



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



Wei, age five years, ten months

Wei is a cheerful, easy-going 5-year old who speaks both Mandarin and English. He is enrolled in the Green Meadows Elementary School, and has lived in the U.S. for nine months. Wei is one of many English Learners in his classroom. Five languages are spoken by children in Wei's classroom, including English, Farsi, Mandarin, Spanish, and Tagalog. Wei is the only child who speaks Chinese in addition to English.

At the beginning of the school year, Wei's teacher conducted a speech and language screening using the PLS-5 Screening Test with the 5-year-olds in her classroom. She uses the screening to:

- obtain an idea about how much English the children know;
- identify children who need additional support in the classroom to learn English;

- and identify children whose language patterns suggest that they are having more difficulty than their classmates in keeping up with the language demands of the classroom.

For the children that do not pass the screening, a speech-language pathologist can conduct a comprehensive assessment to determine if the child is a typically-developing English Learner, or if the child is demonstrating signs of difficulty in speech and language development. While the teacher has a Spanish-speaking aide to help her screen the Spanish speakers using the PLS-5 Spanish Screening Test for Early Childhood Educators, the school district is still in the process of identifying interpreters to assist the speech-language pathologist with students speaking languages other than Spanish.



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Wei's Performance on the PLS™ -5 Screening Test for Early Childhood Educators

Language Section

Wei was able to do the following tasks:

Language Task 1—Identifies three out of five letters.

Language Task 3—Uses the possessive pronouns *his* or *hers*. Wei said *she ball* instead of *her* and *him ball* instead of *his*. When the teacher referred to the scoring criteria in the Manual, she saw that those responses, while different than the target response, are typical of a normally developing child who speaks Chinese and is in the process of learning English, so Wei earned a score of 1 for this item.

Language Task 4—Asks a question—with correct grammar—that is appropriate for the situation. Wei was able to communicate questions appropriate to the situation. He used a declarative sentence structure with a question intonation (e.g., “I have some cookies?”) When the teacher referred to the scoring criteria in the Manual, she saw that this response is a typical pattern for normally developing child who speaks Chinese and is in the process of learning English.

Language Task 5—Uses descriptive noun phrases. Wei said “Point to the pretty new car” for item 5a and said “the wet dog” for item 5b.

Language Task 6—Names categories. Wei named the categories “foods” and “drinks.”

Wei was not able to:

Language Task 2—Understands complex sentences. Wei pointed to one picture showing the correct answer, but missed two test items by pointing to pictures that showed that while he understood the gist of the sentence, he does not “catch” all the parts of the sentence needed to identify the correct picture.

The Pass criterion for the Language section of the screening is “Score of 5 or more items correct.” Wei earned a score of 5, so he passed the Language section of the screening. Wei passed five Language items, meeting the pass criterion for this section.

Articulation Section

In the Articulation section of the screening, Wei made only one error on the sounds that are tested. He said the following sounds incorrectly: “l” in *lamp*, “th” in *teeth*, “r” in *car* and *red*. Because he said four out of ten sounds incorrectly, Wei did not meet the pass criteria of eight or more sounds correct in the Articulation section of the screening.

Connected Speech Section

In this section of the screening, the teacher marked “You understand most of what the child says.” Because this description of Wei’s speech is the pass criterion for this section, Wei passed the Connected Speech section of the screening.

Social/Interpersonal Section

The teacher checked all six socially appropriate communication behaviors in this section, such as “Greets you when you say ‘hi’”, “Responds to your questions,” and “Speaks to other children.” Although Wei is very shy with adults he doesn’t know, he will answer questions when asked by familiar adults, so he was given credit for “Speaks to adults.” With a pass criterion of four or more statements checked, Wei (with six statements checked) passed this section of the screening.

Stuttering Section

The teacher selected the description “Speaks as smoothly as peers.” Because no atypical characteristics (such as “Frequently repeats part of a word” or “Pauses excessively when talking”), Wei met the pass criteria of “No atypical characteristics noted” in the Stuttering section of the screening.

Voice Section

The teacher selected the description “Voice sounds like other children of the same age and sex.” Because no atypical characteristics (such as “Voice sounds hoarse, rough, or breathy” or “Coughs or clears throat often”) were noted, Wei met the pass criteria of “No atypical characteristics noted” in the Voice section of the screening.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Connected Speech	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social/Interpersonal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fluency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Screening Summary for Wei, Age 5

In the Notes section, the teacher commented that Wei appears to be doing very well in English after nine months in the United States. Although he passed the Language screening, he had difficulty with long, complex sentences and that she should confirm that he knows what to do when given more complex directions. His teacher also made a recommendation to check for comprehension when explaining new content during a lesson. The teacher may want to monitor Wei’s progress this year and consult with a speech-language pathologist if she sees a need to confirm that Wei is demonstrating language behaviors of a typical child learning a second language. Because Wei did not pass the articulation screening, he should be referred to the speech-language pathologist, who will conduct an assessment to determine if Wei’s articulation is typical for a Chinese-speaking child who is learning English as a second language.

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