



Communication Bill of Rights

**National Joint Committee for the
Communication Needs of Persons
With Severe Disabilities (NJC)**

All students – including students with a disability of any extent or severity – have a basic right to affect, through communication, the conditions of their existence.

In accordance with the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities (NJC), beyond this basic right, a number of specific communication rights should be ensured in all daily interactions and interventions involving students who have severe and profound disabilities.

**To participate fully in communication interactions,
each student has these fundamental communication rights:**

- The right to interact socially, maintain social closeness, and build relationships.
- The right to request desired objects, actions, events, and people even when the desired outcome cannot be realized.
- The right to have communication acts acknowledged and responded to even when the desired outcome cannot be realized.
- The right to have clear, meaningful, and culturally and linguistically appropriate communications.
- The right to refuse or reject undesired objects, actions, or events.
- The right to express personal preferences and feelings.
- The right to make choices from meaningful alternatives.
- The right to make comments and share opinions.
- The right to ask for and give information, including information about changes in routine and environment.
- The right to be informed about people and events in one's life.
- The right to access interventions and supports that improve communication.
- The right to have access to functioning augmentative and alternative communication(AAC) and other assistive technology (AT) services and devices at all times.
- The right to access environmental contexts, interactions, and opportunities that promote their participation as full communication partners with other people, including peers.
- The right to be treated with dignity and addressed with respect and courtesy.
- The right to be addressed *directly* and not be spoken for or talked about in the third person while present.

Source:

National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons With Severe Disabilities (NJC), 2016
Communication Bill of Rights: <http://www.asha.org/uploadedFiles/NJC-Communication-Bill-Rights.pdf>

Brady, N. C., Bruce, S., Goldman, A., Erickson, K., Mineo, B., Ogletree, B. T., Paul, D., Ronski, M., Sevcik, R., Siegel, E., Schoonover, J., Snell, M., Sylvester, L., & Wilkinson, K. (2016). Communication services and supports for individuals with severe disabilities: Guidance for assessment and intervention. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 121(2), 121-138.