

Non-Verbal Communication

Guidance Example

Child's Name

Date

How does child indicate the following message	Behaviour to indicate the message, such as body movement, vocalisation, stiffening, turning	What makes this happen? Example: Only happens with a certain toy, person or other stimulus	What interventions or adjustments are needed to establish positive consistent response and to move onto the next step?
I like that	Smiles, laughs, squeals, flaps hands. Makes sound. Repeats action. Requests more - could be by looking intently or eye gazing.	Pop up frog toy. Loves to watch light up toy spin round. Certain noise adult makes. Sounds, textures, foods. Action such as spinning round or jumping.	Encourage child to press button to activate. Give hand over hand support to help form finger point. Encourage eye gaze towards adult to request repeat of action.
I don't like that	Cries, Vocalises loudly, Grimaces. Covers ears. Turns away. Shakes head from side to side. Avoids types of activities. Goes very quiet Freezes on the spot. Holds body rigid. Hides. Pushes/kicks out, Bites, pinches. Scatters or throws items, destroys things, pushes item away. Wets self.	Sensitive to sound- could be booming or high pitched voice. Sensitive to touch, certain materials. Illness, afraid, overwhelmed. Change to routine, environment or presentation of activity or something new. Too many people around. Too much /little space. Task too difficult. Other child tries to play with same toy. Not had enough time to play with toy how they want to. Personality clash with peers.	Adjust volume. Adjust environment. Introduce at lower level such as finger touch into reduced substance rather than whole hand. Make it fun, make sure you have cleaning cloth or similar close by to wipe hand immediately Look for trigger signs for illness or anxiety to try and avoid behaviour. Pre-warn about changes. Show the follow-on activity to reassure and prepare. Use visuals. Adapt environment Demonstrate task, break down into smaller steps. Provide more of favourite toy. Introduce 'count down' pre warning Teach child to 'wait' share turns. Facilitate relationship build with peers.

I need something	Eye gaze towards item/person. Vocalises. Stands close by adult. Stands by activity and looks at adult. Points with finger or reaches hand out. Pushes to get to what they want. Climbs. Taps adults' body or leads adult by hand. Isolates self.	Wants something specific such as motivating toy. Wants support with joining activity or wants showing how to do something. When hungry/ thirsty, tired, feeling ill or wants comfort. When wet/soiled.	Teach child to tap adults hand to get their attention Introduce picture/object recognition followed by teaching to put picture of desired item into adults' hand to request item. Child likes some solitude. Provide quiet comfy area.
I want some attention	Vocalises. Throws items. Snatches toys off others. Walks around aimlessly. Stands close to adult. Pushes to get closer. Overly demanding Persistently taps adult. Hurts self- head banging/biting self Wets self.	Illness, tired, hungry. Bored or unable to engage self in activities. Notices favourite adult enters or leaves room. Adults not giving enough attention, recognition, praise. Adult not recognising they need help or they are frustrated or are trying to communicate.	Teach 'waiting' Reassure. Acknowledge child wants your attention; give a visual sign to let him know you will attend to him soon. Look at him; say his name and say 'waiting'- hold his hand to let him know you won't forget him. Distract, avoid comment on self- harm.
Do that again/more	Eye gaze Reaches towards person or object. Throws/drops item Gives object/toy to ask for repeat action.	Same as 'I like that' could be for particular activities – dancing, singing, tickling, peekaboo, blowing bubbles.	Encourage vocalisation Withhold item; ask if child wants more.... (name it), nod/shake head and say yes? No? to encourage response. Introduce PECS; (picture exchange communication system) child to give you picture of item in exchange for repeated action.
Finished	Turns/ walks away. Throws toy just played with. Scatters toys off table. Holds head downcast, not engaging or responding. Looks over to different toy/area.	Lost interest. Tired. Activity too difficult. Something else caught attention. Different adult or child joined activity. Noticed change in routine such as when tidy up music comes on.	Offer alternative or rest period. Simplify task, encourage to have another go. Encourage positive finish to activity; say one more then finished. Encourage to put activity away- show them where and how. Prepare for what is next- use visual to reinforce.

Other non-verbal communication behaviour	Throws, bites, hits out or pushes others Uponds activity.	To try to get what they want. Trying to interact with others To say they do not feel well. Frustrated, activity too difficult.	Adult could carry out behaviour analysis using a 'managing incidents' template and guidance document. Simplify activities; break down tasks into smaller chunks.
	Refuses drink/food, comfort.	Unwell. Not able to recognise signs of hunger/thirst.	Monitor, offer refreshment periodically. Use First/then strategy by rewarding with favourite toy afterwards.
	Passive/or demanding Unresponsive to interaction	Unwell. Medical condition. Social communication disorder.	Observe and monitor. Seek professional/medical advice.
	Mouths/sucks non edible items.	Sensory stimulation	Provide chew bar; direct mouthing to that item.

This document could be used for a variety of information gathering purposes.

Such as:

A prompt sheet to help staff with their observation techniques and in understanding what different non-verbal messages might mean.

An assessment record, to help recognise and monitor the communication or non-verbal responses of children with more complex needs.

A monthly/termly recording tool to help plan for next steps to help promote communication. To share with parents and other professionals.

A tool for recognising emerging negative behaviours and using it as a marker to introduce more positive ways of communicating.

A tool to prompt you to look at the environment and make adjustments to accommodate a child's needs, preferences and ways of communicating.

An information sharing document to support a child's transition from keyworker to keyworker, room to room or setting to setting.

Responses Sheet template is taken from - I can read my baby programme (ICRMB)