Aided Language Stimulation

MODEL, MODEL, MODEL

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISN318WaJzA>

Use language strategies you are familiar with – expansion, extension, recasting, describing, commenting

A Word About Vocabulary

Core versus Fringe?

I	it	who	what	when	again	now	that	this	trouble
me-myself	my - mine	not	come	do-does-do	ready	how	finished	all gone	bad
you - your	drink	eat	get	give	go	where	big	different	good
hear / listen	help	like	look / see	make	put	werey	happy	little	more
say / tell	stop	take	turn	want	here	there	sad	sick	silly

baked potato	chicken tenders	ham	rice	stopy joe
burrito	Chinese food	corn dog	enchiladas	lasagna
staroni & cheese	nachos	noodles	pizza	ravioli
salad	spaghetti	taco	turkey	cheeseburger
ken kate sande	hohburger	grilled cheese	hamburger	hot dog
sandwich	chicken leg	chicken nuggets	fish	fish sticks

BOTH are important

Parent/Caregiver Training

- Teach caregivers and daycare providers to:
 - Create environment for success
 - Reinforce desired behavior
 - Create communication opportunities
- Consistency and carryover is important
 - Teach and demonstrate the POWER of communication



AAC Myths and Misconceptions

- AAC is a last resort
- AAC hinders or stops speech development
- Prerequisite skills
 - ‘The Pitfalls of Presumptions’ Katie O’Neil and Rebecca McCarthy
- Speech-generating devices are for children with intact cognition
- Age requirement

Resources

- <http://aackids.psu.edu> – specifically focuses on EI/young children
- <https://praacticalaac.org/>
- <https://www.prentrom.com/>
- <http://www.project-core.com/>
- <https://www.assistiveware.com>
- <https://coreword.assistiveware.com> – you need to create an account for access
- www.asha.org



Communication and Skill Inventory

- Observe
- Take data
 - What is working? What isn't?
- Consider Communication and Language separately



When to seek outside evaluations?



Limited or No Social Communication Skills

- Language Intact
 - Consistent spontaneous, non-imitative use of symbolic language (sign, spoken, picture)
- Limited Social Communication Skills
 - Does not use language for a variety of communicative functions
 - Reduced turn taking
 - Poor Joint Attention
 - Limited response to name
 - Other Red Flags (restricted repetitive behaviors or interfering behaviors)

Refer for NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Limited to No Spoken Language

- Social Communication Intact
 - Uses symbolic language (sign, pictures) or conventional gestures to serve a variety of pragmatic or communicative functions
 - Consistent spontaneous, non-imitative use of symbolic language (sign, spoken, picture)
- Limited Spoken Language Skills
 - Limited non-imitative inventory of spoken words/word approximations
 - Limited phonetic inventory
 - Intact play skills and verbal/non-verbal turn taking
 - Good joint attention, response to environmental sounds, and response to others gestures
 - No other Red Flags

Refer for SPEECH-LANGUAGE EVALUATION

Not Sure?

Unsure or observed variable delays across domains.

Refer for combined **NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL & SPEECH-
LANGUAGE EVALUATION**

Questions ?



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Thank You!
Enjoy the rest of the conference