**Evaluation of Basic Skills for Assistive/Alternative Communication System Use**

**Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date of Rating: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Rater Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Rater’s Relationship to Student:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Suggested Use: Indicate the behavior or skill the student typically demonstrates during structured and unstructured communication opportunities. If there is a different level of participation in a specific setting or with a specific partner, include that information in the notes or examples of student behavior section. The responses are ordered from least to most complex. After identifying the student’s ability, use the **Communication System Use Observation Skills List** to set goals and measure progress.

**Area 1. Attention/Partner Engagement**

During modeled use of the communication system (including Aided Language Stimulation and PODD), the student:

1. Stays near communication partner without prompts.
2. Attends to communication book or communication partner for about 50% of the interaction.
3. Attends to the communication system when used by partner more than 70% of the time.
4. Consistently attends to the communication system when used by partner more than 90% of the time.

Notes or Examples of student behavior:

**Area 2. Interaction and Engagement with Communication System**

During modeled use of the communication system, the student:

1. Attends to system/symbols one or two times during interaction.
2. Occasionally points to or selects symbols from system.
3. Requests book/ communication system.
4. Accesses the communication system independently.

Notes or Examples of student behavior:

**Area 3. Initiation/Expressive use/effort**

The student typically interacts with the system by:

1. Touching the system other than to push away but not with observable intent.
2. Touches symbols in a focused way or begins to point\* at symbols with intent.
3. Points\* to some symbols to form messages. 1 symbol
4. Navigates and uses communication system with consistent point\* to independently communicate 1-3 symbols (except for adult speaker if using a book based system).

*\*The expressed communication might not be correct or as expected, you are measuring communication initiation/effort, not accuracy of the message or response.*

Notes or Examples of student behavior:

**Area 4. Receptive Skills/ Comprehension**

When the system is used to respond to a communication partner’s verbal or modeled request, the student:

1. Does not attempt to follow direction or respond to the message.
2. Occasionally attempts to follow direction or responds to message (25-50% of the time)
3. Attempts to follow directions or responds to message spoken or modeled by the communication partner at least 50% of the time.
4. Attempts to follow directions or responds to message spoken or modeled by the communication partner at least 80% of the time.

*The student might not follow the direction correctly or respond as expected. You are measuring response to the modeled message, not accurate reception.*

Notes or Examples of student behavior:

**Area 5a. Book Navigation** (*Only applies if student is using a communication book like PODD or Pixon, not an electronic device (like iPad with Proloquo2Go) and if he/she is motorically able to turn pages. Do not evaluate if the student does not have sufficient motor skills.)*

1. Does not interact with pages.
2. Waits for partner to turn pages.
3. Requires support to turn pages or navigate communication system.
4. Independently turns pages.

Notes or Examples of student behavior:

**Area 5b. Device Access and Navigation** (*Only applies if student is using an electronic device (like an iPad with Proloquo2Go) and if he/she is motorically able to navigate the tool. Do not evaluate if the student does not have sufficient motor skills or adequate access.)*

1. Does not appear to understand changes in pages based on items/icons selected.
2. Understands pages change based on items/icons selected but cannot navigate to sub categories or back to home page/higher organization level.
3. Navigates to sub categories or back to home page/higher organization level.
4. Independently communicates messages using a combination of 2 or more pages.

Notes or Examples of student behavior:

|  |
| --- |
| **Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **Summary of Information** |
| 1. Record the number of areas with each of the ratings.
 |
| Total number of items rated: | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Indicate the letter with the most responses:  |
| 1. Use the following table to identify the description of the student’s communication system proficiency:
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| * Majority of items rated A = Early/Entering proficiency for communication system use.
* Majority of items rated B = Emergent proficiency for communication system use.
* Majority of items rated C = Developing/Instructional communication system use.
* Majority of items rated D = Proficient communication system use.
 |
| **Based on this information, the student’s communication proficiency is:**  |
| 1. Identify goals for instruction based on the next proficiency category. Consider the areas of greatest need for the individual student, it is typically not appropriate to include all skills in annual goal writing.
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| **If the proficiency is rated as Early/Entering, consider goals and instruction to move the student toward emergent skills including:**Attends to communication book or communication partner for about 50% of the interaction.Occasionally points to or selects symbols from systemTouches symbols in a focused way or begins to point at symbols with intentOccasionally attempts to follow direction or responds to message (25-50% of the time)Waits for partner to turn pages. - OR - Understands pages change based on items/icons selected but cannot navigate to sub categories or back to home page/higher organization level. |
| **If the proficiency is rated as Emergent consider goals and instruction to move the student toward developing /instructional skills including:**Attends to the communication system when used by partner more than 70% of the time.Requests book/ communication system. Points to some symbols to form messages. 1 symbolAttempts to follow directions or responds to message spoken or modeled by the communication partner at least 50% of the time.Requires support to turn pages or navigate communication system. - OR -Navigates to sub categories or back to home page/higher organization level.  |
| **If the proficiency is rated as Developing/Instructional, consider goals and instruction to move the student toward proficient skills including:** Consistently attends to the communication system when used by partner more than 90% of the time. Accesses the communication system independently.Navigates and uses communication system with consistent point to independently communicate (except for adult speaker if using a book based system).Attempts to follow directions or responds to message spoken or modeled by the communication partner at least 80% of the time.Independently turns pages or uses folders/sub menus with intent.Independently communicates messages using a combination of 2 or more pages. |
| **If the proficiency is rated as Proficient, consider goals and instruction in higher order language tasks including (but not limited to):**Participating in group instruction using communication system and demonstrating knowledge of academic information using a communication system.Independently communicating ideas and opinions using a communication system.Using a communication system across multiple settings, including work place communication.Using a communication system to compose sentences of 4 or more words.Using a communication system for descriptive language.Retelling a sequence of events using a communication system. |

# Suggestions for Skill Based Instructional Tasks:

This list is not exhaustive. The purpose of these items is to help teams identify functional/skill based tasks and instructional goals for students using communication systems. Target these skills during instruction. This skill might not be exclusive to the communication system. If the student is verbal, do not penalize him/her.

1. Student will communicate his/her name via the communication system.
2. Student will indicate wants via the communication system during snack time and other classroom activities.
3. Student will indicate needs via the communication system during instruction (sabotage the process so the student has to request paper, scissors, tape, or help).
4. Student will use the communication system to participate in classroom routines like calendar, sharing time, fun Friday
5. Student will report his/her lunch choice via the communication system.
6. Student will communicate personal information (parents’ names, siblings’ names, address) via communication system.
7. Student will communicate dislikes via communication system.
8. Student will identify academic vocabulary via communication system (planets, parts of a flower, body parts, mathematic symbols, letters, numbers, places in the school)
9. Student will communicate pain or health care needs via communication system (don’t deny care based on inability or refusal to communicate)
10. Student will participate in language arts activities via the communication system (retelling events, identifying parts of a book, using vocabulary words, word/symbol matching)
11. Student will control an activity by requesting: more, stop, mine, go, again, all done, different, etc.
12. Student will greet peers and/or adults
13. Student will make comments during an activity: like, fun, okay, bad, right, funny etc…

# Conditions for Instruction/Prompting Strategies:

* Modeled/Aided Language
* Hand under hand prompted
* Visual prompts (like pointing to or shining a flashlight on icon)
* Verbal prompts (like fill in the blank, finish sentence)
* Independent

# Examples of IEP goals based on this evaluation and skill set:

These goals are written based on the Audience, Behavior, Condition, Degree (of Mastery) and Evaluation (Strategy) – ABCDE model of IEP goal writing.

Student will attend to communication book or communication partner during aided language stimulation focused on participation in language arts activities and identification of academic vocabulary for at least 50% of the interaction across 3 measures based on teacher rating.

## Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance Examples

**Associated Instructional Standards to Reference:**

**Utah Early Childhood Core Standards (ECCS)** <http://www.schools.utah.gov/CURR/preschoolkindergarten/Core/StrategiesActivities.aspx> p. 41-43

**Utah Essential Elements Standards for English Language Arts** <http://www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/sscd/ee_ela-draft.aspx> see Comprehension and Collaboration and presentation of Knowledge and Ideas for the student's current Grade level

**Early/Emergent Communicator**

Based on observation and teacher report, Student is at the emergent proficiency level for 4/5 basic skills for alternative/assistive communication use. These skills are attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with the communication system, initiation/expressive use/effort and receptive skills/comprehension. Student is at the early level for 1/5 basic skills. This skill is device access and navigation. In order to access the general curriculum, Student needs to improve his ability to attend to a communication system when used by a partner, request or access a communication system, point to symbols to form messages, follow directions and understand pages change based on items/icons selected. These skills will improve Student's ability to ask and answer questions about details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Given a communication system, Student will independently attend to a communication system when used by a partner, request or access a communication system, point to symbols to form simple messages, follow directions and demonstrate understanding that pages change based on items/icons selected in 4/5 opportunities based on teacher report, observation and treatment data.

Given a communication system and verbal prompts, Student will attend to a communication system when used by a partner, request or access a communication system, point to symbols to form simple messages, follow directions and demonstrate understanding that pages change based on items/icons selected in 4/5 opportunities based on teacher report, observation and treatment data.

Given a communication system and a model, Student will request or access a communication system, point to symbols to form simple messages, and follow directions for communication system navigation in 4/5 opportunities based on teacher report, observation and treatment data.

**Developing/Instructional Communicator**

Based on observation and teacher report, Student is proficient in 3/5 basic skills for alternative/assistive communication use. These skills are attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with the communication system and receptive skills/comprehension. Student is at the developing or instructional level for 2/5 basic skills for alternative/assistive communication use. These skills are initiation/expressive use/effort and device access and navigation. Student needs to improve his ability to navigate and use a communication system to independently communicate using 1-3 symbols to access the general curriculum. This will allow Student to communicate precisely (i.e., provide complete information) or efficiently (i.e., telegraphic communication) as required by the context, task, and communication partner.

Given a communication system, Student will independently communicate a variety of messages including answers to questions, make requests and state information about himself using at least 1-3 symbols in 4/5 opportunities based on teacher report, observation and treatment data.

Given a communication system and verbal prompts, Student will communicate a variety of messages including answers to questions, make requests and state information about himself using at least 1-3 symbols in 1-3 symbols in 4/5 opportunities based on teacher report, observation and treatment data.

Given a communication system and a model, Student will communicate a variety of messages including answers to questions, make requests and state information about himself using at least 1-3 symbols in 1-3 symbols in 4/5 opportunities based on teacher report, observation and treatment data.

# Evaluation Summary Description (use before writing the individual assessment)

The Evaluation of Basic Skills for Assistive/Alternative Communication System Use is a rubric used to identify a baseline and establish instructional goals for communication system use with electronic or communication board instruction utilizing core vocabulary and aided language use. It focuses on 5 skills including Attention/Partner Engagement, Interaction and Engagement with the Communication System, Initiation/Expressive use/effort, Receptive Skills/ Comprehension and Device Access and Navigation. The rating form is completed after observation or by the communication partners who interact with the student and the communication system most often.

# Evaluation Summary Samples:

**Early/Emergent Communicator**

Student was observed in the classroom during group instruction. The purpose of the observation was to identify Student's proficiency when using a dynamic communication system. Student currently uses an iPad with Proloquo2Go. An informal observation form called, Evaluation of Basic Skills for Assistive/Alternative Communication System use was used to assess and quantify Student's use of the iPad and Proloquo2Go. This measure defines 5 requisite skills for an assistive communication user and 4 levels of complexity. The skills are attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with the communication system, initiation/expressive use/effort, receptive skills/comprehension and device access and navigation. The 4 levels of complexity are early/entering, emergent, developing/instructional and proficient.

During the observation Student demonstrated the following basic skills for communication system use at the emergent level: attend to communication book or communication partner for about 50% of the interaction, occasionally points to or selects symbols from the system, touches symbols in a focused way or begins to point at symbols with intent, occasionally attempts to follow direction or respond to message (25-50% of the time) These abilities are related to the attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with communication system, initiation/expressive use/effort and receptive skills/comprehension skill areas.

Student demonstrated the following basic skills for communication system use at the early/entering level: does not appear to understand changes in pages based on items/icons selected. This ability is related to the device access and navigation area.

This information suggests Student is at the emergent proficiency level for the basic skills for assistive communication.

**Early/Emergent Communicator – Parent Report**

Student's parents completed an informal observation form called, Evaluation of Basic Skills for Assistive/Alternative Communication System Use. The purpose of this is to quantify Student's use of the iPad and Proloquo2Go. This measure defines 5 requisite skills for an assistive communication user and 4 levels of complexity. The skills are attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with the communication system, initiation/expressive use/effort, receptive skills/comprehension and device access and navigation. The 4 levels of complexity are early/entering, emergent, developing/instructional and proficient.

Parent rating identified Student's basic skills for communication system use at the emergent level for: attend to communication book or communication partner for about 50% of the interaction, occasionally points to or selects symbols from the system, touches symbols in a focused way or begins to point at symbols with intent, and understands pages change based on items/icons selected but cannot navigate to sub categories or back to home page or higher organization level. These abilities are related to the attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with communication system, initiation/expressive use/effort and device access and navigation.

Parent rated receptive skills/comprehension as attempts to follow directions or responds to message spoken or modeled by the communication partner at least 50% of the time. This is the developing/instructional level of proficiency.

The overall rating of emergent proficiency is consistent with the school rating of Student's skills. Student's parents observe him as having higher receptive language skills when accessing and using the communication system.

**Developing/Instructional Communicator**

Student was observed in the classroom during group instruction. The purpose of the observation was to identify Student's proficiency when using a dynamic communication system. Student currently uses an iPad with Proloquo2Go. An informal observation form called, Evaluation of Basic Skills for Assistive/Alternative Communication System use was used to assess and quantify Student's use of the iPad and Proloquo2Go. This measure defines 5 requisite skills for an assistive communication user and 4 levels of complexity. The skills are attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with the communication system, initiation/expressive use/effort, receptive skills/comprehension and device access and navigation. The 4 levels of complexity are early/entering, emergent, developing/instructional and proficient.

During the observation Student demonstrated the following basic skills for communication system use at the developing/instructional level: pointed to some symbols to form messages, and navigates to sub categories and back to the home page/higher organization level. These abilities are related to the initiation/expressive use/effort and device access and navigation skill areas.

Student demonstrated the following basic skills for communication system use at the proficient level: consistently attends to the communication system when it was used by a partner for more than 90% of the time, accessed the communication system independently, attempts to follow directions or respond to messages spoken or modeled by the communication partner. These abilities are related to the attention/partner engagement, interaction and engagement with communication system and receptive skills/comprehension skill areas.

This information suggests Student is between the developing/instructional and proficient levels for the basic skills for assistive communication.

When Student activated a communication icon or pair of icons to form a message the teacher prompted him to verbalize the message. Student was able to repeat the message with a verbal model from the teacher. Student also signed the information with a verbal prompt.

Classroom teacher, was interviewed to determine if the observed skill levels were in line with Student's daily performance in the classroom. Classroom teacher reported Student does much better with picture symbols to support verbal directions. She reported that Student is most accurate with simple directions like, "get backpack," "pat head," and "say hi" when given visual prompts with the verbal direction.

Classroom teacher also reported Student does not engage in play or communicate with other students in the classroom without prompts. Student also seeks physical contact and deep pressure, which could be used as a form of positive reinforcement to shape behavior.