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PLS™-5 Screening Test *for* Early Childhood Educators



Jacy, age 1 year, 10 months

Jacy is enrolled in a home-based infant/toddler program that serves low income families, including expectant mothers and children from birth through age 2:11. An early childhood specialist assigned to work with Jacy conducts routine cognitive, motor, and speech/language screenings. The PLS-5 Screening Test for Early Childhood Educators was used to screen speech and language skills.

The early childhood specialist noted that Jacy is a quiet, placid toddler who loves to play with blocks and musical toys. Jacy's mother has expressed concern that

Jacy seems to be developing more slowly compared to her older brother and sister. Jacy looks briefly at people and things she wants and vocalizes strings of consonants and vowels in a sing-song way as she plays. She smiles when she is happy, and she cries softly when unhappy, when the noise level from the TV gets too loud, or her siblings get too loud and boisterous. She says a few words that she sometimes sings to herself while she plays, such as ma-ma-ma and no, no, no, no, no.

Jacy's Performance on the PLS™-5 Screening Test for Early Childhood Educators (age 1 year, 10 months)

Language Section

Jacy was able to do the following language tasks for age 1:

Language Task 1—Looks at objects or people the caregiver points to and names. Jacy looked at objects that she was interested in when her mother pointed to them. For example, she looked at her cup of juice when her mother said, "Here is the juice." Jacy was thirsty and drank it. When Jacy's mother said, "Look! A cookie," Jacy reached for it. Jacy earned a score of "1"; however, the examiner noted that Jacy did not look at other objects the mother named, even when her mother named toys that Jacy likes.

The following task was scored "0.":

Language Task 2—Says at least one word. While Jacy's mother reported that she says *mama* and *no*, Jacy was not observed to say *mama* to get her mother's attention. When she said *no-no-no-no-no*, she said it in a sing-song way as she played, and it did not appear that she was saying that she didn't want to do something.

Language Task 3—Looks at and plays with another person for at least one minute using appropriate eye contact. Jacy plays happily on her own, but did not make eye contact or attempt to play with her mother when the mother tried to play peek-a-boo or patty-cake with her. When asked if there were little games Jacy liked to play with her, Jacy's mother reported that she likes to swing up high while her mother holds her hands. The early childhood specialist observed that Jacy laughs and enjoys being swung, but does not look at her mother while she is swinging and does not do anything to show her mother she wants to keep swinging. If her mother stops swinging her, she walks away to get a toy.

Language Task 4—Responds to words like no or no-no. Jacy did not seem to pay attention to her mother when her mother said, "no-no". She reached for several objects from the table, and when her mother said, "no-no", she continued to reach for and pick up the objects. It did not seem to bother or

concern Jacy when her mother took objects away while saying no. Jacy either reached for other toys or walked away to get something else.

Language Task 5—Understands a specific word or phrase without the use of gestures. Jacy seems to understand phrases her mother says when her mother puts out her arms and says, "Come here," and lifting her arms when her mother lifts her arms up and says, "Let's swing!" She does not appear to understand if her mother does not gesture while she talks to Jacy.

The pass criterion for the language section of the screening is "Score of 4 or more items correct." Jacy earned a score of 1, so she did not pass the language section of the screening.

Feeding Section

The early childhood specialist observed while Jacy ate her lunch. The examiner did not observe any of the behaviors that might suggest a feeding/swallowing issue. Jacy's mother reported that Jacy shows some very specific food preferences, which do not seem to be related to food texture. Although Jacy passed this section of the screening, the examiner wrote down the some notes about the mother's concerns about the limited number of foods Jacy likes so that she would remember to discuss this with the early childhood team in the home office.

Social/Interpersonal Section

The examiner checked the following atypical behaviors on the screening form:

- Does not respond to his or her name when called
- Does not use gestures or speech to initiate social interactions

The pass criterion for this section of the screening is "None of the behaviors are noted." With two statements checked, Jacy did not pass the social/interpersonal section of the screening.

Jacy's Performance on the PLS™-5 Screening Test for Early Childhood Educators (age 1 year, 10 months)

Screening Summary

Screening Summary

Check only one box for each section. If the child does not meet the pass criteria, check "Refer for Additional Testing."

Section	Pass	Refer for Additional Testing
Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Feeding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social/Interpersonal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Screening Summary for Jacy age 1 year, 10 months

In the notes section, the examiner commented that Jacy's mother mentioned Jacy has very specific food preferences. While food preferences are common among young children, the information may be significant in light of the other behaviors observed.

The early childhood specialist will confer with the occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, and psychologist on the assessment team to discuss the screening results and determine if a multidisciplinary diagnostic assessment is an appropriate next step.

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