

# Communication

## 'No Mode of Communication' based on ISTAR

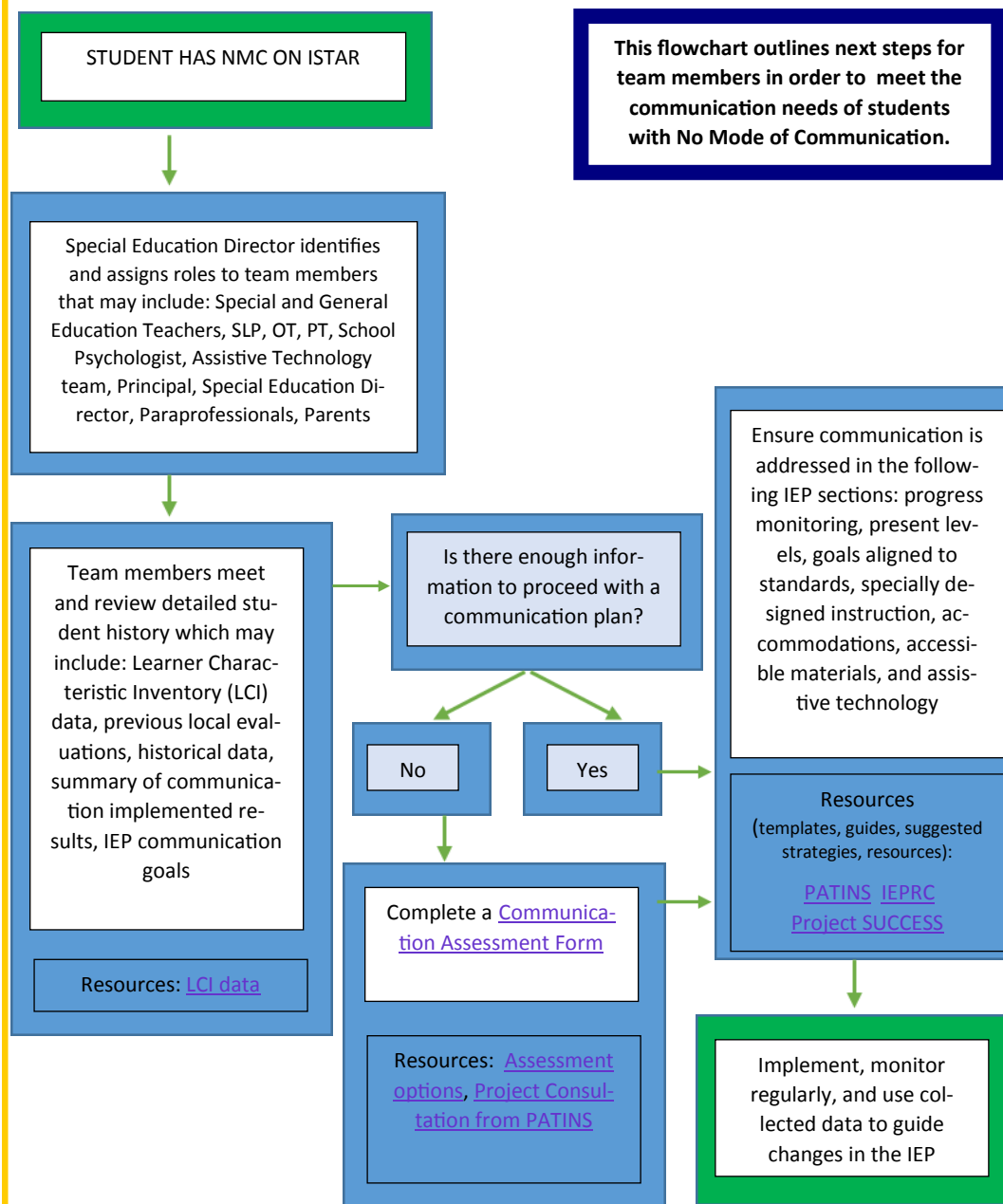
For the Spring 2017 ISTAR, teachers were able to 'close' a student's test if after the first four questions the student was not able to respond due to not having a mode of communication. One of the goals in Indiana is that each and every student should be able to communicate. This document was created in collaboration with the Communication Community of Practice and various Indiana Resource Network (IRN) resource centers. It includes important information to support educators who work with students with No Mode of Communication (NMC).

## No Mode of Communication counts Spring 2017

Out of the total number of students tested throughout Indiana on ISTAR, below are the number of students by grade and percentage who were submitted as No Mode of Communication.

Gr	NMC	%
All	552	6.9%
3	100	11.3%
4	82	8.2%
5	85	8.2%
6	73	6.6%
7	61	5.0%
8	81	6.5%
10	70	4.7%

**This flowchart outlines next steps for team members in order to meet the communication needs of students with No Mode of Communication.**



ISTAR Individual Student Reports will indicate NMC in lieu of a proficiency rating. For more information about how to locate your student, school, and corporation reports, contact your Corporation Test Coordinator or Director of Special Education.

## What are some strategies we can begin to incorporate in our schools and classrooms? (PATINS Project)

### What is AAC?

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) “includes all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas.” This can include facial expressions, pointing to pictures or a set of symbols, sign language, writing, etc. We are all users of some form of AAC. However, for a small population of people, AAC may be the only way they can communicate. The ultimate goal of AAC for students in educational settings is to provide a method for communication, social interaction, a sense of self-worth and engagement in academics, and other school-related activities.

### What do I do first if I have a student with No Mode of Communication?

ALL students have the right to communicate and be understood. Our high expectations make all the difference. First, assemble your team and determine how to support your student in developing communication skills.

The team should include the student, family, teachers, and speech-language pathologist. It may also include an occupational therapist, physical therapist, and teachers of the Blind/Low-Vision or teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, paraprofessionals, and any others that may be needed.

You may want to consult with a specialist, such as one from the PATINS Project, to try AAC technologies, consult on your particular situation, or get training on how to support the student in developing communication skills.

### Strategies and Modeling

Imagine you had to learn another language. What would you expect to need to be successful? You would probably expect to have teachers who understood the language and use it in front of you. You would want lots of time to hear it and to practice with others. You would expect to learn lots of vocabulary, to hear that vocabulary being used to better understand it. You would want it to be interesting.

Learning AAC, even for the most complex communicators, is no different than learning another language. It takes modeling, practice, and lots of opportunities. A typically developing kindergarten student has already had over 20,000 hours of oral language modeling. New AAC communicators also need lots of hours of experiencing their new language, and everyone- staff, peers, family and community- can participate.

### Access

Accessing an AAC device often requires creative brainstorming by the whole team. Factors to consider include seating, positioning and alternative seating. Then, once a student is well positioned, look at the expectations of the task. Once you have good positioning and know what is expected communicatively, socially, academically, then you can identify alternative access tool options (i.e. switches).

Determine if direct select is useful and where/how it can be used. If a switch is needed, explore placing at various body parts i.e. knees, head, foot. Identify alternative access such as proximity switches, head pointing, eye gaze. Recognize that students often require more than one way to access a device due to factors such as energy level, positional changes, environmental and academic requirements.

Device placement is critical. Make sure the student can actually see the communication board. This may result in creative device mounting supports. It is also important to be aware of glare.

Lastly, review and revise. Moveable parts move, and the human body is anything but static. Review device and student positions throughout the day for maximum access by the student.

### References/Resources

[AAC Assessment Chart](#)

[Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\)](#). American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

[PATINS Project](#)



## What are some strategies we can begin to incorporate in to our schools and classrooms? (HANDS in Autism & CDHHE)

### Communication-General Guidelines

#### WHY DO WE USE COMMUNICATION TRAINING?

We know that many skills including communication skills are very complex but are often done very naturally for many of us.

Behavior is one form of communication.

Communication training provides a structured process for training the appropriate skill in a gradual and systematic way. Students who need support in the area of communication will then use behavior to communicate their needs.

#### WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO TEACH?

The purpose of communication training would be to train skills that can replace the negative behavior that we are trying to reduce but that has been effective in communicating something.

We choose a behavior to train that serves the same function as, and is an appropriate and motivating replacement for, the negative behaviors (e.g., ask for break vs. throwing items across the room to get escorted out).

We can teach a wider range and number of communication skills that are increasingly complex over time.

#### WHEN AND WHERE CAN WE TEACH THESE SKILLS?

We have opportunity to teach 24/7, and all caregivers can and should take responsibility for training communication skills.

Skills are generally taught in a 1:1 setting initially where the individual can have the support needed and can feel safe and secure.

The setting should be physically and visually structured to support the individual in knowing the expectations. Generalization is a skill that needs to be specifically taught as well and cannot be assumed that it will occur. Generalization is the ability to use the same skills taught with a particular person with a certain set of conditions, as well as used with a certain person in different settings, and with different people and in different circumstances.

#### HOW IS COMMUNICATION TRAINING EFFECTIVELY CARRIED OUT?

Emerging communication skills/formats (e.g., exchange, words, talkers).

Communication that will lead to the desired function/purpose for communication are focused upon as well (e.g., I want a break).

Skills are generally taught in a 1:1 setting initially where the individual can have the support needed and can feel safe and secure.

Skills are taught progressively.

Consistency is important!!!

Data should guide the process—which skills to target, where to begin and when progress is being made.

A number of supportive strategies are used to support development and independence with communication inclusive of:

- Differential responses by teachers to emphasize behaviors that we would like to see repeated and those that we prefer not;
- Structuring teaching by breaking tasks into several steps and being taught progressively and systematically. Strategies used include: whole task training, chaining, modeling with feedback;
- Structured prompting methods to support at the level needed but also allowing for independence: Errorless learning, guided compliance;
- Other supports include: Visual Cueing (e.g., picture cues, scripting), Social Narratives, Self-talk.

Ultimately, a number of specific strategies and concepts can be utilized which is dependent on the needs of the individual.

All people have a [basic right to communication](#). The impact of audiological factors must be considered when discussing an individual's communication needs. Before a student can produce a sound, they must be able to hear and process it. The [Auditory Learning Guide](#) shows the series of auditory milestones that must occur for a student to access his/her auditory environment. Children grow and develop at different rates, however, growth tends to follow a certain sequence. If communication skills are not developing at an average rate, the child's ability to hear appropriately should be taken into consideration, and having an audiological evaluation may be a next step. The [Functional Auditory Performance Indicators \(FAPI\)](#) profile lists auditory skills in an integrated hierarchical order. This tool can be used to determine what skills are observed and if there are any gaps in the hierarchy of development to determine how auditory skills may be impacting the student's communication development. [Completing a Consideration of Special Factors plan](#) (pgs 28-31) can also be beneficial in determining how to plan for a child's unique communication needs and ensure that he/she is able to have direct communication opportunities.

Consideration of Special Factors-When an Indiana Student is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, [pgs. 28-31](#) (Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education)



## What are some strategies we can begin to incorporate in to our schools and classrooms? (Indiana Resource Center for Autism)

Here are a number of example of **communication boards** and books that are rich in core language:

1. Kate Ahern's [Core Vocabulary in 3 Symbol Types](#) (and [Core Word Learning Book](#)) via SlideShare
2. [Core language board with 20 PCS](#) and [12 PCS](#) by Yvonne Green via SET-BC
3. [PCS communication book \(core and fringe\)](#) from the AT4All Wiki/Barbara Cannon
4. [PCS communication book pages in Boardmaker](#) and [PDF format](#) by Polk County Public Schools FDLRS/ESE
5. [PCS Tabbed communication book](#) by Deanna Wagner
6. [PCS tabbed communication book \(young children\)](#), for [elementary school-aged children](#), and HS students in PDF format by Jefferson Parish Public Schools
7. [Pixon Board](#) by Gail Van Tatenhove
8. [Tri-fold PCS book](#) from the AT Team at Orange County Public Schools (Florida)

### Core Vocabulary

(Indiana Resource Center for Autism)

In the Augmentative and Alternative Communication field, Speech Language Pathologists and educators have moved away from ABC boards and activity based picture boards and improved them by using a richer set of core vocabulary. Core vocabulary provides more stability for the learner and relates to better generalization and functional use. The student is more engaged, participating and expressing him/herself using a core vocabulary. Core vocabulary is designed to allow students to express the things THEY want to talk about and not just about a particular activity.

#### **Which Core Words?**

There are many right ways to pick the core vocabulary that will match your learners' needs, but you might want to try:

- Consulting one of the many core vocabulary lists that are available on line
- Using the core vocabulary that populates with the AAC device or app that your student is already using
- Reviewing some of the pre-made core vocabulary materials that are available to see which one best fits your student (see resources listed below)

### **Resources**

- <http://practicalaac.org/practical/3-presentation-handouts-on-core-vocabulary-implementation/>
- <http://practicalaac.org/practical/practical-questions-with-vicki-clarke-whats-the-role-of-core-vocabulary/>
- <http://practicalaac.org/practical/aac-in-the-classroom-considerations-for-modeling-core-vocabulary/>
- <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/FREE-Core-Vocabulary-Communication-Board-for-AAC-User>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_jvCrYKkC4—how to make a classroom core vocabulary board](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jvCrYKkC4—how to make a classroom core vocabulary board)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moEK88I9UH4>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/cmcmormier/aac-core-vocabulary/>
- <http://projectsuccessindiana.com/index.php/ncsc-resources/296-communication>

## Federal Guidance

### [Frequently Asked Questions on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)

Students with disabilities, like all students, must have the opportunity to fully participate in our public schools. A critical aspect of participation is communication with others. Three Federal laws – the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) (Title II), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)– address the obligations of public schools, including charter schools, to meet the communication needs of students with disabilities, but do so in different ways. Public schools must comply with all three laws, and while compliance with one will often result in compliance with all, sometimes it will not.

### [Center on Technology and Disability- Augmentative and Alternative Communication-AAC](#)

We encourage you to view a series of [archived webinars](#), released May 2-9, 2017 which address (1) the use of assistive technology to support children and students with disabilities, (2) [Augmentative and Alternative Communication](#), and (3) identifying and supporting children with hearing loss.

For information about the IDEA requirements for children with disabilities and communication needs, school districts and parents can contact OSEP at (202) 245-7459 or consult OSEP's website at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>. In addition, a list of OSEP's State contacts can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/monitor/state-contact-list.html>.

Below are links to several relevant Federal documents:

- U.S. Department of Justice. (2014). Technical Assistance Document on Effective Communication. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from <http://www.ada.gov/effectivecomm.htm>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2013). Office of Special Education Programs Memorandum 13-08--July 23, 2013-Dispute Resolution Procedures under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/acccombinedosersdisputeresolutionqfinalmemo-7-23-13.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2013). Dear Colleague Letter from the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the Director of Special Education Programs-June, 19, 2013-Braille instruction. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/brailledcl-6-19-13.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Justice. (2012). K.M. v. Tustin Unified School District, 725 F.3d 1088 (9th Cir. 2013) amicus brief. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/app/briefs/kmtustinbr.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2011). Questions and Answers On Individualized Education Programs (IEP's), Evaluations, and Reevaluations. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2COaCorner%2C3%2C>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2011) Questions and Answers on Accessible Technologies. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dclebook-faq-201105.html>
- U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice. (2010). Dear Colleague Letter from the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, and the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Justice – Emerging Technologies in Education-June 29, 2010. Retrieved October 1, 2014, from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20100629.html>

## Communication Bill of Rights

All people with a disability of any extent or severity have a basic right to affect, through communication, the conditions of their existence. Beyond this general right, a number of specific communication rights should be ensured in all daily interactions and interventions involving persons who have severe disabilities. To participate fully in communication interactions, each person has these fundamental communication rights:

The right to interact socially, maintain social closeness, and build relationships

The right to request desired objects, actions, events, and people

The right to refuse or reject undesired objects, actions, events, or choices

The right to express personal preferences and feelings

The right to make choices from meaningful alternatives

The right to make comments and share opinions

The right to ask for and give information, including information about changes in routine and environment

The right to be informed about people and events in one's life

The right to access interventions and supports that improve communication

The right to have communication acts acknowledged and responded to even when the desired outcome cannot be realized

The right to have access to functioning AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) and other AT (assistive technology) services and devices at all times

The right to access environmental contexts, interactions, and opportunities that promote participation as full communication partners with other people, including peers

The right to be treated with dignity and addressed with respect and courtesy

The right to be addressed directly and not be spoken for or talked about in the third person while present

The right to have clear, meaningful, and culturally and linguistically appropriate communications