# 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 for  When 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 gesture  Use 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 respond  Communication 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 |  |

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