

Getting Started

The starting point for communication is to establish a **“best yes”**. People with Rett Syndrome can learn how to communicate a “yes”. It may be through:

- a direct look in the eyes
- a touch
- a lean forward
- a blink
- an eye movement right or left
- a specific sound or laugh
- a nod of their head
- a yes/no board

Reinforcing and giving meaning to the “yes” is critical in order for it to become a reliable method of communicating.

Accepting the natural “yes” ensures as little motor demand as possible and therefore enables easier communication. Anything other than the “yes” should be taken as a “no”. It is crucial to keep the motor demands and therefore the apraxia as low as possible.



How to establish a ‘Best Yes’

This is achieved by giving a commentary of how we are interpreting their communication. This is a key in the early stages of getting started so they become confident you know what their ‘yes’ is.

“Would you like some cake?” <they look at you> “I see you’re looking at me and telling me Yes. Here you go”.

“Do you want to play with your brother?” <they look away> “Ah you’re not looking at me so I’m taking that as a no, you don’t want to play with your brother.”

As this approach becomes familiar, the running commentary will become less necessary. They will know that you understand their “yes”.

A Best Yes is such a powerful tool, you can have conversations with it, and even argue with your siblings over sharing chocolate. Important for anyone!

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