

EPVS: LISTS FOR EVALUATION OF PRAGMATIC SKILLS

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Background: The prevention and early detection of communication problems are of crucial importance. It is, therefore, essential to have appropriate assessment instruments. As there was no norm-referenced instrument to examine the pragmatic skills of Dutch speaking children younger than two years, we developed the 'EPVs: Lists for Evaluation of Pragmatic Skills'.

Method: The EPVs are based on 'The Pragmatics Profile of Everyday Communication Skills in Children' devised by Dewart and Summers (1995). We translated the instrument in 1999 and transformed the structured interview into a parent questionnaire. After a scientific procedure of item selection, developing norms and doing studies of reliability and validity, we created the EPVs. EPV1 is for children between 6 and 15 months, EPV2 is for children between 16 and 30 months.

Results: There are norms available for EPV1 (n=390) and EPV2 (n=534). Reliability for EPVs is high. Cronbachs Alpha for all items together is between .88 and .99. for EPV1 and between .90 and .99. for EPV2. Validity: construct-, content- and concurrent validity all show good results. The EPVs seem valuable to examine communication skills in specific target groups like Cleft Palate, Down Syndrome and Autism.

Conclusion / take home message: The EPVs are a valuable screening instrument for early detection of children at risk for communicative problems and specifically measures pragmatic skills. Specific clinical groups seem to have their own pragmatic profile (differences are noticeable quite early). EPV's combined with N-CDIs provides a fairly complete picture of communication skills.