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 may 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 "true 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
__ has difficulty understanding questions
__ fails to understand age-appropriate stories
__ has difficulties making inferences, predicting outcomes, drawing conclusions
__ lacks understanding of spatial terms such as left-right, front-back
__ requests multiple repetitions of instructions/directions with little improvement in comprehension
__ relies too much on context to understand what is said

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

This checklist was prepared by Hugh W. Cats, University of Kansas. Some descriptors have been taken from Language for Learning: A Checklist for Language Difficulties, Melbourne, Australia: OZ Child. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association grants permission to photocopy this checklist for professional use.