



PELICAN TALK'S *PRAGMATICS CHECKLIST*

Pragmatics is the study of a person's ability to use and interpret verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate in a **social and functional sense**. (Verbal skills relate to the production speech, and non-verbal skills relate to tone of voice, body language etc...)

To explain this further, we must remember that there is more to communication than just saying the words! For example, a child may be able to say the sentence "Do you want to play?" but do they know how to use this sentence functionally in a social sense? A child must approach another child, look at them, gain their attention and then produce the sentence using intonation that is questioning and inviting.

One of the main impairments associated with autism spectrum disorder is in the area of pragmatics. Difficulties are also seen in children with speech and language difficulties. For this reason, a pragmatic profile is useful so areas of pragmatic deficit can be identified and addressed through explicit teaching and supported practice.

Pelican Talk produces several resources to assist in the development of pragmatics. One of these is SOCIAL SAM ©. (Refer to the website for details and updates).

Sometimes, it is seen as a priority to work on a child's pragmatic skills instead of their actual speech skills. For example, a child with very unclear speech, may benefit more from learning how to go up to another child, to beckon and to point to a game, rather than spending hours trying to master the words "Do you want to play?" Assessment and promotion of pragmatic skills are an extremely important part of speech pathology intervention.

The checklist over the following 2 pages allows a subjective overview of a child's pragmatic skills. It is often useful to have a parent/carer fill out the checklist as well as a preschool/childcare/school teacher, as a child's pragmatic skills may vary in mastery between contexts. Also, keep in mind the age and cultural background of the child and what is "appropriate" for a regular child of that age and from that cultural background. If in doubt, try and compare the child to a group of similar peers.

After completing the checklist, look over the items and think about which are affecting the child's social interactions most negatively and which would be most beneficial to first address. Think about whether these are skills that you would normally expect from a child at that age/cultural background. If in doubt, email Pelican Talk for some advice.



Name of Child:

Name of Person Completing Checklist:

Date:

	Does the child appropriately...	N	S	U	A	ANY COMMENTS ?
1	<i>...greet (look and wave or say hello)</i>					
2	<i>...respond to a greeting</i>					
3	<i>...bid farewell (eg. look and wave goodbye or say goodbye)</i>					
4	<i>...respond to someone saying goodbye</i>					
5	<i>...use eye-contact</i>					
6	<i>...adjust body position when interacting (that is, stand at appropriate distance)</i>					
7	<i>...take turns in conversation</i>					
8	<i>...respond when spoken to</i>					
9	<i>...start a conversation</i>					
10	<i>...stick to the topic at hand</i>					
11	<i>...join a conversation</i>					
12	<i>...leave or end a conversation/interaction</i>					
13	<i>...tell you about things that have happened to them, making sure they fill in bits you would not know about</i>					
14	<i>...ask questions about something that is happening</i>					
15	<i>...ask for general help when needed (eg. "Help!")</i>					
16	<i>...ask for specific help when needed (eg. "Can you get my shoe off?")</i>					
17	<i>...ask for clarification when they don't understand something</i>					
18	<i>... say "I don't know" or shrug their shoulders when they do not know an answer</i>					
19	<i>... say "thank you" and "please"</i>					
20	<i>...participate in structured group activities</i>					
21	<i>... participate in unstructured group activities</i>					
22	<i>... let others have a turn in play/activities</i>					
23	<i>...ask others if they can have a turn (eg. "Can I have a go?")</i>					



24	<i>...use interrupting strategies (eg. "Excuse me...")</i>					
25	<i>...ask how to do something</i>					
26	<i>... ask for permission</i>					
27	<i>... ask what someone is doing out of interest</i>					
28	<i>... respond differently to familiar vs. unfamiliar people</i>					
29	<i>... hug/touch familiar people differently to unfamiliar people</i>					
30	<i>...ask how to use something</i>					
31	<i>...explain what they are doing when asked</i>					
32	<i>...ask others to stop doing something they find annoying/unpleasant</i>					
33	<i>...stop doing something when others ask them to do so</i>					
34	<i>... express when they do not want to do something</i>					
35	<i>...comment when they like something</i>					
36	<i>...laugh at funny things</i>					
37	<i>...ask others if they can join play (eg. "Can I play?")</i>					
38	<i>...invite others to join in play (eg. "Do you want to play?")</i>					
39	<i>...state their name and age when asked</i>					
40	<i>...respond to others when others are hurt or upset</i>					
41	<i>...respond to teasing</i>					
42	<i>...apologise</i>					
43	<i>...use intonation in voice</i>					
44	<i>...adjust volume of voice</i>					
45	<i>...use facial expression</i>					
46	<i>...use gestures</i>					
47	<i>...understand/respond to facial expression</i>					
48	<i>...understand gestures</i>					
49	<i>...avoid talking too much on a topic</i>					
50	<i>...get attention</i>					
51	<i>...express their negative feelings (sadness, being sick, anger)</i>					