Assessing Vocabulary and Oral Language Skills in Preschoolers

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Additional information about DMG and the PELI is available at https://dibels.org/.

Agenda

• Overview of the PELI and research
• Importance of assessment of vocabulary and oral language skills
• Overview of Vocabulary-Oral Language subtest
• Administration and Scoring Practice
• Review Data
• Discussion & Questions

Overview of the PELI and Research
What is the PELI?

Preschool Early Literacy Indicators:
A storybook embedded assessment of early literacy and language skills for preschool. PELI assesses:
- Alphabet knowledge
- Phonological awareness
- Vocabulary and oral language
- Comprehension

PELI® Benchmark Materials
- Benchmark Assessment: 10 different books—equally difficult
  - 5 books for 3–4 year olds
    - 3 Benchmark books
    - 2 Interim (PM) books
  - 5 books for 4–5 year olds
    - 3 Benchmark books
    - 2 Interim (PM) books
- Score Forms corresponding to each book

PELI® Books
Time for Bed

PELI® Score Forms
How to Use PELI® Materials

Use **Benchmark books** to assess *all* children three times per year:
- Beginning of year
- Middle of year
- End of year

Use **Interim books** to assess *some* children between Benchmark assessments
- Mid-way between beginning- and middle-of-year benchmark
- Mid-way between middle- and end-of-year benchmark

PELI® Quick Checks

- **Progress Monitoring: Quick Checks**
  - Scoring booklets and corresponding student materials for:
    - Alphabet Knowledge
    - Vocabulary–Oral Language
    - Phonological Awareness
  - Use Quick Checks to monitor progress of *children who are receiving additional instructional support* in one or more critical skills

Features of PELI®

- Storybook format is familiar to preschool students
- Assessment is untimed

Child sits to left of assessor

Assessor Directions (in bold)

Stories feature diverse characters
PELI® Administration and Scoring Overview: Alphabet Knowledge

Alphabet knowledge
- Child is asked to name as many letters as he/she knows from an array of letters embedded in theme-related picture.
- Score is number of letters correctly named.

PELI® Administration and Scoring Overview: Vocabulary-Oral Language

Vocabulary/Oral Language
- Child is shown a scene related to the theme of the book.
- Child is asked to:
  - a) name 10 items
  - b) tell everything he/she can about 5 items.
- Score is total of a) number of pictures correctly named and b) quality of response rating for “Tell About.”

PELI® Administration and Scoring Overview: Comprehension

Comprehension
- Comprehension Questions: Assessor reads a story pausing to ask questions before, during and after.
- Shared Retell: Child fills in missing words during a brief retelling of the story.
- Score is total of: a) questions correctly answered and b) correct responses during Shared Retell.

PELI® Administration and Scoring Overview: Phonological Awareness

Phonological Awareness
- Game format
  - The assessor shows and names a picture and asks the child to say the first part or the first sound in words.
- Score is total of: first parts of words and first sounds in words that child says.
Benchmark Goals and Cut Points for Risk for 3-4 Year Old Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>Benchmark Status</th>
<th>Likely Need for Support</th>
<th>Beginning of Year</th>
<th>Middle of Year</th>
<th>End of Year</th>
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<td>PELI Composite Score</td>
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**Benchmark Goals and Cut Points for Risk for 4-5 Year-Old Children**

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**Research on the PELI: Reliability and Validity**

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Note: AUC = Area Under Curve; Sens = Sensitivity; Spec = Specificity; AC = Accurate Classification; PPP = Positive Predictive Power; NPP = Negative Predictive Power.

**Research on the PELI: Decision Utility Indices for Benchmark Goals for 4-5 Year Olds**

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<th>Subtest/Score</th>
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**Research on the PELI: Decision Utility Indices for Cut Points for 4-5 Year Olds**

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Note: AUC = Area Under Curve; Sens = Sensitivity; Spec = Specificity; AC = Accurate Classification; PPP = Positive Predictive Power; NPP = Negative Predictive Power.
Assessment of Vocabulary and Oral Language

Importance of Assessing Vocabulary and Oral Language

The Issue: Differences in Reading Trajectories Start Early

The Issue: Differences in Language Trajectories Begin Even Earlier (Hart & Risley, 1995)

Vocabulary and Oral Language: What Is It?

- Knowledge of words and word meanings
- The ability to put words together in simple sentences with correct grammar and syntax to communicate needs, wants, ideas and information
Relating Oral Language and Reading

- Variations in oral language abilities account for differences in reading comprehension more significant than age, nonverbal ability or non-word reading. (Nation & Snowling 2004)
- Strong link between development of oral language and the development of phonological awareness. (Dickinson et al., 2003; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998)

It is important to Identify Vocabulary and Oral Language Delays EARLY

- In early grades, reading comprehension depends heavily on emerging word-reading skills.
- As children accomplish the ability to automatically and fluently read printed words, language comprehension begins to contribute more to individual differences in reading comprehension.

Students with poor word-reading abilities lag behind their typically developing peers on reading comprehension measures in the early grades -- even those with good language skills.
- However, students with delayed language skills who have proficient word-reading abilities in the early grades usually do not lag behind their typically developing peers on reading comprehension tests until they have had one or two years of reading instruction. (Catts et al., 2005)
Assessment of Vocabulary and Oral Language

Promote Vocabulary and Oral Language Development EARLY

How many words can you teach?
- 2-3 a day
- 10-15 a week
- 350 - 525 a year

How many words do children learn?
- Typically developing children acquire 2.2 words a day from 1 year of age to end of grade 2
  - 15.4 a week
  - 803 a year
- By age 4, typically developing children have acquired approximately 6,000 word meanings.
- By age 5, typically developing children have an oral vocabulary of approximately 5,000 to 8,000 words.

In Sum:
- Strong vocabulary skills contribute to improved reading fluency and comprehension skills in later grades.
- Vocabulary is a cumulative skill: The more words you know, the easier it is to learn new words.
- Significant language support for English Language Learners in preschool can reduce or eliminate the need for specialized language support in elementary school.
Vocabulary and Oral Language

So, how do we assess vocabulary and oral language development with the PELI?

Vocabulary and Oral Language: Picture Naming

V-OL 1. Here is a picture of a farm. I am going to point to some things and you tell me what they are.

Point to each picture and ask, What is this? or Do you know what this is? for the following words:

1. cow  6. barn
2. sun  7. fence
3. owl  8. wheelbarrow
4. tractor  9. windmill
5. scarecrow  10. puddle

Vocabulary and Oral Language Part I: Picture Naming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Literacy Skill</th>
<th>Vocabulary and Oral Language</th>
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<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Child is shown a picture of a scene and asked to name common objects in the picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1 point for each object correctly named</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompts</td>
<td>What’s another name for it? Do you know what it is called in English? What is the whole thing called? What is just this part called?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinue</td>
<td>Discontinue if child gives no response on the first three items. Go on to “Tell About.”</td>
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### Vocabulary and Oral Language
#### Part B: Tell About

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Literacy Skill</th>
<th>Vocabulary and Oral Language</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>Child is asked to tell all he/she can about 5 words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score</strong></td>
<td>Quality of response rating on 0–5 point scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Prompts**          | What do you do with a ______?  
What is a ______ for?  
What does a ______ do? |
| **Discontinue**      | Discontinue if child gives no response on the first three words. |

**Tell About: Directions**

Now I want you to tell me everything you can about some words. My turn first. I will tell you everything I can about an owl (point to the owl). An owl is a kind of bird that flies around at night and it says, “Hoo.” Now it is your turn.

If the child has not named the picture correctly, say, *This is a ______* before asking him/her to tell you about it:

1. Tell me everything you can about a cow.
2. Tell me everything you can about a barn.
3. Tell me everything you can about a tractor.
4. Tell me everything you can about a wheelbarrow.
5. Tell me everything you can about a puddle.

**Video: Ben and On the Farm**

**Scoring PELI**

Vocabulary and Oral Language
**Assessment of Vocabulary and Oral Language**

**Tell About Quality of Response Rating:**

Follows progression of early childhood language development:

0  No response or incorrect/irrelevant response
1  One word response
2  Phrase, correct two-element sentence, or incorrect/incomplete three-element sentence
3  Correct three-element sentence, or incorrect/incomplete expanded or compound sentence
4  Correct expanded sentence
5  Correct compound sentence

**Language Development First Year: Listening and Learning**

**Listening**

**Looking**

**Joint Attention**

**Cooing**

**Babbling**

**Vocables**

**Language Development Stage 1: Single-Word Utterances**

First 10 Nouns
(food, animals, toys)

- kitty
- mama
- car
- eat
- juice
- more
- ball
- baby
- water
- down
- go
- up
- dada
- cookie
- want

**Language Development Stage 2: Two-Word Utterances**

50-word vocabulary: mostly Nouns

- More
- cookie
- Mommy go
- More
- cookie
- Mommy go
- Big doggie
- Eat cookie
- Kitty here
- No bed
- Want ball
- Daddy eat
Language Development
Stage 3: Three-Element Sentences

Oral vocabulary of 50–100 words
Combine Ideas
Daddy throw  Throw ball
Daddy throw ball
I go Go school
I go school
The doggie is big
I run fast I want juice
That is my kitty
The doggie is in the house
I kick a ball

Language Development
Stage 4: Four + Element Sentences

Oral vocabulary of 900–1000 words
Sentences expand and become more grammatically correct
I like to build with blocks at school.
I went to the movies last night.
My mom ran fast in the race.

Language Development
Stages 5–6: Complex Sentences

Oral vocabulary of 4,000–6,000 words
Sentences become increasingly sophisticated and correct
Ideas are linked in sentences using “connector words” like and, then, because, if, when, after

I go to sleep in my bedroom when I am tired.
I like to read a story before I go to sleep.
I like it when it is nice out and we can play outside.
The game that I played last night is my favorite.
I am going to my grandma’s after I get home from school today.

Tell About: Rating Scale

0  No response or incorrect/irrelevant response
1  One word response
2  Phrase, correct two-element sentence, or incorrect/incomplete three-element sentence
3  Correct three-element sentence, or incorrect/incomplete expanded or compound sentence
4  Correct expanded sentence
5  Correct compound sentence
0-Point Responses

0 = No response or response unrelated to target word

- Examples of responses that are clearly unrelated to the target word or convey incorrect information:
  - *It tells you how hot it is outside* (clock)
  - *It can help you* (lizard)
  - *It’s for push* (telescope)

- Examples of responses that are vague and/or do not convey information about the target word:
  - *I want it* (merry go round)
  - *That place* (stairs)

Note: You can ask a follow-up question—*What do you do with ____? What is a _____ for? Tell me something else about a ____.*

Sentence Elements

Subject: Who or what the sentence is about (noun, pronoun or noun phrase)

Verb: Action – does what/what happens? (verb or verb phrase)

Object: The person or thing affected by the action

Descriptive word:
- Adjective: Describes a person, place, or thing
- Adverb: A word or phrase that describes an action, typically tells how, when or where

Prepositional phrase: phrase that begins with a preposition (e.g., in, on, under) and ends with a noun or pronoun

Simple 3-Element Sentence

Subject – Verb -- Object

*She kicked him.*
*I will kick it.*
*I string them.*
*I kick balls.*
*I can string beads.*
*I did throw the ball.*
*She picked up the phone.*
*I pick up my backpack. We can read our books.*
*He kicks that ball. The boy throws this thing.*
Simple 3-Element Sentence

Subject – Verb - Object

I like to eat.
I want to play.
I would like to help.
Bobby likes to dance.
Faye wants to read.
I do like singing.
Bobby likes sliding.

Subject ---Verb – Descriptive Word

Adjective
The boy is tall.
The cat is fluffy.
His hair is red.
My mom is happy.
The girl feels sad.
Swimming is fun.

Adverb
The monkey is running fast.
He can jump very high.
The girl walks slowly.
I can throw far.

Subject – Verb – Prepositional Phrase

The cat is under the table.
The book is for my teacher.
The bike is in the garage.
Bobby is at school.
Pablo is on the bus.

Subject ---Verb – Descriptive Word

A word or phrase that describes or renames the subject

Noun
- Our teacher is a man.
- My dad is a carpenter.
- A dog is an animal.
- Those people are doctors.
Note: An utterance must be grammatically correct to achieve a score of 3

Examples of utterances that have three elements, a subject and a verb, but are not grammatically correct and would be scored as 2 points.

- cow: cow say moo
- barn: animals go sleep
- tractor: me drive tractor
- wheelbarrow: you put dirt
- puddle: cow drink puddle

Practice # 1: 3-Element Sentences
- he throws
- he throws the ball ✓
- I want to run fast
- I play on the playground ✓
- Bobby is playing at school ✓
- I kick the ball on the playground
- kick the ball
- I play

Practice # 2: 3-Element Sentences
- tape is sticky ✓
- you can color the paper ✓
- make fish
- we get paper and paint
- you can sleep in a house ✓
- I like to draw ✓
- for draw fish
- you can make a fish ✓

Practice # 3: 3-Element Sentences
- you play at school ✓
- we make it ✓
- we get some lights and candy
- we look in the sky ✓
- a doctor makes you healthy
- you talk to your teacher ✓
- I like swinging on swings
Assessment of Vocabulary and Oral Language

If it is not a 3 ...

Is it less or greater than?

If it is less than a 3 and the utterance contains more than a single word, it is a 2.

Examples of 2-Point Responses

- Cow
  - get milk
  - in the barn
- Barn
  - the animals
  - eat in there

Examples of 5-Point Responses (Grammatically correct sentences consisting of two stand-alone clauses joined by connector word(s))

- cow: a cow says moo and you get milk from a cow
- barn: a barn keeps animals in it so they don’t get lost
- tractor: you get in it and then you drive it around on the grass
- wheelbarrow: a wheelbarrow can roll and it can take hay to the animals
- puddle: you jump in it when the rain falls down

Scores for Ben: On the Farm

Benchmark goal for 3-4 year olds at EOY: 14+
Video: Calvin and A Day at the Beach

Scores for Calvin: A Day at the Beach

Benchmark goal for 3-4 year olds at EOY: 23+

Tell About: Practice 1
Tell About: Practice 2

Vocabulary/Oral Language

milk comes from cows

a barn has hay

a tractor is loud

a wheelbarrow picks up dirt

A puddle / you can play in a puddle

Tell About: Practice 3

Vocabulary/Oral Language

you can get milk from a cow

a barn is for feeding all the animals and helping them

a tractor is for driving everyone back to the barn

wheelbarrows are for picking up dirt and grass

you can jump in the puddle when you have rainboots on

Tell About: Practice 4

Vocabulary/Oral Language

it can moo and it walks and you can milk cows

all the animals can go in the barn so they can rest and sleep

the farmer can drive it so he can bring hay to the animals

a wheelbarrow can roll around on one wheel

kids can jump in puddles and they can splash everybody

Questions?
Assessment of Vocabulary and Oral Language

Language Development by Kindergarten Entry

Oral vocabulary of 5,000–8,000 words
Easily use complex sentences that link two or more ideas
Sentences are, for the most part, grammatically correct

References


Thank YOU!

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