

Early Identification of Language-Based Reading Disabilities: A Checklist

Child's name: _____ Birthday: _____
 Date completed: _____ Age: _____

This checklist is designed to identify children who are at risk for language-based reading disabilities. It is intended for use with children at the end of kindergarten or beginning of first grade. Each of the descriptors listed below should be carefully considered and those that characterize the child's behavior/history should be checked. A child receiving a large number of checks should be referred for a more in-depth evaluation.

Speech Sound Awareness

- Doesn't understand and enjoy rhymes
- Doesn't easily recognize that words begin with the same sound
- Has difficulty counting the syllables in spoken words
- Has problem clapping hands or tapping feet in rhythm with songs and/or rhymes
- Demonstrates problems learning sound-letter correspondences

Word Retrieval

- Has difficulty retrieving a specific word (e.g., calls a sheep a "goat" or says, "you know, a woolly animal")
- Shows poor memory for classmates' names
- Speech is hesitant, filled with pauses or vocalizations (e.g., "um," "you know")
- Frequently uses words lacking specificity (e.g., "stuff," "thing," "what you call it")
- Has a problem remembering/retrieving verbal sequences (e.g., days of the week, alphabet)

Verbal Memory

- Has difficulty remembering instructions or directions
- Shows problems learning names of people or places
- Has difficulty remembering the words to songs or poems
- Has problems learning a second language

Speech Production/Perception

- Has problems saying common words with difficult sound patterns (e.g., animal, cinnamon, specific)
- Mishears and subsequently mispronounces words or names
- Confuses a similar sounding word with another word (e.g., saying, "The Entire State Building is in New York")
- Combines sound patterns of similar words (e.g., saying "escavator" for escalator)
- Shows frequent slips of the tongue (e.g., saying "brue blush" for blue brush)
- Has difficulty with tongue twisters (e.g., she sells seashells)

Comprehension

- Only responds to part of a multiple element request or instruction
- Requests multiple repetitions of instructions/directions with little improvement in comprehension
- Relies too much on context to understand what is said

(continued)

Figure 2.4. Checklist for early identification of language-based reading disabilities. (From Catts, H.W. [1997]. Appendix A: Early identification of language-based reading disabilities. A checklist. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 28, 88-89; reprinted by permission. Some descriptors have been taken from *Language for learning: A checklist for language difficulties*, Melbourne, Australia: OZ Child.)

Figure 2.4. (continued)

- Has difficulty understanding questions
- Fails to understand age-appropriate stories
- Has difficulty making inferences, predicting outcomes, drawing conclusions
- Lacks understanding of spatial terms such as left-right, front-back

Expressive Language

- Talks in short sentences
- Makes errors in grammar (e.g., "he goed to the store" or "me want that")
- Lacks variety in vocabulary (e.g., uses "good" to mean happy, kind, polite)
- Has difficulty giving directions or explanations (e.g., may show multiple revisions or dead ends)
- Relates stories or events in a disorganized or incomplete manner
- May have much to say, but provides little specific detail
- Has difficulty with the rules of conversation, such as turn taking, staying on topic, indicating when he/she does not understand

Other Important Factors

- Has a prior history of problems in language comprehension and/or production
- Has a family history of spoken or written language problems
- Has limited exposure to literacy in the home
- Lacks interest in books and shared reading activities
- Does not engage readily in pretend play

Comments
