Pragmatic Language Skills Inventory
(PLSI)

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Purpose:
• Individually-administered, norm-referenced scale for children ages 5-12 years, which is completed by a teacher/caregiver very familiar with the student. The scale is designed to assess pragmatic language abilities.

Provides:
• The 45-item scale includes three subscales: Personal Interaction Skills (conversation initiation, seeking assistance, participation in verbal games, appropriate gestures/nonverbal communication), Social Interaction Skills (understanding classroom rules, conversational turn-taking, knowing when to talk and when to listen, predicting behavioral consequences), and Classroom Interaction Skills (figurative language, topic maintenance, explaining how things work, story writing, and use of slang). Cut-scores are provided for determining the likelihood of pragmatic language disorder and need for further, comprehensive language assessment.

Standardization Issues:
• 1,175 children ages 5-12 years from 38 states comprised the standardization group. Of that number, 1,019 were considered “average” by the 38 raters participating in the norming; 61 were identified as “gifted/talented;” and the remaining 95 students represented a wide variety of identified disabilities (cognitive disability, blindness, hearing impaired, autism, and multiple-disabilities). The sample is representative of 2001 US Census Bureau school-age statistics for geographic region, gender, race, ethnicity, and disability-status.

Reliability and Validity Issues:
• Internal consistency, test-retest, and interrater-reliability data is provided and yielded adequate coefficients. The manual provides information regarding content-, criterion-, construct-, and concurrent validity.

Additional Points:
• Reliability of the scale—as is the case with all third-party rating scales—is increased when the scale is adequately explained to the respondent, when the respondent is confidently familiar with the subject’s pragmatic abilities in a variety of settings, and when the respondent possesses a
good understanding of what “average” or “typical” skill development is for children of the same age.

- Given the broad areas covered by the scale, it may be unlikely that a particular rater can confidently rate all items. In that case, it is permissible (and advised) to structure direct observation(s) and/or seek input from additional informant(s) to accurately judge the student’s performance.