

Communication Difficulties Observation (Mutism)

Name

DoB:

Class:

Successful communication is the interplay of a number of variables. Different pressures can result in the child struggling to communicate. Some of these important variables are:
Physical context: classroom (with peers present, with an adult alone, with teacher...) playground, corridor, intervention room, type of communication required: sharing personal or non-personal information, sharing known information or reading a book, spontaneous conversation or rote, spontaneous, highly communicative (sharing information), less communicative (naming a picture, game context), yes/no answers.
Characteristics of communicative partner/others present in vicinity: familiarity, number present, gender, peer or non peer, age, social role (teacher, parent, therapist).
Communicative functions: regulating another's behaviour, social interaction, greetings, joint attention, answering questions, requesting information, etc. Behavioural regulation typically easier than the social functions of language. Answering questions (non-personal first) may be easier than asking questions.
Interaction/communication modality: nonverbal turn-taking (e.g., taking a turn in a game), pointing, writing, nodding, whispering, voicing with low volume, voicing with normal volume, playing a toy instrument in a "band" (unvoiced instrument, e.g., guitar, then voiced, e.g., kazoo; or mouth instrument or manual instrument), making speech noises in non-communicative contexts ("ch ch ch ch" to go up the ladder, "ssssss" to go down the chute in game; first unvoiced, then voiced)

Date, Time of observation / duration e.g. 10.10.14 / 9.05am / 15mins					
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Participation in classroom activity

Child alone and not involved in activity					
Child alone but watching others					
Child in an activity alone					
Child in own activity but aware of others					
Child participating in a group activity					
Child takes equipment for the activity without communicating					

Talk with others

No talk observed					
Child playing and talking to self, not aware of others					
Child listening to others but not talking					
Child talking and aware of others but not requiring responses					
Child initiating conversations and seeking responses					
Child directing behaviour of others					
Child being directed by another					

Talk with adults

Initiates conversation with teacher					
Responds when approached by a teacher					
Maintains a dialogue easily					
Contributes when with a teacher in a group activity					
Gets attention from adults by tugging at their arm or clothes					
Points to things that they want or in response to questions					

General behaviour

Any particular features of behaviour e.g. friendly, aggressive, shy, easily distracted, confident					
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About the child

Does the child respond when called by name?
Does the child speak to anyone in school? Who?
Does the child speak home?
Does the child respond to instructions?
Can the child point or gesture in response to questions or instructions?
How many friends does the child have?
Does the child get along with all peers?
Does the child participate in classroom activities?
Does the child participate in whole class discussions?
Does the child participate in small group activities?
Does the child participate in one to one conversations?
Will the child read a book out loud? In their head?
Does the child participate in PE?
Does the child behave at home with parents?
Does the child play alone at home?
Does the child have academic difficulties?
Does the child act your for their age?
Does the child constantly demand help?
Does the child get upset easily?
Does the child eat normally? (over eating / under eating)
Does the child get embarrassed or feel self-conscious easily?
Does the child look unhappy, sad or depressed?
Does the child make any sounds? noises / 1 word answers
Does the child get distressed in noisy or busy place?

Other observations:

Summary of the observed behaviour

Observed by:

Date: