

SPEECH CLARIFICATION PROFILE

Questionnaire for Communication Partners

1. How many times approximately do communication breakdowns happen in a single day at school (i.e., a breakdown is when you cannot understand the message the child has communicated)
2. What percentage of the child's messages, approximately, are not understood in a single day?
3. Are there people at school who can understand the child's messages better? (i.e., peers, EAs)
4. Is it easier for you to understand the child when you know the topic of his messages?
5. Does it ever happen that you understand the general topic of his message but you still cannot figure out what he is saying? For example, you know he is trying to tell you something about his summer vacation but you still can't figure out exactly what he's saying
6. What do you do when you cannot understand what he said?
7. What does the child do when you ask him to *repeat* what he just said? Can he repeat many times or he just repeats once and then quits? Does he repeat the words exactly the same way each time he repeats them?
8. Has the child tried explaining what he is saying using different words?
9. Has the child used gestures, body language or physical actions to clarify what he is trying to say?
10. What percentage of communication breakdowns are successfully repaired? (i.e., you can understand him after he repeats, after you ask more questions, after he shows you what he wants etc.)
11. Can you identify successful repair strategies? (i.e., things you or the child say or do that help repair the breakdown) please provide examples
12. Can you tell if what you don't understand is a single word or a series of words (i.e., phrases or full sentences)
13. Is his speech more intelligible when he speaks slower or louder? Can he speak slower or louder on command? (i.e., when you ask him to do it)
14. Does he frequently talk about things that happened in the past or when you were not present?
15. Can you provide examples of phrases the child say that you understand? How complex are his sentences? How complex do you think are the ideas he is trying to communicate?
16. Do you think the child is aware of his lack of intelligibility? Why? (signs you see that make you think one way or another)
17. Do you see signs of frustration *clearly related* to the child's challenges in being understood?
18. Do you think he could be taught to use gestures to clarify what he says?
19. Does the child know the concept of 'categories'? e.g., apple is Food, hockey is a Sport, park is a Place
20. Does the child know the alphabet and does he have letter-sound correspondence? For how many letters?
21. Does the child read words? (silently or aloud) How many approximately? Please provide example of the most complex words the child can read
22. Can the child write letters with pencil and paper or with a keyboard?
23. Does the child know the beginning sound of words?
24. What are the child's current literacy goals? Does the child use literacy apps or software? Which ones?
25. Does the child know how to use the camera on his iPad to take pictures or video? If so, does he open the photo app to look back at pictures or videos he took?

Tips to Teach Children How to Use Augmentative Communication for Clarification Purposes

Children whose speech is not clear frequently have a difficult time learning to use pictures to clarify the messages they are trying to communicate. Just having a device or pictures available is not enough. They need training to learn to use these tools to make themselves understood. The following tips are recommended when introducing a clarification system (device, picture book etc):

- Teach the child to respond to the question: *What is it about?* The child needs to understand that just repeating what he said does not help us understand him better. We start teaching the child to respond to this question by MODELING the phrase “talking about” many, many times during the day. For example, when the teacher talks about how cold it is today, the communication partner says: “Ms. Smith is **talking about the weather**” and then looks for the picture of weather on the device
- Spend time with the child learning the location of the pictures on the AAC system. Both, communication partner and child need to be able to find pictures within categories in a relatively fast manner. You need to spend time with the child exploring where pictures are located. E.g., applesauce is in the FOOD and DRINKS button, swimming is in the ACTIVITIES button, mom is in the PEOPLE button. Partners should do the navigation out loud e.g., “I’m trying to find the word HOCKEY... Let’s see... is it here, under Activities?... No, it’s not... Maybe it’s here, under Sports... YES, I see it here”
- Until she child learns to navigate the AAC system, partners should take ownership of repairing the communication breakdown. Partners should hold the AAC system in front of the child and point to pictures of categories while asking questions such as “Are you talking about... someone?(PEOPLE)... something you did? (ACTIVITIES) ... a place you are going (PLACES)? Partners should gradually fade the level of support until the child is comfortable finding pictures to repair a communication breakdowns on his own
- Communication partners need to be become more systematic and aware of their questions and requests for clarification. It is recommended to follow a pattern of steps. For example, asking the child to:
 1. Slow down (encourage him to keep trying)
 2. Say it in a different way (i.e., “tell me more”)
 3. Show with his hands or body (by acting it out or pointing at things in the environment) or Draw it
 4. Use the device
- Other valuable clarification resources are the iPad Calendar and Camera Roll:
 - CAMERA ROLL: encourage the child to take photos of objects and events representing activities he has participated in. Photos allow the child to initiate conversations - especially with less familiar partners. Have the child take photos from special places he goes (movie theatre, restaurants), people he encounters, activities and events he participates in. Encourage the child to take photos of books and characters he likes to talk about. This will be a way for the child to have contextual cues readily available. Add in photos from new units at school that the child has difficulty saying e.g., dinosaurs, volcanoes, insects. Model using the camera roll. You can add labels to pictures while keeping them in the camera roll using the app PhotoName.
 - CALENDAR: it keeps family and school partners informed about new or interesting topics that the child may want to talk about. It also lets the child comment on activities in which he participates in regularly. The app Photo 365 allow partners to enter photos on a blank calendar grid