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| **LINGUISTIC** | **OPERATIONAL** |
| ♦ Identifies and establishes the first reliable signal for symbolic communication | ♦Carries own device  |
| ♦Reliable “want” or “don’t want” given choices (\*partner assisted scanning) | ♦Puts device in position for communication  |
| ♦Matches personally meaningful visual scenes to context (photos or pictures) | ♦Turns device on/off ♦Charges (in routine) |
| ♦Understands basic vocabulary within familiar routines and themes (animals; ADLs; family/friends photos) within context of visual scenes | ♦Simple errorless message selection via touch/step or automatic scanning ♦Partner assisted navigation to specific pages for activity |
| ♦Single button messages ♦Reliable choice making  | ♦Partner assisted navigation to specific page appropriate to the communicative demand |
| ♦Responds/requests with single word  |   |
| ♦Understands and uses simple/concrete symbols |   |
| **SOCIAL** | **STRATEGIC** |
| ♦Demonstrates turn taking (object based)  | ♦Cause and effect  |
| ♦Responds to communication  | ♦Demonstrates ownership of device (“This is mine” or “I use this to talk”) |
| ♦References communication partner | ♦Selects single button message (or other communication mode) to signal a misunderstood message (e.g. “That’s not right” or repeat message)  |
| ♦Cause/effect with social consequences (come here; leave; break; finished) | ♦Gains partner’s attention ♦Introduces self when appropriate  |
| ♦Requests motivating activities/objects | ♦Uses different mode of communicating misunderstood message (e.g. gestures, pointing, vocalizing)  |
| ♦Greetings and farewells with partner assisted navigation |   |
| ♦Uses humor with partner assisted navigation |   |

**Emergent Communicator**

**Emergent communicator characteristics**: communicates basic needs and messages; requires assistance from communication partner; beginning to interact socially; communicates a limited number of messages in a small set of specific contexts or routines.

**Context Dependent**

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| **LINGUISTIC** | **OPERATIONAL** |
| ♦Understands and uses themes / levels /  contexts  | ♦Operational device management with on- screen sequences: ex: soft reset, volume  control, voice controls |
| ♦Understands and uses symbols to  reference time (“today/tomorrow”) | ♦Participates in programming (symbol and  message selection with choice) |
| ♦Tells or retells a story | ♦Retrieves device |
| ♦Indicates “more than one”  | ♦Asks for assistance when problem arises |
| ♦Understands and uses abstracts symbols  (verbs and concepts:  quantitative /qualitative/spatial) | ♦Touching/Scanning to select meaningful  choices with distracters present (avoids blank buttons) |
| ♦Begins to combine 2-3 word messages | ♦Touch/switch activation to select  “correct” or “logical” choices within the  context of the event/discussion/activity |
| ♦Recognizes letter/sound associations  | ♦Selects page back button with consistent location on all pages |
| ♦Matches visual scenes to context  | ♦Selects linking pages with action symbols  |
| ♦Uses short, quick, multifunctional  messages to maintain/ control/ comment  as appropriate to conversation (“Cool”,  “Hang on”, “That stinks”, etc.) | ♦Selects linking pages with category symbols ♦Selects linking pages with location cues (ex: scene based pages or row / column scanning) |
| ♦Understands and uses descriptive words to clarify nouns (adjectives) | ♦Navigates and uses word-based pages  for intended message |
| **SOCIAL** | **STRATEGIC** |
| ♦Maintains eye contact ♦Initiates conversations with partner assisted navigation to preprogrammed pages | ♦Selects from 1 or more messages to  prevent communication breakdown (e.g. delivers descriptive instructions on how to  communicate with him/her). |
| ♦Demonstrates turn-taking (Social/Activity Based) ♦Maintains topic  | ♦Selects from 2 or more messages to signal a misunderstood message (e.g. “Wrong,  try again” or “Let me tell you another way”) |
| ♦Terminates conversation with partner  assisted navigation to preprogrammed pages | ♦After signaling misunderstanding, utilizes 1 or more strategies to repair  misunderstanding. ♦ Repeats all/part of message |
| ♦Shares several pieces of preprogrammed  “news” or information on an activity board | ♦ Changes speech output (volume and/or  rate) |
| ♦Spontaneously greets and says farewell with  navigation  | ♦ Expands intended message |
| ♦Uses humor ♦Requests information ♦Requests actions ♦Asks partner focused questions ♦Shifts topics smoothly with suggestions  |  |

**Context dependent communicator characteristics**: limited literacy skills; overall ability to communicate dependent on environment, topic, or partner; understands most concrete symbols, some abstract; limited ability to combine symbols to create new messages.

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| **LINGUISTIC** | **OPERATIONAL** |
| ♦Understands and uses morphological endings to denote time concepts (past “-d”, present “-ing”) | ♦Page navigation ♦Takes care of AAC device and components |
| ♦Uses plural “s” to denote “more than one”  |   |
| ♦Uses existing vocabulary to describe new word or concept not in device | ♦Increased independence in programming (accesses programming menus) |
| ♦Produces messages with increased length and/or complexity (e.g. different sentence forms, questions, flexibility in message choice) | ♦Increased access to external devices (phone, printer, email, IR controls) ♦Stores files, customized messages, and sequences |
| ♦Understands and uses morphological endings to qualify verbs (er /ly) | ♦Row/Column/Group Scanning with purposeful selection of “correct” or “logical” choices |
| ♦Demonstrates independent spelling skills at age level, with or without word prediction |  |
| **SOCIAL** | **STRATEGIC** |
| ♦Demonstrates turn-taking ♦Requests clarification ♦Uses social language (verbal or non-verbal fillers) | ♦Chooses appropriate message or strategy to prevent a communication breakdown♦Uses gesture/message to indicate intent of using a “first letter” strategy, then provides first letter of word for listener to guess |
| ♦Uses polite social forms | ♦Chooses appropriate message / strategy to signal a communication breakdown |
| ♦Changes message to ensure listener understands.  | ♦Signals a topic change with appropriate message  |
| ♦Initiates conversation using standard page sets and navigation | ♦Uses appropriate rate enhancement strategy (e.g. telegraphic message; abbreviated/shortened words; uses number or single letter 4=“for”) |
| ♦Terminates conversation using standard page sets and navigation | ♦Uses appropriate “start over” strategy when message becomes lost through too many attempts to repair. |
| ♦Uses partner focused questioning to continue conversation. Shifts topics smoothly with segues. |  |

**Independent Communicator**

**Independent communicator characteristics:** age appropriate receptive language; follows linguistic rules appropriate for age; socially engaged; writes and spells near age level; combines single words, spelling and phrases to create novel messages about variety of subjects.