# Comprehensive Assessment Reference for Speech-Language Pathology

### Overview

A comprehensive assessment provides a picture of a student’s functional speech and language skills in relation to the ability to access the academic and/or vocational program, and to progress in the educational setting. It does not rely solely, or even primarily, on norm-referenced assessment instruments to determine a student’s communication abilities. A comprehensive speech-language assessment includes performance sampling across multiple skills, with multiple people using different procedures from varied contexts. It is the responsibility of the school-based speech language pathologist to assess the student using a variety of methods completed in a variety of contexts (Speech-Language Pathology Services in Schools, 2011, page 17-18).

### Accuracy of Norm-Referenced Tests

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) should carefully consider statistical properties of norm-referenced tests with regard to their ability to correctly identify students with speech-language impairments (Spaulding 2006). Tests vary in their technical adequacy and diagnostic accuracy. Best practices in speech-language pathology include consideration of the sensitivity and specificity of published assessment instruments (Betz & Eickhoff, 2013; Spaulding, Plante, & Farinella, 2006). Researchers suggest that norm referenced measures should have at least 80 percent accuracy in discriminating language abilities (Plante & Vance, 1994, Spaulding, Plante, & Farinella 2006).

### Virginia Regulations on Evaluation

A student can demonstrate communication differences, delays, or even impairments, without demonstrating an adverse affect on educational performance. Specific criteria for speech-language impairment must be met before a child can be found eligible as a child with a disability with a speech language impairment (8 VAC 20-81-80 U)

* Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this chapter are: a. Selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; (8 VAC 20-81-70 C 1 a).
* A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent(s), and information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities), that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the content of the child’s IEP (8 VAC 20-81-70 C 3).
* No single measure or assessment is used as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for a child (8 VAC 20-81-70 C 11).

### Definitions

* General Information- Includes type of test, administration time, and ages. The administration time for omnibus tests only includes the subtests needed to calculate the core/identification scores.
* Language Areas - Refers to the specific areas of language the test developers report the test measures.
* Literacy Areas- Refers to the specific areas of literacy the test developers report the test measures.
* Dialect Considerations- Refers to the specific dialects that test developers provide optional scoring considerations for in the administration manual.
* Normative Sample - Refers to the group of individuals whose performance data are used as a reference for evaluating individual test scores. The individual being evaluated should be represented in the normative sample for the test being used.
* Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample -Refers to the sub groups that made up the normative sample for the test.
* Geographic Residence -Refers to the areas of the country where individuals in the normative sample reside.
* “Normalcy” of subjects -Refers to normative samples that included specific sub populations that may alter the overall distribution of scores. When the purpose of the test is to identify the presence of a language and/or literacy disorder, individuals with disorders known to affect oral language, reading, or writing should be excluded from the normative group (Peña, Spaulding, & Plante, 2006). Tests that included students with disabilities (SWD) and/or students identified as gifted are indicated in this column.
* Sensitivity -Refers to the rate at which a test can correctly identify students with language impairments as having a significant deficit.
* Specificity - Refers to the rate at which students who have typically developing language abilities are found by that test to have adequate language performance.
* SWD - Students With Disabilities

### SLP Test Comparison

Tests were selected for inclusion in this publication because of reported use by Virginia School SLPs OR because of acceptable levels of diagnostic accuracy. SLPs are encouraged to access examiner manuals and examine diagnostic accuracy (sensitivity and specificity) and normative samples prior to selecting a test for administration. This information was compiled by researchers at James Madison University for the Virginia Department of Education. Explanation of the terms used in this chart are provided on the previous page.

**All tests have a mean of 100 and Standard Deviation of 15 points.**

#### Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Fifth Edition (CELF-5)

**General Information**

Omnibus

30-45 min.

Ages 5;0-21;11

**Language Areas**

Semantics, morphology, syntax, pragmatics

**Literacy Areas**

Reading comprehension (ages 8-21; supplementary); Structured writing (8-21; supplementary)

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE, Southern English, Spanish-influenced English, Asian-influenced English (p 277)

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

White (56.8%), Hispanic: (20%), African American (13.8%), Asian (3.6%), Other (5.9%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Midwest, Northeast, South, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 20%

**Sensitivity**

-1.5 SD: 85%

(from test administration manual)

“Unacceptable”(Leaders, 2014, p.9)

 **Specificity**

-1.5 SD: 99%(from test administration manual)

“Unacceptable”(Leaders, 2014, p.9)

#### Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Preschool – Second Edition (CELF-P2)

**General Information**

Omnibus

 15-20 min.

 Ages 3;0-6;11

**Language Areas** Semantics, morphology, syntax, pragmatics

Phonological awareness (ages 4-6);

**Literacy Areas**

Pre-literacy rating scale (ages 3-6)

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE, Appalachian English, Southern White, Spanish-influenced English

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

African American (15.53%), Hispanic (17.48%), White (61.3%), Other (5.69%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

North Central, Northeast, South, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

11th grade or less; High School; 1-3 years college or technical school; college or post-graduate Degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 13%

Gifted: <1%

 **Sensitivity**

-1 SD: 85%

**Specificity**

-1 SD: 82%

#### Preschool Language Scales - Fifth Edition (PLS-5)

**General Information**

Omnibus

 45-60 min.

 Ages Birth-7;11

**Language Areas**

Semantics, morphology, syntax,

**Literacy Areas**

Print awareness; Alphabet knowledge; initial sounds, rhyming, morphological awareness\*\*\*

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE, Appalachian English, Southern English, English influenced by Chinese, English influenced by Spanish

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

African American (11.6%), Asian (4%), Hispanic (18%), White (60.7%), Other (5.7%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Northeast, South, Midwest, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 6.2%

Gifted: .4%

 **Sensitivity**

≥ 1SD: 83%

**Specificity**

1SD 80%

#### Test of Integrated Language & Literacy Skills (TILLS)

**General Information**

Omnibus

 20-35 min.

Ages 6;0-18;11

 **Language Areas**

Semantics, morphology, syntax, pragmatics

**Literacy Areas**

Phonemic Awareness, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE, Spanish-influenced English, Asian-influenced English

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

White (73%), Hispanic (10%), African American (10%), Asian (5%), Native American (1%), Other (1%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Northeast, Midwest, South, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

11th Grade or less; High School; Some College; 4-year College or more

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 0

**Sensitivity**

Ages 6;0-7;11 Cut Score 24: 84%

Ages 8;0-8;11Cut Score 34: 88%

Ages 12;0-18;11 Cut Score 42: 86%

**Specificity**

Ages 6;0-7;11 Cut Score 24: 84%

Ages 8;0-8;11 Cut Score 34: 85%

Ages 12;0-18;11 Cut Score 42: 90%

#### Test of Narrative Language – Second Edition (TNL-2)

**General Information**

Narrative Comprehension and Production

15-30 min.

Ages 4;0-15;11

**Language Areas**

Narrative Comprehension and Production

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

Not Reported

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

White (78%), African American (14%), Asian/Pacific Islander (5%), Two or more (2%), American Indian/Eskimo/Aleut (<1%), Hispanic (22%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Northeast, South, Midwest, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; High School; Associate’s degree; Bachelor’s degree: Advanced degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 8%

**Sensitivity**

Cut Score 92: 92%

**Specificity**

Cut Score 92: 92%

#### Test for Examining Expressive Morphology (TEEM)

**General Information**

Morphology & Syntax

6.5 min.

Ages 3;0-7;11

**Language Areas**

Morphology

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

Not Reported

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

Not Reported

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Fresno, California

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Not Reported

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 0

**Sensitivity**

- 2 SD: 90%

**Specificity**

-2 SD: 95%

#### Structured Photographic Expressive Language Test – Third Edition (SPELT-III)

**General Information**

Morphology & Syntax

15-20 min.

Ages 4;0-9;11

**Language Areas**

Morphology

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

African American (16.1%), White (65.5%), Hispanic (11.2%), Other (7.2%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Midwest, Northeast, South, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; Some College, College degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 7%

**Sensitivity**

Cut Score 95: 90% (Perona et al., 2005)

**Specificity**

Cut Score 95: 100% (Perona et al., 2005)

#### Structured Photographic Expressive Language Test – Second Edition, Preschool (SPELT-P2)

**General Information**

Morphology & Syntax

15-20 min.

Ages 3;0-5;11

**Language Areas**

Morphology

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

African American (12.5%), White (72.8%), Hispanic (8.6%), Other (6.1%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Midwest, South, West, East

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 2.5%

**Sensitivity**

Cut Score 87: 90% (Greenslade, et al., 2009)

**Specificity**

Cut Score 87: 100% (Greenslade, et al., 2009)

#### Comprehensive Assessment of Spoken Language, Second Edition (CASL-2)

**General Information**

Omnibus

General Language Ability Index 30-60 min.

Ages: 3;0-21;11

**Language Areas**

Semantics, morphology, syntax, pragmatics

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE, Southern English

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

Asian (2.8%), African American (14.4%), Hispanic (22%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.3%), American Indian/Alaska Native (0.4%), White (56.7%), Other (3.4%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Northeast, South, Midwest, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

No High School diploma; High school; Some College; Bachelor’s degree or higher

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 0

**Sensitivity**

-1 SD: 74%

**Specificity**

-1 SD: 84%

#### Test of Language Development –Primary: Fourth Edition (TOLD-P:4)

**General Information**

Omnibus

30-60 min.

Ages 4;0-8;11

**Language Areas**

Semantics, phonology, morphology, syntax

**Literacy Areas**

Syllable segmentation

**Dialect Considerations**

Not Reported

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

European American (78%), African American (15%), American Indian/Eskimo (1%), Asian/Pacific Islander (4%), Two or more (2%),

Other (<1%)

 **Normative Sample geographic residence**

Northeast, South, Midwest, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Family income striated from 15,000-75,000+

 Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

 **Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 15.1%

Gifted: 4%

**Sensitivity**

Cut Score 90: 74%

**Specificity**

Cut Score 90: 88%

#### Test of Language Development-Intermediate: Fourth Edition (TOLD-I:4)

**General Information**

Omnibus

30-60 min.

Ages 8;0-17;11

**Language Areas**

Semantics, syntax, morphology

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

Not Reported

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

European American (78%), African American (14%), American Indian/Eskimo (1%), Asian/Pacific Islander (5%), Two or more (2%), Other (<1%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

Northeast, South, Midwest, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Family income striated from 15,000-75,000+

 Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

 **Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 15.3%

Gifted: 5.7%

**Sensitivity**

 Cut Score 90: 77%

**Specificity**

Cut Score 90: 88%

#### Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test - 4th Edition (EOWPVT-4)

**General Information**

Expressive Vocabulary

20 min.

Ages 2;0-80;11

**Language Areas**

Semantics

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

Not Reported

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

African American (12.8%), Asian American (3.4%), Caucasian (63.2%), Hispanic (18%), Native American (1%), Other (.3%), Not Reported (1.4%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

North Central, Northeast, South, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 8.7%

**Sensitivity**

Not Reported

**Specificity**

Not Reported

#### Oral and Written Language Scales, 2nd (OWLS-II)

**General Information**

Omnibus

20-50 min.

Ages 3;0-21;11

**Language Areas**

Semantics, syntax, pragmatics

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

AAE

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

Not Reported

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

East, South, Midwest, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

Not Reported

**Sensitivity**

Not Reported

**Specificity**

Not Reported

#### Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Fourth Edition (PPVT-4)

**General Information**

Receptive Vocabulary

10-15 min.

Ages 2;6-90+

**Language Areas**

Semantics

**Literacy Areas**

None

**Dialect Considerations**

Not Reported

**Race/Ethnicity of Norming Sample**

African American (15.1 %), Hispanic (15.4%), White (63.4%), Other (6.1%)

**Normative Sample geographic residence**

North Central, Northeast, South, West

**Normative Sample socioeconomic status**

Less than high school; High School; College; Graduate Degree

**Normative Sample "normalcy" of subjects**

SWD: 13.4%

**Sensitivity**

Not Reported

**Specificity**

Not Reported

### Consideration of Cultural and Linguistic Bias

Local dialectal and cultural variations exist within the school division. Students, who are native English speakers, may use dialects and speak or write following the language patterns of their community. Educators should use the student’s community language, not race, when considering dialect use. Teams should recognize that accents and regional vocabulary differences are a natural part of spoken language and should not be considered a disorder. Norm-referenced test scoring procedures based on use of Standard American English may potentially penalize students who use other dialects or languages. When using norm-referenced tests with students who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, provide consideration for dialect use and consider use of other assessment procedures. To avoid biased or inaccurate reporting of results for students from culturally linguistically diverse populations, SLPs should address cultural or linguistic differences in the evaluation report. Caution Against Over Reliance on Norm-Referenced Tests Norm-referenced measures are not sufficient sources of data for determining eligibility for special education or the educational impact of a speech-language impairment.

• Norm-referenced measures usually cannot distinguish between communication disorders and communication differences due to instructional, cultural or dialectal experience.

• Norm-referenced tests are not aligned with the curriculum and do not take into account how prior knowledge and experience impact performance.

• Spaulding, Plante, and Farinella report, “The practice of applying an arbitrary low cut-off score for diagnosing language impairments is frequently unsupported by the evidence that is available….(2006)”.

### REFERENCES

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