



NIH Workshop on 'Nonverbal' School Aged Children

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Defining Minimally Verbal

- Small repertoire of spoken words or fixed phrases that are used communicatively.
- Exact number of words may vary across children, from no spoken words or phrases to perhaps 20 or 30, depending on a range of factors including age, intervention history, and access to alternative/augmentative communication (AAC) systems.
- Spoken words or phrases may be restricted to limited contexts and one or two functions (e.g., requests with familiar adults).
- Rate of spoken language is usually very low and may include scripted phrases that have been highly trained (e.g., *I want X*).
- May use echolalic or stereotyped language that does not appear to be functionally communicative.

Assessment

- First area to address.....
- Interventions depend on good assessments
- Good assessment can lead to meaningful outcomes

Year long work group

- NIH colleagues...Judith Cooper, Alice Kau, Lisa Gilotty, Ann Wagner, Frank Avenilla, Dan Hall
- Nancy Brady, University of Kansas
- Catherine Lord, Weill Cornell
- Helen Tager-Flusberg, Boston University
- Connie Kasari, UCLA

Assessment

- Core Areas of Development
 - Language
 - Social
 - Repetitive Behaviors
- Associated Concerns
 - Oral motor, medical history
 - Nonverbal cognition
 - Prelinguistic skills—imitation, intentional communication, play

Measures Tables

● = Well-suited for use with minimally verbal children

◐ = Use with some caution

○ = Unlikely to yield meaningful results

| Assessment Name | Variables Assessed | Age Range | Assessment Context | Citation | Rating |
|--|---|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Language Use Inventory | Pragmatic language | 18-47 months | Parent report | O'Neill, 2009 | ◐ |
| Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - IV | Receptive vocabulary | 2:6 - 90 years | Standardized | Dunn & Dunn, 2007 | ● |
| Preschool Language Scales-5 | Auditory comprehension | Birth- 7:11 | Standardized | Zimmerman et al., 2011 | ◐ |
| Reynell Developmental Language Scales -III | Verbal comprehension Expressive language | 1-6 years | Standardized | Edwards et al., 1999 | ◐ |

Kasari, Brady, Lord, Tager-Flusberg (2013) Assessing minimal verbal children with ASD,

Recommendations/Future Research

- Assessments need to determine children's actual ability at a point in time
- Need to have validity data for use with minimally verbal school aged population
- Likely a combination of standardized and experimental assessments

- Future goals.....
- Novel assessments that can yield meaningful results for this population
- Measures that can be implemented easily and applied widely