

Early Functional Communication Profile™



Name: _____

Evaluation Setting: _____

Examiner: _____

A Dynamic Assessment
for Social Communication Disorders

Sharlet Lee Jensen

	Highlight Color	Highlight Color	Highlight Color	Highlight Color
Test Date	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day
Birthdate	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day
Chronological Age	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day	_____ yr/mo/day

SUMMARY CHART

KEY	E = Emerging	M = Mastered
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	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
1 Joint Attention—Requesting Objects	E:	E:	E:	E:
	M:	M:	M:	M:
2 Social Interaction—Turn-taking	E:	E:	E:	E:
	M:	M:	M:	M:
3 Communicative Intent—Requesting Continuation of Actions	E:	E:	E:	E:
	M:	M:	M:	M:
4 Communicative Intent—Requesting Assistance	E:	E:	E:	E:
	M:	M:	M:	M:
5 Social Interaction—Response to Greetings	E:	E:	E:	E:
	M:	M:	M:	M:
6 Joint Attention—Receptive Language	E:	E:	E:	E:
	M:	M:	M:	M:
7 Communicative Intent—Protesting	E:	E:	E:	E:
	M:	M:	M:	M:



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SOCIAL INTERACTION—RESPONSE TO GREETINGS

1 child responds to high-five gesture

- ▶ **adult kneeling in front of child saying *high five* with hand raised**
 - hand-over-hand prompt—adult uses hand to help child grasp other hand and move it
 - partial physical prompt—adult pushes child’s arm toward other hand
 - expectant wait—attention-getting sound and hand moves slightly toward child
 - expectant wait—hand out, but hand not moving
 - spontaneous

- ▶ **adult standing in front of child saying *high five* with hand raised**
 - hand-over-hand prompt—adult uses hand to help child grasp other hand and move it
 - partial physical prompt—adult pushes child’s arm toward other hand
 - expectant wait—attention-getting sound and hand moves slightly toward child
 - expectant wait—hand out, but hand not moving
 - spontaneous

- ▶ **adult to side of child saying *high five* with hand raised**
 - hand-over-hand prompt—adult uses hand to help child grasp other hand and move it
 - partial physical prompt—adult pushes child’s arm toward adult’s other hand
 - expectant wait—attention-getting sound and hand moves slightly toward child
 - expectant wait—hand out, but hand not moving
 - spontaneous

2 child responds by waving

- ▶ **adult kneeling in front of child saying *hello***
 - hand-over-hand prompt—adult uses hand to help child grasp other hand and wave
 - partial physical prompt—adult touches child’s hand to start waving motion
 - IMITATION OF WAVE GESTURE**
 - expectant wait—attention-getting sound and partial hand wave
 - expectant wait—3 seconds
 - spontaneous

- ▶ **adult standing in front of child saying *hello***
 - hand-over-hand prompt—adult uses hand to help child grasp other hand and wave
 - partial physical prompt—adult touches child’s hand to start waving motion
 - imitation of wave gesture
 - expectant wait—attention-getting sound and partial hand wave
 - expectant wait—3 seconds
 - spontaneous

- ▶ **adult to side of child saying *hello***
 - hand-over-hand prompt—adult uses hand to help child grasp other hand and wave
 - partial physical prompt—adult touches child’s hand to start waving motion
 - imitation of wave gesture
 - expectant wait—attention-getting sound and partial hand wave
 - expectant wait—3 seconds
 - spontaneous

5 Social Interaction—Response to Greetings

PREPARATION

For the purpose of this assessment, the term “greeting” refers to any response a child gives to acknowledge the presence of others for social reasons. This includes saying or gesturing *hello* or giving a *high five* when approaching someone, the latter of which is often a useful starting point for eliciting social interactions. The high-five gesture uses the same basic movement as the start of a wave (raising hand) and includes a physical contact component to help the child engage with an adult.

The high-five gesture uses the same basic movement as the start of a wave (raising hand) and includes a physical contact component to help the child engage with an adult.

While it would seem logical to complete this section of the *EFCP* first, beginning communicators are often too distracted or distressed by entering a new environment to demonstrate their true skills during an initial encounter. However, during subsequent reassessments, it may be reasonable to complete this communication area first as the child is comfortable with you and the environment.

Determine a context in which the child will allow you to leave the room briefly. For example, if the child will play independently in one area of the room, give him a toy of moderate interest to keep him busy. If necessary, you may ask the child’s caregiver to hold onto him gently while you exit the room and return a few seconds later.

Clinical Note: In consideration of the child's safety, never leave him unattended during your brief exit from the room. The child's caregiver or another adult should remain in the room with the child.

ASSESSMENT

1. Inform the child’s caregiver, “I’m going to see how your child says *hello* when someone enters his personal space.”
2. Begin at the suggested starting point marked on *Social Interaction—Response to Greetings* (#2. Child responds by waving after imitation of wave gesture with adult kneeling in front of child saying *hello*). Start by briefly leaving the room. Then return to kneel directly in front of the child and say *hello* in an animated voice while waving. If the child imitates a wave, briefly leave the room again.

2 child responds by waving

▶ adult kneeling in front of child saying *hello*

- hand-over-hand prompt—adult uses hand to help child grasp other hand and wave
- partial physical prompt—adult touches child’s hand to start waving motion
- IMITATION OF WAVE GESTURE**
- expectant wait—attention-getting sound and partial hand wave
- expectant wait—3 seconds
- spontaneous

3. Increase the level of skill demand by moving a column to the right on the test form and beginning at the bottom box and check box (#3. Child spontaneously responds by waving and making eye contact with the adult to the side of the child). When you reenter, wave *hello* and wait to see if the child spontaneously makes eye contact with you while waving with you off to the side. If he successfully demonstrates the desired behavior, continue to increase the difficulty level by moving a column to the right on the test form and beginning at the bottom box and check box. If the child is successful at the highest level of difficulty during the initial assessment (#4. Child independently responds to adult's greeting by saying *hello*, waving, and making eye contact), terminate testing with the *EFCP* and resume using a more demanding assessment.
4. If the child does not respond to a greeting at the suggested starting point, use one of these options:
 - a. move up to the next check box within the same box to increase prompting at this same skill level
 - b. move a column to the left and start assessing at the lowest check box

Continue to move backward (left) and forward (right) across the columns and up and down within boxes until you elicit three greetings at a particular skill level. To prevent the greetings from becoming unrealistic, you may need to stop assessing in this communication area and move to a different area before returning for additional greeting trials.

SCORING

Elicit repeated greetings until the child demonstrates a greeting behavior at the same level of difficulty a total of three times, indicating mastery. Highlight that entire box on the test form to indicate the child's highest level of consistent performance. You may also highlight any boxes above or to the left of the child's mastery level since you can assume the child has also mastered these earlier-developing skills. A child may demonstrate an inconsistent ability to greet at a higher difficulty level, indicating emerging skills. Score these by highlighting only the check boxes. A child may not demonstrate consistency at any one level, suggesting scattered skills. Write notes related to the child's greeting behaviors in the Comments section.

TREATMENT GOALS

The treatment goals for *Social Interaction—Response to Greetings* should focus on a higher degree of difficulty than what the child is currently demonstrating. Determine the treatment goal percentages based on whether the goal is to expand the child's current skill level to emerging (e.g., 50% of opportunities) or to increase a child's current skill level to mastered (e.g., 90% of opportunities).

Discussion of Results

Share the *EFCP* results with a child's caregivers and educational team to discuss the child's unique profile of early communication strengths and weaknesses. Use it also as a visual tool to explain how therapy goals are chosen and how the early communication skills in each communication area build progressively.

As soon as possible after completing the assessment, take a few minutes to highlight the test form as directed in the scoring section of the manual for each communication area. After highlighting the seven communication areas, fill out the Summary Chart on the cover sheet to show mastered and emerging communication skills. Be sure to mark the highlighter color used on the test date on the cover sheet. This allows you to match the highlighter color with the test date and show progress with a different color of highlighter at reassessments. You may review the results with the child's caregivers immediately, or you may schedule a separate time for this caregiver meeting.

If this is an initial assessment, begin the discussion with a statement about the results. Explain that the results represent what you observed on a particular day, but that you also tried to take into account information the caregiver provided about the child's performance in other situations. See the following example:

"I'm going to share with you the communication skills your child demonstrated during our brief time together, but in some situations he may demonstrate different communication skills. This is a tool to help us understand your child's communication strengths and identify ways we can help him continue to develop these important communication skills."

If this is a reassessment for a child you have been working with, however, a statement like the above will be unnecessary since you have already established a working relationship with the family. You will have knowledge of a broader representation of the child's skills across different days and contexts to interpret whether the reassessment results are typical for the child.

Explain the difference between mastered skills (those the child consistently demonstrates) and emerging skills (those the child inconsistently demonstrates). Explain how these skills are represented by the highlighting within the communication areas. You may also use the Summary Chart on the cover sheet to show mastered and emerging skills. Review the child's mastered and emerging skills in each communication area, keeping the discussion focused on the child's strengths as opposed to focusing on his weaknesses. This focus on strengths keeps the discussion positive and encouraging for caregivers. At the end of each communication area, discuss what goals are priorities in treatment. Depending on the time allowed for the initial caregiver meeting, it may be relevant to start brainstorming specific contexts in the child's life where each goal naturally elicits carryover tasks. If you will be conducting home visits, you may actually demonstrate therapy ideas within these contexts; otherwise, additional efforts will be needed to ensure the child is generalizing new communication skills to home and school life. Make sure to allow time for caregiver questions or concerns.

Reviewing the entire *EFCP* at one time may be overwhelming for a child's caregivers, especially if a child is demonstrating profound communication deficits. In this case, prioritize the *EFCP* results and therapy goals of one or two communication areas.

Case Examples

The following are real case examples of the variety of pediatric populations served and how therapy goals are written from the information gained on the *EFCP*.

ANGEL Functionally nonverbal 2-year-old male with suspected Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Angel's family and his pediatrician were concerned that Angel was not communicating functionally, so the pediatrician referred him for an initial assessment. Per the family's report, Angel often repeated words or lines from a favorite song in a singsong voice, but when he wanted an object, he usually grabbed for it or cried. Angel's mother provided most of the information for completing the initial *EFCP* because Angel was visibly upset in an unfamiliar environment. Despite numerous attempts to distract Angel and engage him in play activities, he continued to cry.

► **Angel's *EFCP* Results**

Joint Attention—Requesting Objects

Mastered: requested objects with an adult nearby by pushing the adult's hand toward the desired object with the adult in front of him and an expectant wait of 3 seconds

Emerging: requested objects up to the level of an adult at an arm's length away, pushing the adult's hand toward the desired object with the adult off to the side, and an expectant wait with attention-getting sound and hand out within 6 inches of child

Social Interaction—Turn-taking

Mastered: took turns by tolerating an adult taking a brief turn with a desired object if the adult picked up the object and performed a simple action with it for less than 3 seconds

Emerging: took turns by participating nonverbally in an exchange of the desired object by requesting a turn in response to *Whose turn?* by patting his chest with hand-over-hand prompting

Communicative Intent—Requesting Continuation of Actions

Mastered: requested continuation of actions when an adult is at arm's length away by making eye contact with the adult to the side and an expectant wait of 3 seconds

Emerging: requested continuation of actions up to the level of when an adult is nearby, making eye contact when the adult is off to the side using an expectant wait with an attention-getting sound

Communicative Intent—Requesting Assistance

Mastered: requested assistance with the adult nearby, putting the adult’s hands on the object with the adult behind the child and an expectant wait with attention-getting sound and hands out within 6 inches of the child

Emerging: requested assistance with the adult an arm’s length away, putting the adult’s hand on the object with an adult in front of the child at eye level, and an expectant wait with an attention-getting sound and hand out within 6 inches of the child

Social Interaction—Response to Greetings

Mastered: responded to greetings with a high-five gesture with the adult at the child’s level saying *hello* with an animated voice and a hand-over-hand prompt

Joint Attention—Receptive Language*Shared Focus*

Mastered: responded to bids for joint attention by looking at an object an adult shook in his field of view

Emerging: responded to bids for joint attention by looking at an object an adult tapped off to the side

Follow One-Step Directions

Mastered: followed one-step directions by tolerating hand-over-hand prompting

Emerging: followed one-step directions in response to partial physical prompting

Answer Yes/No Questions

- showed no response to *yes/no* questions

Angel demonstrated some foundational skills in joint attention, communicative intent, and social interaction. He performed at a much higher degree of skill demand with prompting than he could independently, so his initial goals targeted several degrees of difficulty higher than his current level of mastery. Initial goals for Angel included:

Joint Attention—Requesting Objects

- request objects by approaching an adult located within arm’s reach at various positions relative to Angel and pushing the adult’s hand toward the desired object with an expectant wait of 3 seconds

Social Interaction—Turn-taking

- participate in turn-taking by imitating a chest pat to gesture *my turn*

Communicative Intent—Requesting Continuation of Actions

- request continuation of an action by making eye contact with an adult to the side and an expectant wait of 3 seconds

Communicative Intent—Requesting Assistance

- request assistance by approaching an adult located within arm’s reach at various positions relative to Angel and putting the adult’s hand on the object that he needs help with and an expectant wait with the adult’s hands out within 6 inches of the object

Social Interaction—Response to Greetings

- respond to greeting by making eye contact with familiar adult in front of Angel at eye level and an expectant wait
- look at objects with a passive proximal point to the side

Joint Attention—Receptive Language*Follow One-Step Directions*

- follow one-step directions with daily home routines (e.g., “stand up,” “arms up,” “sit down,” “come here,” “put it in”) by imitating an adult model

In addition, the SLP referred Angel to the local autism diagnostic center and also provided the family with resources on early intervention for children with communication delays. Six months later, Angel improved in most communication areas, and new goals were established to develop his communication skills further.

KATYA **Nonverbal 10-year-old female with known Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Mental Retardation (MR)**

Katya received speech, occupational, and physical therapy and special education services since she was diagnosed with ASD as a toddler. At the time of this assessment, she attended a self-contained classroom that focused on teaching functional life skills. Her parents requested an outside evaluation of her communication skills due to concerns over her general lack of progress. At school, Katya used communication boards (groups of picture symbols that the child points to in order to express an idea) and a simple speech-generating device, but she rarely initiated using these augmentative communication systems. In addition, Katya’s family struggled using these systems with her at home. Katya did not have access to these systems on the day of assessment.