

The Therapy Path

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SPEECH AND LANGUAGE EVALUATION

Name:	The client	Evaluation Date:	2002 05 00
Telephone:	700-0000	Birth Date:	1996 00 00 Age: 6
Address:	2 Street, Hometown, ON P4N P0N	Primary Language:	English

HISTORY

The client was referred for a speech and language assessment by the referral source from the School Board as requested by Dr. Physician, Developmental Pediatrician. His parents are pursuing multidisciplinary assessments to understand The client's history of behavioral difficulties in school and frequent consequential detentions. His parents report that he has only attended a total of 2 or 3 months of school in each of Junior and Senior Kindergarten. Fewer days were completed this year (grade one) with an estimated 9 complete days.

The client has had a history of communication delays. He was first seen by the Speech and Language Pathologist at the Infant Development Program. Mrs. Parent stated that The client was only expressing a few sounds at the age of 2 1/2 years old, and that intervention addressed speech and language development. Services continued up until the age of 5 at the Porcupine Health Unit, with some direct therapy and home intervention programs provided to the family.

Parent reported that The client had frequent ear infections, and Audiology testing showed a mild hearing deficit in the high and low frequency of both ears, which impairs his ability to hear certain speech sounds (high frequency s, z, sh, j, tch...). They suspect that this also impairs his ability to hear at a distance and in the presence of noise. Parents did not reveal any other physical, sensory, or medical condition that could impact on speech and language development.

EVALUATION

Speech

Articulation, voice, fluency and prosody (rate, rhythm, phrasing) were within normal limits and judged to be adequate for social and academic success.

Receptive Language

On the Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test, The client scored in the 95th percentile indicating superior comprehension of vocabulary. He succeeded equally well on the *Listening to Paragraphs* subtest of the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals 3 (CELF-3), which measures a child's ability to listen and understand short stories. He scored in the 75th percentile, and retained specific details (relating to events and specific object names). Overall, language comprehension is within normal limits.

Despite these superior language comprehension results, his listening comprehension performance may be reduced if listening attention is impaired. Although his reduced hearing acuity may contribute to listening difficulties, a more significant difficulty appears to exist with his listening attention level and attention shift. With approximately 15-25% of the clinician's questions, he did

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not listen/attend to relevant/important events while multitasking (i.e. He was not listening to instructions while playing with the Leap Pad reader). On one occasion, this was a deliberate aversion, as he turned away and blocked his ears when the clinician explained that he could play with Legos only after all testing was complete. This behaviour should be investigated further.

Language Processing

Verbal reasoning skills were tested with the Test of Problem Solving. The client had inconsistent difficulties with this as shown below. (14/50 incorrect or imprecise responses)

Added irrelevant information:

One player remembered that he didn't have a ride home. What could he have done so this wouldn't have happened? K: "Ask his mom, and he had to walk home."

How does this family know the electricity just went off? K: "They have sad faces and now they can't watch T.V."

Why shouldn't he ride his bike with a flat tire? K: "He'll fall or get a new tire if there's no air in it."

What will the family do now. K: "Get battery powered flashlights, walkie talkies with no antennas to talk to each other when they're far away."

This family wasn't prepared for the lights to go out. What could they have done? K: "They should run downstairs to get candles and cover up their flowers so they can't get ruined."

How do you know there's been an accident? K: "Two people cra... (self revision) two people are saying sorry to each other."

Misinterpreted the intent of the question:

Why do you think the painter is painting the house? K: "Because he couldn't find the house he's supposed to paint."

Why wouldn't you shake hands with him right now? K: "He'll say: get painting."

What made the popsicle drip? K: "water and flavor."

Why wouldn't the boy stand on a cardboard box to reach the jar?. K: "That's not cardboard."

Why isn't an ambulance there? K: "The ambulance didn't see it."

Irregular formulation:

Why did the electricity go off? K: "Look at that bolt of lightning." (formulated as a request for joint attention.)

What should this lady in the car do? (accident) K: "What if the police are that way or that way and she can't turn? (formulated as a question.)

His difficulty making inferences and explaining causes/solutions is frequent enough that it could have detrimental effects on academic learning and social interactions. The cause for this may be linguistic in nature given his history of language delays. (misinterpretation of certain sentence structures: interrogatives and negatives). Alternatively, since The client demonstrated superior vocabulary and discourse comprehension skills, inconsistent problems with comprehension/listening may be explained by occasional drops in his listening attention level.

Expressive Language

Overall, expressive language was measured to be normal. The client used specific vocabulary and age appropriate sentence structure, including complex sentences with correct use of prepositions (because, but, and, or...) He generally used interrogative forms and negative forms correctly.

They should say: "We ordered spaghetti, not hamburgers and French fries."

Expressive discourse was assessed by asking The client to explain how soccer is played. He was found to sequence ideas in a logical order, he included many relevant details, used linking words to show the relationship between ideas (then, under, so, to). When cued, he provided the main objective and information about the players and field. His discourse was very coherent and judged to be appropriate for his age.

You need long socks and pads right under the big socks and you have to run around in shoes with peg so you don't slip on the grass. There's chalk on the field and if the ball goes outside of the chalk, they blow the whistle. Then they pick someone to put the ball, get the ball and throw it in the field, then everybody runs. (cue) Trying to get the ball and pass it to the team to get goals, pass it to the team you are in. (cue) ten players (cue) five. (cue: field) It's a square, with a net at the end and you're trying to get goals.

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Pragmatics

Social communication skills were characterized by a friendly, and variably attentive child. He complied throughout the 2 hours of testing with the exception of a brief protest when he wanted to play Legos. This was resolved by way of verbal support from Mrs. Parent. He was responsive to the demands of the assessment and responded appropriately to all questions, albeit, sometimes inaccurately (see language processing above). He also asserted himself when needed and maintained the conversations by asking questions and adding relevant information. He expressed a variety of purposeful intentions, including requests, comments, and joint attention. With the exception of occasional tangential/inaccurate responses (constituting of approx. 15-25% of expressions), social communication skills were judged to be within normal limits.

According to The client's parents, the inaccurate responses do not appear to have any effects on relationships with peers. He invites them to play by calling on the telephone. They collaboratively play together by taking turns, negotiating rules, planning the day.... Parents don't report any problems playing with his friends, who he has known for some time.

Reading and Pre-reading

The client was able to randomly identify most letters of the alphabet, but had difficulty with b, n, p, e and t. In a phonological awareness task that is known to be an important precursor to reading, The client successfully blended words that were presented in a segmented way (Example: c --- oa --- t) (21/23 correct). On the Auditory Word Discrimination subtest of the Test of Perceptual Skills - Revised, The client had a score in the 6th percentile. This score, however, does not represent his actual auditory perceptual skills, since he responded incorrectly on items pairs that he imitated accurately, exhibiting an accurate perception of these word pairs. Finally, The client has developed an interest in a variety of books, including chapter books (Harry Potter) which his parents read for him on a daily basis.

SUMMARY AND GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

The client is a 6 year 9 month old boy who has missed a large proportion of school due to multiple detentions since Junior Kindergarten. This assessment showed that language development is in the average or superior range in most areas, including receptive and expressive vocabulary, discourse comprehension, expressive syntax, expressive discourse, and social pragmatic skills. Language processing testing showed mild difficulties with verbal problem solving (misinterpretation, tangential or irrelevant information). It is not clear if this is caused by a variable listening attention level, syntactical confusion (negatives), or other reasons (affective?). This problem could lead to difficulties interpreting verbal and textual information in the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that parents pursue professional assistance from a behavioral specialist (child psychologist) to address behavioral issues that prohibit him from attending school.

The client would also benefit from explicit intervention that would instruct him on how to listen and interpret various question forms (the intent of questions - inferences, negatives) and how to use internal language to verify the relevance of his response.

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That The client receive intervention to develop sound-symbol association in words / sentences through various appealing language based activities. Ideally, he would be provided specific instructions describing the skill to be rehearsed and provided constant positive feedback on his performance. Parents' ongoing reading with The client continues to provide him with a wealth of vocabulary, knowledge, and social conversation skills. Furthermore, they have fostered an interest in books which will promote The client's literacy development.

The following accommodations should be explored to facilitate academic success.

- ⇒ Provide preferential seating to facilitate The client's retention of verbal instructions. This will allow instructors to verify his comprehension of declarative/procedural knowledge and supportively clarify when needed.
- ⇒ Assign a mature empathetic "study buddy" to help during work time.
- ⇒ Make necessary adjustments in a way that does not draw negative attention to The client.

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