

# SOCIAL COMMUNICATION IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

## The Child Role Play Measure

Developed by Dodge, McClaskey & Feldman (1985)

**Purpose:** To assess student’s skills in responding in a variety of key situations. Specifically, this measure is used to assess responses to challenging social situations, especially for students with low social competence or low social acceptance. The results of this assessment would ultimately lead to identifying particular problematic social contexts or tasks. This would in turn result in goal development toward improving student theory of mind and use of social communication (pragmatic language) so that he or she will respond appropriately in challenging situations.

**Age:** Grades 2, 3, 4; typical age response information is provided for ages 7-10 years.

**Task:** There are 15 role plays. The adult reads out each scenario and then role-plays it with the student. The student is asked to act out what he or she would do in response to the situation. Five benchmark student responses are provided, each with a related score (0, 2, 4, 6, 8). The test administrator must match the benchmark response provided that is most similar to the student’s response. By use of graduated benchmark levels, teachers can demonstrate improvement and continued needs over time. Origin of the role plays: these situations were derived from the *Taxonomy of Problematic Social Situations for Children* (Dodge et al, 1985) generated by 50 teachers and 6 child psychologists.

**Categories of challenging social situations:**

- A. Peer group entry** – the student’s task is to initiate inclusion into the peer group
- B. Response to peer provocation** – the student’s task is to preserve self-integrity while maintaining peer status
- C. Response to failure** – the student’s is identified as inferior to peers or identified to peers as being different
- D. Response to success** – the student is identified as superior to peers
- E. Social expectations** – situations in which there are clear expectations (social norms) for the student’s behavior
- F. Teacher expectations** – the teacher has established clear expectations (social norms) for the student’s behavior

**Scoring:** Average (mean) scores for a student’s performance in each of the 6 social situation categories will be calculated. The mean scores for each of these categories OR for the whole measure can be compared to typical age-appropriate responses. This will identify social situations in which the student performs more or less competently. This will allow teachers to identify problematic situations for intervention. A student who role plays behavior that is different from what he or she demonstrates in the classroom will require different intervention as compared to students who have difficulty producing a socially competent response, even in a role play.

**Interpretation:** Overall, boys were found to perform more competently than girls, especially in response to failure by showing persistence rather than a more passive response demonstrated by girls. Responses are based on students identified as being adaptive and nonaggressive who gets along favorably with peers (each gender: 10 in gr. 2; 7 in gr. 3 & 4).

Total all questions answered correctly. Score range = 95% confidence interval. A child with a typical response to these challenging situations will have scores that fall into the specified Score Range for their age group.								
Categories of challenging social situations:	Grade 2: Age 7-8				Grades 3 & 4: Age 8-10			
	GIRLS		BOYS		GIRLS		BOYS	
	Mean	Score Range	Mean	Score Range	Mean	Score Range	Mean	Score Range
<b>A. Peer group entry</b>	3.75	2.1 to 5.4	5.06	4.1 to 6.0	4.75	4.1 to 5.4	5.75	5.0 to 6.5
<b>B. Response to provocation</b>	5.38	4.2 to 6.6	5.31	4.6 to 6.0	5.13	3.2 to 7.0	5.65	4.4 to 6.9
<b>C. Response to failure</b>	1.25	0.3 to 2.2	4.31	2.7 to 6.0	3.25	1.6 to 4.9	6.10	4.7 to 7.5
<b>D. Response to success</b>	2.50	1.3 to 3.7	4.38	2.9 to 5.9	4.50	2.3 to 6.7	4.8	2.9 to 6.7
<b>E. Social expectations</b>	3.67	1.8 to 5.5	5.54	4.9 to 6.2	5.17	3.6 to 6.8	5.87	4.8 to 6.9
<b>F. Teacher expectations</b>	3.5	1.0 to 6.0	6.13	4.5 to 7.7	5.50	2.7 to 8.3	7.2	6.4 to 8.0
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	3.83	2.3 to 5.3	5.38	4.8 to 6.0	5.00	3.7 to 6.3	5.99	4.6 to 6.1

# SOCIAL COMMUNICATION IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

## The Child Role Play Measure

Developed by Dodge, McClaskey & Feldman (1985)

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Say to student: "We are interested in finding out what students your age do in different situations in school. I am going to ask you to imagine some situations. I will pretend I am one of the students in your class. I want you to act out what you would do and say. There are not any right or wrong answers; I just want you to show me what you would really do and tell me what you would really say." Write out the child's response. Circle the appropriate score.

Situation	Response Key	Score
1. Let's pretend we're outside for recess. You're playing tag, but all of a sudden you notice that I'm standing all by myself. You come over to talk to me and you see that I've been crying and there are tears in my eyes. What do you do and say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts to console child or help them personally ("I would play with her", "I would hold her hand").</li> <li>• Asks the child what has happened or if the child is alright.</li> <li>• Tells, or offers to tell, someone in authority.</li> <li>• No response.</li> <li>• Laughs at child. Does nothing. Doesn't know what to do or say.</li> </ul>	8 6 4 2 0
<b>Response 1:</b>		
2. Let's pretend that I'm playing with building blocks with some friends after lunch. We're building a really good house. You come in the classroom and see us. Pretend that you really want to play with the blocks with us. What do you do and say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complementary or evaluative remark with a request to play ("Hey, that's good. Can I play?")</li> <li>• A simple request to play ("I'd ask." "May I play?")</li> <li>• Rhetorical question ("What are you doing?") or an evaluative remark with no request to play ("That's good").</li> <li>• Suggestion for a different activity ("Want to play a game?").</li> <li>• Aggressive response ("I'd knock the blocks over) or says he would sit down without saying anything; doesn't know what to do.</li> </ul>	8 6 4 2 0
<b>Response 2:</b>		
3. Let's pretend that we're in the cafeteria carrying our food. I'm walking right beside you. I want to sit by my friend. I accidentally bump you and you drop all of your food. I look back at you. What do you do or say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the accidental nature of the event ("Well, if she did it accidentally...OK" "That's all right if you bumped me" or responses that deal with the person in the situation ("I would ask if she would help me pick up the food").</li> <li>• Responses that deal only with the spilled food ("I'd get more food" "I'd get a teacher/supervisor (score as a 2 if used as a threat) or responses that attempt to clarify the motivation behind the incident ("Why did you do that?" "You knocked my tray over!" "What have you done?").</li> <li>• There is no response scored as a 4 for this scenario</li> <li>• Responses that are threats ("I'm going to tell!" "Don't do it again!") or responses that criticize the child ("YOU clean it up!" "Thanks a lot!").</li> <li>• Retaliatory responses that involve physical force ("I'd dump your food on the floor" "I'd hit you") or responses that involve name calling ("Idiot!").</li> </ul>	8 6 2 0
<b>Response 3:</b>		
4. Let's pretend that the teacher has told the whole class to line up for lunch. You are standing in line. Then I come and stand in front of you (cutting in). Let's pretend that I say "I'm standing here now." What do you do and say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks child to go to the end of the line, or to allow them to return to their original position ("Go to the end of the line" "Let me have my place back") or asks other child why they cut in. Or responds without upset ("That's OK if she's a friend, if not I'd ask why she cut in" "I don't care about cutting in").</li> <li>• Comments on the child's behavior without asking for a specific replacement behavior ("I was here first" "You cut in" "I was here first" "No you don't!")</li> <li>• Tells the teacher about the other child's behavior. Cuts back in front of the other child without employing physical force.</li> <li>• There is no response scored as a 2 for this scenario.</li> <li>• Physical retaliation at the time or later ("I'd push you out of the way") or doesn't know what to do, doesn't answer, does nothing.</li> </ul>	8 6 4 0
<b>Response 4:</b>		

Situation	Response Key	Score
<p>5. Let's pretend that I and some other children have a new video game that we're playing with. You can see that it looks like a lot of fun. We are taking turns playing with it. You ask, "Can I have a turn?" Let's pretend that I say, "No. You have to wait until I say you can play." What do you do and say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waits for turn or waits and asks again later ("I guess I'll wait" "When will you be done?" "OK, when is it my turn?"). Watches and comments on the game while waiting.</li> <li>• Asks again immediately or asks reason for refusal ("Please can I play?" "Why do you let your friends play?") or says "OK" and then goes in search of the owner of the video game to ask him/her.</li> <li>• Walks away without commenting, goes to play somewhere else or in some other way, drops the subject ("I would walk away without saying anything").</li> <li>• Questions or comments on child's behavior in a negative way ("Well that's not nice" "I don't want to play"). Tells teacher or asks teacher when s/he can play. Attempts to bribe child ("Let me play or I won't give you candy").</li> <li>• Uses physical force ("I'd shove you" "I'd cry, then I'd punch you" "I'd say 'please' then I'd knock their heads together"). Sabotages the game. Makes rude comment ("Aw, shove it"). Doesn't know what to do, does nothing.</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 4 2 0</p>
<b>Response 5:</b>		
<p>6. Let's pretend that I'm another girl or boy in your class. You have some free time and want to talk to someone. You see me sitting at my desk. Let's pretend you decide to talk to me. What do you do and say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates a conversation by commenting on the child's activity or suggesting an activity ("Hi, want to do some drawing?" "I'd ask if I could play with the toy you're playing with" "Are you done with your Work?" "Would you like to help me with my Spelling?")</li> <li>• General questions or remarks ("Do you want to talk?" "Hi, will you come over here?"). Direct appeals for friendship ("Do you want to be friends?").</li> <li>• A statement that is not a specific comment (score 8) or a general comment (score 6) but is a conditional statement regarding what the child might do ("I would go over and talk" "I'd see if you were busy, if not I'd talk").</li> <li>• Questions the comment on the child's inactivity in a negative fashion ("Why are you just sitting here?").</li> <li>• Responses that are not relevant to the task or that are inappropriate ("Quit looking around" "No I'd give you some....."). Says they would do nothing.</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 4 2 0</p>
<b>Response 6:</b>		
<p>7. Let's pretend that you're drawing with your felt tip markers during a break time. I am coloring too, but some of my markers are lost. Let's pretend that I ask you, "Can I use your red one?" What do you do or say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses that say simply "yes" or that have a cautionary or conditional phrase added ("Yes, when I'm finished" "Yes, bring it back though").</li> <li>• Questions such as, "What do you want a marker for?" or child changes his mind ("No, I'm using it. Yes, OK").</li> <li>• There is no response scored as 4 for this scenario.</li> <li>• Responses with a threat attached ("Yes, but give it back or I'll tell"). Responses that require "Say please".</li> <li>• Replies "No".</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 2 0</p>
<b>Response 7:</b>		
<p>8. Let's pretend that we're in class now. The teacher is handing back math books. When the teacher gives you your book you smile because you got all of the answers correct. Then you notice that I got a lot wrong and I am almost ready to cry. What do you do and say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer specific or general advice <i>and</i> console the child.</li> <li>• Offers constructive, specific advice to the child ("Let me help you with your math"). Attempts to console child ("It's OK, nobody's perfect" "Maybe you could do better next time"). Offers to help the child or to tell the teacher so that the teacher could provide help.</li> <li>• Simply gives advice without attempting to comfort or actually help the child ("Try harder next time" "Practice so you do better").</li> <li>• Asks what is wrong or why they did so badly ("Why did you get them wrong?" "Why are you crying?"). Is matter-of-fact about the grade ("So what, if you get lots wrong").</li> <li>• Wouldn't say anything. Simply says she would be sad but wouldn't communicate this to the child. Ridicules the child either to his face or behind his back ("Ha! You got lots wrong!" "I would spread it around the school"). Laughs at the other child or has no sympathy ("Tough, it's his own fault"). Doesn't know what to do or doesn't answer.</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 4 2 0</p>
<b>Response 8:</b>		

Situation	Response Key	Score
<p>9. Let's pretend that some boys or girls in your class have started a club. It's a real fun club and we do some really good things. I'm in the club. Let's pretend that you wish that you could join the club too. One day you see me walking down the hall on my way to a club meeting. What do you say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sends a message to the leader of the club asking if s/he can join. Asks child if s/he can go to a club meeting first to see if s/he likes it before s/he joins. Asks how to join the club. Asks if the child is the leader.</li> <li>• Asks child if s/he can be in the club, or go with the child to the meeting.</li> <li>• There is no response scored as 4 for this scenario.</li> <li>• Asks where child is going or what will be happening at the club today (without specifically asking to join the club).</li> <li>• Simply says "come here" to the child. Replies off subject ("Don't run in the hall"). Says he would bump into the child and then keep walking away. Says s/he would do or say nothing. Doesn't know what to do or doesn't answer.</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 2 0</p>
<b>Response 9:</b>		
<p>10. Let's pretend that when you get ready to go to school your mother tells you that you can't leave unless you put on your ugly black raincoat and big, heavy rain boots. When you get to school all the other children have on shorts and tennis shoes. When I see you, I start laughing. What do you say and do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts to show the child his/her viewpoint or give a rationale for his/her behavior ("How would you like it if your mom made you wear this?"). Says to child "I can wear whatever I want and so can you" ("My other raincoat doesn't have any pockets so I had to wear this" "It's supposed to rain, you know"). Attempts to explain the other children's behavior.</li> <li>• Asks child to stop laughing or pointing. Asks for more information ("What's wrong?").</li> <li>• Takes off coat, hides it, or goes home to change. Says that the other child is the one dressed inappropriately ("At least I won't get sick like you will"). Says he would laugh with the child.</li> <li>• Tells the teacher. Says s/he would feel bad or turn red. Tells or warns the child to "shut-up" or "get lost"). Says he would feel angry.</li> <li>• Use physical force or threatens to do so "You look dumb too" "I'd hit you" "I'd take the raincoat and put it on you to see how you like it"). Would do nothing.</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 4 2 0</p>
<b>Response 10:</b>		
<p>11. Let's pretend that your teacher told the class to write about reptiles. You don't even know what a reptile is or even how you would spell the word. You notice me going right to the encyclopedia to start my work. You come over to see what's going on. You are really upset because you think you are going to get in trouble. What do you do and say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests specific type of help from peers, teachers, parents ("What is reptile?" "Can I look in the encyclopedia with you?" "I'd ask what page it's on"). Says s/he would watch the child to see how the child goes about doing the work.</li> <li>• Requests general type of help from peers, teacher, parents ("What are you doing?"). Stands in line to use the encyclopedia the child was using or looks it up her/himself. Compliments the child on how well she's doing (finding the word).</li> <li>• There is no response scored 4 in this scenario.</li> <li>• Acts somewhat negatively to the child ("Hurry up I want to use the encyclopedia" "It's not fair that you get to use the encyclopedia and I don't" "You can't use the encyclopedia").</li> <li>• Does not attempt to solve problem or makes general negative comments. Swears or pretends not to care if s/he finished the report. Says s/he would do nothing.</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 2 0</p>
<b>Response 11:</b>		
<p>12. Let's pretend that I brought a new toy to school. I let you play with it. Let's pretend that I said you could use it for the whole break time. Halfway through break time I come over to you and say, "I want my toy back right now." What do you do and say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point out that a promise was made ('You promised. If you don't keep your promise, I won't trust you anymore,' then I'd wait to see if they kept their promise"). Asks why the child wants the toy back. Asks if they can play with the toy longer, or if they could both play with the toy.</li> <li>• Returns the toy ("I guess you can have it back" "Sure, I'd give it back, after all it's theirs"). Child exclaims "But you said I could have it all break time!").</li> <li>• Warns the child not to break promise again. Says that they wouldn't be friends anymore or wouldn't borrow toys again.</li> <li>• Shouts at the child. Tells the teacher. Threatens not to let the child play with his/her toys in the future. Cries, "Next time I won't give it to you!"</li> <li>• Refuses to return the toy. Throws the toy out of the reach of the child. Hits or pushes the child. Doesn't know what to do, doesn't answer, or says they would do nothing.</li> </ul>	<p>8 6 4 2 0</p>
<b>Response 12:</b>		

Situation	Response Key	Score
13. Let's pretend that we are in PE class. The teacher is having us run some races. I am a really fast runner and end up winning almost every race. At the end of class the teacher says I will get to race against children from other schools. You walk with me back to class. What do you do and say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congratulates or praises child on being fast ("That's really good. I wish I were the fastest" "You're lucky"). Gives the child a present or pat on the back for being fastest.</li> <li>• Comments on the child's speed or on the race ("How/Why do you run so fast?" "You're going to have fun at the races" "Could you beat someone older?").</li> <li>• Asks the child for coaching ("Can you help me to run fast?"). Says they would practice running.</li> <li>• Assumes the child is conceited, or will be conceited and warns them not to be ("I'd congratulate them, but I'd tell them not to show off"). Imagines the child would be teasing others and tells him not to be conceited.</li> <li>• Insists that s/he is the fastest. Shows hostility toward the child her/himself ("I'd hate him/her" "You always have to beat everyone"). Responds out of context. Cries and asks to go to the races. Would do nothing.</li> </ul>	8 6 4 2 0

**Response 13:**

14. Let's pretend that you and I are playing checkers during break time. I have three kings and you don't have any. I am almost ready to jump your last piece. What do you do and say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledges defeat and/or asks to play again ("Wish I'd won" "You're going to win"). Compliments the child ("You can be proud of yourself, you're a good player").</li> <li>• State's "It's just a game". Asks for instructions from child ("How did you do that?").</li> <li>• There is not response scored 4 in this scenario.</li> <li>• Tries to avoid losing by persuading the other child to change the rules ("Don't jump over me, OK?" "Let me take a turn first"). Questions the child's reasons for winning ("So why did you have to jump over me?").</li> <li>• Quits the game or refuses to let the child jump over her his last piece. Throws a checker. Makes an illegal move ("If you jump me I'll just move it back"). Accuses the child of cheating ("That's not fair!"). Threatens to hurt child. Doesn't answer.</li> </ul>	8 6 2 0
--	--	------------------

**Response 14:**

15. Let's pretend that the whole class is working on a big picture to hang in the hall. The teacher is going to choose one person to be in charge and decide what we're going to draw on the picture. You would really like to be the person in charge. The teacher says to me "[name], I'm going to let you be in charge. What shall we draw?" What do you do and say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asks if they can draw. Suggests ideas to the leaders. Congratulates the child ("Good luck! Teacher made a good choice!").</li> <li>• Expresses disappointment in a non-hostile manner ("Aw, shoot!" "I wish I were in charge"). Suggests alternative ways for the project to be led ("We need a leader for the boys and one for the girls" "Teacher should lead" "Well you're lucky"). Asks child if s/he can be second in command.</li> <li>• Asks if s/he can replace the child as leader ("Can I be it please?" "If you don't want to, can I?"). Asks the teacher if he can be chosen next time.</li> <li>• Complains that the child is always picked for special privileges, or says that s/he is better qualified ("She should have picked me" "Don't pick her, pick me!" "I'm the best drawer in the world!"). Asks the child or the teacher why the child was chosen "Why her and not me?").</li> <li>• Threatens violence ("I'd be mean to you"). Child cries or says they won't cooperate or stay to do the work. Makes an inappropriate/irrelevant response. Doesn't know what to do or doesn't answer.</li> </ul>	8 6 4 2 0
---	---	-----------------------

**Response 15:**

Enter the score for each item in the open box, next to one of the social challenge categories. Add all of the responses horizontally to total for each type of social challenge category. Finally, add all of the category scores for a total measure score. Compare to the score ranges representing performance of a group of typical children to identify possible areas for needed intervention.

Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
A. Peer group entry																
B. Response to provocation																
C. Response to failure																
D. Response to success																
E. Social expectations																
F. Teacher expectations																
															<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	