Description of the Assessment Tool

The Communication Matrix is a communication skills assessment designed for the parent and professional to evaluate communication in individuals with disabilities. The Communication Matrix is unique in measuring all possible communicative behaviors in non speaking individuals and accommodates any type of communicative behavior, including “augmentative and alternative” forms of communication, pre-symbolic communication and typical forms of communication such as speech and writing. The measure covers seven levels of communication occurring during the earliest stages of communication seen in typically developing individuals. Completed profiles allow parents and professionals to directly compare the information they have across settings to provide a comprehensive portrait of an individual’s communication skills. The Communication Matrix is available in print and as an online service. Complete information about this assessment is available at www.communicationmatrix.org

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Personal Information

Birthday: 04-04-2004
Age: 5 years, 2 months
Gender: Female
Primary Diagnosis: Rett Syndrome

Residential:
Georgia lives with her family consisting of her mother, an older sister, a younger brother and her grandmother. Her mother and grandmother speak Romanian at home.

Additional information:
Georgia dislikes sudden noises, and changes in routine. She is very affectionate at home. Most of her communication occurs at home. She is easily frustrated at school.

Educational Information

Georgia attends Grade 2 at Hayhurst Elementary. She receives services from the MESD and Columbia Regional Program

Previous Assessments Used to Evaluate the Communication Skills of this Client

X Online Communication Matrix, dated October 12, 2009 (see results on next pages)
X Other: Vineland Scales of Adaptive Behavior

Summary of Current Functioning

Previous Communication Matrix Profile (October 12, 2009) and Current Communication Matrix Profile (July 5, 2010) on Next Pages
Communication Matrix Profile for Parents and Professionals

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## C1. Refuses or Rejects Something

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body Movements</td>
<td>leg movements (kick, stamp feet)</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>pushes away object or person</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## C2. Requests More of an Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body Movements</td>
<td>leg movements (kick)</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Sounds</td>
<td>coo, squeal, laugh</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>takes your hand</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: See this occasionally at home, but not at school.*

## C3. Requests a New Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>takes your hand</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## C4. Requests a New Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Gestures</td>
<td>holds hands up or out to you (for &quot;up&quot;)</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### C4. Requests More of an Object

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>looks at desired object</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>guides your hand to or pulls you over to desired item</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>touches desired object (without taking it)</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C5. Makes Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>looks at object</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>reaches toward, touches or taps desired item (without taking it)</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: Not sure if trying to point or not, but could be shaped into a point.*

### C6. Requests a New Object

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>points to desired item</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C8. Requests Attention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Expressions</td>
<td>smile</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>looks at you</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>touches you</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C9. Shows Affection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Expressions</td>
<td>smile</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Gestures</td>
<td>touches you</td>
<td>Mastered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Level 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Gestures</td>
<td>hugs, kisses, pats you</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Primary Level of Communication

Georgia is functioning primarily at **Level III, Unconventional Communication.** At this stage, the individual has learned that if she or he does certain things, other people react in certain ways, and she or he uses these behaviors to communicate very intentionally. Unconventional pre-symbolic behaviors are used intentionally to communicate. Communicative behaviors are "pre-symbolic" because they do not involve any sort of symbol; they are "unconventional" because they are not socially acceptable for us to use as we grow older. Communicative behaviors include body movements, vocalizations, facial expressions and simple gestures (such as tugging on people).

Higher Levels of Communication Demonstrated

Georgia also demonstrates some communication at the following higher levels:

**Level IV, Conventional Communication.** At this level, conventional pre-symbolic behaviors are used intentionally to communicate. Communicative behaviors are "pre-symbolic" because they do not involve any sort of symbol; they are "conventional" because they are socially acceptable and we continue to use them to accompany our language as we mature. The meanings of some gestures may be unique to the culture in which they are used. Communicative behaviors include pointing, nodding or shaking the head, waving, hugging, and looking from a person to a desired object. Note that many of these gestures (and especially pointing) require good visual skills and may not be useful for individuals with severe vision impairment. Some vocal intonations may also be used at this stage.

Percentage of Messages Expressed at Each Level

The table below shows the % of all possible messages that Georgia expresses (EITHER emerging or mastered) at each level of the Communication Matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level V</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level VI</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level VII</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of Behaviors Used to Communicate

- Body Movements
- Facial Expressions
- Early Sounds
- Visual
- Simple Gestures
- Conventional Gestures/Vocalizations
The Communication Skills List shows the specific behaviors and messages that Georgia uses to communicate.

Other Observations about Current Functioning

Georgia gets very frustrated when people don’t understand her attempts to communicate at school.
Summary of Progress Since Last Assessment

The last two assessments show that **Georgia is operating primarily on the same level as she was previously, but has gained some new skills at a higher level.**

New messages that Georgia has gained since the last assessment (scored as EITHER emerging or mastered) are:
- C. 6 Requests a new object

**New** types of communicative behaviors that Georgia has gained since the last assessment (scored as EITHER emerging or mastered) are:
- Conventional Gestures & Vocalizations

Specifically, Georgia uses these new behaviors to communicate:
- hug
- pushes things away
- nods head
- starting to point

Additional Observations about Client's Progress

Georgia is becoming more and more sociable. She has more ways to show people what she wants and is less likely to get frustrated.

Quantitative Estimate of Change

The total score achieved on the Communication Matrix changed from **25** on the previous assessment to **34** on the latest assessment. This represents a **6 %** increase in total score.
Below are recommendations for specific levels, messages and behaviors to target in educational programs.

**Level IV (Conventional Gestures and Vocalizations)**

**General goals at this Level**

1. Increase the number of conventional behaviors used.

**Specific Recommendations at this Level**

Level IV behaviors and intents to target:

**C1. Refuses or Rejects Something**

Specific behaviors to target: Shake head “no”

Suggestions:

1. Offer Georgia something that she doesn’t like (such as a non-preferred food choice, a toy, a book, clothing). Take it away as soon as Georgia uses the behavior you have targeted to show that she doesn’t want it. Once Georgia has rejected something, offer something she does want.

2. Sabotage can be used to create opportunities for Georgia to protest, refuse or reject actions and objects. After Georgia asks for something, try offering something different or something unrelated to the current activity.

3. Target this behavior in all of Georgia’s activities where she has the opportunity to have choices and may be offered things that she doesn’t like. Snack time, art and play time are probably the best options.

**C5. Makes Choices**

Specific behaviors to target: Pointing

Suggestions:

1. Present Georgia with choices of one favorite item and one that she dis likes. Don’t give her the desired item until she uses the targeted behavior to show you which one she wants. Be careful not to always offer the desired item on the same side. Make sure she looks at the choices or touches them before choosing, so she knows what the options are. Offer choices throughout the day and during a variety of activities like snack, circle time, a dressing routines, songs or book reading.
C10. Greets People
Specific behaviors to target: Wave “hi”, “bye”
Suggestions:

1. Create opportunities for Georgia to greet people during social interaction or play routines using the targeted behavior, by greeting her and waiting for her to reciprocate. Be sure to give plenty of time to respond to your wave, pat, hug or verbal greeting.

2. Play routines can include modeling of greetings; for instance, you could make a doll “wave” to Georgia.

3. Song routines can be used to encourage greetings either at morning circle time at school or at home. You might sing a familiar greeting song to stuffed animals and place them in a box or out of sight after singing or waving goodbye.

Level V (Concrete Symbols)

Symbols represent, or stand for, something else. "Concrete" symbols that physically resemble what they represent, are used to communicate. Concrete symbols look like, feel like, move like or sound like what they represent. Concrete symbols include pictures, objects (such as a shoelace to represent "shoe"), "iconic" gestures (such as pating a chair to say "sit down") and sounds (such as making a buzzing sound to mean "bee"). Most individuals skip this stage and go directly to Level VI. For some individuals concrete symbols may be the only type of symbol that makes sense to them; for others they may serve as a bridge to using abstract symbols. Typically developing children use concrete symbols in conjunction with gestures and words, but not as a separate stage.

General goals at this Level
1. Determine what type of concrete symbols is appropriate, depending on the vision, hearing, motor and intellectual capacities needed to understand and use various types of symbols.

Specific Recommendations at this Level
1. Probe Georgia’s readiness to use picture symbols to communicate during snack. Provide pictures (color photos) of her favorite foods as well as pictures of foods she doesn’t like. Show two pictures at a time (one for a favorite food, one for something she doesn’t like) and ask her which she wants. See if she will take, touch or point to the appropriate picture.
Monitoring Progress

(suggested performance data/information to collect to determine whether the individual is making progress or having difficulty with the new instruction)

Type of data: shake head “no”, point, wave

How to measure behavior: count the number of times Georgia uses each behavior independently after you provide a clear opportunity for her to use it in a designated activity and in a reinforcing context (see recommendations for how to target these behaviors). Also record level of assistance needed if she does not produce behavior independently.

How often to take data: take data once a week for behaviors that can be used throughout the day and once a month for behaviors used less frequently.

Who will take the data: Martha in a.m, Scott after lunch

Criterion for success: uses targeted behavior independently in at least 4 out of 5 opportunities.

General Strategies to Guide Instruction

1. Good instruction focuses both on changing the learner’s behavior or knowledge and on changing the instructional environment to promote learning. The learner needs to learn how to communicate specific messages, and the environment needs to provide opportunities to communicate those messages.

2. Be sure to give Georgia plenty of opportunities to initiate communication. She sometimes needs extra time to respond to a “bid” for communication, but given enough time will often respond independently.
Client’s Name: Georgia Peach  
Date of Evaluation: July 5, 2010

Primary Level of Communication  
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Specifically, Georgia uses these new behaviors to communicate:

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- pushes things away
- nods head
- starting to point
Recommendations

Level IV (Conventional Gestures and Vocalizations)
General goals at this Level
   1. Increase the number of conventional behaviors used.

Specific Recommendations at this Level
Level IV behaviors and intents to target:
C1. Refuses or Rejects Something
   Specific behaviors to target: Shake head “no”

C5. Makes Choices
   Specific behaviors to target: Pointing

C10. Greets People
   Specific behaviors to target: Wave “hi”, “bye”

Level V (Concrete Symbols)
Determine what type of concrete symbols is appropriate, depending on the vision, hearing, motor and intellectual capacities needed to understand and use various types of symbols.

Specific Recommendations at this Level
   1. Probe Georgia’s readiness to use picture symbols to communicate during snack. Provide pictures (color photos) of her favorite foods as well as pictures of foods she doesn’t like. Show two pictures at a time (one for a favorite food, one for something she doesn’t like) and ask her which she wants. See if she will take, touch or point to the appropriate picture.