

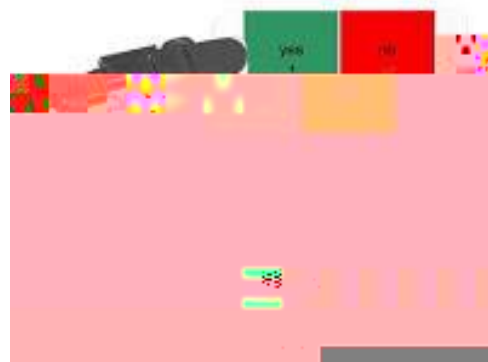
The Yes/No Series - Part One



Ways to Indicate Yes and No

There are so many ways we all say yes and no every day. None of us is limited to just one means and our students should be either. In teaching our students a yes/no response we aim for the most universal - verbal and/or head nod/shake (at least in the USA, in English) but if those are not possible any other system is better than none at all. Here is a list of some I have seen used by people with significant special needs over the years:

- Verbal response (yes/no, ok/no, yeah/nah, si/no, uh ha/ut ah)
- Head Nod/Shake
- Body Language (smile/frown, look/look away, reach/push away)
- Pointing to symbols with
 - Finger
 - Hand
 - Foot
 - Head
 - Eyes
 - Other
- Activating a voice output switch
 - Finger
 - Hand
 - Foot
 - Head
 - Eyes
 - Other
- Activating a speech device
- [Yes/no wrist bands - raise hand or look at hand](#)



- Yes/no symbols on arm rest with hand movement or eye gaze to symbols
- Sign yes/no (or sign approximations)
- Eyes up for yes, eyes down for no (and vice versa)
- Eyes left for yes, eyes right for no (and vice versa)
- Facial expressions – smile for yes, frown for no
- Thumbs up/thumbs down
- Look at partner for yes/look away for no
- Yes/no cards
- [Yes/no wearable tag/necklace](#)
- Hold up fist for yes/open hand for no
- Tongue click for yes, none for no
- Eye brows up for yes/down for no (vice versa)
- Lip raise for yes (smile) and nose wrinkle for no (sour face)
- Point to chin for yes and nose for no
- Clap for yes, tap tray for no
- There's an app for that

Or any combination of a yes and a no from above!

2 comments

[Reply](#)

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[Unknown](#) December 17, 2017 at 11:00 pm

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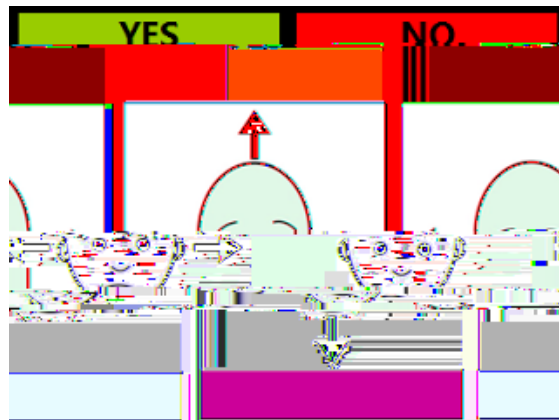
The Yes/No Series - Part Two

There is so much more in the world to say than yes/no, yet it is still a vital skill, especiall

If that is the case, modeling that NO means you rejected the thing that was offered by taking away/not giving soda is essential. If the student becomes upset because they wanted soda you can wait a minute and offer again, "Do you want soda? Yes." This time you answer your own question both verbally and by modeling the yes response. This gives a cue to the child that the answer is yes. You already established that they want the soda (the complaining when you took it away after they said no) so you can teach the yes response by modeling it.

Another thing to be careful of is the tendency for adults to use their words just to fill space. How often do you hear, "Yes or no? Do you want the ball? Yes or no? The ball? Tell me yes or no?" Imagine how confusing that is if the child does not understand the question.

The Yes/No Series - Part Four



Using Games to Teach/Reinforce Yes/No

*"In every job that must be done
There is an element of fun
You find the fun and snap!
The job's a game!" - Mary Poppins*

"Is that right?" Game

Level: yes/no for accept/reject and higher

This game is all about being silly! You can play it to work on accept/reject yes/no responses or something at a higher level. Essentially you do something super silly, like try to put on the child's coat yourself, put the child's sock on their hand or whatever the child will know is absurd. Then you ask, "Do you want it this way?" or "Do you like it this way?". Keep in mind that the child may, indeed, want it that way, because being silly is fun. So if he says "yes" to the sock on his hand, keep it up and put the other sock on his other hand. Create a build up and keep asking yes or no questions. When it is time to stop, if the answer is still, "yes", then you say, "Oh, I am so silly! No (model how the child says no)! It doesn't go like this!" If the child is working on higher-level yes/no you can ask, "Do socks go on hands?" and other higher order questions.

The Yes/No Race

Level: higher yes/no skills (label, function of object, comparison, etc.)

Prepare a list of yes/no questions at the level your students are working on or use yes/no question cards (see list below). Decide if the student will compete individually or in teams. Create a scoreboard with student names or team names. Be sure each child has access to their best way of expression yes/no. Using your list or cards, ask each question one by one. After each question be sure to wait up to a minute. You can either play that the first correct answer wins a point or every correct answer wins a point. I find this game works better if you have everyone answer at once (thus none of the students refuses to answer just for the attention given when they don't). Whoever has the most points at the end wins a prize!

Guess Who?

Level: higher yes/no

You can play this with the commercial game, with the commercial game replacing the cards with your own or you can create your own game. To create your own you need to print out two sets of photographs of people (can be real people in your setting, celebrities or characters of books, etc). We like to make these large for our students with LowVision. Using a velcro board or similar hang up one set of pictures. Choose a student to be "it", preferably one who is working on yes/no. Allow that child to pick a person from the second set of photo cards. Once chosen the other players ask yes/no questions and the child who is "it" answers. Be sure to have that child's best way of saying yes/no available. If the children asking the questions are non-speaking they can use communication books or devices or you can even program a series of questions onto a sequential switch such as a Step-by-Step or Smooth Talker. The "asking" children should use the means of asking that allows them the most possible independent generation of their questions. Once a yes/no question is asked and answered cards are removed from the velcro display board of photos in the process of elimination. Stop when someone guesses the person or only one person is left. Whoever guess is it, if no one guessed then the teacher picks. (Thanks to Susan Malloy, SLP for this idea.)

What is it? Game

Level: higher yes/no

Gather a set of object or pictures. These can be related to the theme unit you are teaching (insects, planets or common objects from around the room). Choose a child to be "it" and take him or her into the hall (or aside) and allow the child to choose one thing. Go back to the group and display all the items or pictures, including the chosen one. The child who is "it" will need his or her best way to answer yes/no. The other children will need a means to ask questions that eliminate items from the array in front of them. As always speech or AAC can be used for the answering and the asking. You may need to have questions for your particular set of objects ready on communication devices/boards/switches ahead of time. As questions are asked and answered eliminate choices until someone guess correctly or one choice is left. You can also play this with the commercial game [Hed Banz](#), adapt the game by only having one person at a time where a Hed Banz and the others take turns answering yes/no questions of the wearer.

20Q Game

Level: Higher yes/no

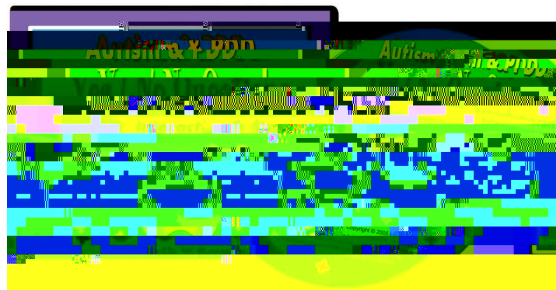
20Q is a commercial game available as [a handheld electronic game](#), [an app](#) or [online](#) (for free). For our purposes an older version of the handheld game (yard sales, flea markets, your basement) is better, but you can adapt if needed to the newer version. 20Q operates just like the 20 Questions game most of us have played, only the game does all the figuring out. The old version asks questions and gives you three possible responses: "yes", "no", "it depends". The newer version has up to ten possible answers, "yes", "no", "it depends", "unknown", "irrelevant", "sometimes", "maybe", "probably", "rarely", "partly". Personally, I think that the new 20Q cheats! However you can still use it by only answering "yes", "no"

and "it depends". If your students aren't ready for "it depends" you can ask them yes or no and change it to "it depends" when you enter the answer into the game. You can also rephrase questions like "Is it an abstract concept?" or just answer those yourself without reading them aloud. So long as all the students have a means of communication "yes" and "no" this game is a fun way to practice.

Question of the Day

Level: any

This is a fun game to include in your morning meeting group. You can use a portable white board and simply write the question with a drawing and two columns or you can make your Question of the Day board all fancy. If your students are at the accept/reject level of yes/no you can make a list of 10-15 accept/reject questions and cycle through them over and over. These could be things like, "Do you want the teacher to sing really loud?", "Do you want a high five?", "Do you want the paraprofessional to spin in circle ten times?", "Do you want me to give you a 3 second shoulder rub?" Then go around the room and ask each child and perform the action if he or she says yes. Tally each child (or put a picture of each child) under yes or no on your display. Overtime you can draw comparisons, "Last time 2 students wanted me to sing, how many this time?" then you can bring in counting if you would like. If your students are a higher level you can ask more abstract questions, "Are you wearing boots?" or "Is a fish an insect?" and then tally and graph responses.



Yes/No Practice Apps and Software

- [Ask Me a Yes/No Question by Super Duper for iPad and Android](#)
- [Autism and PDD Yes/No Questions App by Linguistics](#)
- [Autism and PDD Yes/No Questions Software by Linguistics](#)

Yes/No Question Lists and Cards

Free

- [Speaking of Speech Auditory Processing Cards](#)
- [SLP Materials Power Point](#)
- [SLP Materials Categories Yes/No Questions](#)
- [Yes/No Cards on Boardmaker Share \(must have Boardmaker\)](#)
- [Yes/No Question Cards from Twinkl](#)
- [Yes/No Question Cards from Sparklebox](#)
- [Yes/No Monsters](#)

Commercial

- [K-3 Teacher Resources \(requires premium membership\)](#)
- [Yes or No Fun Deck by Super Duper](#)
- [Smart Kids Yes/No Questions](#)
- [PECS 4 Autism Yes/No](#)
- [Just for Adults Yes/No Questions by Linguistics](#)

The Yes/No Series - Part Five

Using Books to Teach and Reinforce Yes/No

- **Ollie's School Day: A Yes and No Book**
 - Go with Ollie through his day making yes and no choices
- **No No Yes Yes**
 - this board book presents behaviors and labels them yes and no
- **I'm Going to Read No Yes**
 - is a simple story told by a series of yes and no statements

- **Oh No, Ah Yes**
 - a book about trying new things

Ways to use these and other books to teach and reinforce yes/no:

- as you read the book have paraprofessionals and peers model yes and no for each student in the manner he or she communicates it
- pick a student to be your co-reader and communicate yes and no as they occur in the book
- velcro yes/

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

The Yes/No Series - Part Six

"Best Yes" and Rewarding Successive Approximation

Shaping, simply put, is rewarding the small steps that lead to a large success. Also known as "rewarding successive approximations" I call it, "Close enough is good enough, for now." By which I mean that if we reward a first step towards meeting a goal and then each tiny step closer we will eventually get there. Shaping is baby steps. In the case of yes/no this starts with something known as "best yes".

A "best yes" is any response our student with complex communication needs gives us that indicates a communication. A slight head movement, a smile, clapping hands, stopping a rocking motion or a change in affect any of these is a best yes - and it is ok, at first, to accept any one of these from the same child.

With careful observation (including video, if needed) and data collection we can determine which "best yes" we can shape into a consistent "yes" response. We want our vision of the consistent "yes" to be something noticeable and clearly understandable by all who interact with the individual regularly.

For some children we may need to accept that the "best yes" and "close enough is good enough" might be

Watch this clip from the 1970 French film, *An Infinite Tenderness*, look for all