



Communication Function Reference Sheet

According to research, there are a few broad categories of reasons why we communicate with others. We communicate to get our wants and needs met, to exchange information, and for social closeness and etiquette.

Use the chart below to get a better idea of all the reasons we communicate. Use it when planning goals for AAC learners. Share with others to help them learn about communication.

Wants and Needs

- Request Objects**
to ask for a desired thing
- Request Activity**
to ask for a desired activity to start
- Request Attention**
to ask for someone's attention for social interaction
- Request Permission**
to ask for approval to do something
- Direct Action**
to tell someone to do something
- Request Help**
to ask for assistance with something
- Direct to Stop**
to tell someone to stop an action or activity
- Accept/Reject**
to tell someone that you want or don't want something

Exchange Information

- Share/Describe**
to tell about what something looks, sounds, smells, tastes, feels like
- Name/Label**
to tell what something is
- Relay Past/Future Events**
to tell about activities you have done or will be doing
- Confirm/Deny**
to tell someone if something is correct or not
- Request Information**
to ask a question (who, what, where, when, why, how)
- State Opinion**
to share likes, dislikes, wishes, hopes, desires, problems, beliefs, thoughts
- Negotiate**
to discuss something with others to agree on something
- State Personal Information**
to tell about your name, age, address, etc.

Social Closeness/Etiquette

- Greet/Close**
to start or end a conversation
- Tease**
to joke or be silly with someone
- Gossip**
to talk about another person whether the person is present or not
- Express Manners**
using words like please, thank you, excuse me, you're welcome, etc.
- Take Turns**
participate in back and forth conversation by alternating in listening and talking with someone
- Comment**
to provide information for social sharing on a situation
- Express Feelings**
to tell someone how you feel