

## PERSONAL FOCUS COMMUNICATION TIP SHEET

👉 These are suggestions of what to consider when completing the “Communication” section of the Personal Focus. Inclusion in the ISP should be based on the unique characteristics, needs and preferences of the person. There is no expectation or requirement that all areas be specifically addressed in the ISP. However, it is imperative that communication be looked at holistically for the person as it occurs in all environments and at all times.

1. How the person lets you know what he/she wants or needs. This may include, but is not limited to the following:
  - Verbal language;
  - Sign language, both standard or individually developed or a combination of both;
  - Body Language;
  - Facial Expression.
2. How the person communicates when they are in pain, ill or need help.
3. How the person communicates with others.
4. Ways the person expresses preferences and choices.
5. The best way to communicate with the person.
6. How well the person understands others.
7. Durable, medical, mobility, adaptive or assistive technology, equipment or supplies used by the person to communicate including:
  - When it’s used;
  - If it is not used, why isn’t it;
  - Where it’s kept;
  - Is it available;
  - Is it in good repair;
  - Who is responsible for maintenance and repair; and
  - Who is responsible for training how to use it?
8. Everyone communicates in some way. If little is known about how the person communicates, discuss ways to identify communication.

Communication encompasses more than just words or the use of verbal language. Everyone communicates in his/her own way such as silence, facial expressions, body language, actions, sign language, etc. It is a matter of taking the time to figure out how the person communicates and expanding on that. It is important to consider communication across all environments and all times. Each person may adjust their communication to the environment he/she is in, to the people he/she is around or change it based on the events occurring around him/her. Communication can be

assessed both formally through the use of standardized assessments completed by Speech/Language Pathologists or informally through recognition and documentation of everyday activities and responses to those activities.

The use of a communication chart could prove helpful in some cases. This should be developed on an individual basis. Some areas that a communication chart may include are:

When this happens...	I do this...	This usually means...	And others should...
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If a chart or something similar is developed for the person, it is not included as part of the ISP.