

Communication Defined

[Adapted from NTAC: The National Technical Assistance Consortium for Children and Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind. (2002). Communication fact sheets for parents.]

Communication is a social act or behavior that occurs between at least two people. We communicate in many different ways for many different reasons. In order for communication to occur, one person must send a "message" and another must receive it. The person who purposefully expresses a message toward another person is using expressive communication.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Communication is an essential human behavior. We use communication to play, learn, teach, and interact with other human beings. We use it to form friendships and be part of a community. Through communication we learn more about each other and the world we live in. Without communication we become isolated from our fellow human beings and cannot form meaningful relationships (Miles & Riggio, 1999).

All children learn to communicate before they learn words, signs, or pictures. They learn that others' communication has a purpose and meaning and begin to understand other people's messages before they themselves use communication expressively.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Communication is critical for social interactions and friendships
- Expressive communication builds upon receptive communication
- Adults' interactions with a child provide a model for how to communicate
- In order to have communication, a child must have a way to communicate, a reason to communicate, and something to communicate about
- The lack of a communication system can isolate a child who is deaf-blind

REFERENCES

Miles, B., & Riggio, M. (1999). *Remarkable conversations*. Watertown, MA: Perkins School for the Blind.
