Eligibility for the "Good Student"
Pinpointing Vulnerable Areas of Need

Karen L. Anderson, PhD Director, Supporting Success for Children with Hearing Loss

A beginning without an end… Individualized instruction requires comprehensive assessment information. Evaluators must have the skills and experience to interpret test results, recognize patterns, and determine specific areas in need of instruction Assessments must be tailored to the needs of the student with hearing loss.

Objectives

- Describe requirements for selecting assessments
- Describe some norm-referenced assessments to identify adverse educational affect secondary to communication access issues
- Describe some functional assessments to identify non-academic adverse educational affect

Disclosure: This information is excerpted from *Steps to Assessment* by Karen Anderson & Lynne Price. Participants do not need to purchase this guide to benefit from this presentation.

Eligibility

Children with hearing loss have accessibility barriers to verbal instruction and classroom communication. The question is not IF they need support, the question is HOW MUCH support is needed for the student to benefit from the regular education setting. Will she require "specially designed instruction"? or Can her access to communication needs be met with the basic accommodations of a 504 Plan? This decision will be based on collected data (academic and FUNCTIONAL), and should not be ruled by 'we've always done it this way' or by history with one or more communication modes.

Evaluation requires functional + academic information

§300.304(b)(1) Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability

§300.304(b)(2) Not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child;

§300.304(c)(2) Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

Evaluation Basics…

The child must be assessed in all areas of suspected disability to determine the present levels of performance and the educational needs of the child. No single procedure or criterion may be used. Decisions must be made by a team, not an individual (i.e., principal, special education director). "Multidisciplinary evaluation team" means a minimum of 2 persons who are responsible for evaluating a student suspected of having a disability. The team shall include at least 1 special education teacher or other specialist who has knowledge of the suspected disability.

IDEA & the necessity of academic delay… "Each State must ensure that FAPE is available to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the child has not failed a course or grade, and is advancing from grade to grade." (CFR Section 300.101) "The group determining the eligibility of a child for special education and related services must make an individual determination as to whether, notwithstanding the child's progress in a course or grade, he or she needs or continues to need special education and related services." (CFR Section 300.101). **Adverse educational effect is not synonymous with academic delays.** For DHH it is not just a question of identifying areas of educational performance that are adversely effected (educational, not academic performance). The clarification by ADA has shifted the focus to: Can the student communicate as effectively as peers? (perceive verbal instruction & class peers). What is needed to ensure that the hearing loss will not interfere with effective understanding in class, thereby limiting the students' opportunity to reach the same level of achievement as peers without hearing loss? We cannot just rely on grades for this info.

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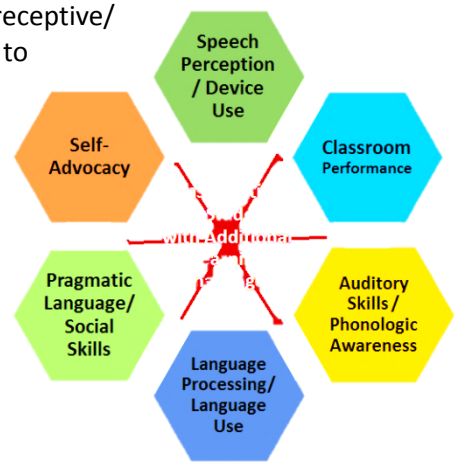
Vulnerable areas to consider when evaluating students with hearing loss are not just receptive/ expressive language, speech and academic performance. We must tailor assessments to consider development and performance in the areas of development most vulnerable to delay due to hearing loss.



Assessment is a comparison comprised of 3 components:
1) An evaluator to obtain data and make the comparison
2) Data: test item responses, age expectations, normative peer performance
3) A standard or area of function upon which the comparison will be made
Both quantitative and qualitative data must be collected reflecting functional characteristics and comparing performance to norms: grades, level of mastery, RtI, standard scores (norm referenced), criterion referenced (comparison to age expectations).

Special factors ALWAYS apply. Results are impacted by the student's ability to access information; speech perception and understanding of spoken language; history of early intervention; use of technology; and language and social interaction skills. These must be considered throughout the process.

Evaluator Qualifications: IDEA requires assessments to be administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel. *[IDEA §300.304(iv):* be knowledgeable of educational impact of hearing loss; get to know the student before testing; choose appropriate assessment tools; conduct a valid test session; and to interpret task responses and behavior to determine if related to the hearing or other areas of eligibility.

Role of the TDHH
1. Observation and data gathering prior to testing
2. Educate other evaluators: Student background, equipment and accommodation use
3. Administer assessments – language, vocabulary
4. Observe behavior during testing
5. Analyze test responses
6. Interpret test results from other evaluations **Standard scores are never enough!**

Behavior:	Indication:
Delayed response	extended wait time may indicate weak language comprehension, poor vocabulary knowledge, or an increased level of anxiety related to a fear of getting it wrong.
Slow to answer questions	extended wait time may indicate the need to verbally repeat what was asked to understand key elements or a need for extended retrieval time for previously heard information.
Perseveration	Repeating an item in a response or using language from a previously presented item may indicate difficulty with memory.
Poor attention and fatigue	Giving up on tasks and tiring quickly may indicate difficulty attending and processing for a typical period of time.
Distracted	Attending to background noise may indicate a lack of auditory efficiency and focus.
Body movement	Playing with hands or an object may indicate split or unfocused attention.
Incorrect sequence in response	Repeating of a sequence out of order may indicate poor processing and organizational skills
Continued visual attention	Closely watching the examiner's facial expression and lip movement may indicate a need for visual support.

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Analysis of task responses and behavior can indicate:

- Difficulty with attending and listening,
- Weak processing or memory skills,
- Lack of repair strategies
- Misinterpretation of language
- Poor vocabulary knowledge

An effective assessment process

Prior to evaluation:

1. Develop a detailed picture of the student from multiple sources.
2. Choose appropriate assessment tools.
3. Create a testing environment that maximizes access.
4. Consider mode of communication impact on testing process and responses.

During testing:

5. Manage testing session procedure and duration.
6. Attend to student's behavior as an indication of perception, fatigue, behavior, or thought process.

After - during scoring and evaluating:

7. Consider more than standard scores.
8. Compare results with other assessment tools done by other examiners.

The purpose of assessment is to determine present level of performance, identify strengths and areas of educational need, monitor and measure progress. **Evaluations determine** delays or disability, identify strengths and needs in all areas. The members of the evaluation team need to be knowledgeable of the why, what, and how of assessment for students to receive an appropriate education.

Speech Perception & Device Use

Adverse Educational Affect + HL –

To be found eligible for specialized services the hearing loss must meet criteria (the audiogram answers this)

- Speech perception assessment results inform us about how typical the child is in perception of speech
- Results should pinpoint the specific auditory challenges of the student with hearing loss
- Should answer "How different is the input he or she is receiving in school?"
- Speech perception reflect student input and the results estimate the level of access to verbal instruction

Adverse educational effect is defined by student output: "To what degree has the acquisition of skills been impacted by the reduction in auditory input?"

History of HL Identification / Device Use

With universal hearing screening most children with congenital hearing loss are identified early. Consistent use of amplification is the single most effective means to prevent developmental delays due to hearing loss for children who have residual hearing.

If a child was late-identified with hearing loss OR has not consistently used amplification since infancy the following language delays can be anticipated[8]:

15-26 dB loss = 1.2 year delay
27-40 dB loss = 2.0 year delay
41-55 dB loss = 2.9 year delay
56-70 dB loss – 3.5+ year delay

Datalogging is the only OBJECTIVE means to identify the typical hours per day of hearing aid use. Interview methods with the family tend to overestimate the hours of hearing aid use. Data gathering as part of the IDEA §300.113 requirement for schools to ensure that hearing aids worn by children with hearing impairments are functioning properly can yield a picture of the average number of hours the child is wearing functional hearing aids each day. The child needs to be involved in daily checks and recording.

Interpreting the Audiogram Meaningfully: Functional Interpretation of Hearing Thresholds on the Audiogram. In Teacher Tools Materials Library under Describing the Impact of Hearing Loss.

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Planning Speech Perception Assessment

Age 1-2 parents report on response to sound/speech
Age 2-3 closed set identification can start being used (i.e., Ling sounds, body parts)
Age 4-5 move toward open set recognition – repeat what you hear without any clues
Use of too easy materials will underestimate impact of hearing loss on speech perception and use of materials too hard will overestimate impact. MANY CHOICES for materials!

Assessment of Speech Perception

Precision Listening Assessment: What speech sounds are not perceived or can be confused due to fragmentation caused by hearing loss. How does distance/noise impact the student's ability to accurately perceive speech?
Some example assessments:

- Young Child - Find the "Listening Bubble" size via the ELFLing in the Teacher Tools materials library under Tests
- School-Age - Iowa Medial Consonant Test in the Teacher Tools materials library under speech perception
- AB Short Word List – each phoneme is scored. In Steps to Assessment guide.
- Developmental Test of Auditory Perception (DTAP): Norm referenced – comparing student with hearing loss to performance of age peers, age 6+ listens to a CD; 5 subtests. SSCHL catalog.
- Contrasts for Auditory & Speech Training (CAST): Closed set pairs of speech sounds. CAST pretest has 28 cards to help determine which parts of the speech signal the child is able to perceive/identify, Suprasegmentals, vowels, consonants. Results reflect speech perception and level of auditory skill development. S4KWHL catalog.

It is worth the time to assess precision listening! Doing the Ling sounds and WDS testing does NOT inform you as to the completeness of the child's speech perception.

Functional Listening Assessment: What is the estimate of the student's speech perception in classroom conditions?
Some example assessments:

- Functional Listening Evaluation: 8 conditions. Recorded FLE Using Sentences – S4KWHL catalog.
- Listening Inventory For Education-Revised: Student Appraisal. S4KWHL.tests and USB drive/CD via catalog.
- Classroom Participation Questionnaire (CPQ). Page 263 in big BSSFPC book.

Performance Review

An integral part of eligibility determination. Eligibility needs to consider more than a child's grades as an indication of the need for specialized instruction. Grades reflect performance within a specific class. Rigor of the class can impact the scoring of performance and invalidate grades as a true measure of knowledge. Grades lack information on specific skill deficits. Grades do not measure retention over time. Functional performance must be reviewed. Non-academic skills; not related to academic achievement- Examples: social skills, adaptability, level of frustration, independence and other areas vulnerable to delays due to hearing loss.

Teacher checklists, observation, work examples: These informal data gathering measures can offer critical information on a student's access to general education. Helps the team address questions in several domains:

Sensory

How does the hearing loss impact classroom functioning, access, and participation?
What is the benefit from personal amplification or assistive hearing technology in the classroom?
Have acoustic needs been accommodated in the classroom?

Academic

What is the academic achievement of the student compared to typical peers?
Is the student continuing to make progress in the identified areas of educational need based on data, or do additional interventions need to be implemented to assure goal attainment?

Communication

How does the hearing loss affect understanding in the classroom?

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How does the hearing loss affect the use of language in the classroom?
What is the student's linguistic level of development compared to typical peers?
What is the student's level of conversational competence in the classroom?

Functional

How is the student demonstrating advocacy/compensatory skills in the classroom?
What strategies are utilized when learning breakdowns occur in the classroom?
How are support services utilized (interpreter, language facilitator, etc.)?
How effective are current accommodations and should others be considered?

Social-Emotional

What is the student's social-emotional level of competence compared to typical peers?

Functional Performance Data-Gathering Tools – examples

During a performance review the student cannot be administered assessments that are not expected of the whole class. Informal tools can provide valuable insights into the extent that the student's hearing loss is impacting classroom functioning and achievement. Results of informal measures are essential companions to formal measures, which often lack specificity regarding the effect of the student's hearing loss on ability to make progress.

- Classroom Observation -Access to Curriculum Inventory (ACTI) (in Documenting Skills for Success). Coordinated Checklists for: Classroom Teacher, DHH Teacher, Special Education Support, Speech Language Therapist, Parent, Student
- SIFTERS – Preschool, Elementary and Secondary versions of the Screening Instrument For Targeting Educational Risk or the CHAPS – Children's Auditory Performance Scale (S4KWHL.tests or fillable versions in Documenting Skills for Success)
- LIFE-R Teacher Appraisal of Listening Difficulty (S4KWHL.tests or USB drive or CD – S4KWHL catalog)
- Informal Inventory of Independence and Self-Advocacy Skills for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students: especially appropriate for students who use interpreters. In big BSSFPC book.
- Placement and Readiness Checklists (PARC): 4 readiness checklist that focus on skills that students require in order to actively and meaningfully participate in their educational programs. The *PARC General Inclusion Readiness Checklist* (best for cases when children may be transitioning from a more restrictive setting into the general education classroom), The *PARC Interpreter/Transliterated Education Readiness Checklist,* The *PARC Captioning/Transcribing Readiness Checklist,* The *PARC Instructional Communication Access Checklist.* S4KWHL.tests

Auditory Skills Development

Poor listening skills can cause maladaptive strategies to develop: Behaviors we look for as part of Performance Review!

- watching what others do instead of listening to directions
- looking for eye gaze/gestures from the speaker instead of trying to process their words
- guessing at meaning from context rather than listening to the whole sentence
- faking comprehension
- choosing to isolate themselves from others during play opportunities
- becoming dependent on a few people who act as 'human hearing aids'
- monopolizing conversations

Why Assess? Weak auditory skills impact academic information

Weak discrimination results in difficulties accessing orally presented information, poor understanding of speaker intent, and a slower rate of processing information. **Weak closure skills** result in slower decoding in reading, missing key

information in conversation, and confusion of word choice. **Weak memory** reduces the ability to hold what was said in mind until it can be comprehended. It slows recall and retelling of information in reading, decreases the ability to identify key elements in a spoken passage for summarization, and creates auditory confusion due to inaccuracy. **Weak visual integration** impacts the ability to spell, develop deep word meaning, and use visual support as an effective accommodation in the classroom. **Weak figure ground discrimination** causes difficulty with processing speech in noise, an inability to attend consistently and over time, and an inability to focus, which impacts class participation and socialization. **Weak integration skills** result in difficulties with attaching meaning to what is heard, in poor visualization of content in reading, and in difficulty following directions.

Information on assessment of auditory skills can be divided into 3 areas: early auditory skill levels occurring in the typically hearing child in the first 36 months per hierarchy of typical development; prosodic and phonologic awareness; sound-language processing. **Audition – where precision listening meets functional performance**

Some example assessments:

- Auditory Skills Checklist S4KWHL.listening
- Informal Trials with 1, 2, 3 syllable words (ESP by CID or in Steps to Assessment)
- Suprasegmental feature identification:
    - Contrasts for Auditory and Speech Training (CAST)
    - Developmental Test of Auditory Perception (DTAP)
    - Preverbal CASLLS
    - Compass Test (SFKWHL catalog)
- Discriminate critical elements & Comprehend familiar expressions & Sequencing
    - Common Objects Test (COT) – one of our door prizes! MED-EL
    - CASLLS applicable protocol for skill level
    - Mr. Potato Head Task (in big BSSFPC book or Steps to Assessment)
    - TesTrax speech tracking for teens and adults (MED-EL)

Results provide insight into how clearly students perceive connected speech, their ability to process what is heard into sensible sentences, their auditory memory for segments of connected speech, vocabulary, grammatical structures or specific speech sounds that are a challenge for the student, relative rate of processing over time, improvement in accuracy of speech tracking with practice

Prosody, Phonologic Awareness & Morphology

Prosody: Listening comprehension is more than word meaning and language.
Sound level: suprasegmentals – pitch, intensity, duration
Language level: stress, juncture, intonation, rate
Literary level: plot understanding of time, place, action
"The best predictor of reading difficulty in kindergarten or first grade is the inability to segment words and syllables into constituent sound units (phonemic awareness)." "The ability to hear and manipulate phonemes plays a causal role in the acquisition of beginning reading skills." National Reading Panel, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel

Example assessment: Phonological Awareness Test (PAT) (SKWHL catalog)
Phonological awareness is the result of precision listening! There is a positive correlation between phonological awareness & achievement in reading. The PAT measures: rhyming, segmenting & blending, deletion & substitution, sounds in isolation, decoding. Items are presented in a developmental sequence.

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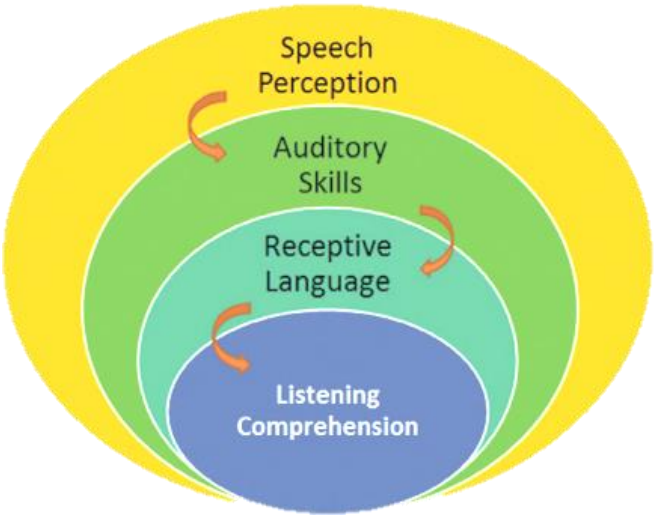
PAT Note: Consider speed of answering - does the number of errors increase as task becomes more specific? Consider the amount of support needed - Does student repeat stimulus before answering? Does student concentrate or fidget? Does student request repetition? Or give up?

Comprehensive Assessment of Phonology is Necessary

Perception of phonemes in speech requires precision listening. We are interested more on the impact of hearing loss on development of phonological awareness skills than overall developmental delays in these skills. There are a number of phonological awareness skills screening instruments readily available that sample phonological awareness. Since hearing loss impacts perception of some phonemes more than others we need to use a COMPREHENSIVE assessment – not a screener.

Language Processing / Language Use

Components of language develop simultaneously.
phonemic – sounds in words
morphemic – word parts
vocabulary and semantics – words and meaning
syntax – word order in a sentence
figurative language – word choices with different meaning
discourse – multiple sentences
metalinguistics – thinking about language



Impact of hearing loss on discourse

- standard phrases & limited content in speech
- hesitant when speaking
- echoing a speaker's words
- talking in circles
- problem retelling or relaying information
- unable to start or hold a conversation
- not observing general rules of communication

Assessment in Birth-3 Programs: Part C of IDEA requires that children be evaluated prior to the start of EI services Annual re-evaluation (after 12 months of service). Periodic reviews of functional performance occurring at least every 6 months. We want to track the trajectory of communication development and adjust services as needed to attain 6 months *or more* of communication growth in 6 months. Trajectory shows the changes in rate of growth as the service intensity, frequency, focus has changed. Trajectory sets expectations for future performance.

Some Example Assessments for Transition at age 3

- MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories (MCDI): Level I age 8-13 months and 14-18 months; Level IIA age 14-18 months, Level IIB age 19-24 months; Level III age 31-36 months. Norms for boys & girls. Customized version allowing families to indicate use of expressive vocabulary in spoken, cued or signed form is available on SKWHL.early intervention.
- Preschool Language Scales – 5: Appropriate for birth – age 7 years. PLS-5 can be used over time to monitor the trajectory of language development across different language components
- Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language & Speech (CASLLS): Even more comprehensive than the PLS-5. Useful for teachers who do not have extensive background in language development as it provides a comprehensive hierarchy of expected skills. Manual provides extensive support including interpreting responses. Good for ongoing assessment. If one time only assessment, the PLS-5 would be a better choice.

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Assessment 3 and up:

- Test of Comprehension of Language 3 (TACL-3): ability to understand vocabulary and sentence structure in a closed set. The TACL measures: Vocabulary, Grammatical Morphemes, Elaborate phrases & sentences
- Listening Comprehension Test: Looks at classroom situational listening via subtests: Main idea, Details, Reasoning, Vocabulary, Understanding the message. SKWHL catalog

How are DHH students truly comprehending? Process to determine:

1. Start with speech perception & performance review
2. Predict areas of concern
3. Test first by following protocols
4. Look for patterns
5. Compare results with other assessments
6. Determine needs & formulate goals

It is essential to have comprehensive information on the language that is being processed by the brain in order to appropriately measure performance and progress.

Social Interaction Skills

Smaller Listening Bubble is the Culprit! Hearing loss reduces the amount of speech a child will perceive in everyday situations. Actions observed may often be unconnected with the verbal language or even the 'social noises' or facial expressions that impart full meaning. Due to this children with hearing loss are vulnerable to developing delays in social cognition, Theory of Mind conceptualization, pragmatic language.

Some Example Assessments

- The Pragmatics Checklist: 45 Pragmatics Questions. Results for typical development: 20 skills by age 3, 43 by age 4, 44 by age 5, and 45 by age 6. SKWHL.language.social communication
- Language Use Inventory to assess pragmatic language development in ages 18-47 months; assessment – not screening. There are 14 subscales assess communication use in various settings and functions. Normed on 3500+ children. Online version – makes taking/scoring the LUI fast and only $3 per test!
- Social Language Informal Assessment for Gr K-2 and Gr 3-5. Two forms that have items related to: Story retelling, Theory of Mind, Tone of Voice, Feelings, Social Problem Solving, Pragmatic language. From Superpowerspeech.com for $10.
- Pragmatic Language Observation Scale (PLOS) is a teacher rating scale. Items are specific to spoken language behaviors seen in classrooms. 5-point scale; 5-10 min. 25 items, norm-referenced; ages 8+. Normed on 994 kids. Correlates well with oral language test results – can be used to augment this information. SKWHL catalog.
- Social Language Development Test (SLDT): Norm-referenced, 6-12 yr to validate & define social interaction issues. Percentile rank, AE for: Making inferences, Interpersonal negotiation, Multiple interpretations, Supporting peers. Social is cognition tested! SKWHL catalog.
- Theory of Mind Inventory (TOMI): Developed by researchers; ages 2-17 years. Parent inventory; 42 items. Reliable indicator of ToM competencies. Early, Basic, Advanced subscales. Useful for identification and for planning. Available in 10 different languages. Website makes it available for free. Online scoring that generates reports. http://www.theoryofmindinventory.com
- Theory of Mind Task Battery (TOMTB): Same researchers as TOMI; ages 2-12. Items administered to child. 45-page document downloadable to view on computer as you present the test items. Designed to test the ToM understanding of children with varying levels of cognitive and language delay. Test is stopped if child misses any 5 control questions. Available in 8 languages. Short form, long form and summary form score sheets. Long scoring form is especially helpful for test interpretation and program planning. If an issue is identified, verify using the TOMI.

- Social-Emotional Assessment/Evaluation Measure (SEAM): Psychometrically sound tool for assessing and monitoring functional social-emotional development in infants through preschool. Completed by families or the preschool teacher. Ideally, an integrated part of the EI program so that this info can be considered as part of transition at age 3. English/Spanish. Infant, Toddler and Preschool forms. With ages and without ages specified for each skill. All materials come on CD. SKWHL catalog.

Teaching Social Cognition: App to improve understanding of feelings through cartoon facial expressions: AutismXpress (by StudioEmotion) FREE; Teaching the Basics of Theory of Mind and The Nonverbal Language Kit (SKWHL catalog).

Self-Advocacy, Self-Determination, Independence with Amplification Devices

Self-advocacy can include skills and knowledge related to the student being able to:

- Recognize/describe his own skills and needs
- Know the how, who, and when to ask for assistance
- Make decisions and then take the responsibility to deal with the consequences of those actions
- Set his own goals and create a plan to reach them

Self-advocacy includes the following skill sets:

- knowledge of hearing loss – include independence with hearing devices
- communication repair skills – responding to communication breakdowns
- specific self-advocacy skills – responding to the global learning environment
- development of self-determination problem-solving skills

Some examples of assessment:

- After LIFE Questions – a measure of self-awareness and self-advocacy SKWHL.tests.life-r
- C.O.A.C.H. teaching method to develop the problem-solving skills needed for self-determination.
- Self-Advocacy Skills – Age Expectations:
    - Expectations provided within Advocacy in Action book (SKWHL catalog)
    - Hierarchy: Guide to Self-Advocacy Skill Development SKWHL.self-advocacy
    - Test informally using the situations and strategies provided in the What's the Problem game

Review – Do you…

- Focus on estimating the level of access to classroom communication?
- Gather data on both precision listening and functional listening (or level of comprehension through sign)?
- Identify the student's auditory skill development level?
- Comprehensively assess phonological skills?
- Look BEYOND standard scores to note behaviors that identify challenges processing the language perceived?
- Specifically assess pragmatic language & ToM as a part of social skills considerations?
- Identify self-advocacy skills in light of access needs and full participation in the classroom and socially?

IDEA is a "Failure Mode" but… Questions to consider when standard scores comes out as within 'average' limits:

- Is the assessment sufficient in scope and intensity to identify gaps in auditory, language, narrative, discourse, academic and social language skills?
- Has testing been conducted in situations similar to the school setting (window into performance in noise)? Has daily functioning with devices been considered (frequency of 'optimal hearing')?
- Has the transitioning young child been observed in new situations without the parent?
- Have we considered early literacy?
- What do you do now? What will you do in the future? Suggested completion of 'assessment wheel' handout.

