

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

SUGGESTED DIAGNOSTIC METHODS

DEAN WILLIAMS

VERY OLD BUT VERY USEFUL

First, you will want to obtain a speech sample from the child (200 to 300 word speech sample in conversation in response to pictures).

"VERBAL COMPLEXITY": After you obtain a representative speech sample, determine the extent to which the child's frequency of total disfluency or of any one type of disfluency increases or decreases as you vary the verbal complexity required from the child. These levels of verbal complexity include the following:

1. NAMING OBJECTS. The child makes a one word response in naming objects pictured on cards.
2. SHORT-PHRASE RESPONSE. The child makes statements about what's going on in a picture. The purpose is to elicit a two to five word response.
3. TELLING A STORY ABOUT A PICTURE. Use pictures that contain considerable activity or use a sequence of pictures that tell a story requiring a longer sequential speech response. Ask the child to tell the story.
4. RELATING INFORMATION. In this task the child can tell you all he can about a pet or a television program that he likes. Another meaningful task is to ask him to tell you about his house. You or he can draw the house on a piece of paper and put in the kitchen, living room, etc. Then the child can tell you what goes on in each room.
5. ANSWERING QUESTIONS. Devise a list of questions to ask the child that will require his verbal response. The types of questions can require responses of increasing length.
6. ASKING QUESTIONS. While looking at pictures or while playing games, request the child to ask as many questions as he can about the activity.
7. GIVING INSTRUCTIONS. While playing with toys, ask the child to tell you what you should do first, what he should do next, etc.

LISTENER REACTION COMPLEXITY: While obtaining the samples described above, you should be reacting to the child in an easy, attentive, relaxed way. It can be informative, however, if you begin to vary the ways you interact with the child. Again, careful observation should be made of the increase in frequency of total disfluency or of any one disfluency type as you vary your reaction pattern. You can vary reactions in the following ways:

1. BEGIN TO HURRY YOUR ACTIVITIES. Increase the rate of your speech, increase your hand movements, or increase the speed of requesting answers.
2. INTERRUPTING. While the child is telling you about the activities in a picture, you can interrupt him and note verbally some other activity. You can ask a question and then ask a new question before he finished answering the first question.
3. LOSS OF ATTENTION. When the child is talking to you as you are playing together with toys or while he is relating an event, begin to do something else and indicate by your action that you're not paying attention to him.
4. CEASE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS. While the child is giving you directions about how to play a game with some toys or explaining how a toy works, cease following his directions and start doing things other than what he's directing you to do.
5. SAY IT AGAIN. After the child makes a verbal response, respond with the statement, "I didn't hear that; would you say it again?" or "I didn't understand that; would you tell me again?"

SOCIAL COMPLEXITY. (The above two procedures are done by the clinician interacting with the child.) If possible, arrange situations in which other people can talk with the child. These may include the following: 1) an adult enters the room to talk with the child; 2) the parent enters the room (the examiner leaves) and talks with the child; 3) the examiner takes the child out of the room to talk with the secretary or staff or other children if they are available.

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