**Initial Speech-Language Evaluation Results**

**Name**: River Hernandez **Evaluation Date:** September 5, 2024

**Date of Birth:** May 28, 2019

**Age:** 5 years, 3 months

**Relevant Background Information**

River, a 5-year, 3-month-old male was seen for an initial speech-language evaluation at Riviera Day School on September 5, 2024. Evaluation was recommended following parent and school concerns regarding overall academic performance.

As per information collected via previous speech-language evaluation report on June 28, 2023, River was born at 39 weeks gestation via natural delivery. Birth history was significant for being jaundiced at birth; however, no pre-natal peri-natal, or post-natal complications were reported. Medical history was significant for having a history of Croup. River was seen by an Otolaryngologist (ENT) two years ago and results were reported to be within normal limits. Parents reported that he is in good health at this time. Early developmental milestones were reported to be developing within normal limits.

River has received both speech therapy and occupational therapy in the past. River is exposed to both Spanish and English in the home environment. He currently attends Riviera Day School and is in Pre-K 4.

**Instrumentation**

Formal and informal measures performed during the evaluation included the following:

* Social Behavioral Observation
* Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)
* The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals - Preschool- 3rd Edition (CELF-3 Preschool)
* Oral Peripheral Observation
* Articulation/Phonology
* Speech-Language Sample

All measures were performed in English. Results of all formal and informal assessments appear to be reliable.

**Outcome of Evaluation**

**Social-Behavioral Observation-** Observation was used to assess social-behavioral components in various structures and unstructured activities throughout the course of the evaluation. The following social behavioral observations were noted:

River walked from the classroom to treatment room independently with clinician. While walking, he engaged in appropriate conversation with clinician. He demonstrated adequate communicative intent and awareness of others. Upon entering the treatment room, River walked over to the bag of toys and requested to play with the dinosaurs. He enjoyed playing with the clinician’s toys, however, would go from toy to toy and appeared to have attention to tasks for short periods of time.

Throughout the course of formal assessment measure, River demonstrated good initial attention to task. However, after administering a few items, he required frequent redirection and repetition of test items and was observed to be impulsive. Additionally, he was observed to have difficulty attending to adult directed tasks. River appeared distracted by the room. He was observed to frequently make conversation about people and objects around the room while test items were being administered. However, once verbally redirected he would return. Verbal praise, first-then language, repetition of directions, and breaks were proven to be effective in keeping River motivated and on task.

As per information from the school, the findings obtained from the evaluation were consistent with the school’s observation.

**Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)**

The Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) (Sundberg, 2008), a behaviorally-based language assessment, was utilized to help identify strengths and weaknesses across a variety of critical skills. Performance in various domains was observed, followed by an analysis of barriers that are affecting River’s ability to learn.

River demonstrated particular strengths in the domains of manding (requesting), social interaction, and imitation skills. These areas indicate that River has a foundation of functional communication and the ability to imitate, both crucial for learning and social engagement. Tacting (labeling objects, actions, or events) and play skills were found to be inconsistent. These gaps may impact River's ability to label and interact meaningfully with objects and peers in a structured environment, suggesting the need for targeted interventions in these areas.

The most significant challenge observed was in listener skills. River struggled with understanding and following directions, which is a core area in language development. This weakness in receptive language skills was identified as the primary area needing attention moving forward.

In addition to assessing milestones in various domains, the VB-MAPP also evaluates barriers to language and skill acquisition, focusing on behaviors that hinder learning. The assessment revealed several barriers that need to be addressed as part of River's intervention plan:

* Negative behaviors: River exhibits severe negative behaviors on a daily basis, which interfere with his ability to participate in structured learning activities.
* Difficulty with instructional control: River frequently engages in escape and avoidance behaviors, particularly when faced with instructional demands, demonstrating significant noncompliance throughout the day.
* Impaired manding: While manding is one of River’s strengths, it was noted that this skill is not yet fully developed. There is a need to strengthen this area to promote more consistent and functional communication.
* Weak listener repertoires: River has difficulty responding to verbal cues and instructions. Attempts to improve these skills have often resulted in escape and avoidance behaviors, indicating that River struggles with receptive language tasks.
* Hyperactive behavior: River is frequently "on the go," displaying fidgety, impulsive behaviors. He often climbs on furniture, talks excessively, and has difficulty staying engaged in academic or social tasks. This level of hyperactivity is affecting his ability to focus and learn effectively.

Given the close relationship between skill deficits and behavior challenges, River’s intervention program will focus on both increasing communication and social skills, while simultaneously reducing the behaviors that are impeding his progress. Developing more consistent listener skills and addressing hyperactivity will be key components of River's therapy plan.

**The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals - Preschool- 3rd Edition (CELF-3 Preschool)** a standardized assessment of receptive and expressive language skills was administered in order to assess overall language skills. The CELF-3 Preschool is designed for students ages 3-6 years to assess language and communication skills in a variety of contexts.

**Total Language Scores:** Standard Scores from the CELF have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of +/- 15. Therefore, standard scores that are between 85 and 115 are considered to be within normal limits. The following interpretation of standard scores is applicable:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Core Language Score and Index Scores | Standard Score | Percentile Rank | Interpretation |
| Core Language Score | 71 | 3% | Moderate Delay |
| Receptive Language Index | 71 | 3% | Moderate Delay |
| Expressive Language Index | 71 | 3% | Moderate Delay |
| Language Content Index | 69 | 2% | Moderate to Severe Delay |
| Language Structure Index | 72 | 3% | Moderate Delay |

**Core Language Score** - The Core Language Score is a measure of general language ability and provides an easy and reliable way to quantify overall language performance. The Core Language Score is derived by summing the scaled scores from Sentence Comprehension, Word Structure, and Expressive Vocabulary. River received a Core Language Score of 71 and a percentile rank of 3%. This standard score and percentile rank yields a moderate delay.

**Receptive Language Index** - The Receptive Language Index is a measure of listening and auditory comprehension skills. The Receptive Language Index is derived by summing the scaled scores for Sentence Comprehension, Following Directions, and Word Classes. River received a Receptive Language Index score of 71 and a percentile rank of 3%. This standard score and percentile rank yields a moderate delay.

**Expressive Language Index** -The Expressive Language Index is a measure of expressive aspects of language including oral language expression. The Expressive Language Index is derived by summing the scaled scores from Word Structure, Expressive Vocabulary, and Recalling Sentences. River received an Expressive Language Index score of 71 and percentile rank of 3%. This standard score and percentile rank yields a moderate delay.

**Language Content Index** - The Language Content Index is a measure of vocabulary and word knowledge. The Language Content Index is derived by summing the scaled scores from Expressive Vocabulary, Following Directions, and Word Classes. River received a Language Content Index score of 69 and a percentile rank of 2%. This standard score and percentile rank yields a moderate to severe delay

**Language Structure Index** – The Language Structure Index is a measure of understanding and production of syntactical structures and morphology. The Language Structure Index is derived by summing the scaled scores from Sentence Comprehension, Word Structure, and Recalling Sentences. River received a Language Content Index score of 72 and a percentile rank of 3%. This standard score and percentile rank yields a moderate delay.

**Test Scaled Scores-** Test scaled scores provide performance information about the language content that each test targets. Subtest scaled scores are based on a scale with a mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 3. Subtest scaled scores that are between 7 and 13 are considered to be within normal limits. The following scores were obtained:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Test | Scaled Score | Age Equivalent | Interpretation |
| Sentence Comprehension | 4 | 3:5 | Very Low |
| Word Structure | 6 | 3:5 | Low |
| Expressive Vocabulary | 4 | 3:3 | Very Low |
| Following Directions | 8 | 4:8 | Low Average |
| Recalling Sentences | 4 | 3:5 | Very Low |
| Basic Concepts | 5 | 3:5 | Very Low |
| Word Classes | 4 | <4:0 | Very Low |

It should be noted that River repeated Pre-K 3. When comparing River to his chronological age, scores appear lower than when comparing him to his peers in his classroom.

Sentence Comprehension

The Sentence Comprehension subtest is used to evaluate the ability to interpret spoken sentences of increasing length and complexity. For this subtest, River was asked to point to the picture that illustrates a given sentence. This subtest can give information about how he understands spoken sentences in the classroom and at home. River received a scaled score of 4 and age equivalence of 3 years, 5 months. This scaled score and age equivalence are in the very low range. He demonstrated relative strength with verb condition (is running, will find), negation (not), relative clause, indirect objects, and indirect requests. However, demonstrated difficulty with some prepositional phrases (e.g., in line), noun modification, infinitives, passive voice, compound sentences, and subordinate clause.

Word Structure

The Word Structure subtest is used to evaluate a child’s knowledge of grammatical rules in a sentence-completion task. River was asked to complete a sentence that pertains to an illustration using the targeted word structures. Information from this subtest can help determine how River is acquiring the morphological rules of the English language. River received a scaled score of 6 and an age equivalence of 3 years, 5 months. This scaled score and age equivalence are in the low range. He demonstrated relative strength with using prepositions (in, on), progressive verbs (-ing), objective pronouns, and possessive pronouns (hers). However, demonstrated difficulty with the use of regular plurals, possessive nouns, third person singular verbs, future tense, regular past tense verbs, irregular past tense verbs, copulas, subjective pronouns (she does, he is), reflexive pronouns, and derivational form.

Expressive Vocabulary

The Expressive Vocabulary subtest is used to evaluate a child’s ability to label pictures of people, objects, and actions. Information from this subtest can be used to determine how River is able to name objects, people, and activities in his home/school environment. River received a scaled score of 4 and an age equivalence of 3 years, 3 months. This scaled score and age equivalence are in the very low range. He demonstrated relative strength labeling food, some tools (ladder, umbrella), and musical instruments. However, demonstrated difficulty labeling occupations, part/whole relationships, and some verbs (pouring, wrapping).

Following Directions

The Following Directions subtest is used to evaluate a child’s ability to interpret, recall, and execute oral commands of increasing length and complexity. River was asked to remember the names, characteristics, and order of pictured animals, and point to them in response to an oral direction. River received a scaled score of 8 and an age equivalence of 4 years, 8 months. This scaled score and age equivalence are in the low average range. He demonstrated relative strength with following 1-level commands with no orientation, 1-level conditional and temporal commands, all 1-level commands with a modifier, and 2-level sequential and temporal commands. However, River demonstrated difficulty following 1-level commands with two modifiers, 2-level commands with one and two modifiers, and all 3-level commands.

Recalling Sentences

The Recalling Sentences subtest is used to evaluate the child’s ability to repeat sentences of varying length and complexity without changing any word meanings or structure. The child’s response indicates if critical meaning or structural features are internalized for recall. The ability to remember spoken sentences is required in following directions and other situations in preschool and home settings. River received a scaled score of 4 and an age equivalence of 3 years, 5 months. This scaled score and age equivalence are in the very low range. He demonstrated relative strength recalling various short sentences. It should be noted, as length and complexity of sentences increased, River missed four or more components of the sentence.

Basic Concepts

The Basic Concepts subtest evaluates the child’s knowledge of dimension/size, direction/location/position, number/quantity, and equality concepts. After listening to a description, River was asked to point to the picture that best identifies a concept. River received a scaled score of 5 and an age equivalence of 3 years and 5 months. This scaled score and age equivalence are in the very low range. He demonstrated relative strength understanding attribute (dry, hard), some number/quantity (empty, many, full), and some dimension/size (long, large). However, he demonstrated difficulty understanding direction/location/position, some number/quantity (either, all), some dimension/size (tall), same/different, and inclusion/exclusion.

Word Classes

The Word Classes subtest evaluates the ability to understand and express relationships between words that are related by semantic class relationships. River was asked to choose the items that best represent the desired relationship. This subtest provides information on River’s development of categorization skills and ability to associate word meanings. River received a scaled score of 4 and an age equivalence of less than 4 years. This scaled score and age equivalence are in the very low range. He demonstrated relative strength with categorizing some clothing items (shoe and sock) and transportation. However, he demonstrated difficulty categorizing toys, most home items, some clothing items, school items, food and drinks, body parts, and animals.

**Oral Peripheral Observation:**

Informal assessment of the oral speech mechanism was performed through observation to assess the adequacy of the structures and functions of the oral-motor mechanism. Cursory observation revealed:

**Structure** – The face was observed to be symmetrical in shape. The mandible and maxilla were in proper alignment, height, shape and size. Dental occlusion, the palatal arch and oral/dental structures were observed to be unremarkable based on chronological age. At this time, River’s oral structure was observed to be adequate for speech production.

**Function** –The body and trunk were observed to be normal. Facial tone was observed to be weak. All reflexes were inhibited (no observable reflexes when performing verbal tasks). Phonation and breath support were adequate (1-3 seconds of sustained phonation), single voiced, nasal and un-voiced phonemes could be produced (/a/, /m/, and /h/). Jaw movements were unremarkable. In the area of Labial-Facial Control, decreased muscle tone of the cheeks were noted. Labial facial muscle movements were significant for decreased retraction and protrusion resulting in poorly controlled cheek movements. In the area of Lingual Control (tongue) in connected speech, decreased control of the lingual muscle was noted as evident by reduced precision of the tongue when articulating lingual sounds. Overall, facial muscles were observed to be weak and have decreased combined alternate movements and coordinated functioning.

**Articulation / Phonology:**

The ability to produce speech sounds was assessed throughout the course of the evaluation in order to measure articulation of sounds and determine types of misarticulation. The Clinical Assessment of Articulation and Phonology - 2nd Edition (CAAP-2)was administered informally. Additionally, spontaneous speech was elicited both in words and connected speech. Data was collected and analyzed using the Age of Customary Consonant Production chart as recommended by The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The acquisition of speech sounds is a developmental process, and children often demonstrate "typical" errors and phonological patterns during this acquisition period. Developmentally appropriate error patterns were taken into consideration during assessment of speech sounds in order to differentiate typical errors from those that are not.

Various inconsistent errors of sounds were noted in sequenced movements in spontaneous speech as a result of difficulty moving oral motor musculature appropriately during connected speech, difficulty with combined alternative movements of the facial muscles, and poor integration of jaw, lips, and cheek movements to support development of lingual control.

Based on River’s chronological age at the time of the assessment, the following relevant substitutions, distortions, and omissions were noted:

* Substitution of /b/ for /v/ (e.g., /hibe/ for /hive).
* Substitution of /v/ for /ð/ (voiced th) (e.g., /bave/ for /bathe/)
* Substitution of /n/ for /ng/ (e.g., /kin/ for /king/)
* Distortion of /l/
* Omission of /ch/ in final position (e.g., /wa/ for /watch/)
* Omission of /sh/ in final position (e.g., /fi/ for /fish/)
* Decreased labial-facial rounding present when saying /sheep/ and /cheese/
* Substitution of /f/ for /Ɵ/ (voiceless th) (e.g., /teef/ for /teeth/)

These sound substitutions, omissions, and distortions affected River’s overall intelligibility at the conversational level. Intelligibility in connected speech was judged to be fair. At times, longer utterances were difficult to understand. However, the structure of the utterance played a part in decreased understanding by clinician.

**Speech-Language Sample:**

A speech-language sample was obtained in order to evaluate spontaneous speech and obtain more information about River’s language skills in a less structured environment.  A language sample can help identify the types of language behaviors in a student’s repertoire and provides an enhanced overview of language development. The language sample was collected informally and observed for semantic, syntactic, morphological and pragmatic language abilities. The following was observed:

Spontaneous conversation consisted predominantly of 3–4-word utterances with some expanded utterances. River was observed to use language to request and initiate interactions with clinician. In addition, River inconsistently named objects and pictures, used action words, denoted place, denoted quantity and described objects (e.g., “I have big dinosaurs”). However, word finding difficulties, as well, difficulty using age-appropriate grammar were noted in conversation, at times.

Social language use revealed River’s ability to use words in basic conversation to greet someone and say goodbye, interact with clinician, protest or complain and respond when spoken to. However, it should be noted that for lengthier discussions, River’s comprehension was decreased and he demonstrated difficulty appropriately responding when spoken to, getting and directing conversational partner’s attention, talking about an event or recent experience, maintaining a conversation, getting partner to do something, as well as talking about what he is doing. Connected speech was observed to be disorganized, off topic, at times, and out of sequence.

The clinician engaged River in conversation about his favorite movie. River said his favorite movie was Blippi. When the clinician asked River to explain what Blippi was about, he demonstrated difficulty formulating an age appropriate, grammatically correct, expressive recount of Blippi. Instead, he changed the topic.

Intelligibility in connected speech was judged to be fair. At times, longer utterances were difficult to understand. However, the structure of the utterance played a part in decreased understanding by clinician. Overall, observations collected from speech-language sample were consistent with results obtained from the formal assessment.

**Impressions**

Based on the results of formal and informal assessment, as well as parent interview and clinical observation, River, a 5 year, 3-month-old male presents with a moderate total language delay.

**Recommendations**

Based on the information obtained through the assessment tools and parent, the following recommendations are made:

1. Individual speech language therapy 4 times a week for 30-minute sessions to improve overall language skills.
2. Goals should be reviewed and updated regularly, and a re-evaluation is recommended in 6 months to evaluate progress.
3. Implement at home activities focusing on goals targeted in therapy.
4. Continued school attendance in the least restrictive environment.
5. Continue to monitor overall oral motor mechanism and address as deemed appropriate by speech-language pathologist.
6. Occupational Therapy Evaluation

It has been a pleasure meeting and working with River and his family. If you have any questions and/or concerns feel free to contact us directly via telephone at 786-622-2353 or via email at [info@iplcmiami.com](mailto:info@iplcmiami.com).

Sincerely,

Text

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Speech-Language Pathologist

Karina De La Rosa, M.S., CF-SLP

Speech Language Pathologist