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Language Assessment in Early Childhood, Presented in Partnership with Pearson

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Language Assessment in Early Childhood

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Disclosures

- Dr. Scheller is an employee of Pearson (financial), publisher of the PLS-5 and CELF P: 2, both of which will be discussed in this presentation.

Agenda

- 12:00 – 12:20 PM: Review of Best Practice Procedures
(PLS-5 Alignment with Best Practice)
- 12:20 – 12:37 PM: Uses and score analysis: PLS-5
- 12:37 – 12:55 PM: Uses and score analysis: CELF
Preschool-2
- 12:55 – 1:00 PM: Questions

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to name at least one best practice procedure for evaluating a young child.
2. Participants will be able to describe at least one area where the PLS-5 aligns to best practice assessment for young children.
3. Participants will be able to describe at least one type of referral for which the PLS-5 can be used effectively to answer evaluation questions.
4. Participants will be able to describe at least one score on the CELF P:2 and how it can be used to answer a specific referral question.

Legal and Ethical Issues

- Federal Legislation affecting Preschool Assessment
 - IDEA
 - FERPA
- Ethical Issues
 - Test Validation
 - Informed Consent
 - Confidentiality

(ASHA, 2010; Demers & Fiorello, 1999; Wrightslaw, 2011)

Assessment Procedures with Preschoolers

- Understanding the characteristics of Preschoolers
 - Variability
 - Reaction to testing demands
 - Motivation
 - Refusal versus cooperation

Assessment Procedures with Preschoolers

- Preparing for testing
- Testing session

Assessment Procedures with Preschoolers

- Begin Testing
 - Interact with confidence
 - Begin testing when child is ready
 - Observe and record behavior
 - Be sensitive to the needs of the child
 - Give praise and reinforcement liberally, when indicated
 - Adjust speed of testing according to child's needs
 - Have a structure, but remain friendly
 - Based on child factors, determine length of testing session

(Romero, 1992)

Guiding Developmental Concepts

1. Human development is shaped by a dynamic and continuous interaction between biology and experience.
2. Culture Influences every aspect of human development and is reflected in child-rearing beliefs and practices designed to promote healthy adaptation.
3. The growth of self-regulation is a cornerstone of early childhood development that cuts across all domains of behavior.
4. Children are active participants in their own development, reflecting the intrinsic human drive to explore and master one's own environment.
5. Human relationships and their dynamic interactions are the building blocks of healthy development.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000)

Guiding Developmental Concepts

6. The broad range of individual differences among young children often makes it difficult to distinguish normal variations and maturational delays from transient disorders and persistent impairments.
7. The development of children unfolds along individual pathways whose trajectories are characterized by continuities and discontinuities, as well as by a series of significant transitions.
8. Human development is shaped by the ongoing interplay among sources of vulnerability and sources of resilience.
9. The timing of early experiences can matter, but more often than not the developing child remains vulnerable to risks and open to protective influences throughout the early years of life and into adulthood.
10. The course of development can be altered in early childhood by effective interventions that change the balance between risk and protection, thereby shifting the odds in favor of more adaptive outcomes.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000)

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Roles and Responsibilities of SLPs in Early Intervention

- www.asha.org/policy
- Four guiding principles
 1. Family-centered and culturally and linguistically responsive
 2. Developmentally supportive and promote participation in natural environments
 3. Comprehensive, coordinated, and team based
 4. Based on the highest quality evidence available

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1. Family-centered and culturally and linguistically responsive...

- Caregiver participation in testing
- Caregiver-selected and caregiver-identified social routines and vocabulary tested for very young children
- Extensive bias review and widespread testing with a diverse sample has resulted in
 - Familiar home vocabulary and contexts
 - Dialectal, regional, and cultural variations to identify responses that are accepted as correct
- Home Communication Questionnaire

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2. Developmentally supportive and promote participation in natural environments...

- Observation of naturally-occurring behaviors for younger children
- Credit given for spontaneous productions in and outside the assessment room
- Developmentally appropriate skills assessed

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Developmentally Sensitive Methods of Assessment

- PLS-5 allows multiple assessment methods for giving credit (Birth – 2:11)
 - Caregiver Report
 - Observation
 - Elicitation
- Allows for observation of naturally occurring behaviors and spontaneous language in unstructured format.

PLS-5 Profile

Directions: Draw a line across the profile at the child's chronological age. Circle the items failed.

Age	Auditory Comprehension													
	Attention		Gender	Play	Semantics						Language Structure		Nonverbal Language Skills	Emergent Literacy Skills
Attention to Environment	Attention to People	Vocabulary/ Connected Speech			Qualitative Concepts	Special Concepts	Quantitative Concepts	Time/ Sequence Concepts	Morphology	Syntax				
0:0-0:2	3	1, 2												
0:3-0:5	4, 5	6		7										
0:6-0:8	10	9		8										
0:9-0:11		12	11											
1:0-1:5		13		16, 17	14, 15									
1:6-1:11			19	18										
2:0-2:5			22		20, 21, 22, 23, 24									
2:6-2:11				26	25, 27, 28					27				
3:0-3:5				29	30, 31		32							
3:6-3:11								33		36		34, 35		
4:0-4:5						37	39				38			
4:6-4:11					40	42		41		40				
5:0-5:5					44			45					43	
5:6-5:11						48					46		47	
6:0-6:5								50	52			49	51	
6:6-6:11									54			56, 57, 58	53, 54, 55, 59	
7:0-7:11										65	62	60, 61, 64	63	

Note: Some item numbers are included in more than one category.

Age	Expressive Communication												
	Visual Development	Gender	Social Communication	Vocabulary	Conceptual Speech	Qualitative Concepts	Special Concepts	Time/Sequence Concepts	Morphology	Syntax	Nonverbal Language Skills	Emergent Literacy Skills	
0:0-0:2	1, 2, 3												
0:3-0:5		5		4									
0:6-0:8				6, 7									
0:9-0:11		10, 11		8, 9									
1:0-1:5		14, 15	16	12, 13	17								
1:6-1:11		18, 21		19, 22	20, 23								
2:0-2:5			24, 25	25	26								
2:6-2:11				28	27					29			
3:0-3:5					30, 31, 32								
3:6-3:11				36						34, 35	33		
4:0-4:5										39		37, 38	
4:6-4:11						42					40, 41		
5:0-5:5										43	45	44, 46	
5:6-5:11					47						49		48
6:0-6:5										52		50, 51	53, 54
6:6-6:11											57	55	56
7:0-7:11						66	58, 59, 60, 67	63, 64	61, 64	62, 65		58, 59, 60	

Item Criteria for PLS-5 is Developmentally Sensitive

- Birth – 11 months old
 - Items represent behaviors that are precursors to language
 - Caregiver involvement to maximize performance and caregiver reporting to ensure credit for skills.
- 1 – 2 years old
 - Use of manipulatives and play for more authentic assessment
 - Scoring of spontaneous interactions
- 3 – 4 years old
 - Engagement in interactive behaviors
 - Practice items level field for children w/o school or testing experience
- 5 – 7 years old
 - Integration of knowledge and language skills holistically
 - Evaluation of emergent literacy and academic skills

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3. Comprehensive, coordinated, and team-based...

- Provides a survey of language skills in the areas of
 - Social communication
 - Semantics
 - Morphology
 - Syntax
 - Articulation
- Useful for arena assessment; can be administered by professionals in child development teams

	Auditory Comprehension	Expressive Communication
Attention		
Attention to Environment	*	
Attention to People	*	
Play	*	
Gesture	*	*
Vocal Development		*
Social Communication		*
Semantics		
Vocabulary	*	*
Qualitative Concepts	*	*
Quantitative Concepts	*	*
Spatial Concepts	*	*
Time/Sequence Concepts	*	*
Language Structure		
Morphology	*	*
Syntax	*	*
Integrative Language Skills	*	*
Emergent Literacy Skills	*	*

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4. Based on the highest quality evidence available...

- Current review of research for item development
- Expert review
- Current normative data

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PLS- 5 Standardization Research

- For the PLS-5, over 1800 children were tested for standardization and related reliability and validity studies from December 2009 through August 2010.
- The standardization data were collected by 189 clinicians in 42 states in the United States.

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PLS-5 Clinical Study: Developmental Language Delay

Scales and Total	N	Mean Dev. Lang. Delay	Mean Nonclinical Matched Sample	Diff.	t	Standard Difference
Auditory Comprehension	23	74.0	96.4	22.4	5.45**	1.70
Expressive Communication	23	79.3	97.9	18.6	4.37**	1.35
Total Language	23	75.3	97.0	21.7	4.98**	1.57

****p<.01**

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PLS-5 Clinical Study: Receptive/Expressive Disorder

Scales and Total	N	Mean Rec./Exp. Disorder	Mean Nonclinical Matched Sample	Diff.	t	Standard Difference
Auditory Comprehension	66	74.8	101.0	26.2	11.52**	1.93
Expressive Communication	66	71.6	97.9	26.2	11.20**	1.91
Total Language	66	71.6	99.3	27.7	11.83**	2.03

****p<.01**

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Diagnostic Accuracy and Clinical Use

- **Sensitivity** — in classification of disorders, the cases in which a disorder is detected, when it is, in fact, present.*
- **Specificity** — in classification of disorders, the cases for which a diagnosis of disorder is rejected when rejection is warranted.*

* *Standards for Educational & Psychological Testing* (1999)



Sensitivity/Specificity/ Predictive Power

	AC	EC	Total
Cut Score SD and Predictive Power	Matched Sample 50%	Matched Sample 50%	Matched Sample 50%
-1 SD			
PPP	.83	.86	.81
NPP	.77	.85	.83
-1.5 SD			
PPP	.93	.94	.92
NPP	.66	.75	.74
-2 SD			
PPP	.96	.95	.94
NPP	.60	.63	.63
Note. PPP is Positive Predictive Power and NPP is Negative Predictive Power.			

PLS-5 Example:

-1.5 SD Cutoff (StS=78); Lang. Disorder ($\approx 10\%$ prevalence)

	Language Disorder (.92)	No Language Disorder (.74)	Total
Positive Test Results	920	1,600	2,520
Negative Test Results	80	7,400	7,480
Total	1,000	9,000	10,000

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**Speech-language assessment
is a complex process.**

**Assessing, describing, and interpreting
an individual's communication ability
requires the integration of a variety of
information gathered in the evaluation
process.**

(ASHA, 2004)

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PLS-5 can be used to. . .

- Ages birth to 7:11
- Determine presence of a language delay/disorder
 - Determine whether child has receptive or expressive language delay/disorder, or combination of both
- Determine eligibility for early intervention or speech/language services

PLS-5 can be used to. . .

- Identify both receptive and expressive language skills in the areas of:
 - Attention, gesture, play, vocal development, social communication, vocabulary, concepts, language structure, integrative language, and emergent literacy.
- Identify a child's language strengths and weaknesses to develop appropriate interventions.

Progress Monitoring

Track Progress

- Measure efficacy of S/L treatment and interventions
- Use GSV to track progress of child's skills on the same instrument
 - Can be given at each time child transitions to new developmental period

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Evaluating GSVs relative to Standard Scores Over Time

- Changes in SS: indicate how the child is performing relative to same-age peers
- Changes in GSV: show gains the child has made since the previous assessment(s)

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Qualifying a Child For Services

- You can qualify a child for services using standard scores and percentile ranks for each of these scores:
 - Auditory Comprehension
 - Expressive Communication
 - Total Language
- You should not use age equivalents to qualify a child for services.
 - Descriptive Statistic
 - Age equivalents do not provide information about “percent delay” or a child’s relative rank or standing within a group of age peers.
 - Age equivalents do not provide the information you need to determine if a child has a language disorder.

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Evaluating AC/EC Score Differences

- It is intuitive to think that a child’s comprehension skills should be higher than expressive skills.
- “The comprehension-production relationship is a dynamic one that changes with a child’s developmental level and with each aspect of language. For example, it’s different for syntax and phonology. In other words, the relationship between comprehension and production changes because of different rates of development and different linguistic demands.” (Owens, 2008)

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Receptive/Expressive Differences in the PLS-5 Sample

- In the PLS-5 Sample
 - No difference: 3.7%
 - Higher AC score: 47.2%
 - Higher EC score: 49.1%
 - Point difference of at least one: 48%
 - Point difference of at least five: 31%

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Prevalence: Does the difference in AC/EC scores occur frequently in the normative population?

1. Look up the prevalence of the score difference in Table D.2
2. Differences between scores that occur in less than 10% of the population should be considered significant

Table 2.3 Cumulative Prevalence of Auditory Comprehension (AC) and Expressive Communication (EC) Standard Scores in the Normative Sample

Normative Sample (N = 1,400)			
Standard Score Difference	(-) AC < EC	(+) AC > EC	Standard Score Difference
	%	%	
17	5.9	6.0	17
16	6.5	6.7	16
15	6.9	8.6	15
14	8.8	10.0	14
13	10.5	11.4	13
12	12.4	13.0	12
11	14.1	15.5	11
10	17.1	17.0	10
9	19.1	20.2	9
-	---	---	-

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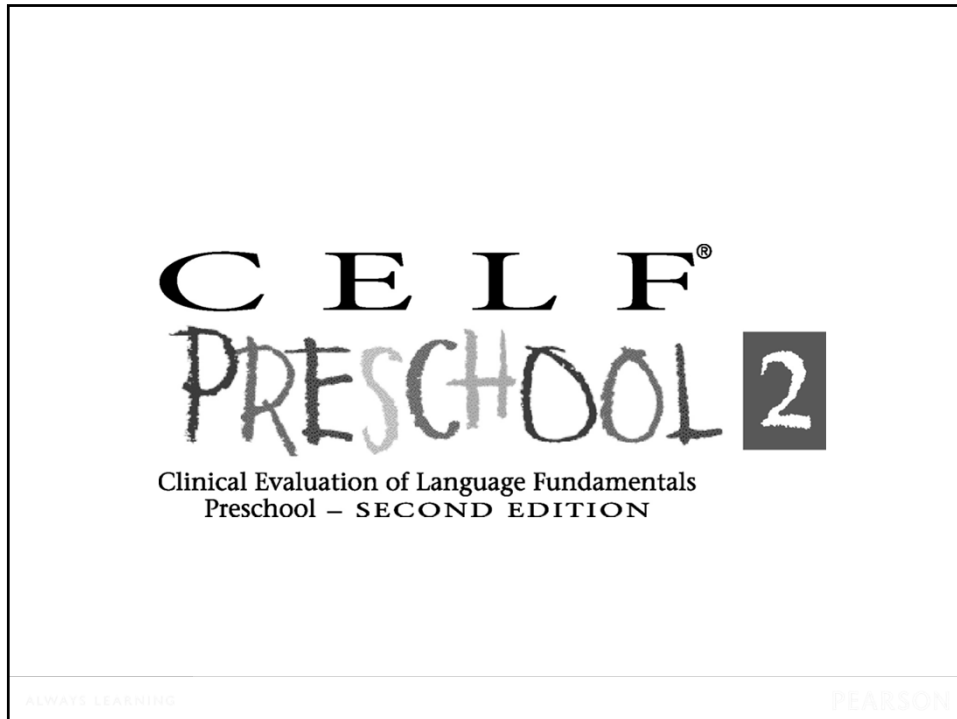
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PLS-5 Scores are Borderline	Assessment Tool	Evidence Provided	Evidence Supports Normal Language Acquisition	Evidence Supports S&L Disability
	Developmental History	Is there evidence of developmental delay across domains? Hospitalizations?	x	
	Parent interview	How does the child communicate at home? How do different members of the family communicate with the child? What are facilitating contexts?		x
	Home/Preschool Observations	What does the child do at home and at preschool to initiate and maintain communication?		x
	Developmental checklists	How does the child's skills look across a wide range of developmentally appropriate behaviors in a variety of contexts?	x	
	Language Sampling	How does the child communicate in less formal, interactive contexts? What forms of communication (verbal and nonverbal) does the child use?		x
		How do the child's language skills compare to age-level peers?	<i>borderline</i>	
	Dynamic Assessment	How easily does the child learn new skills?		x
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PLS-5 Scores are Borderline	Assessment Tool	Evidence Provided	Evidence Supports Normal Language Acquisition	Evidence Supports S&L Disability
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	Parent interview	How does the child communicate at home? How do different members of the family communicate with the child? What are facilitating contexts?	x	
	Home/Preschool Observations	What does the child do at home and at preschool to initiate and maintain communication?		x
	Developmental checklists	How does the child's skills look across a wide range of developmentally appropriate behaviors in a variety of contexts?	x	
	Language Sampling	How does the child communicate in less formal, interactive contexts? What forms of communication (verbal and nonverbal) does the child use?		x
		How do the child's language skills compare to age-level peers?	<i>borderline</i>	
	Dynamic Assessment	How easily does the child learn new skills?	x	
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CELF Preschool–2 Assessment at Each Level

1. Identify whether or not there is a language disorder.
2. Describe the nature of the disorder.
3. Evaluate early classroom and literacy fundamentals.
4. Evaluate language and communication in context.

Summary of CELF Preschool-2 Assessment Process

Referral Question

- **Is there a language disorder?**

Derive This Score

- **Core Language Score**
 - Sentence Structure
 - Word Structure
 - Expressive Vocabulary

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Summary *continued*

Referral Question

- **What is the nature of the disorder?**
 - Receptive and Expressive Skills (modalities)
 - Language Strengths and Weaknesses
 - Syntax (structure), Morphology, Semantics

Derive These Scores

- **Receptive Language Index**
- **Expressive Language Index**
- **Language Structure Index**
- **Language Content Index**
- **Language Memory Index**

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Index Scores

- Receptive Language Index (RLI)
 - A measure of listening and auditory comprehension skills
 - Derived by summing the scaled scores of three receptive subtests
- Expressive Language Index (ELI)
 - A measure of overall expressive language skills
 - Derived by summing the scaled scores of three expressive subtests

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Index Scores (cont.)

- Language Content Index (LCI)
 - A measure of semantic development
 - Vocabulary
 - Concept development
 - Comprehension of word associations and relationships
 - Comprehension of simple and complex sentences
- Language Structure Index (LSI)
 - An overall measure of the ability to interpret and produce word and sentence structure

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Summary *continued*

Referral Question

- **How are early classroom and literacy fundamentals?**

Derive these Scores

- **Basic Concepts Criterion Score (Ages 5–6)**
- **Recalling Sentences in Story Context Percentile Range**
- **Phonological Awareness Criterion Score**
- **Pre-Literacy Rating Scale Criterion Score**

Summary *continued*

Referral Question

- **How is communication in context?**

Derive this Score

- **Descriptive Pragmatics Profile Criterion Score**

CELF-P:2

Clinical Use of Sensitivity and Specificity

- Clinical sensitivity is the proportion of cases that are identified as disordered—when, in fact, they are disordered. CELF Preschool–2 sensitivity is
 - 85% at -1.0 *SD*
- Clinical specificity is the proportion of cases identified as having normal language—when, indeed, they do. CELF Preschool–2 specificity is
 - 82% at -1.0 *SD*

Standard Score Summary

Subtest Scaled Score		Core Language	Receptive Language		Expressive Language	Language Content		Language Structure
		3–6	3–4	5–6	3–6	3–4	5–6	3–6
Sentence Structure	SS	5		5				5
Word Structure	WS	1			1			1
Expressive Vocabulary	EV	9			9		9	
Concepts & Following Directions	C&FD			3			3	
Recalling Sentences	RS				2			2
Basic Concepts	BC							
Word Classes–Receptive	WC–R			11				
Word Classes–Total	WC–T						8	
Core Language Score and Indexes								
Sum of Subtest Scaled Scores		15		19	12		20	8
Standard Score ^a		71		77	65		79	57
Standard Score Points +/-		7		7	7		7	7
Confidence Interval (90% Level)		64 to 78	to	70 to 84	58 to 72	to	72 to 86	50 to 64
Percentile Rank		3		6	1		8	0.2
Percentile Rank Confidence Interval		1 to 7	to	2 to 14	0.3 to 3	to	3 to 18	<0.1 to 1
		Core Language	Receptive Language		Expressive Language	Language Content		Language Structure

^aSee Appendix C in Examiner's Manual.

Discrepancy Comparisons

1. Determine if difference between two index scores is statistically significant.
2. If statistically significant, evaluate how rare the score difference is in the standardization sample.

Discrepancy Comparisons *continued*

Compare

- Receptive and Expressive Language Index scores
- Language Content and Language Structure Index scores

Discrepancy Comparisons *continued*

- If the difference is \geq the critical value, the difference is considered to be a true difference rather than due to measurement error or random fluctuation.

Critical Values

TABLE 3.5 Critical Values for Discrepancy Comparisons Between Index Scores

Age	Level of Significance	Critical Values for Composite Pairs	
		RLI-ELI	LCI-LSI
Overall	.05	12	12
	.15	9	9
3:0-3:5	.05	11	11
	.15	9	9
3:6-3:11	.05	11	11
	.15	9	9
4:0-4:5	.05	10	10
	.15	8	8
4:6-4:11	.05	11	11
	.15	9	9
5:0-5:5	.05	11	11
	.15	9	8
5:6-5:11	.05	11	11
	.15	9	8
6:0-6:5	.05	12	12
	.15	9	9
6:6-6:11	.05	14	14
	.15	10	10

Discrepancy Comparisons *continued*

Level of Significance

.15: broader indicator of differences between index scores.

- Easier to find significant differences
- More error

.05: narrower indicator and is therefore more stringent.

- Harder to find significant differences
- Less error

Discrepancy Comparisons *continued*

1. Determine if difference between two index scores is statistically significant.
2. If statistically significant, evaluate how **rare** the score difference is in the standardization sample (clinical significance).

Prevalence of Difference Between Index Scores in the Standardization Sample

TABLE 3.6 Cumulative Prevalence (Percentage) of Differences Between Index Scores in the Standardization Sample

Standard Score Difference	RLI-ELI (percentage)		LCI-LSI (percentage)		Standard Score Difference
	RLI < ELI (-)	RLI > ELI (+)	LCI < LSI (-)	LCI > LSI (+)	
25	1.5	1.0	0.8	0.4	25
24	1.6	1.3	0.8	0.6	24
23	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.1	23
22	2.9	1.9	1.6	1.5	22
21	3.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	21
20	3.6	2.6	2.3	2.4	20
19	4.1	3.4	2.9	2.9	19
18	5.4	4.1	3.3	3.3	18
17	6.4	4.9	3.9	4.0	17
16	7.1	5.8	4.4	4.8	16
15	8.3	7.0	5.5	5.6	15
14	9.5	8.0	5.6	6.6	14
13	10.6	10.8	7.5	8.4	13
12	12.0	12.8	8.3	9.9	12
11	13.8	16.4	11.5	11.6	11

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Discrepancy Comparisons *continued*

Discrepancy Comparisons	Score 1	Score 2	Difference	Critical Value	Significant Difference (Y or N)	Prevalence in Standardization Sample	Statistically Significant Level
Receptive-Expressive Language Index*	77	65	12	12	Y	12.8%	.15 ^(.05)
Language Content-Structure Index*	79	57	22	12	Y	1.5%	.15 ^(.05)

*See Tables 3.5-3.6.

Are score differences meaningful?

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Criterion Score Chart

Criterion Score Chart			
Subtests	Raw Score	Criterion Score	Criterion
Basic Concepts (BC; Ages 5–6)	17	≥ 17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Phonological Awareness (PA; Ages 4–6)	15	≥ 19	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Checklists	Raw Score	Criterion Score	Criterion
Pre-Literacy Rating Scale (PLRS)	83	≥ 86	<input type="checkbox"/> Meets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Descriptive Pragmatics Profile (DPP)	93	≥ 72	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meets <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet
Percentile Range Chart			
Subtest	Raw Score	Percentile Range	
Recalling Sentences in Context (RSC)	4	< 1 to 4	

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What test should I choose?

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Correlations: CELF Preschool-2/PLS-5

CELF Preschool-2	PLS-5						CELF Preschool-2	
	Auditory Comprehension		Expressive Communication		Total Language			
	<i>r</i>	Adj <i>r</i> ^a	<i>r</i>	Adj <i>r</i> ^a	<i>r</i>	Adj <i>r</i> ^a	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Core Language	.65	.74	.70	.78	.71	.79	103.1	11.9
Expressive Language	.67	.75	.74	.82	.75	.82	102.0	11.6
Receptive Language	.64	.70	.66	.74	.69	.76	103.4	11.8
PLS-5 Mean	105.3		105.0		105.5			
PLS-5 <i>SD</i>	12.5		12.2		12.6			

Note. Adj = adjusted. All scores are based on age norms; units are standard scores.

^a All correlations were corrected for the variability of the norm group, based on the standard deviation obtained on the first administration, using the variability correction of Cohen et al. (2003, p. 58).



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So what is the difference between PLS-5 and CELF:P-2?



- Overview of developmental language skills in many areas
- Ages birth through 7:11
- Can assess preverbal children and children with low language ability
- Can assess children functioning in supported classroom environments (such as Early Childhood and classrooms for children with pervasive developmental delays such as autism)

- In-depth assessment of semantics, morphology, syntax
- Ages 3:0 through 6:11
- Assess children who speak in complete sentences
- Assess children functioning in mainstream classrooms

Both assessments target language skills; both point to intervention goals

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Language Assessment in Early Childhood

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1/15/2015

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