Title	Assessing Pragmatic Skills Using Checklists with Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: A Systematic Review

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Main Points

Pragmatics is defined as 'Social communication'. It is seen as part of language, but also linked to other areas of development: cognition, theory of mind and social and emotional development.

A systematic research review on the assessment of pragmatics in deaf children and young people.
Early identification of deafness and intervention has led to an improvement in language outcomes for deaf CYP, however, pragmatics is still an area of concern.

Assessment of pragmatics skills is problematic, as it is how language is used in social situations – therefore difficult to assess by conventional assessments
Use of checklists to assess pragmatic skills
Toe et al recognise that checklists to assess pragmatic skills in deaf children can be used with deaf CYP regardless of modality ie speech or sign.

The paper looks at 12 different checklists of pragmatic development. Each checklist looks at pragmatics from a different perspective. This makes it difficult to interchange or directly compare data from 2 different checklists to demonstrate progress.

Considerations

Whichever checklist is used it is important that we use the information gained appropriately, whether this be to identify areas of challenge and set targets and appropriate interventions, or if it is to show impact of intervention and longitudinal progress.
Parents, educators, clinicians or researchers may complete the checklists – each will have different perspectives and all are valuable.
A checklist may provide a snap shot of a child's interaction or may be based more on an adult's reflections of the child's communication over time – both are valuable.

9 checklists of pragmatic skills were identified: 7 which were completed by carers or educators, and 2 completed by educators or clinicians/researchers based on video taped interaction .

The authors describe the 9 checklists based on age group, areas of pragmatics assessed, primary informant, and nature of information assessed.
They then compare each checklist against 6 key features, including pragmatic or theoretical model, nature of pragmatic skills assessed, age range, results, primary informants and reliability.

Research into Practice

- Outcomes for deaf children's language have improved since the advent of new born hearing screening, early implantation and early intervention.
- Most QToDs are familiar with assessing different aspects of deaf children's language and using this to set targets for improving phonology, vocabulary, syntax, semantics, narrative and inferential language. I think as QToDs we are less likely to assess pragmatics.
- The link between pragmatic skills and social and emotional well-being is well documented and if we think about the number of deaf CYP who have mental health difficulties, then the responsibility and importance of assessing and supporting pragmatic development is clear.
- Checklists provide a way to assess a range of pragmatic skills.
- The Pragmatic Profile (Dewart & Summers, 1997) – is free to download and though quite old provides a great overview of a child's pragmatic language from a carer and/or teacher's perspective
- The newly available CELF-5 also provides a pragmatic checklist for carers or teachers to use. It also has the Pragmatics Activity Checklist which has pre-designed activities to do with the child, to help elicit and demonstrate pragmatic skills.