

# Complex Communication Needs

- FBA and IPCA

(YOU)<sup>us</sup>

# Functional Assessment & Analysis



Functional Analysis is the process of determining the **intent** that a communicative behaviour serves for obtaining a desired outcome with the aim of replacing that behaviour with a more appropriate one that accomplishes the same goal.



Functional Assessment is a systematic process for identifying **events** that reliably predict and maintain communicative behaviour

# Benefits of functional behavioural assessments

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FBAAs assist to determine goals for intervention

They identify *potential communicative acts* and the function and purpose of these.

Careful observation and personal understanding is needed to “listen” to what the child is saying...  
with their behaviours.

If you can identify the **function** or the **purpose** of the current communication behaviour (ineffective or inappropriate), then you may be able to **replace** it with a communicative alternative.

# FBA – Steps involved

Step 1: Collect background information



Step 2: Conduct a standardised assessment of expressive language.



Step 3: Conduct a functional behavioural assessment using the IPCA.



Step 4: Verify the results of the functional assessment – via direct observation



Step 5: Collating the **data**



**Step 6:** Use the IPCA grid to assist in identifying goals **replacing NV communication**

# Step 1: Collect background information

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Gathering the facts.

Information that will help you understand the learner, their context and needs e.g. health or disability status; family context; skills or abilities

## Step 2: Conduct a functional behavioural assessment of expressive language

Typically, this assessment would be conducted by a speech therapist or school counsellor

One measure that can be used is called the Vineland-II Adaptive Behaviour Scale. It contains a measure of communication.

## Step 2: Conduct a standardised assessment of expressive language.

One commonly used, reliable and valid standardised assessment of communication is the Vineland-II Adaptive Behaviour Scale.

The scales of the Vineland II are organized within a three-domain structure:

- Communication,
- Daily Living,
- Socialisation.

*NB: The Vineland-II **does not** assess children's non-verbal communication ability.*

# Step 3: Conduct a functional behavioural assessment using the IPCA.

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A functional communication assessment is a behavioural interview completed using an indirect and a direct assessment method.

The assessment of a child's potential communicative acts are used to identify **observable** and **measurable** behaviour.

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## Purpose:

to gather descriptive information on any informal or idiosyncratic behavior exhibited by the child that is interpreted by others as a form of communication.



# Questions used in the tool


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1. What are the communication behaviours?
2. What does the communication behaviour look like?
3. Why do you think that the child engages in the behaviour?
4. When is the behaviour most likely to occur?
5. When is the behaviour least likely to occur?

# Features of the IPCA tool


## The IPCA tool

- Can be used as an interview schedule OR completed independently
- Used by parents, teachers, therapists
- Has 53 questions
- 10 distinct pragmatic classes



Inventory  
of  
Potential  
Communicative  
Acts

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# Current Communication Behaviour

Current communication behaviour is defined individually for each child based on the responses given by the children's parents or teacher or therapist on the IPCA.

When completing the IPCA it is important to collect data on the FORM of the communicative behaviour, as well as obtain several examples of **when** the child might engage in the communicative behaviour.

The object is to answer the question.....

*How do you know what the child is communicating?*

# Sample response sheet from IPCA

## “Social Convention” Function

Please describe how the child.....

SOCIAL CONVENTION	BEHAVIOURS	EXAMPLES
<p>For Example:</p> <p>1. Greets you/others</p>	<p><b>For her mother:</b> She will give a smile. If she wants to be picked up at the time that she sees me she will put her hands out and lift up her arms.</p> <p><b>For her father:</b> She smiles, he gets more of a reaction than I do.</p> <p><b>For her brother:</b> She smiles</p> <p><b>For others:</b> I have not noticed any reaction.</p>	<p>When I collect her from day care.</p> <p>When he comes home from work.</p> <p>When he comes in from play or school.</p> <p>For anyone other than immediate family. At school, at day care etc..</p>
2. Farewells you/others	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
3. Responds to their own name	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
4. Other	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>



# Step 4: Verify the results of the Functional Assessment – via direct observation

Once we

- 1 have collected data,
- 2 assessed expressive language, as well as
- 3 completed the functional behavioural assessment, we then verify the results through direct observation.

The direct observation permits a **verification** of the data collected via the indirect assessment (the adult interview).

# Direct observation

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**Direct observation** is used to confirm the information obtained via the indirect method (IPCA interview).

This usually takes 3 - 4 days.

This is when the examples gathered indirectly are useful.

Using direct observation, watch the child and when the communication behaviour occurs, describe briefly what the child did.



# Functional communication assessments and functional behavioural assessments .

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A functional behavioural assessment looks beyond the communication behaviour itself.

This broader perspective offers a better understanding of the function or the purpose behind student's PCA.

Communication intervention plans, based on an understanding of “what” is the child trying to communicate and /or “why” a student appears to misbehave, are extremely useful in addressing a wide range of challenging (problem) behaviours.

## Step 5: Collating the data

### What are the child's current non-verbal communication skills?

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Target child: to be able to effectively conduct a functional communication assessment, the informant needs to have had weekly contact with the target child for at least 6 months.

Current non-verbal communication skills are defined individually for each child based on the responses given by the child's parent, teacher or therapist on the IPCA.

The overall results (PCA's) for each child are then coded onto a grid.



# Example of IPCA Grid

## IPCA grid for Beth

Child:		PARENT RESPONSES TO THE IPCA														Date:																		
		Social Convention		Attention to Self			Rejection and Protest				Request Object		Request Action		RI	Imitate	Respond		Comment															
		Greet	Goodbye	Respond to name	Seek Attention	Seek Comfort	Show Off	Routine Disrupted	Dislike Doing	Dislike Object	Object Removed	Adult Steps Attribution	Object	Food	More	TV/Misc	Dees	Toilet	Adult Come	Clarify	Do	Say	CM	Yes	No	Happy	Sad	Excited	Frustrated	Frightened	Pain	Angry	Look	
Smile		■																																
Look at item/ad				■																				■										
Frown															■																			
Lips purse										■															■									
Yawn																										■								
Stiffen																						■												
Wail			■																															
Sign "finished"											■																							
Says "Up"																																		
Call "aaa"					■		■						■																					
Cry/yell													■																					
Whinge																																		
Laugh																																		
No ans/response				■				■																										
Cast aside item																																		
Gasp item																																		
Point to item																																		
Arms lift up						■																												
Babble																																		
Turn away																																		
Count to four																																		
Turns to adult																																		
Says "Yeah okay"																																		
Reach for item																																		
Rubs her eyes																																		



# Step 6: Identify goals to have a more easily “readable” communication.

**Use the IPCA grid to assist in identifying goals to replace a current non-verbal communication with a more easily “readable” communication.**

