

The Communication Matrix

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www.communicationmatrix.org

The *Communication Matrix* is a tool designed to assess expressive communication in individuals who are at the earliest stages of communication, and to provide a framework for determining logical communication goals. It was designed to document the expressive communication skills of children who have severe or multiple disabilities, including children with sensory, motor and cognitive impairments. It is organized in seven “levels of communication” from the most basic (Level 1. Pre-Intentional Behavior) to the highest (Level VII. Language). There are two versions of the tool, one for parents and one for professionals, but the skills and scoring are identical. You can order a PDF of this tool for \$5.00: <https://www.designtolearn.com/Store> or use the free online version: <https://www.communicationmatrix.org/> If you enter data online, video examples are available demonstrating various communication behaviors. For a small charge you can obtain a personalized report as well.

The *Communication Matrix* is organized in seven “levels of communication.”

- Level I. Pre-Intentional Behavior
- Level II. Intentional Behavior
- Level III. Unconventional Communication
- Level IV. Conventional Communication
- Level V. Concrete Symbols
- Level VI. Abstract Symbols
- Level VII. Language

The Matrix also is organized into four major reasons to communicate: to REFUSE things that we don't want; to OBTAIN things that we do want; to engage in SOCIAL interaction; and to provide or seek INFORMATION. Under each of these four major reasons are more specific messages that people communicate: these correspond to the questions that you must answer as you complete the Matrix.

The child's communicative behaviors are classified into nine categories: Body Movements, Early Sounds, Facial Expressions, Visual, Simple Gestures, Conventional Gestures & Vocalizations, Concrete Symbols, Abstract Symbols, and Language.

This tool is helpful in showing progress in communication development for children with multiple disabilities including deaf-blindness, and provides guidance in how to support a child's progress to the next level of presymbolic communication.