

FIRST WORDS Project:
*Improving Early Identification of
Communication Disorders*

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**Seminar Presented at the 16th Annual DEC
International Early Childhood Conference on
Children with Special Needs**

*Albuquerque, New Mexico
December 9, 2000*

OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

1. The Problem: Need for Earlier Identification
2. The Challenge: Using Prelinguistic Predictors
3. Findings on Our First 2,000 Children
4. How Early Can We Identify Children with Communication Disorders?
5. Early Intervention Model for Very Young Children
6. Future Directions



FIRST WORDS Project

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Funding for the FIRST WORDS Project has been provided by the U.S. Department of Education Model Demonstration Grant (H324M980173) and the Jessie Ball duPont Fund.

PRELINGUISTIC PREDICTORS OF PERSISTING COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Emotion and Use of Eye Gaze

- ⇒ limited ability to share attention and affective states with eye gaze and facial expression
- ⇒ limited use of gaze shifts between people and objects
- ⇒ delay in following another person's point and eye gaze

Use of Communication

- ⇒ low rate of communicating with gestures and/or vocalizations
- ⇒ limited range of communicative functions, particularly lacking in the joint attention function

Use of Gestures

- ⇒ limited repertoire of conventional gestures (e.g., giving, showing, reaching, pointing)
- ⇒ limited use of symbolic gestures (e.g., waving, nodding head, depictive gestures)
- ⇒ reliance on gestures and a limited use of vocalizations to communicate

Use of Sounds

- ⇒ limited consonant inventory (stops, nasals, and glides emerge earliest)
- ⇒ immature syllable structure (reduplicated CV combinations emerge earlier than consonant contrasts)

Understanding of Words

- ⇒ delay in comprehension of words or sentences

Use of Words

- ⇒ delay in production of words or sentences

Use of Objects

- ⇒ delay in the spontaneous use or sequencing of action schemes in symbolic play
- ⇒ limited ability to imitate actions on objects

From Kasari, Sigman, Mundy, & Yirmiya, 1990; Mundy, Sigman, & Kasari, 1990; Paul, 1991; Paul, Looney, & Dahm, 1991; Rescorla & Goosens, 1992; Snyder, 1978; Terrell & Schwartz, 1988; Thal & Tobias, 1992; Thal, Tobias, & Morrison, 1991; Wetherby & Prizant, 1993; Wetherby & Prizant, 1996; Wetherby & Prutting, 1984; Wetherby, Yonclas, & Bryan, 1989; Wetherby, Prizant, & Hutchinson, 1998)

CSBS DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE
Evaluation Procedures
(Wetherby & Prizant, 1998)

- (1) **Infant/Toddler Checklist for Communication and Language Development:** Gather information from family members through one-page checklist to determine whether a referral for an evaluation is needed.
- (2) **Caregiver Questionnaire:** Gather information from family members through four-page questionnaire.
- (3) **Behavior Sample:** Caregiver is present and professional coaches caregiver on procedures to evaluate child.
 - Warm-up
 - Communicative Temptations
 - ⇒ Activate a wind-up toy, let it deactivate, and hand it to the child.
 - ⇒ Blow up a balloon and slowly deflate it; then hand the deflated balloon to the child and wait.
 - ⇒ Open a jar of bubbles, blow bubbles, and then close the jar tightly and give the closed jar to the child.
 - ⇒ Place a desired food item or toy in a jar that the child cannot open while the child is watching; then put the jar in front of the child and wait.
 - ⇒ Put interesting toys in a bag, and shake the bag to attract the child's attention. Place the bag in front of the child and encourage the child to take one of the toys out of the bag.
 - Sharing Books
 - Symbolic Play Probes
 - Language Comprehension Probes
 - Constructive Play Probes
- (4) **Caregiver Perception Form:** Caregiver rates how typical child's behavior is during child evaluation
 - Alertness
 - Emotional reaction
 - Level of interest and attention
 - Comfort level
 - Level of activity
 - Overall level of communication
 - Organization and focus of play

FIRST WORDS Project Menu of Service Options
for At-Risk Children and Families

Preventative Family Education/Support Services:

- parent education group meetings in the community
- infant/toddler peer play groups
- caregiver education modules disseminated to families and service providers
- parent support and networking groups
- resource and referral database

Intensive, Individualized Early Intervention

- individualized intervention through a family-guided assessment of the child's communication and the communicative environment
- parents are essential partners in the identification of specific concerns, intervention planning, and evaluation of outcomes

Infant/Toddler Checklist for Communication and Language Development

Amy M. Wetherby & Barry M. Prizant © 1998 by Applied Symbolix. All rights reserved.

Child's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Filled out by: _____ Date filled out: _____

Instructions for Caregivers: This checklist is designed to identify different aspects of development in infants and toddlers. Many behaviors that develop before children talk may indicate whether or not a child will have difficulty learning to talk. This checklist should be completed by a caregiver when the child is between **6 and 24 months of age** to determine whether a referral for an evaluation is needed. The caregiver may be either a parent or other person who nurtures the child daily. Please check all the choices that best describe your child's behavior. If you are not sure, please choose the closest response based on your experience. **Children at your child's age are not necessarily expected to be able to do all the behaviors listed.**

Emotion and Use of Eye Gaze

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Do you know when your child is happy and when your child is upset? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 2. When your child plays with toys, does he/she look at you to see if you are watching? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 3. Does your child smile or laugh while looking at you? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 4. When you look at and point to a toy across the room, does your child look at it? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |

Use of Communication

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 5. Does your child let you know that he/she needs help or wants an object out of reach? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 6. When you are not paying attention to your child, does he/she try to get your attention? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 7. Does your child do things just to get you to laugh? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 8. Does your child try to get you to notice interesting objects—just to get you to look at the objects, not to get you to do anything with them? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |

Use of Gestures

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 9. Does your child pick up objects and give them to you? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 10. Does your child show objects to you without giving you the object? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 11. Does your child wave to greet people? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 12. Does your child point to objects? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |
| 13. Does your child nod his/her head to indicate yes? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often |

Use of Sounds

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 14. Does your child use sounds or words to get attention or help? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | | |
| 15. Does your child string sounds together, such as uh oh, mama, gaga, bye bye, bada? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | | |
| 16. About how many of the following consonant sounds does your child use:
ma, na, ba, da, ga, wa, la, ya, sa, sha? | <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> over 8 |

Understanding of Words

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 17. When you call your child's name, does he/she respond by looking or turning toward you? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | | |
| 18. About how many different words or phrases does your child understand without gestures? For example, if you say "where's your tummy", "where's daddy", "give me ball", or "come here", without showing or pointing, your child will respond appropriately. | <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> over 30 |

Use of Words

- | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 19. About how many different words does your child use meaningfully that you recognize (such as baba for bottle; gaggie for doggie)? | <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> over 30 |
| 20. Does your child put two words together (such as more cookie; bye-bye daddy)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | | |

Use of Objects

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 21. Does your child show interest in playing with a variety of objects? | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | | |
| 22. About how many of the following objects does your child use appropriately:
cup, bottle, bowl, spoon, comb or brush, toothbrush, washcloth, ball, toy vehicle, toy telephone? | <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-8 | <input type="checkbox"/> over 8 |
| 23. About how many blocks (or rings) does your child stack? Stacks: | <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 blocks | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 blocks | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more blocks | |
| 24. Does your child pretend to play with toys (such as feed a stuffed animal, put a doll to sleep, put an animal figure in a vehicle). | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Yet | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | | |

**Evaluation Parameters Measured with the *CSBS Developmental Profile*
(Wetherby & Prizant, 1998)**

EMOTION AND EYE GAZE

1. **Gaze Shifts**- alternating eye gaze between a person and an object and back (i.e., person-object-person or object-person-object).
2. **Shared Positive Affect**- clear facial expression of pleasure or excitement directed toward other with eye gaze.
3. **Gaze/Point Following**- responding to another's point/gaze by turning head or following with eye gaze

COMMUNICATION

4. **Rate of Communicating** - frequency of communicative acts displayed per sampling opportunity.
5. **Behavioral Regulation**- use of communication to regulate behavior of another to obtain or restrict an environmental goal.
6. **Social Interaction**- use of communication to attract attention to self.
7. **Joint Attention**- use of communication to direct another's attention to an object or event.

USE OF GESTURES

8. **Conventional Gestures**- repertoire of gestural communication with shared or conventional meaning, including giving, showing, pushing/pulling away, reaching, pointing, waving, nodding head, and shaking head.
9. **Distal Gestures**- gestural communicative acts in which the child's hand does not touch a person or object (e.g., open-hand reaching, pointing at a distance, waving).

USE OF SOUNDS

10. **Syllables with Consonants**- vocal communicative acts that are transcribable vowel plus consonant combinations.
11. **Inventory of Consonants**- the variety of different consonants produced in communicative acts.

USE OF WORDS

12. **Words**- use of words (i.e., spoken or signed) in communicative acts; a word or word approximation must be used to refer to a specific object, action or attribute and only that word class.
13. **Inventory of Words**- sample of different words used (i.e., spoken or signed) in communicative acts.
14. **Word Combinations**- use of multiword combinations in communicative acts.
15. **Inventory of Word Combinations**- sample of different word combinations used in communicative acts.

UNDERSTANDING OF WORDS

16. **Language Comprehension**- comprehension of object names, person names, and body parts.

USE OF OBJECTS

17. **Inventory of Action Schemes**- the variety of different action schemes used with objects in symbolic play.
18. **Action Schemes Toward Other**- the use of action schemes with objects toward other agents in pretend play.
19. **Action Schemes in Sequence**- the use of action schemes with objects in sequence of different action schemes in pretend play.
20. **Constructive Play**- the use of objects in combination to construct a product; that is, to stack a tower of blocks.

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