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| Communication Evaluation |
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**Communication Evaluation Assignment**

**Selection of a child**

Andrew is an almost 10-year old who has just completed the third grade. Andrew has an educational diagnosis of ASD. He has a twin sister who has completed fourth grade and he lives at home with his mother, his twin and an older sister. Andrew is quite verbal is the ASD categorical room, but is very quiet in the general education setting. According to his gen ed teacher, Andrew said very little other than “Good Morning” for most of the year. He did start to speak more in the 3rd grade class room during the last two months of school.

**What stage of development does the student exhibit?**

Like most people with ASD, Andrew’s speech, language and communications development is splintered. His receptive language skills are in the early to late Syntactic-Semantic complexity area. Andrew does not consistently respond to Whose, Who, Why and How Many questions and has trouble following multi-step commands. When asked these types of questions Andrew needs additional time to process and respond. If he is asked how many objects there are, he must stop and look and count before he can answer the questions. He also struggles with responding to order of mention of clauses. This is evident when he is verbally given directions. He can follow the first couple, but the additional directions are done out of order. He does not always comprehend connected discourse and narratives. When asked questions about narrative he has heard, Andrew struggles to put the story together. His comprehension does improve after repeated exposures to a story. Andrew does well with responding to how and when questions, though the answers may only be a word or two. He does comprehend locations and temporal relationships.

Andrew’s expressive language skills are in the Communicative Competence range. He has many multisyllabic words as well as a complete phonetic repertoire and morphophonemic development. This is the one area where Andrew’s language skills are approximately age appropriate. However, many of the multisyllabic words that Andrew uses are echolalic in nature. He echoes many of the PBSkids programs especially *Word Girl*. As you can guess from the title, *Word Girl* has taught Andrew some very interesting vocabulary words. Although he can pronounce the words correctly, I am not always sure that he understands the meaning of them.

When he is uncomfortable and anxious, Andrew’s expressive and pragmatic language skills decrease dramatically. When Andrew is comfortable, he can hold a conversation across a turn or two turns using age appropriate sentences but does not always stay on topic. His narratives both verbal and written do not always have a beginning, end, problem and resolution. An uncomfortable Andrew uses a word or two at most and relies on non-verbal communication to express himself and his communication partner to supply words for him. Andrew’s pragmatic language skills, like this receptive language, ranges between the early and late Syntactic-Semantic Complexity range. He does not have a great variety of forms for all functions and does not respond to contingent queries with revisions that reflect level of linguistic development. At almost 10, Andrew cannot determine the information the listener needs and does not have great ability to maintain the topic across multiple turns in a conversation.

**Determine Function and Means of communication**

From highly verbal in one setting to a probable selective mutism in others settings, Andrew is fascinating because his use of speech, language and other communication skills varies so much by setting. Andrew was observed in three different settings: the ASD categorical room, his third grade gen ed classroom, and in the library presenting a Reader’s Theatre play in front of peers, parents and school staff.

The widest range of function and means of communication are present when Andrew is in the ASD room. He is in the room for about 2/3rds of his day. He spends the first ½ hour to 45 minutes in the gen ed room and then comes to the ASD room until lunch. He has lunch with his peers and then returns to the ASD room for DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time until his gen ed specials. From 1:45 to 2:40 pm he is in the ASD room and then attends Science/Social Studies with his peers. During his time in the ASD room, Andrew requests objects and requests action by pointing, showing, head nods, facial expression and creating multi-word responses. While he rarely protests, Andrew does so with head shakes, facial expressions and multi-word responses. Most of Andrew’s social interactions utilize proximity, head shakes, facial expressions and creative multi-word expressions. When requesting permission and showing off, he will add showing to his means of communication. Andrew does not use proximity to comment or request information.

In the general education classroom, Andrew has been almost completely pre-verbal in his means of communication. He is beginning to add created multi-word responses to his repertoire. When requesting an object, Andrew will use facial expressions. He also uses facial expressions to protest. There is more use of communication means with Andrew’s social interactions. He will use gaze shift, head shakes, facial expressions and now multi-word expressions when requesting social routines and when he is greeting. He will use facial expressions to request comfort.

Performing as the dog in the reader’s theatre event was very hard for Andrew. Because of his anxiety, signs were created so that the audience could “hear” his lines. He did speak them aloud, but they were barely audible. He discomfort was evident, but so was his courage. In this setting, his request for comfort and greeting were conveyed by gaze shifts, proximity, head nods, and facial expressions. Andrew did use creative multi-word expressions to greet, show off and provide information. This was an area where Andrew’s selective mutism was apparent. He used it to not verbally respond to my questions regarding the following: social routine, comfort, greeting, calling, showing off, commenting, and providing information.

**Profile of Domains that interfere with development**

Andrew does have domains that interfere with his development. These include: sensory integration, attentional issues and cognitive issues. His sensory integration issues can be seen in a couple of different areas. By and large when watching a program on the computer or TV, Andrew wants the volume turned up loud. He also does not like to wear headphones. One of Andrew’s sensory quirks is verbalizing whatever he has just heard on the computer or TV. This can continue after the show has been turned off and Andrew is walking back to his gen ed classroom. There does not seem to be any kind of communicational intent with this verbalizing.

Andrew also struggles to pay attention when he is working on a non-preferred task. Reading is not preferred and DEAR time can be a fight for him to look at a book rather than drawing the pictures he sees in the book. Like many with attention issues, Andrew can also hyper-focus on a preferred task. Currently, Anglo spends a lot of time drawing, coloring and creating different animals that he sees in books and videos. If given a choice, he would spend most of the day coloring and creating.

Cognitively, Andrew is at least a grade level behind his peers. His reading is at a kindergarten level and he’s been working on learning word families. Phonetics seems to be an area of weakness for him. When asked questions about what he has read, he can answer most of the content questions, but struggles to remember the most basic sight words. Mathematically, Andrew is doing first and second grade math. He has really worked on learning to read an analogue clock to the ½ hour. He can count using 10’s blocks and add two digits with regrouping. Subtraction has been harder. He can count by 5’s and 10’s and is learning to recognize and count varying amounts of coins.

**Care Givers and Family Input**

Parent input is unavailable due to privacy issues. I have been told by the general education teacher that Andrew is VERY verbal at home.

**Summary of Assessments**

Andrew’s receptive skills need work in the following areas: Whose, Who, Why and How many questions; multi-step commands; responding to order of mention of clauses and; comprehending connected discourse and narratives. Andrew is age appropriate with his expressive skills, but still needs work with pragmatic skills. These pragmatic skills include: a great variety of forms for all functions; responding to contingent queries with revisions that reflect level of linguistic development; determining the information the listener needs; and the ability to maintain the topic. An intervention plan should work on pragmatic skills first with receptive skills coming after the pragmatic skills are on a more solid footing.

Andrew’s goals and objective should include the following:

1. **Objective 1: The student will follow an individual daily schedule.**
2. **Objective 2: By June, 2014, Andrew will maintain a topic across three turn takings with visual and verbal prompts at 100% complience as evaluated through systematic observation.**