

Overview of Level I



Pre-Intentional Behavior

Individuals in Level I do not act intentionally, but their behavior reflects their general state (comfortable, uncomfortable, hungry or sleepy). In this stage, the individual is neither deliberately pursuing a goal nor aware of a means to obtain the goal. A communication partner interprets the individual's behaviors such as movements, facial expressions and sounds as if these were intentional.

Messages communicated at Level I include:

- Refuse: Express discomfort
- Obtain: Express comfort
- Social: Express interest in other people

Messages at Level I are communicated through body movements, early sounds, and facial expressions including:

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Cry | • Vocalization | • Head or limb movement |
| • Gurgle | • Change in breathing pattern | • Postural changes |
| • Coo | • Body movement (stiffens or relaxes) | • Smile, grimace, frown |
| • Grunt | | |

Partner

Goals for the Communication Partners at Level I

- » Encourage intentional behavior by creating highly responsive environments.
- » Adults learn to consistently interpret different sender behaviors and respond to them consistently.
- » Create new opportunities for interactive episodes.

Individual

Goals for the Individual from Communication in Action

- » **Goal 1:** Student will demonstrate adequate emotional regulation in order to maintain or regain appropriate arousal level for learning.
- » **Goal 2:** Student will demonstrate interest in topics initiated by a partner.
- » **Goal 3:** Student will demonstrate purposeful behavior.

Intervention Principles at Level I

- Intervention has two focuses: identifying the individual's potential communicative behavior and creating a responsive environment.
- Be a highly responsive partner!
- Develop routines to build consistency across environments and communication partners. Presenting the communication opportunity (e.g., pausing a favored activity) and responding to any behavior/action from the individual is critical at this level.
- Consider experiences that involve movement and action.

- Consider multi-sensory exploration, including touch using a hand-UNDER-hand approach rather than guiding a child with a hand-over-hand approach. Invite them to engage with you, but don't force them.
- Choose interactions with objects/activities that are highly preferred by the individual, using play. It should be fun!
- Partners' repeated interpretations of an individual's behaviors, over time, will shape intentionality and conventionality.
- Data collection is important at this level to demonstrate convincingly that a behavior is intentional.

| Communication Level | Continuing Strategies | Strategies to Introduce | Tools |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| Level 1 Pre-Intentional Behavior | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routines • Wait Time • Contingency Games • Touch Cues • Hand-Under-Hand • Modeling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response Dictionary • Embedding Goals into Routines |

Essential Takeaways Level I

- It is very important to focus on being a communication partner, actively looking for, listening for, and responding to potential communicative behaviors.
- Potential communicative behaviors may be vocalizations, body movements, change in tone, facial expressions.
- Consistently respond to the individual's potential communicative behaviors in a predictable way.
- Build communication opportunities into the typical routines throughout the day.
- The receptive communication mode may be different from the expressive.