



{inclusion outreach}

1031 Lucas Avenue  
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[www.inclusionoutreach.ca](http://www.inclusionoutreach.ca)

## Why We Communicate

Although many students who use AAC first learn how to request and making choices, students benefit from being able to communicate for a variety of reasons. It is important that adults recognize the various modalities students use to communicate, such as facial expression, signing, or the use of picture symbols, and respond to students' meanings.

Personal Communication Dictionary responses can be used to acknowledge the student's communicative intent, the function of communication. For example:

1. *I see you pointing to "go".*
2. *I think you are asking to go to gym with the class.*
3. *Yes, we can go to gym, choose a partner and we'll line up.*

The following shows a selection and some examples of the reasons we all communicate.

### Expression of Wants and Needs

Function or Intent of Communication	Sample Spoken Phrase	Total Communication Example
Asking for something	<i>I want to go to the gym with the class.</i>	<i>Pointing to "Go" on a core board</i>
Asking for more of something	<i>Let's do that again.</i>	<i>Reaching out for the item</i>
Acceptance	<i>Yes, I want to do that.</i>	<i>Smiling when the item is offered</i>
Protest or Rejection	<i>No, I don't want to do that.</i>	<i>Throwing the item</i>
Making a Choice	<i>I want to read this book, not that one.</i>	<i>Looking at the book they want to read</i>
Asking for Help	<i>I need help with this.</i>	<i>Making eye contact with the adult</i>
Getting someone's attention	<i>I have something to show you.</i>	<i>Saying, "Hey!"</i>

Respect

Competence

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Choice



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### Getting and Giving Information

Function	Sample Phrase	Total Communication Example
Commenting, Giving an opinion	<i>That's a cute dog.</i>	<i>Vocalizing excitedly</i>
Describing	<i>The dog is really fluffy.</i>	<i>Saying "Fluffy" with a speech-generating device</i>
Explaining	<i>It looks broken because it's out of battery.</i>	<i>Showing the battery compartment</i>
Directing	<i>Put the book back on the shelf.</i>	<i>Pointing to the book, then the shelf</i>
Talking about past or future events	<i>I had gym at school today.</i>	<i>Showing a page from a tactile experience book</i>
Telling a story	<i>The car flew up into the air.</i>	<i>Using a switch to activate a Pictello story about the car</i>
Expressing feelings	<i>I'm really frustrated.</i>	<i>Vocalizing with frustrated intonation</i>
Asking for information	<i>Where are we going?</i>	<i>Looking/pointing to the icon for "Where" on a core board</i>

### Social Interaction

Function	Sample Phrase	Total Communication Example
Greeting or Closing	<i>Hi, it's good to see you!</i>	<i>Waving</i>
Being polite	<i>Thank you</i>	<i>Signing "thank you" by touching palm to mouth</i>
Joking, Teasing, Flirting, Complimenting	<i>Why did the chicken cross the road?</i>	<i>Choosing to tell a joke on a BIGmack</i>
Initiating social interaction	<i>Hey, can I play with you</i>	<i>Activating "Can I play with you" in Quick Chats on TouchChat</i>

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