

AAC-Aphasia Categories of Communicators Checklist

Adapted from Garrett, K. & Lasker, J. (2005). *Adults with severe aphasia*. In D.R. Beukelman and P. Mirenda (Eds.) *Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Supporting Children and Adults with Complex Communication Needs, 3rd edition*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Co. Available at: <http://aac.unl.edu>.

Instructions: Observe the person with aphasia during Needs Assessment, Impairment Testing, AAC Skills Assessment and in functional activities when possible. *Check* the box in the Skills or Challenges column if communication behaviors are observed more than once. Use a “cluster” approach to identify the most representative communicator type – that is, look for a *predominance* of behaviors in a category. *Circle* the communicator type that represents the most advanced level of communication for which a cluster of behaviors has been identified. *Draw an arrow* to the next communicator type if you think that communicator is advancing to the next level but hasn’t yet mastered all of the skills. *Readminister* this checklist if it appears that the person’s capabilities, needs, or setting have changed.

Partner Dependent Communicators		
Communicator Type	Skills	Challenges
Emerging Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increased attentiveness to tangible objects (e.g, clothing), personal photos, or reminiscence items <input type="checkbox"/> Emerging ability to demonstrate (nonverbal) acceptance or rejection of a tangible choice <input type="checkbox"/> Looks up when greeted <input type="checkbox"/> Takes objects and returns them to command within familiar routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Poor comprehension without visual or personal context <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent or nonexistent signal for “yes” or “no” <input type="checkbox"/> May demonstrate emerging awareness of daily routine, but is easily confused by changes in the routine or new events <input type="checkbox"/> No functional speech or gestures
Contextual Choice Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Some attempts to communicate via natural modalities <input type="checkbox"/> Can clearly indicate an answer or preference by pointing to a choice of objects, pictures, or large print written words <input type="checkbox"/> Can participate in multi-turn conversations given partner supported strategies (written choice, tagged yes-no questions, augmented comprehension) <input type="checkbox"/> Confirms or selects topics of interest <input type="checkbox"/> Clearly aware of daily routine (e.g., tries to get shoes on before therapy) <input type="checkbox"/> Augmented partner input and support enhances comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speech or gestures are minimally comprehensible <input type="checkbox"/> Generate little information on their own <input type="checkbox"/> Seldom initiates, even by pointing or vocalizing <input type="checkbox"/> Poor comprehension of decontextual auditory information (e.g., commands, questions that do not pertain to events in the present and/or personally relevant information)
Transitional Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can access holophrastic messages on a board or device with cues <input type="checkbox"/> Can shift modalities with cues <input type="checkbox"/> Can initiate a partial message on occasion and in specific contexts, but requires support to communicate a complete message <input type="checkbox"/> Can request by pointing or vocalizing <input type="checkbox"/> Can greet or produce gestural or spoken word responses in automatic social conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Requires constant cueing to think to access stored messages <input type="checkbox"/> Requires constant cueing to use alternate modes of communication <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to repair conversation breakdowns independently <input type="checkbox"/> Does not initiate questions, but may initiate requests for physical needs or comment without cues <input type="checkbox"/> Uses mostly automatic speech, if any

Independent Communicators		
Communicator Type	Skills	Challenges
Stored Message Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Initiates communication without support ❑ Independently locates messages that have been stored in advance by others ❑ May occasionally produce meaningful spoken words or phrases, ❑ May occasionally communicate portions of ideas by writing or using symbolic gestures ❑ Aware of communication breakdowns but unable to repair successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ May require support to effectively complete a communication message ❑ Attempts to utilize alternate modalities to augment unintelligible speech are not always effective ❑ Attempts to clarify or elaborate stored messages are usually unsuccessful ❑ Cannot independently spell or combine words to generate novel messages
Generative Message Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Independently combines a variety of modalities and/or message components to create new messages ❑ Independently navigates to multiple locations in a communication system to retrieve appropriate messages ❑ May utilize several steps to produce a single message (e.g., symbol sequences, word prediction, spell a series of letters) ❑ Uses stored messages independently in predictable situations when rapid communication is needed ❑ Can sometimes communicate by drawing schematics, maps, objects ❑ Recognizes errors and breakdowns and is sometimes successful at repair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ May require training to learn when to use AAC strategies effectively ❑ May require more time to complete communication attempts ❑ May require training on the use of voice-output device or other symbolic communication mode ❑ Communication breakdowns continue in highly demanding or unfamiliar communication contexts
Specific Need Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Has indicated a need to perform a specific communication task more efficiently ❑ In specific contexts or life situations, selectively uses AAC systems/strategies to communicate messages ❑ May fall into either independent or dependent classifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ May require emotional and linguistic support to participate fully in unfamiliar situations as a communicator with aphasia