The Communication Matrix

Overview
The Communication Matrix (Rowland, 1996) is designed to determine how a child communicates and to provide a framework for determining communication goals. It is primarily used by speech-language pathologists and educators to document the communication skills of children who have severe or multiple disabilities, including children with sensory, motor, and cognitive impairments. It assesses skills typical of normally developing children from birth through 24 months of age. It is not appropriate for children who are fluent language learners. The newest version, originally designed for parents, is online. It is also available for purchase in a printed version. The original is available in print form.

The results are summarized on a one-page Profile and a Communication Skills List highlighting communication function, message content, and communication form. The Communication Matrix involves three major aspects of communication: communication function, message content, and the communication form. The Matrix is organized into four major functions that appear across the top of the columns on the Profile:

- to REFUSE: expresses discomfort, protests, refuses, or rejects something.
- to OBTAIN: expresses comfort, continues an action, obtains more of something, requests more of an action, requests a new action, requests more of an object, makes choices, requests a new object, requests objects that are absent.
- to engage in SOCIAL interaction: expresses interest in other people, attracts attention, requests attention, shows affection, greets people, offers things or shares, directs someone’s attention to something, uses polite social forms.
- to provide or seek INFORMATION: answers “yes” and “no” questions, asks questions, names things or people, makes comments.
# The Communication Matrix

## Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Tool/Author</th>
<th>Age Range*</th>
<th>Method of Administration/Format</th>
<th>Approximate Time to Administer</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Matrix Rowland (1996)</td>
<td>All ages at the earliest stages of communication; normally birth–2 in a typically developing child</td>
<td>Individually administered in the form of a caregiver interview and informal observation in natural environment. Consists of six-page booklet and summary sheet. Yields designation of intention of communicative acts; age ranges; overall developmental language level.</td>
<td>“Rapid administration by persons familiar with the assessment”</td>
<td>Four major reasons to communicate: Refusals, Requests, Social Interaction, Provide/Seek Information</td>
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</tbody>
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*In years except where noted.  Availability: The Communication Matrix, [http://bit.ly/1on7gDn](http://bit.ly/1on7gDn) (Online version is free)

## Research

None

## References