# Communication Dictionary

| What he does | What we think it means | How we respond |
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| Head turn, make eye contact, over exaggerated blink | * In response to “Are you ready?”: he is indicating “yes”
* When initiated it means: “I want to connect”
 | In response: you initiate the activity you’ve asked if he is ready forWhen initiated: initiate interaction  |
| Look and rapid blink | * Typically questioning something:
	+ It may be for reassurance in unfamiliar settings/situations, “What’s going on?”
	+ It also might be asking “What’s that?”
	+ Can also be excitement
 | Respond to him by describing what’s going on |
| Tickling hand with finger when you present your hand to him | Initiation for interaction, might mean: “I’m ready to engage” | Signing with him and initiating play |
| Lifts shoulders, without lifting hands (jerky movements typically- you might see muscle effort) | “I want to continue this interaction” | Continue interaction using sign and verbal language |
| Lifting one hand up | Again, this might be inquiry, he might be checking in about a new experience, shows he’s engaged | Give information about the experience |
| Lifting both hands and shoulders up from elbows- hands end in air curled up | This is a seizure | Provide some verbal reassurance: “It’s almost done”“You’re back” |
| Turn toward a person | “I’m thinking about you and want to connect with you”- showing he’s engaged | Give wait time for him to fully turn, then respond with verbal and sign to initiate interaction |
| His eyes are almost closed, sneaky peeks | * “I’m tired” or
* “Not yet fully engaged” or
* “I’m not sure about this” or
* “I don’t want to interact”
 | Be big about engagement (increase volume, big hand movements, motherese- lots of intonation)Cue him by saying, “Big boy eyes” with gestureUse tactile contact with him.This also could be a time to acknowledge that he may need the interaction to be a bit slower- for someone he’s not comfortable with, it might mean slowing down, quieting, being present and stepping back a bit to tactile connection (as you mentioned below), or connection around movement or a visual object or person of interest |
| Vocalizing without movement “ah” or “wuh” or exhale sound | His response in a conversation, this happens after he’s engaged | Communication partner should stop talking and gives him the “air time”- allow multiple seconds for him to get it out and then respondCommunication partner should acknowledge it as his conversational turn |
| “uh” in rhythmic manner  | Initiating discomfort | Provide reassurance and check for discomfort |
| Change in breathing, a pause in his breathing  | “I’m getting ready to talk”- Then the inhale, then he can vocalize | Listen quietly and wait for him to vocalize |
| Holding his breath (this might be at midline) | Not quite sure what this means, he sometimes gets stuck but sometimes seems to do it purposely | Encourage him to keep moving head to his side &let him know you’re listening (i.e., if it’s on purpose what is he trying to tell us? Let him know we are there/curious) |
| Sweeping with his left arm | Can move arm out but not back in |  |

Vermont Sensory Access Project, 9/18/16