

Assessing Pragmatic Language Skills and Factors that Promote More Successful Outcomes

EHDI

March 10, 2020



Presenters and Authors

Allison Sedey, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, CCC-A^{1, 2}

Allison.Sedey@Colorado.edu

Christine Yoshinaga-Itano, Ph.D.¹

Christie.Yoshi@Colorado.edu

¹University of Colorado-Boulder

²Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind

Additional Authors

Mallene Wiggin, Ph.D, CCC-SLP

University of Colorado-Boulder

Mallene.Wiggin@Colorado.edu

Craig Mason, Ph.D.

University of Maine

Craig.Mason@Maine.edu

Today's Topics

- Describe the Pragmatics Checklist
- Highlight earlier- and later-developing pragmatic language skills
- Identify risk factors for pragmatic delay
- Identify characteristics associated with better pragmatic language outcomes

Definition of Pragmatic Language Skills

The use of language in context

Using language socially and being able to adapt it to different situations

Pragmatic Language Skills

1) Using language for different reasons

➤ e.g., greeting, informing, requesting

2) Adapting language in response to the listener or situation

3) Following conversational rules

➤ e.g., turn taking, staying on topic, clarifying

Pragmatics Checklist

- Developed by a team at the University of Colorado-Boulder led by Dianne Goberis
- Checklist of 45 pragmatic skills in 6 categories

Pragmatics Checklist

- For each skill indicate if it is:
 - Not present
 - Demonstrated with gestures only
 - Produced using 1 to 3 words
 - Exhibited with the use of more complex language

Pragmatics Checklist

- Completed by parent, interventionist, and/or teacher
- For ages 3 years and up

Pragmatics Checklist Benchmarks

Average results for 109 children with typical hearing:

3 years = 20 of the 45 items

4 years = 43 of the 45 items

5 years = 44 of the 45 items

6 years = all of the items

Pragmatics Checklist Benchmarks

Average results for children who were deaf or hard of hearing:

7 years = 31 of the 45 items

*Similar performance to hearing children between 3 and 4 year of age

Early Developing Items

- 1) makes polite requests
- 2) expresses a specific personal need
- 3) interacts with others in a polite manner
- 4) asks questions because of curiosity
- 5) role-plays with props (e.g., a banana for a phone)

Later Developing Items

- 1) asks questions to systematically gather information as in “Twenty Questions”
- 2) makes promises.
- 3) asks questions to make predictions (What will happen if...?)
- 4) revises/repairs an incomplete message
- 5) explains the relationship between two objects, actions or situations



Predictors of Pragmatic Language Skills

Participant Criteria

- Bilateral hearing loss
 - (all degrees -- mild to profound)
- Hearing parents
- English primary language of the home
- Previously received Birth-to-3 early intervention services through Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP)

Number of Participants/Assessments

- 124 children
- Assessed annually from 4 to 7 years of age
- Not all children assessed at all 4 age levels

Participant Characteristics

- Boys = 51%; Girls = 49%
- Met EHDI 1-3-6 = 46%
- Mild/moderate hearing loss = 36%
- Mod-sev to profound hearing loss = 63%
- Additional disabilities = 10%

Participant Characteristics: Mother's Level of Education

Highest degree completed	% of primary caregivers
Less than HS	3%
High school diploma	33%
Vocational or Associates	16%
Bachelor's degree	32%
Graduate degree	16%

Participant Characteristics: Communication Mode of Family

Communication mode used with child by family	% of primary caregivers
Primarily spoken language	84%
Spoken only	41%
Very occasional sign used	43%
Spoken + sign language	16%

Analysis

Hierarchical Linear Analysis (HLM) was used to examine if predicted pragmatics scores at 7 years of age varied based on a variety of child and parent characteristics

Risk factors for delayed pragmatic language skills

- Moderately-severe and greater degree of hearing loss
- Lower levels of maternal education
- Lower non-verbal IQ (even when within the normal range)

Factors predicting better pragmatic language skills

- Meeting EHDI 1-3-6 guidelines
- Greater quantity of parent talk (spoken and/or sign) directed to the child



In Memory of Dianne Goberis

Our much-loved colleague and
author of the Pragmatics Checklist