

# Yes-No Questions

Answering yes-no questions is a beneficial goal for low functioning students, for two significant reasons:

## Background

- 1) It's very functional. Accurately answering these questions is useful with innumerable daily activities.
- 2) Many caregivers improperly realize yes-no inadequacies.

These kids often answer consistently "yes," instead of providing an accurate answer. This is a basic linguistic ability upon which rests foundational components of much of comprehension, including understanding –wh questions, functional vocabulary, orientation, pronouns, and helping verbs.

Some studies suggest that the frequency of yes-no questions facilitate children's acquisition of helping verbs (Fey and Loeb, 2002). It seems evident that some questions are easier to understand than others, particularly questions with fewer syntactic comprehension demands.

In addition to the obvious answers to these questions (yes or no), there exists the sometimes more accurate, but often more ignored possible answer of "I don't know." In real life situations, often the most accurate answer to a yes-no question lies somewhere beyond yes and no. The question "Are flowers red?" illustrates this. Providing answers to these questions appears to flout Grice's maxim of quality, that people who do not respond as expected do so for a good reason – in this case, that neither yes or no is an appropriate answer. (Grice, 1975). Even adults sometimes need help with this. The PLS-4 and REEL are among tests that assess yes/no questions.

## Hierarchy

**Prerequisites:** responsiveness, initiation, answering when given choices, functional nouns, verbs, and adjectives, orientation, at least basic consonant – vowel single syllable production

Basic Orientation – Yes Only

For example: "Is that a dog?" "Is he barking?" "Are you hungry?" "Do you see the dog?", etc. For low functioning students: "Bird?" while looking at a picture of a bird. "My hand?" while student is looking at instructor's hand., etc.

Basic Orientation – No Only

For example: "Is that a tiger?" "Are you wearing a hat?" "Does it hurt?" "Can you see in the dark?", etc. For low functioning students: "Dog?" while looking at a picture of a cat. "Is it raining?" when it's not., etc.

Basic Orientation – Mixed Yes and No

For example: "Are you in third grade?", "Are you ten years old?", "Have you eaten lunch?", "Is Mr. Jones your teacher?" "Are you wearing glasses?" "Is today Monday?" "Do you have any pets?", etc.

Advanced Mixed Yes and No

For example: "Do books have chapters?", "Do you know today's forecast?", "Does this sentence have a period?" "Have you ever observed an experiment?", etc.