Revised Edition

The PRAGMATICS PROFILE of Everyday Communication Skills in Children

Manual

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of Everyday Communication Skills in Children

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Many people have contributed to the development of the extended *Pragmatics Profile*. Thank you to all of the following:

- those who helped us develop the original *Profile*.

- users of the *Profile* whose enthusiasm encouraged us to develop it further.

- students at City University and Central School of Speech and Drama who carried out research projects which helped us pilot draft versions.

- speech and language therapists working in school settings who piloted drafts with parents and teachers and spent time giving us feedback.

- researchers and specialist practitioners who responded to our request for criticism and feedback with detailed and thorough commentary.

- parents and teachers who were on the receiving end of the interview.

- our own families – who also extended into school-age whilst the *Profile* was in preparation.

CHAPTER 1

Why the *Profile* was Developed

Our original inspiration for the development of the *Profile* was the belief that conventional approaches to *clinical* work on speech and language problems in young children need to be supplemented by a perspective on children as communicators in *everyday* interactions. In traditional approaches to assessment, such as standardised testing and observations of interactions in clinical settings, it is only possible to gain a very limited picture of how children make their needs and wishes known and how they deal with the range of different communicative situations and conversational partners that will be encountered in the course of a day. We believe that the ways the child communicates in situations outside the clinic are of paramount importance and should be the focus of intervention with children who have communication difficulties.

We have also been influenced by developments in research into child language. Research has recently focused on an area often ignored in the past; that of *pragmatics*, which is the study of language in its context of use. A pragmatic approach offers a perspective on child language that emphasises how communication is achieved. It considers how language is used to communicate a variety of intentions, to relate to the communication needs of the listener and to participate in conversation and connected discourse (Bates, 1976).

The pragmatic perspective has much to offer the study of speech and language pathology and is now influencing research and practice in this area (Prutting, 1982; Gallagher and Prutting, 1983; Roth and Spekman, 1984a and 1984b; McTear and Conti-Ramsden, 1992; Smith and Leinonen, 1992; Craig, 1995). Lund and Duchan (1983) have talked of 'the pragmatics revolution' and expressed the following view, which we would echo:

'We predict that this pragmatics approach will not be just another addition to our evaluation techniques but that it will shake the very foundations of how we have been approaching children with language problems. Our notion that we can examine children's language by presenting them with controlled stimuli, such as sentences to imitate or formal tests, will come into question. Our idea that language in the clinic is the same as language outside the clinic will be suspect. Our hope that we can measure a child's language ability in one context in a two-hour diagnostic session will be demolished as results from the research in pragmatics become known to us'. (p.6)

Our own intention was to contribute to this 'revolution' by developing a method of exploring a child's communication that would provide the practitioner with a picture of the child as a communicator *outside* the clinical context and *within* the context of everyday life. We felt convinced that parents, teachers and other carers should be actively involved as partners in this exploration. We wanted to find a means of enabling them to share their knowledge about communicating with the child and to do so in a structured way that would be useful for the practitioner. The approach we developed took the form of a structured interview carried out with parents or carers of pre-school children, the original *Pragmatics Profile of Early Communication Skills* (Dewart and Summers, 1988). The approach has now been extended to include children in the early years of schooling, with a separate interview for children up to, approximately, 10 years of age.

We have tried to make the *Profile* a means of exploring communication in *any* child, whether or not he or she has difficulties in communication and irrespective of whether any difficulties might be caused by developmental delay, hearing impairment, physical or learning disabilities, specific language impairment or other factors. We also intend that this exploration should be a basis for intervention which has at its centre the goal of promoting the child's communicative abilities in all the situations, and for all the tasks, of everyday life.

Why the version for school-age children was developed

We were aware that there was a need for an approach to exploring everyday communication in children older than those for whom the questions in the original *Profile* were devised. We also had many requests from professionals involved with children in schools for an interview for children of school age. Some had used the original *Profile* regularly for younger children and wanted to have a similar means of monitoring later stages of communicative development in those children. We wanted to provide age-appropriate questions and examples for older children, including those whose language was very limited.

When we set out to extend the age range of the *Profile* we were aware of the importance of the school context in the lives of older children; we were also aware of the fact that *teachers*' knowledge of children in that setting would have to be drawn upon, in addition to that of parents or carers. In recent years there have been new demands from the National Curriculum related to the use of language and an increased concern with oral communication skills. Increasingly, children with communication difficulties are integrated in mainstream classrooms. Teachers who have children with special needs in their classrooms may want to explore what the children's communication skills are like outside school. Equally, educational and clinical psychologists and speech and language therapists may often want to find out more about children's communication *in the classroom*. The new extension of the *Profile* was

developed to provide a way of exploring a child's communication in both contexts – with teacher and with parent or carer. It is intended that the *Profile* should provide a focus for dialogue between teachers, other professionals and families.

CHAPTER 2

The Development of Pragmatics

'Pragmatics refers to the study of the use of language in context, by real speakers and hearers in real situations' (Bates, 1974).

Although there is no single, generally-accepted definition of pragmatics and what it encompasses, since the field is broad and diverse (for a review see McTear and Conti-Ramsden, 1992), Bates' definition sums up the area on which we have focused in constructing the *Profile*.

We decided to focus on three major aspects of the development of pragmatics. The first of these is the *development of communicative functions*, the way the child comes to be able to express a range of intentions, such as requesting, greeting and giving information, through a variety of communicative behaviours, such as gesture, vocalisation and language. The second aspect is that of the child's *response to communication*, the way the child reacts to and understands communication from other people. The third aspect is the way the child participates in *interaction and conversation*, looking at the child as a participant in social interactions involving initiation, turntaking and repair. We also looked at the way the expression of these aspects of pragmatics is affected by variations in context, such as time and place and the people involved.

There is not space here to present a detailed account of the development of pragmatics. However, a brief account of development of this aspect of language is presented in Table 1 (pages 6 to 8). This table shows the major developments in each of the three areas of pragmatics mentioned above for six age ranges, from infants through to children of seven and beyond. This table was drawn up with reference to a wide range of sources in the child language literature. For further information on the development of pragmatics, users of the *Profile* are referred to Halliday (1975), Bates (1976), Dore (1978), Rees (1978), Ochs and Schieffelin (1979), Golinkoff (1983), Roth and Spekman (1984a), Becker (1990), McTear and Conti-Ramsden (1992).

Table 1: The development of pragmatics

Communicative functions

BIRTH TO NINE MONTHS

Uses signals such as eye-gaze, smiles, cries, vocalisations, but without specific communicative intention.

NINE TO 18 MONTHS

Begins to express a range of communicative intentions, first by gesture combined with vocalisation and then by words:
- attention-seeking;
- requesting objects, action or information;
- rejecting or protesting;
- greeting;
- naming.

18 MONTHS TO THREE YEARS

Range of communicative intentions increases:

Uses single or multiword utterances to:
- comment;
- express feelings;
- assert independence.

Begins to use language imaginatively.

THREE TO FOUR YEARS

Uses language to:
- talk about past and future events;
- give information.

Modal form used for requests ('Would you' plus request).

Retells simple stories.

FOUR TO SEVEN YEARS

Learns to express intentions in a variety of forms to fit the communicative needs of the listener and politeness constraints.

Begins to use indirect requests.

Uses language to:
- gain and hold adults' attention, for example 'know what?';
- give information;
- seek information from other people;
- give instructions to peers;
- state rules;
- negotiate and bargain;
- express a range of feelings/emotions;
- state beliefs and opinions;
- taunt and threaten.

Begins to tell jokes (punchline often misses the point).

Uses narrative to report experiences, complain about others' actions and to tell simple stories.

SEVEN YEARS AND BEYOND

More sophisticated functions of language become established:
- promising;
- hypothesizing;
- describing own and others' feelings and reactions.

  Uses language to develop ideas:
- planning, predicting and hypothesizing;
- reasoning and evaluation;
- explanation;
- expressing abstract ideas and opinions;
- argument and debate.

Greater flexibility in use of indirect requests and other indirect forms, for example, hints.

Skills in negotiation and persuasion develop further.

Narratives become longer and more complex: can sequence and organize events in stories in time and space.

Develops use of non-literal language, for example, idiom, simile, metaphor.

Begins use of sarcasm and irony.

Response to communication

BIRTH TO NINE MONTHS

Infant pays attention to human voice and human face.

Responds to interaction by looking, smiling and laughing.

Begins to enjoy action games (such as 'Round and round the garden') and begins to smile in recognition of familiar words or in anticipation of tickling.

NINE TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS

Begins to understand adult's gestures such as pointing (first for near objects, then more distant ones).

Responds appropriately to simple directions.

18 MONTHS TO THREE YEARS

Begins to recognize a range of adult communicative intentions and respond appropriately.

Responds to speech with speech: can make verbal responses that directly complement previous utterances (for example, 'yes' or 'no' to 'yes/no?' questions, or specific location as response to 'Where?' questions).

Comes to realise that such phrases as 'In a minute' mean he or she is being asked to wait.

THREE TO FOUR YEARS

Understanding of adult communicative intentions develops further.

Notices changes in wording of familiar stories and rhymes.

FOUR TO SEVEN YEARS

Understanding of indirect requests developing.

Beginning to rely less on context for understanding, for example, in classroom.

Requests clarification when hasn't understood.

Takes instructions from peers and responds to their questions.

Becomes able to treat language as an object of analysis and to use language to talk about language (metalinguistic awareness).

Enjoys jokes but doesn't fully understand play on words/puns.

Listens to extended stories from books and can read simple ones.

SEVEN YEARS AND BEYOND

Greater facility in understanding indirect forms.

Can cope with little non-verbal support for linguistic messages, for example, in reading and in the classroom.

Can judge utterances as appropriate for a particular listener or setting.

Can assess the adequacy of a communication and comment on where it has gone wrong.

Can respond appropriately to idiomatic language.

Can understand figurative and non-literal language.

Aware of the politeness of various forms of request.

Shows awareness of how intonational cues affect meaning.

Learns to make more subtle distinctions between communicative functions, for example, promise and prediction.

Can understand jokes based on play on words.

Can read and extract information from books.

Interaction and conversation

BIRTH TO NINE MONTHS

Early interactions between infants and caregivers:
- involve turntaking and temporally linked behaviours;
- may be initiated by infant looking at a caregiver's face and terminated by infant looking away;
- often consist of ritualised and repetitive games ('peekaboo'), which also involve turntaking;
- involve joint attention between infant and caregiver, which expands to include external objects and events.

NINE TO 18 MONTHS

Interactions initiated non-verbally by child, for example, by giving, pointing, showing or making requesting gestures and vocalisations.

Interactions may be terminated by child moving away.

Responds to questions by non-verbal vocalisation or gesture.
Interactions limited to one or two turns per partner.

18 MONTHS TO THREE YEARS

Begins to use speech in response to speech, (gives verbal response to questions, for example).

Initiates interactions by using vocative (for example, 'Mummy!').

Responds to requests for clarification by repetition or by revision of the original form of the utterance.

THREE TO FOUR YEARS

Can initiate conversation by verbal strategies, for example, vocative + comment or question.

Becomes more able to communicate with strangers.

With peers, talk may alternate between private talk to self and talk to partner.

Can participate in pretend conversations and switch from one speech code to another when taking stereotypical roles in play.

Will respond to things overheard in other people's conversations.

Rapid change of conversational topics.

When child is not understood, tends to repeat without modification.

FOUR TO SEVEN YEARS

Child becomes more efficient at initiating and terminating conversations and controlling the timing of conversational turns. The number and length of turns increases significantly.

Learns to choose most appropriate timing for attempts to join in other people's conversations.

When telling something, has difficulties in taking into account what the listener knows and needs to know in order to understand, for example, assumes knowledge of the context or participants is shared.

May distinguish deictic terms, such as 'here' and 'there', ineffectively so that listener has to probe to find out what is being referred to.

When child has not been understood, can repeat with some elaboration so that more information is conveyed to the listener.

Uses contingent query to request clarification from others.

Participates in games involving role play, negotiated through language.

Gradually learns to adapt conversational style to a variety of conversational partners who differ in age, sex, status and familiarity.

Shows some awareness of social conventions for language use, for example, modifies request forms to make them more polite and makes judgements about degrees of politeness in others' requests.

SEVEN YEARS AND BEYOND

Gets better at setting the scene to take account of listeners' needs.

Becomes more proficient at use of cohesive devices in discourse.

When conversation breaks down can repair by addressing the source of breakdown and elaborating appropriately.

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Topics of conversation extend into abstract ideas.

Adapts style of speech to age, status and other variables related to listener.

More proficient at using politeness as a strategy in communicating.

Develops appreciation and use of social conventions relating to facial expression, gesture, posture, distance, eye contact.

CHAPTER 3

The Approach Adopted in the *Profile*

The *Profile* is an approach to gaining information about how a child communicates in daily life. It consists of a structured interview, which is carried out in an informal way with a parent, teacher or other carer. It provides a qualitative picture of the child's typical communicative behaviours. This information can then be used for planning intervention that is grounded in everyday communicative needs, in partnership with those who are in closest contact with the child.

The focus on pragmatics

There has been an increasing interest in pragmatics, how language is used in communicative contexts, within linguistics (Sperber and Wilson, 1986), in the child language literature (Bates, 1976) and in the study of language pathology (McTear and Conti-Ramsden, 1992; Smith and Leinonen, 1992). Pragmatic aspects of children's language have proved difficult to investigate systematically without observations and analyses that can be detailed and time consuming. Yet language assessment and intervention that does *not* take into account pragmatic considerations of function and use would seem severely limited. The *Profile* has been developed as a tool for professionals involved with children's language, helping them to begin their investigation of pragmatic aspects of a child's language.

The *Profile* aims to provide a general perspective on the child's communicative abilities and needs. Although we have not attempted to cover every area of pragmatic development, the *Profile* does provide information on a broad range of aspects of the development of pragmatics – including the range and form of expression of communicative intentions, response to communications, manner of participating in conversation and the impact of situational context on the child's communication skills.

Style of investigation

As we wanted to find out about the child in a variety of interactions in which it would be impossible for the investigator to be involved directly, we decided to use an interview format where the interviewees are asked to describe the child's typical behaviour and encouraged to provide examples. Our adoption of this approach was partly inspired by a parental interview schedule which was developed by Kay Mogford (1973). Building on her approach and that of Bates and her colleagues (Bates, 1979), we devised an interview schedule that is structured but is intended to be conducted in an informal way – giving interviewees the maximum opportunity to contribute their knowledge and experience.

Working with parents, carers and teachers

The approach stresses the importance of and gives respect to the contribution that parents, carers and teachers can make to the investigation of children's language development and to the planning and implementation of intervention.

It is often assumed that it is hazardous to rely on parents in particular as sources of information about a child's development of language. They are thought to be unfamiliar with the typical course of language development and are thus thought to be unsure of what is important to report. It is also said that parents may over - or under-estimate their child's achievements when reporting them to a professional.

However, parents hold valuable information about their child as a communicator: they are in daily contact with him or her and they have continual experience of communicating together. Our experience is that, if questioned appropriately about their child's current behaviour, parents will share that information. Bates (1993) argues strongly for the value of parents' reports over observational and laboratory based studies of children's earliest language. She states, 'After all, parents are with the child in many different situations, including all those highly predictable routine settings that are the birthplace of early words (e.g. feeding, bathing, going to bed)' (p.224). Evidence that parents can provide valid and reliable information about their children's language development has emerged from studies of parental report measures by Dale *et al*. (1989), Dale (1991) and Camaioni *et al*. (1991).

When teachers are interviewed, their knowledge of the child in the classroom setting and of the particular kinds of communicative tasks that occur within the school can be explored. As with parents, carrying out the *Profile* interview with teachers can facilitate working together and enhance mutual understanding of each other's perspectives.

The form of questioning

The *Profile* questions are rooted in concrete events and everyday experiences to which parents, teachers and others can readily relate. The wording of each question has been carefully chosen and tested. We had to ensure that each question directed respondents to the aspect of communication it was intended to. At the same time the questions had to use language that was easily understandable and that would not sound formal or stilted when spoken by the interviewer. We have tried to make the questions relevant to the experience of *any* child, irrespective of whether he or she has difficulties. The questions were designed not to focus on communicative difficulties or problem behaviours, though these are likely to emerge in the course of an interviewee's descriptions. We avoided seeking retrospective information but focused on the child's *current* behaviour.

We also avoided 'Yes/No' questions (of the form 'Does your child…?'), which are open to positive or negative bias in responding. Such closed questions would limit the range of responses available to the interviewee. Instead we decided to ask open questions that allowed the interviewees to provide their own response and to

describe the child's communicative behaviour in their own words. We chose to word the questions by identifying a particular communicative situation and asking *how* the child usually behaves in that instance. The interviewee, therefore, does not merely agree or disagree but has to provide a short description of how the child usually communicates in that situation. If the interviewee has difficulty in answering, the interviewer may suggest one or two possible responses in the form of 'examples' or prompts provided for each question. These are used to help the interviewee focus on relevant behaviours which the child might show in that situation and are *not* intended to be presented one-by-one in checklist fashion. Thus the interviewee is not given the impression that a child of a particular age *should* be showing a particular behaviour. In the pre-school section of the *Profile*, the examples are listed under each question in approximate developmental order. The examples for the school-age version are not intended to be in developmental order, since the focus for this age group is as much on individual styles of language use and communicative interaction as much as on an emerging sequence.

The questions in the *Profile* can themselves sometimes raise interviewees' level of awareness of a child's communicative development and of the behaviours he or she may be using to achieve communication. They may begin to observe the child's communication and report back at a later date on behaviours they had not been able to describe in the original interview or in which they have noted change.

Qualitative approach

Our strong belief in the value of qualitative, descriptive information, alongside quantitative data, influenced the approach we adopted in developing the *Profile*. Language assessments which are based on measures of language form and structure, standardized and which provide norm-referenced scores, have made a vital contribution to the objective investigation of language performance. However, a score derived from such a test provides little or no insight into how a person's language difficulties affect their everyday use of language for communication.

There are particular difficulties associated with attempts to apply psychometric techniques and other forms of measurement to pragmatic aspects of language (Gallagher, 1991). The study of pragmatics involves the study of language in context. The way a person's language varies with person, place and ongoing activity is at the heart of this investigation and cannot be captured by attempts to study language in a relatively context-free testing situation. The interactive nature of communication means that a person's use of language will be influenced continuously by what other people say and do. Cultural and other differences between people mean that no one way of responding can be judged to be 'correct' or 'appropriate' in every instance.

The findings of the *Profile* are not, therefore, summarised numerically but in descriptive form. The descriptive overview can be supplemented and extended by other methods and analyses. For a review of approaches to assessment of pragmatics see McTear and Conti-Ramsden (1992).

CHAPTER 4

Description of the *Profile*

The *Profile* consists of two structured interviews, one for children up to approximately four years of age and one for older children aged approximately between five and ten years. Each interview consists of a set of questions. Each question has a set of possible answers in the form of examples, which should be used to prompt interviewees only if they have difficulty. Responses are noted in a space provided underneath each question.

Each of the two interviews is divided into four sections, the fourth section being common to both. The sections are as follows:

Section A: Communicative Functions
Section B: Response to Communication
Section C: Interaction and Conversation
Section D: Contextual Variation.

A full list of the topics covered in each section appears under 'An Outline of the Structure' at the beginning of each *Profile.*

Section A covers a range of communicative functions that the child may express. For example, in the pre-school version there are questions about the way the child expresses requests such as requests for an object or for action. The school-age version also considers requests but focuses on the types of requests that may be more important to know about for older children, such as requests for information and for assistance.

Section B investigates the way the child reacts and responds to communication from others. For example, in the pre-school version, questions are asked about the child's understanding of direct requests, whereas the school-age version focuses on understanding of indirect requests.

Section C deals with the way the child interacts with other people and participates in a conversation. This participation is not necessarily verbal but may involve a range of body signals and behaviours. Questions ask about the way interactions are initiated, maintained and terminated and about the way conversation can be repaired when breakdown occurs.

Section D is concerned with the way the child's communication varies depending on context. It asks about different places, people, times of day and about the topics that the child enjoys discussing. We consider that in this section the same questions can be applied to both age groups.

The interviews are presented at the end of this manual for recording of responses and, where relevant, for inclusion in case notes. The structure of the *Profile* and the topics dealt with in each section, a cover sheet and a Summary Sheet are also provided. Brief instructions for users are included at the beginning of the interviews.

It is important that users familiarise themselves with the full information about use and administration before conducting the interview. This information may by found in Chapter 5.

Development of the *Profile*

The *Profile* differs from most of the approaches that are commonly used in language assessment in that it is not, and is not intended to be, a standardised measure. We decided that measurement may not be very helpful to, and is not always relevant in, the study of an individual's everyday communicative interactions. Communicative behaviours depend very much on the context in which they occur and the persons involved. Our decision to opt for a descriptive, qualitative approach has coincided with an increasing trend towards the acceptance of qualitative research methods in psychology (Robson, 1993), in speech and language therapy (Eastwood, 1988) and in education and health research. We believe that a descriptive approach that relies on information from people who know the child well can have considerable value, at least as a first step in the investigation of pragmatics. As a clinical and research tool, it can give access to information not available from standardised testing.

In developing the interviews for both the pre-school and school-age versions, we first devised a set of questions which were based on the literature on the development of pragmatics and on our own experience of young children's everyday communication. These questions were piloted by speech and language therapists and the interviewees' responses were subsequently fed back to us, along with the therapists' reaction to the use of the *Profile*. In the light of this information we then modified the questions and restructured the format of the *Profile*. For the pre-school version a number of small-scale research projects were carried out by students at the Central School of Speech and Drama and City University, giving us systematic feedback on responses given to each question by normally developing children and by children with a range of types of impairment (including language delay, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment and autism). In the case of the school-age version of the *Profile*, a number of specialist and experienced speech and language therapists across the UK volunteered to pilot the draft *Profile* with a wide range of clients whose problems ranged from hearing impairment to severe physical and learning disabilities. Their reports were valuable in developing the final version, as were those resulting from a small number of student projects. We also invited comments and review from a number of researchers and practitioners with an academic interest in the area of pragmatics, and we made use of their comments as far as possible in the final version.

In this edition some modifications have been made to the original pre-school version of the *Profile*. These have been based on experience of its use by ourselves, by students and by practitioners, including a number who responded to a published request for feedback. It is hoped that users of the original pre-school version will find

that the revised version is not changed in substance but that the wording of some of the questions and examples has been improved. We envisage an ongoing process of development and continue to welcome comments and critical feedback from users of the *Profile.*

Reliability and Validity

As the *Profile* adopts a descriptive, qualitative approach and is not a *measure*, reliability and validity must be approached differently from typical quantitative methods (Dey, 1993; Robson, 1993). For instance, validity is not established by correlations with scores on the other assessments or scales. The validity of the content of the *Profile* rests on its base in the research literature on pragmatics.

Reliability and validity are approached in terms of the use of the *Profile* with an individual child. The consistency of an interviewee's responses should be tested out in informal ways, for instance by asking a similar question again at a later time. In relation to validity, since the findings from each interview are based on one person's perceptions, the user should attempt to validate the responses by obtaining information from additional sources. Such sources can involve interviewing someone else, for example, the other parent, a teacher or key worker. Alternatively, the sources can derive from the use of other approaches to assessment in the area of pragmatics, such as naturalistic or structured observation or conversational analysis. The process of *triangulation* is a vital element in validating qualitative research.

'Triangulation in its various guises (for example, using multiple methods, or obtaining information relevant to a topic or issue from several informants), is an indispensable tool in real world enquiry.' (Robson, 1993, p.383).

Where two people who know the child are interviewed separately, it is important to be aware that differences between their reports do not necessarily imply that the *Profile* responses are unreliable. Differences may arise because of their different ways of perceiving the child, of responding to the child, or because the child actually behaves very differently in two different contexts. In fact, differences between interviewees' accounts may be very informative and the ability to demonstrate these differences is one of the strong points of the *Profile*. In relation to this point Robson states, '(Triangulation)…provides a means of testing one source of information against other sources. Both correspondences and discrepancies are of value. If two sources give the same messages then, to some extent, they cross validate each other. If there is a discrepancy, its investigation may help in explaining the phenomenon of interest.' (p.383).

CHAPTER 5

Use and Administration

Who will find the *Profile* useful?

The *Profile* has been devised for use by all those with a professional interest in the development of language and communication. Since its original publication, users have included speech and language therapists, educational and clinical psychologists, health visitors and child development teams. The *Profile* has also been widely used by teachers with a special interest in language development in both mainstream and special educational settings and those working with children whose home language differs from that of the school. Researchers in child language have also incorporated the *Profile* into a number of research studies.

To which children is the *Profile* relevant?

A major strength of the *Profile* is that it can be used to investigate communication in a very wide range of children, whether or not they have developmental problems. It has been used to investigate communication in children with delayed language development, specific language impairment, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical difficulties and learning disabilities, including severe and profound disabilities. It is relevant to non-verbal children as well as those who are using language to communicate. It can be used, if necessary with the help of an interpreter, to investigate language use by children from any culture and has been found to be very useful for children for whom the language of the home is different from that of the school.

What age-range does the *Profile* cover?

The pre-school version of the *Profile* was devised to relate to the lives of infants and pre-school children. This section of the *Profile* can be used to explore the early communication of children at a pre-verbal stage of development, through to a stage where the child is able to use simple and complex sentences to communicate needs and intentions and to hold simple conversations.

The school-age version extends the range to cover the child from the age of four years up to approximately the age of ten.

     Pre-school version: 0-4 years
     School-age version: 5-10 years

These ages are cited as guidelines only as, in particular in the case of children with communication difficulties or developmental problems, the maximum age at which each of the pre-school and school-age interviews may be useful can be higher.

Deciding which version of the *Profile* to use

This will not usually be a problem where a child is in the appropriate age group and at an appropriate developmental level. Where an older child is communicating mainly non-verbally, it may be desirable to use or adapt some of the questions from the pre-school version rather than those in the school-age version of the *Profile,* though some of the school-age questions may still be relevant.

Administering the *Profile*

Before the interviewer begins to use the *Profile,* he or she should print the complete *Profile* provided at the end of this manual. Brief instructions for use with the *Profile* are also provided so that they can be referred to when conducting the interview. Space has been provided on the *Profile* for the interviewer to write down the interviewee's answer to each question. The *Profile* is designed to be conducted as an informal interview and should therefore be carried out in a relaxed atmosphere in which interviewees feel they can talk freely. The interviewer should use the child's name throughout the interview, at each point where *(child's name)* appears in the *Profile*.

It is often possible to carry out the interview as part of an early information-gathering process, but it can be conducted at any stage. The *Profile* can be administered again at intervals to evaluate progress.

There is an element of flexibility in the use of the *Profile.* It need not be completed in one session but can be administered over a number of occasions. Not all questions will be relevant to every child and the user should feel free to omit those judged to be inappropriate. We have tried to make each question relevant to a range of age groups and, as far as possible, to avoid cultural bias. We also wanted to word questions and examples so that they could relate to the lives and experience of all children including those with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments. Nevertheless, the user may sometimes wish to modify the wording of a question to make it relevant to a particular person or situation – and should feel free to do so.

Use of examples

Respondents should be encouraged to describe in their own words the child's typical communicative behaviours. Interviewers should only use the list of examples which accompanies each question if the interviewee has difficulty thinking of a response to the question. These lists of examples are provided to help the interviewer put appropriate suggestions to the interviewee. The examples are *not* to be used as a checklist but *only* as *prompts* when the person being interviewed fails to think spontaneously of an answer to the question.

For some purposes it may be preferable *not to use examples at all.* For example, this should be considered when using the *Profile* for collecting data for research. By excluding the use of prompts, the input in the form of the interview questions can be given to each participant in exactly the same way so that their responses may be collated or compared.

When the interviewees have described the child's typical behaviour for each question, they can be asked to give an instance of a recent occasion on which the child responded in that way. Although it is time-consuming to do this for each question, it can be particularly useful for checking the validity of what the interviewee is saying, especially if the answer seems unexpected (if, for example, it does not match with what has already been said or with what the interviewer already knows about the child). It is in any case important to check for validity by evaluating the child directly. The more the interview focuses on real incidents from the child's experience, the more concrete will be the picture that emerges.

The focus of the interview is on the child's current communicative behaviour. However, the interviewee will sometimes want to refer to the child's communication in the past. This information can help in understanding the child's developmental progress. Sometimes, too, the *Profile's* focus on the family's everyday life may mean that parents may want to discuss other matters related to their child and family and it is left to the discretion of the interviewer as to whether it is appropriate to pursue them – either at this stage or once the *Profile* interview is complete.

A great deal of care has gone into the wording of each question, and the list of examples, to try to ensure that the meaning is simple and clear and that the questions direct the interviewees to the area specified.

We are aware that some users give the *Profile* to parents or teachers to fill in in their own time. It is important that anyone using the *Profile* in this way makes it clear that the main focus is on interviewees' *spontaneous* answers to the questions and emphasises that the examples are not intended to be used in checklist fashion. There is a danger that unusual or atypical behaviours on the part of the child would be missed if the *Profile* was being used in this way as not all possibilities are listed. If people are filling in the *Profile* independently, it is essential that the content of their responses is subsequently discussed in detail so that the information is shared fully.

Recording responses

The interviewer should write down responses on the sheets. Space has been provided for the interviewer to write down the interviewee's answer to each question. If the response corresponds to one of the examples listed, the relevant answer may be ticked; however, it is preferable to have a record of responses in the interviewee's own words. It can be noted that an example has been used by putting an E for 'example' or a P for 'prompt' next to the response.

Some users have found it helpful to use the original form when a child is re-evaluated and to note the responses in a different coloured ink from that used originally so that comparisons can readily be made.

Summarising the *Profile* responses

The Summary Sheet which appears at the beginning of the *Profile* section can be used to help encapsulate the main findings of each section and to identify priorities for intervention, where this is the goal of the interview. The Summary Sheet provides space for each section of the *Profile* to be summarised. The interviewer can use the summary spaces for Sections A, B and C to record a brief synopsis of the child's communication in each. The summary section for Section D can be used to record briefly the way the child's communication varies as a function of communicative context. Any general points that arise can be recorded in the summaries. For example, if a child is expressing a small range of communicative intentions, all at a pre-verbal level (by means of gesture and accompanying vocalisation) this point can be recorded in the summary for Section A. Any special points of relevance to the planning of intervention can also be recorded. For example, the fact may be noted that a child seldom interacts with other children of the same age, or that a sibling often acts as an interpreter for the child. In addition, the situations in which the child is *most* communicative may be identified using the information in Section D and recorded on the Summary Sheet.

Note can be made of the way interviewees deal with the questions and the degree to which they seem to monitor the child's communication and have insight into any problems the child may have. This information is of importance in the planning of intervention strategies.

It will be important to consider areas where the child is showing strengths as well as those where he or she is experiencing difficulty. Having considered the child's communicative needs in as broad a way as possible and in relation to his or her daily life, decisions will be made concerning the focus for the intervention and whether to work on strengths or deficits.

Using the *Profile* with particular client groups

As mentioned above, the questions in the *Profile* were deliberately worded in such a way that they would be, as far as possible, applicable to any child, whether or not that child had difficulties and whether or not any difficulties were mild or severe. Here, we comment on the specific application of the *Profile* to some special groups of children.

It should be noted that practitioners may adapt questions in the *Profile* to suit the circumstances of a particular group of children. Question 1b, for example, refers to a child 'seeing' something interesting: this wording can be adapted to be appropriate to a blind child. We have tried not to bias the questions and examples too much towards *verbal* communication so that the *Profile* can be relevant to pre-verbal and non-verbal children and to those using other means of communication, including sign language and augmentative communication. When interviewing parents or carers of children who are predominantly non-verbal, questions that mention 'talking' or 'conversation' can be reworded to refer to 'interaction'.

Children with severe learning disabilities

It is often extremely difficult to investigate and assess communication in children with severe and profound learning disabilities. The child may be using only minimal cues to indicate that he or she is communicating (Coupe and Goldbart, 1988). Parents, with their intimate knowledge of the child, can provide important insights into the nature of the child's communicative signals. Use of the *Profile* allows this knowledge to be shared in a structured way.

It is important to interpret the range of communicative behaviours that the child is reported to display in relation to knowledge of the opportunities the child has to communicate in particular ways. For example, a change of topic may be difficult for children using a communication board with which to signal, unless they have the means available on the board.

With this group it may not be appropriate to follow the suggested age range, and questions from the pre-school version of the *Profile* may be most applicable. However, specific wording should be adapted to make the questions more age-appropriate. Questions from the school-age version should also be considered, since children with even very limited means of communication may be found to attempt more advanced functions, even though they may be expressed in very rudimentary ways (for example, narrative).

The *Profile* should be used in conjunction with other assessments specifically designed for this client group, for example the *Pre-Verbal Communication Schedule* (Kiernan and Reid, 1987).

Children with hearing impairment

Children with hearing impairment form a group for which the *Profile* has been found to be valuable. Green and Rees (1992) comment,

'The *Profile* has been particularly useful with parents of young, newly diagnosed deaf children and of those with additional handicaps as it enables them to recognise very subtle ways their children are using to communicate across a range of situations and takes the focus off skills the children do not have.'

For young children, the extent to which spontaneous gestures are developing can be explored with parents.

The means and extent of communication may be very different at school and in the home setting. Where the child is learning sign language it can be useful to find out the extent to which it is being used in situations outside the classroom and with the family at home. 'Teachers' and 'carers' responses have been compared to provide a broader picture of the child's communication skills: differences in their responses have highlighted areas to investigate further.' (Green and Rees, 1992).

Where children are adapting to using hearing aids, changes that are occurring in the child's communicative interactions can be monitored. Children with middle-ear hearing problems often have great difficulties in listening in noisy environments such as classrooms and reports of their responses in this kind of setting can be compared with their responses in an ideal listening environment.

Children with pragmatic impairments

While many children with a range of types of disability have speech, language and communication problems that impact on pragmatics, some have communication problems that seem to be largely focused on pragmatic aspects of language development. There is controversy in the literature as to whether there are children who have a specific impairment in pragmatics as distinct from autism or whether such children's difficulties form part of the autistic spectrum (Bishop, 1989; Brook and Bowler, 1992).

Although the *Profile* focuses on pragmatics, it was by no means designed exclusively for these groups. However, it has been found to be particularly relevant in work with children with autism and related difficulties where pragmatic problems are a major feature.

Parents and carers can convey in their responses some of the unusual and sometimes bizarre communication behaviours these children may show and the problems in everyday living that can be created for families. Parents do not always have the opportunity to provide this information in other assessments and this can be a source of frustration to them. They appreciate the chance to share their experiences and knowledge of the child and that these are listened to and valued.

Bilingual children

It is often difficult to gain a picture of a child's language and communication when the language of the child's home is different from that of the clinic or classroom. The *Profile* is a particularly useful tool in this situation. The questions in the *Profile* have universal relevance and are not dependent on any one specific language. Where the child is exposed to two or more languages, it is important to explore differential usage of each language. A child who may appear to be very silent and uncommunicative in the school context may be talkative with his or her family, using the language of the home. Not having access to information on the home setting often presents problems in deciding whether the child has a specific difficulty with acquiring language or is mainly experiencing difficulties in relating to the new language of the school. The *Profile* can be used with a child's classroom teacher and with the family to explore how the child is communicating in different contexts.

If the parent or carer does not speak English, the *Profile* is easy to use in translation, working through an interpreter or bilingual co-worker. The *Profile* does not require in-depth knowledge of the structure of the other language, nor does it use technical terms which make it difficult for interpreters to understand what is being asked. It focuses on everyday communication using everyday contexts.

In developing the questions for the *Profile*, we tried to ensure that the questions and examples would not be biased towards the activities or experiences of any one culture. If it emerges that a particular question or example is inappropriate for one cultural group the user should adapt the wording of the question or the prompt to make it appropriate.

Through use of the *Profile* in a multicultural setting the interviewer may become more aware of subtle differences in the expectations of particular groups concerning children's use of language, the ways in which they are expected to interact with adults and the ways in which they are discouraged from interacting. Some cultures, for example, may be less tolerant of initiations by children, or may place more emphasis on sibling interactions.

When a child has access to two or more languages, it can be important to have information about which language is used in which situation and for what communicative purpose. It may be that one type of communicative function is typically expressed in one language but not in another. For example, the child would not ask for clarification in his or her second language.

In working with families whose children are learning more than one language, it is crucial to explore the family's attitude towards each language and their expectations about its use in particular settings. This exploration touches on sensitive issues concerning the family's cultural identity and power within the community. Such issues may be difficult to deal with because the family may feel that they are expected to talk to the child in the language of the school or wider community, rather than in the language of the home. Although these matters are not addressed directly in the *Profile*, its use can help to establish a relationship with the family in which parents feel that their views and their contribution are valued. A family may be most likely to give a full picture of the child's everyday communication if they can be interviewed in their home language. It should be noted that the questions in the *Profile* are relatively easy to translate, in that they are free of technical terms and do not require detailed knowledge of the structure of any one language or of linguistics. If an 'advocate' or 'co-worker' service is available, such colleagues, who speak a family's own language, can readily be trained in the interview technique used in the *Profile*. Preliminary work adopting this approach appears promising (Madhani and Aubin, 1994).

In working with a family from a different culture it is also important to consider *who* is to be interviewed. The family may consider it more appropriate that the head of the family should be chosen, rather than the person most involved with the child on a daily basis.

It is useful also to interview the teacher about a bilingual child's communication in the classroom setting where only one language is required, as the child may appear very different in this environment. For example, at school the child may appear to be non-fluent, unresponsive or to have word-finding difficulties, while this behaviour is not shown at all in the home setting when the child is using the home language. This is a good illustration of the usefulness of being able to put the same questions from the *Profile* to both teachers and parents.

CHAPTER 6

Implications for Intervention

A major aim of the *Profile* is to provide information and insights that will be useful in planning and carrying out intervention with the child and his or her family, teachers or other carers. The goal of such intervention is to promote the child's communicative abilities so that he or she is able to participate more fully in the social world. The use of the *Profile* encourages cooperation and understanding between the professional and significant people in the child's life. This cooperation and understanding can contribute significantly to work on the child's communicative development.

The user of the *Profile* gains an understanding of everyday life for the child and the family outside the clinical situation. Knowledge is gained about *how* the child communicates and *with whom*, and the opportunities that are available for communicating. Aspects of the cultural background and lifestyle often emerge. This information can be valuable in suggesting how the child's communication skills may be developed, whilst avoiding suggestions that are unrealistic or would conflict with the family's cultural values.

The role of the *Profile* in enhancing awareness

The process of answering the *Profile* questions can in itself enhance awareness of the child's communication and encourage respondents to observe and monitor how the child communicates and how this may change over time. Sometimes a family's main concern is that their child should begin to talk; the child's pre-linguistic attempts at communication may therefore be undervalued. Describing the child's communications via gesture, vocalisations and other means can help the family to see the relevance of these behaviours and the value of encouraging them. In our experience, awareness developed in the process of answering the questions in the *Profile* helps interviewees to become more sensitive to the child's communicative initiations and responses. This awareness may lead to carers spontaneously suggesting ideas for ways in which their own interaction with the child may be modified to facilitate communication.

A number of teachers who were interviewed during the piloting of the section of the *Profile* for school-age children reported that they had had their attention drawn to aspects of children's interactions in the classroom that they might not otherwise have considered relevant. This helped them to think of ways in which the children's communicative development could be supported in the classroom context.

Obtaining further information

Many users of the *Profile* will wish to extend their investigation of a child's language to the use of other methods and approaches to the study of pragmatics. Insights gained from the *Profile* may, for example, suggest that observation of the child in specific naturalistic situations would be of value (Lund and Duchan, 1983). Such observational data helps to validate the information gained from the interview with respect to a particular child. The child's responses may alternatively be observed in carefully contrived communicative situations (Creaghead, 1984; Dale, 1980). Conversational or discourse analysis may be undertaken (Damico, 1985; McTear, 1985a and 1985b). If samples of child talk are to be recorded, information from section D of the *Profile* may be helpful in making decisions about where and when the sampling should take place to be most productive or most typical of the child's output. The strengths and weaknesses of a range of approaches to assessment of pragmatics are discussed by McTear and Conti-Ramsden (1992). Gallagher (1991) describes assessment procedures for school-age children.

Using information gained from the *Profile*

When the interview has been carried out and the Summary Sheet completed, there are a number of ways in which information gained from the *Profile* can contribute to planning intervention. Information can be obtained that is relevant to identifying both strengths and needs and to planning interventions. Intervention might aim to expand the *range* of functions and responses being expressed, for example, or it might build upon those functions already expressed in order to extend the *form* in which they are expressed.

The *Profile* can also be useful for very specific target setting. For example, information from the *Profile* could be used to decide that requesting clarification from his or his teacher would be an appropriate target for a particular child.

The *Profile* can provide an informal means of monitoring progress. The interview can be carried out at intervals to evaluate the extent to which the child's communication has changed and to review goals for intervention. Conducting the interview while intervention is in progress can help gain an impression of the extent to which the behaviours being targeted in intervention are being generalised to other situations that the child encounters in daily life.

Approaches to intervention

Our emphasis is on using everyday situations and opportunities that may arise in the process of daily life to improve communication skills and the range and quality of communicative intentions. Much of the work with younger children will be done by the carer or parent at home rather than in the clinical situation; activities can (and should) include other family members. The intervention will be an interactive process between the professional and the family, the basis for this cooperation being established in the initial use of the *Profile*. Work with older children ideally also involves the family, but it is important that the uses of language that are inherent to

the classroom setting are addressed. It is essential here that activities are carried out within the classroom, and planned jointly with the classroom teacher. Simple strategies can be developed and included in ordinary classroom activities.

The parent, carer or teacher can be encouraged to create situations where modifications to communicative interactions can be made. Aspects of the *Profile* can be discussed and ways in which situations could be set up to promote communication can be planned in collaboration. It may be necessary for the professional to model such situations to show what is being aimed at and how to go about it. For example, if a child expresses 'Request for Object' (Section A) by reaching and pointing, without using words to express the intention, there are a number of suggestions that could be made. In the first place, carers can encourage the child to come with them to get the object, so that child is active in getting his or her needs met. Also, carers can express the communicative intention for the child as they are getting the object, for example, 'You want a biscuit'. The carer can then provide a number of examples of the use of a particular lexical item which would help the child express his or her needs. For example, 'Where's the biscuit?', 'Here's the biscuit!' It should be emphasised to the carer that building blocks are being provided towards the time when the child may spontaneously use words to request things.

Encouraging responses to communication may involve increasing the carer's awareness of small ways in which a child may be responding. For example, a child with cerebral palsy may only be able to make a slight movement or eye blink as a deliberate response. Encouraging these responses to communication may require considerable work by parent and therapist. (See Coupe and Goldbart, 1988).

Working in the nursery setting, specific situations can be used to promote the use of different types of communicative interaction. For example, breaks and mealtimes can be used to encourage the child to ask for a 'Drink' or 'More' as appropriate. Conversation can be promoted between adults and children, and between children. At first this may involve simply acknowledging that there are others at the table; at a later stage it may involve responding to communications addressed to the child by an adult and, later still, by other children. Initially the adult may have to create the space and opportunity for the child to respond so that he or she can take a turn, especially if some of the other children are very quick off the mark.

Working with older children in the classroom, the teacher may be able to use other children to support the activities. For example, if a child does not request clarification when he or she has not understood an instruction, the teacher can encourage other children to make it clear that they have not understood and then offer an opportunity for the child in question to do the same. This intervention strategy can be extended by the use of role play and explicit classroom discussion of the process of communication, for example, turn-taking, listening to one another, and negotiating when there is a disagreement.

Consideration should also be given to expanding the child's *opportunities* for communication in different situations and with different partners.

Adults who are interacting with the child should be encouraged to set simple goals and to try not to do too many things at once. They can be made aware of strategies such as commenting on the child's activity rather than asking questions. It may be useful for the family to set aside regular time for interaction or talking when the child has a parent's undivided attention and can take the lead in the conversation or interaction. The adult thus follows the child's interest, and responds to his or her initiations. The best time for this may become clear through responses to Section D of the *Profile*.

Everyday events can play a major role in helping children build communication skills (Duchan, 1991). One approach is that developed by Snyder-McLean and her colleagues (Snyder-McLean *et al*., 1984) for children with severe learning disabilities. The children are given the opportunity to participate several times a day in 'joint action routines' built around everyday communicative events. Other methods for more able children can involve the use of miniature objects in pretend play to enact events which can be repeated and elaborated. A further stage can involve role play, often as social skills work in groups of peers (Gallagher, 1991). For example, groups might explore getting someone to listen, thanking someone, asking for help, expressing emotion, saying 'no' and trying out things to do when conversation goes wrong.

When the child or young person becomes able to describe and discuss typical behaviours that occur in social situations, a stage of 'metapragmatic' awareness has been reached which may be used to encourage monitoring of communicative behaviour and possibly modification through such means as 'self-instructional training' (Meichenbaum and Asarnow, 1979).

A final word on intervention

In using the *Profile*, and in planning intervention, many more ideas will be generated by families, teachers and by others working with the child. The use of real-life situations and everyday interactions is the basis for this approach to promoting the child's communication. The idea is not to remove the child from everyday interactions for therapeutic input but to support those around the child to communicate in such a way that the child's daily interactions become more effective and satisfying to all those involved.

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THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Children

Brief Instructions

Record Sheet

Summary Sheet

Brief Instructions

NB: Users should be familiar with full details of how the Profile is used, which are presented in Chapter 5.

The *Pragmatics Profile* is an informal interview carried out to explore a child's communication in everyday interactions at home or at school. It asks questions about how the child usually reacts in each of a series of situations. The person responding describes in *his or her* own words the way the child typically behaves and this description is recorded on the interview schedule immediately under the question.

Depending on the child's level of development, users can choose either the pre-school or the school-age version. Sometimes they may decide to use one version but include some questions from the other.

The questions in the *Profile* have been devised to be relevant to a very wide range of children from those without *any* difficulties to children with *severe problems* in communicating. Users may wish to omit or modify the wording of some questions if they consider that they are not appropriate to a particular child. In particular, if a child does not use spoken language, mention in some questions of 'talking' can be changed to 'communicating' and 'interaction' can be substituted for 'conversation'.

If difficulty is encountered in thinking of a response, a set of examples of possible behaviours are provided as prompts. These are *not* intended to be used as a checklist and the focus is always on a person's own descriptions of the child's behaviour. Some users may prefer not to use prompts at all. It should be noted that the examples are not always listed in developmental order, particularly in the school-age version, where the focus is on the individual styles of communicative interaction as well as on development.

The use of the *Pragmatics Profile* can be backed up with other methods of obtaining information about a child's communication. The important feature of the *Profile's* approach is the value it places on the knowledge and insights of parents, teachers and others who know the child well and on their role in helping make the child's everyday interactions as effective as possible.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Children

Record Sheet

Child

Family name:…………………………………………………………………….

First name(s):…………………………………………………………………….

Sex:………………………………………   Date of birth:……………………….

Age on date of interview:………………………………………………………….

School:……………………………………………………………………………..

Home address:…………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………   Tel:……………………………………….

Person Interviewed

Family name:…………………………………………………………………….

First name(s):…………………………………………………………………….

Relationship to child:……………………………………………………………

Address, if different to child's address:………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………   Tel:…………………………………………..

Interviewer:……………………………………..

Date:…………………………………….

Throughout the interview, use the child's name everytime you see the words
(*child's name*): this will help the interviewee to feel at ease.
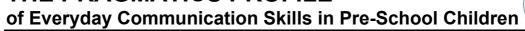
THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Children

Summary Sheet   *Child's name*…………………………

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS
Range of functions expressed

Forms in which intentions are expressed
For example: pre-intentional; gesture; vocalization; words; phrases; sentences.

_____

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION
Type of input typically responded to
For example: touch; gesture; sign; words in context; questions; direct requests; indirect requests; idiom; jokes and puns.

Nature of child's response
For example: no reaction; face and body movements; gestures; jargon; verbal comments; questions.

_____

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION
Child's contribution to initiating and maintaining interaction

Interactional style
For example: attends; takes lead; appears withdrawn; responds with interest; prefers one-to-one; takes listeners; needs into account.

_____

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION
How communication varies with time, topic, situation and partner

Interview Schedule

Pre-School Children

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

An Outline of the Structure

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

Child's name…………………………………………………………

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

1. Attention Directing

a) To Self
How does (*child's name*) usually get your attention?

Examples: By crying. By tugging at you. By vocalising. By calling (for example, 'Mummy'). By saying something like 'Watch me'.

b) To Events, Objects, Other People

If you and (*child's name*) were going along the street or walking in a park and (*he/she*) saw something interesting, what would (*child's name*) be likely to do?

Examples: Point. Point and vocalize. Point and turn to look at you. Say a word, for example, 'look', 'plane'. Begin to talk about it.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

Child's name…………………………………………………

2. Requesting

a) Request for Object
If you were in the kitchen and (*child's name*) saw something (*he/she*) wanted to eat that was out of reach, how would (*he/she*) let you know?

Examples: By crying.
            By reaching out and pointing to it.
            By pointing and making pleading noises.
            By pulling you over to it or pushing your hand towards it.
            By looking or pointing at it and saying its name.
            By pointing and saying something like 'I want that'.

b) Request for Action
How does (*child's name*) let you know if (*he/she*) wants to be picked up?

Examples: Looks up at you.
            Puts arms up to you.
            Says 'up', 'carry'.
            Says 'I'm tired', 'My legs ache'

c) Request for Assistance
If (*child's name*) needs your help, for example, if (*he/she*) was on a toy on wheels and got stuck, or needed straps undone to get out of the buggy, what is (*he/she*) likely to do?

Examples: Cry.
            Make pleading noises that aren't words.
            Call for you.
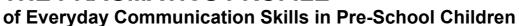   Say something like 'stuck' or 'can't do it'.

Child's name………………………………………………………

d) Request for Recurrence
If you were bouncing (*child's name*) up and down on your lap and (*he/she*) wanted you to do it again, how would (*he/she*) let you know?

Examples: By smiling at you. By making little bouncing movements. By making pleading noises. By saying 'more' or 'again'.

e) Request for Information
If (*child's name*) notices something new at home, how does (*he/she*) ask about it?

Examples: By staring at it. By pointing at it and looking up at you. By saying 'Dat?' or 'Whozat?'. By asking other questions about it (such as 'What's that for?'). When you reply, continuing to ask 'Why?', 'Why?'.

3. Rejecting

If (*child's name*) is at the table and you are giving (*him/her*) some food that (*he/she*) doesn't want, what is (*he/she*) likely to do?

Examples: Cry. Turn face away. Push food away. Say 'no'. Say something like 'no like' or 'don't want it'. Ask for something else.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

Child's name……………………………………………………

4. Greeting

a) Greeting on Arrival
If a familiar person comes to your home, how does (*child's name*) usually react?

Examples: Takes no notice. Looks at person's face. Smiles and makes a sound in greeting. Holds up arms in greeting. Says person's name. Says a greeting word like 'Hi!' or 'Hello!'.

b) Greeting on Departure
What does (*child's name*) do when someone is going away?

Examples: Shows no reaction. Waves in imitation. Waves spontaneously. Says 'bye-bye' or 'bye-bye (plus name)'.

5. Self-Expression and Self-Assertion

a) Expression of Emotion

Pleasure

If (*child's name*) is enjoying something, how does (*he/she*) show it?
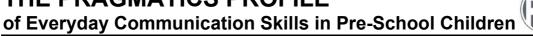
Examples: By smiling. By laughing. By clapping hands. By asking you to do it again. By saying something like 'I like it', 'It's fun'.

Child's name…………………………………………………………

Upset

If (*child's name*) is hurt or upset by something, how does (*he/she*) let you know?

Examples: By crying.
　　　　　　By coming for a cuddle/'kiss it better'.
　　　　　　By telling you where it hurts or what is the matter.

b) Asserting Independence
If you are trying to help (*child's name*) do something like get dressed and (*he/she*) wants to do it without help, how does (*he/she*) let you know?

Examples: By wriggling and screaming.
　　　　　　By trying to do it.
　　　　　　By saying 'me' or 'me do it'.
　　　　　　By saying 'I want to do it myself'.

6. Naming

When (*child's name*) identifies something (*he/she*) recognizes, how does (*he/she*) give it a name?

Examples: By vocalizing.
　　　　　　By making a gesture.
　　　　　　By making a related sound ('miaow' for cat, 'vroom' for car).
　　　　　　By using his/her own word.
　　　　　　By saying its name.
　　　　　　By saying a sentence (for example, 'That's a ….').

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

Child's name……………………………………………………

7. Commenting

a) Comment on Object
If you are putting things away and (*child's name*) sees something (*he/she*) is interested in, what type of comment might (*he/she*) make?

Examples: Point at it. Name it. Say who it belongs to, for example, 'mine'. Say something about it (for example, 'broken', 'dirty', 'That's a little one isn't it?').

b) Comment on Disappearance
If (*child's name*) notices that something has gone from where (*he/she*) would usually expect it to be, what sort of comment would (*he/she*) make?

Examples: Point to the place. Say name of object. Say 'gone'. Says something like 'Car gone', 'Where's teddy gone?'.

8. Giving Information

If something happened while you weren't around (for example, something got broken, someone got hurt), how would (*child's name*) let you know about it?

Examples: By going to you and crying. By pointing, for example, at a bruise or a broken toy. By saying 'broke' or a person's name. By telling you but you have to probe to understand. By telling you clearly.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

Child's name…………………………………………………………

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

9. Gaining Child's Attention

If you want to get (*child's name*) attention, how do you do it?

Examples: By moving close to his/her face. By touching him/her. By saying his/her name.

10. Interest in Interaction

If you are sitting close to (*child's name*) and talking to (*him/her*) how does (*he/she*) generally respond?

Examples: Shows little interest. Looks interested and makes eye contact. Moves his/her body and face. Joins in the 'conversation' using sounds or words.

11. Understanding of Gesture

If you point to something you want (*child's name*) to look at, what does (*he/she*) usually do?

Examples: Does not respond. Looks at you, not where you are pointing. Looks, if it is close by. Looks even if it is quite far away.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

Child's name…………………………………………………………

12. Acknowledgement of Previous Utterance

When you are speaking to (*child's name*), how do you know that (*he/she*) realizes that you are speaking to (*him/her*)?

Examples: Looks at your face. Smiles and looks. Looks and makes sounds. Answers you by talking.

13. Understanding of Speaker's Intentions

a) Response to Request for Action
If you give (*child's name*) an instruction, such as 'Go and get your shoes', then how does (*he/she*) respond?

Examples: Shows no reaction. Looks at you but doesn't seem to know what to do. Goes off purposefully but doesn't return. Does it at part of a regular routine. Carries out your request.

b) Response to Request for Information
If you ask (*child's name*) for information, for example, 'What have you been doing?', how is (*he/she*) likely to respond?

Examples: Shows no reaction. Points or gestures. Shows you something. Tells you with single words for example, 'Park'. Says 'Did painting', 'Don't know'.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in Pre-School Children

Child's name…………………………………………………………

14. Anticipation

How does (*child's name*) react to something like 'Round and round the garden' or a favourite action-rhyme?

Examples: Makes no response.
Looks interested.
Giggles in anticipation of tickling.
Fills in missing words.
Joins in and says part of it with you.
Notices if you change the words.

15. Responding with Amusement

What kind of things make (*child's name*) laugh?

Examples: Tickling.
Peek-a-boo games.
Hide and seek, swinging in the air, or chasing.
Funny rhymes.
Jokes.
'Rude' words.

16. Response to 'No' and Negotiation

a) If you have to say 'no' to (*child's name*) how does (*he/she*) usually respond?

Examples: Accepts it.
Has a tantrum.
Keeps on asking.
Makes an alternative proposal, for example, 'Just one!', 'Tomorrow then?'.

Child's name…………………………………………………

b) If you say 'in a minute' how does (*child's name*) respond?

> Examples: Doesn't understand and keeps asking.
> Gets cross about it.
> Waits, and asks again after an interval.

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

Now we are going to talk about the way you and (*child's name*) communicate to one another.

17.   Participating in Interaction

When you and (*child's name*) are playing or interacting together, how does (*he/she*) take part?

> Examples: By looking interested.
> By smiling and laughing.
> By vocalising or babbling.
> By pointing, showing, reaching gestures.
> By using words and simple phrases.
> By conversational talk.

18. Initiating Interaction

If (*child's name*) ever starts up a conversation or a little game with you, how does (*he/she*) do it?

> Examples: By catching your eye.
> By making little sounds.
> By coming close to you and looking into your face.
> By giving or showing you something.
> By talking to you (for example, asking you to join in, saying 'Guess what').

Child's name…………………………………………………………

19.   Maintaining an Interaction or Conversation

When a conversation or game gets started, how does it keep going?

Examples: He/she quickly loses interest.
You have to direct it.
He/she takes the lead.
He/she wants to go on and on.

20. Conversational Breakdown

When a conversation between you and (*child's name*) gets into difficulties, what is the usual reason for it?

Examples: Difficulties in understanding his/her speech or signals.
Following what he/she wants you to do.
He/she has difficulty understanding you.
He/she doesn't concentrate for long.
He/she doesn't explain who or what is being referred to.

21. Conversational Repair

If (*child's name*) is trying to tell you something and you haven't understood, what does (*he/she*) do about it?

Examples: Seems upset and gives up.
Gets very cross or has a temper tantrum.
Keeps repeating it to try to get you to understand.
Changes the way he/she said it to try and clarify it.
Tries to find another way to tell you.

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Child's name……………………………………………………

22.   Request for Clarification

If (*child's name*) doesn't understand something that is said to (*him/her*), how does (*he/she*) show it?

Examples: Looks bewildered. Echoes what you just said. Asks for clarification (for example, 'Huh?', 'What?', 'What did you say?'). Says 'What do you mean?'.

23. Terminating an interaction

How does an interaction between you usually end?

Examples: He/she looks away. He/she walks off. He/she changes the subject. You bring it to an end.

24. Overhearing Conversation

How does (*child's name*) react to conversations that (*he/she*) overhears?

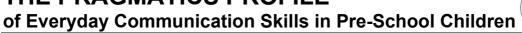| |
|---|
| Examples: Pays no attention.
Reacts to his/her own name.
Reacts to particular words (for example, 'ice cream' or 'bed').
Asks what is being said.
Tries to join in. |

Child's name……………………………………………………

25. Joining a Conversation

If (*child's name*) ever tries to join in a conversation that other people are having, how does (*he/she*) go about it?

Examples: By making a lot of noise.
By standing hovering on the edge.
By tugging at you or whispering in your ear.
By talking over other people.
By joining in when there is a pause.

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

26. Person

Are there people that (*child's name*) likes to be with or talk to more than others?

Examples: Parent.
Other members of the family.
Carer or teacher.
Family friend.
Other children.
Happily talks to anyone.

27. Situation

Are there situations in which (*child's name*) is more communicative?

Examples: At home.
At school/daycare.
On the telephone.
At a friends.
In a group.

Child's name…………………………………………………………

28. Time

At what times of day is (*child's name*) most likely to be communicative?

Examples: Bathtime. Mealtimes. Bedtime. Walking to school/nursery. On return from school/nursery.

29. Topic

a) What things does (*child's name*) like to talk about?

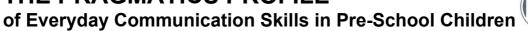| |
|---|
| Examples: Here and now activities.
Toys/games.
Family members/friends.
TV.
Sport or other interests.
Tends to stick to one topic. |

b) Are there times when (*child's name*) will ask questions about abstract ideas such as God, death, how the world began? What sort of things does he/she discuss?

Examples: God. Death. How the world began. Right and wrong. War.

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Child's name……………………………………………………………

30.   Books as a Context for Communication

How does (*child's name*) respond to books?

<div>

Examples: Likes to look at books with an adult.
Points to named objects.
Likes listening to stories.
Tells you bits of the story.
Doesn't show an interest in books.
Reads and talks about books quite a lot.

</div>

31. Use of Language in Play

When (*child's name*) is playing, what kind of talking goes on or what kind of sounds is (*he/she*) making?

<div>

Examples: Usually is silent.
Makes sounds that are like talking but are not real words.
Appropriate noises (car noises, animal noises).
Talks about what is going on.
Talks in a way appropriate for different characters.
Creates stories.
Talks to an imaginary playmate.

</div>

32. Peer Interaction

When (*child's name*) is with other children, how does (*he/she*) take part?

<div>

Examples: Plays alone.
Plays alongside others.
Watches from the sidelines.
Needs adult guidance and participation.
Suggests a game or activity.
Tries to dominate.
Joins in with enjoyment.
Clings to adult.

</div>

Child's name……………………………………………………

33.   Compliance with Social Conventions

To what extent does (*child's name*) show an awareness of needing to be polite and fitting in with social conventions to do with talking?

Examples: Sometimes says 'please' or 'thank you'.
Is polite to older people/visitors.
Doesn't swear at inappropriate times.
Comments on other people's rudeness.
Doesn't make personal comments in front of people.

Interview Schedule

School-Age Children

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in School-Age Children

An Outline of the Structure

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in School-Age Children

Child's name…………………………………………………………

A. COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS

1. Attention Directing

a) To Self
If you are busy doing something how does (*child's name*) usually get your attention?

Examples: Tries to make eye contact. Tugs at your clothing or taps you. Gestures or brings something to you. Says your name. Keeps repeating your name, for example, 'Mum, Mum, Mum'/'Sir, Sir, Sir'. Shouts across the room. Does something he/she has been told not to do, for example, starts a fight, knocks something over.

b) To Events, Objects, Other People

If (*child's name*) wants to point something out to you how does (*he/she*) do it?

Examples: Turns and looks towards it then turns back to you. Pulls at you and vocalizes. Points. Says 'look at that' and starts to talk/sign about it. Comments loudly.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in School-Age Children

Child's name…………………………………………………

2. Requesting

a) Request for Assistance
If (*child's name*) needs help with something (*he/she*) is doing, how does (*he/she*) usually let you know?

Examples: Beckons or points to what is required.
               Requests help but does not explain the problem.
               Requests help and explains what is needed.
               Gets angry and distressed without asking for help.
               Waits passively.

b) Request for Information
If (*child's name*) sees or hears something (*he/she*) doesn't know about, for example, something on TV or in a book, how does (*he/she*) ask about it?

Examples: Looks at you with a puzzled expression.
               Insistent on pointing and vocalizing.
               Says 'What's that?'.
               Asks a lot of questions about it.
               Doesn't ask.

3. Giving Information
For parents:
When (*child's name*) is telling you something about school, how does (*he/she*) go about it?
For teachers:
When (*child's name*) is telling you something about school, how does (*he/she*) go about it?

Examples: Shows you something, for example, a 'home/school' book; a cut or bruise.
               Answers direct questions with very short replies.
               Gives a clear account.
               Doesn't give enough information for you to be able to understand.
               Goes on and on about it for too long.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in School-Age Children

Child's name……………………………………………………

4. Giving Instructions

If (*child's name*) is trying to tell you how to play a game or how to make something, how does (*he/she*) usually go about it?

> Examples: Does it by demonstrating.
> Gives quite clear instructions.
> Gives muddled sequence/aims.

5. Narrative

If (*child's name*) is telling you about something that happened or telling a story, for example, the plot of a book, film or TV programme, how does (*he/she*) go about it?

> Examples: Tries to do it using gestures and single words.
> Tries to show what happened by acting it out.
> Does it by responding to questions.
> Gives a coherent version of the story.
> Doesn't identify events and characters sufficiently for you to understand.
> Sequence is jumbled.

6. Humour

If (*child's name*) ever makes jokes, what kinds of jokes are they?

> Examples: Doing something funny, for example, hiding and suddenly appearing.
> Making funny noises/faces.
> Riddles, puns, play on words, for example, 'Knock, knock' jokes.
> Practical jokes.
> Sophisticated jokes.
> Same joke repeatedly.
> Punchline is omitted or not understood.

Child's name…………………………………………………………

7. Expression of Emotion

a) Pleasure
If (*child's name*) is really pleased about something, how does (*he/she*) let people know?

Examples: Smiles or laughs. Hugs or claps. Say how he/she feels. Gets noisy and excited. Keeps it to him/herself.

b) Upset
If (*child's name*) is hurt or upset about something, how does (*he/she*) let you know?

Examples: Becomes withdrawn or irritable. Cries. Explains how he/she feels and why. Appears moody or sulky so you have to ask what is wrong. Hits out.

B. RESPONSE TO COMMUNICATION

8. Gaining Attention

If you want to get (*child's name*) attention, how do you do it?
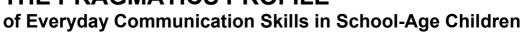
Examples: By touching him/her. Moving so he/she can see you. Gesturing. Saying his/her name. Raising your voice. Have to do something extreme.

Child's name……………………………………………………

9. Understanding Indirect Requests

If you say something that *implies* that you want (*child's name*) to do something, for example, 'Isn't it time you cleared up?', 'Would you like to wash your hands?', 'Can you help put things away?', how does (*he/she*) react?

> Examples: Doesn't respond.
> Understands what you have asked and responds appropriately.
> Takes you literally in a joking way.
> Takes you literally and replies 'yes' or 'no' but doesn't carry out the request.

10. Idiom

If you use an expression, such as 'keep your hair on' or 'wipe that smile off your face', does (*child's name*) ever have difficulty? How does (*he/she*) react?

> Examples: Ignores it.
> Looks bewildered.
> Says 'What do you mean?'.
> Tries to take it literally.
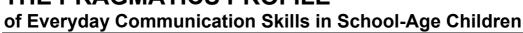> Asks what the expression means.

11. Sarcasm

How does (*child's name*) react if someone is being sarcastic?

> Examples: Ignores it.
> Seems confused.
> Understands the intended meaning.
> Takes it literally/contradicts them.

Child's name…………………………………………………………

12. Metalinguistic Awareness

Does (*child's name*) ever comment on the way people talk or why they use particular words or expressions? What kinds of things does (*he/she*) comment on?

Examples: Someone speaking a different language. Accent. Unknown words. Turns of phrase. Why something is called what it is.

13.   Responding with Amusement

What kind of things make (*child's name*) laugh?

Examples: Slapstick and visual jokes. Silly rhymes. Rude words. Puns and plays on words. Laughs for no apparent reason.

14. Negotiation

If another child is not going along with what (*child's name*) wants (*him/her*) to do, how does (*child's name*) react?

Examples: Mainly non-verbally: pushing, hitting. Gets involved in lengthy argument. Asks an adult to sort it out. Negotiates a compromise. Gives up.

Child's name……………………………………………………………

15. Request for Clarification

If you have asked (*child's name*) to carry out an activity and (*he/she*) hasn't understood exactly what is wanted, what is (*he/she*) likely to do?

Examples: Try to do the task but soon give up.
Try to get help from another child.
Ask for clarification and have another try.
Make no attempt to do it.

C. INTERACTION AND CONVERSATION

NB: If the child does not use spoken language, the questions in this section can be made appropriate by substituting 'interacting' or 'communicating' for 'talking' and 'interaction' for 'conversation'.

16. Interest in Interaction

a) How does (*child's name*) interact with other children in a group?

Examples: Tends to be left on the sidelines.
Talks to one other child.
Listens and responds to several children.
Takes no notice of the other children.

b) How does (*child's name*) relate to adults?

Examples: Interacts only with adults he/she knows well.
Talks with a range of adults.
Avoids talking to adults.
Is over familiar and overfriendly with people he/she doesn't know well.

Child's name…………………………………………………………

17.   Maintaining an Interaction or Conversation

When you are chatting with (*child's name*), how does the conversation flow?

Examples: Child plays a minimal part. Child takes on an equal share. Child monopolizes. Jumps from topic to topic. Conversations are short-lived. You find it hard to understand one another.

18. Presupposition and Shared Knowledge

When (*child's name*) is talking about something you don't know about, how clearly does (*he/she*) put you in the picture?

Examples: Explains everything clearly. Doesn't give enough information to help you understand. Assumes that you know more than you do, for example, mentions people out of the blue. Tells you more than you need to know. Fills in details you know already.

19. Conversational Repair

If you and (*child's name*) are talking together and you can't understand something (*he/she*) says, how does (*child's name*) usually react?

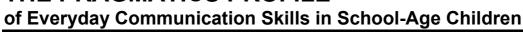| |
|---|
| Examples: Tries to show you in a different way, for example, gesture or demonstration.
Clarifies adequately.
Seems upset and gives up.
Keeps repeating it.
Makes out that it is your fault.
Clams up. |

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in School-Age Children

Child's name……………………………………………………………

20.   Joining a Conversation

If people are having a conversation, how does (*child's name*) try to join in?

Examples: Hovers nearby until included.
Will contribute to the discussion.
Will try to interrupt when someone else is speaking.
Tries to switch the topic to something that interests him/her.
Doesn't try to join in.

21. Terminating a Conversation

How does a conversation with (*child's name*) generally end?

Examples: Gets distracted and loses interest.
It stops abruptly.
It draws to a close naturally.
Doesn't seem to know how to end it.

D. CONTEXTUAL VARIATION

22. Person

Are there people that (*child's name*) likes to be with or talk to more than others?

Examples: Parent.
Other members of the family.
Carer or teacher.
Family friend.
Other children.
Happily talks to anyone.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in School-Age Children

Child's name…………………………………………………………

23.   Situation

Are there any situations in which (*child's name*) is more communicative?

Examples: At home.
            At school.
            On the telephone.
            At a friend's.
            In a group.

24.   Time

At what times of day is (*child's name*) most likely to be communicative?

Examples: Bathtime.
            Mealtimes.
            Bedtime.
            Walking to school.
            On return from school.

25. Topic

a) What things does (*child's name*) like to talk about?

Examples: Here and now activities.
            Toys/games.
            Family members/friends.
            TV.
            Sport or other interests.
            Tends to stick to one topic.

Child's name…………………………………………………………

b) Are there times when (*child's name*) will ask questions about abstract ideas such as God, death, how the world began? What sort of things does (*he/she*) discuss?

Examples: God. Death. How the world began. Right and wrong. War.

26. Books as a Context for Communication

How does (*child's name*) respond to books?

Examples: Likes to look at books with an adult. Likes listening to stories. Doesn't show an interest in books. Reads and talks about books quite a lot.

27. Use of language in Play

When (*child's name*) is playing, what kind of talking goes on?

Examples: Usually is silent. Talks about what is going on. Talks in way appropriate for different characters. Creates stories. Makes up rules and tries to organize other children.

THE PRAGMATICS PROFILE
of Everyday Communication Skills in School-Age Children

Child's name………………………………………………………

28.   Peer Interaction

When (*child's name*) is with other children, how does (*he/she*) take part?

Examples: Plays alone.
Plays alongside others.
Watches from the sidelines.
Needs adult guidance and participation.
Suggests a game or activity.
Tries to dominate.
Joins in with enjoyment.

29.   Compliance with Social Conventions

To what extent does (*child's name*) show an awareness of needing to be polite and fitting in with social conventions to do with talking?

Examples: Sometimes says 'please' or 'thank you'.
Is polite to older people/visitors.
Doesn't swear at inappropriate times.
Comments on other people's rudeness.
Doesn't make personal comments in front of people.