Harcourt Assessment
Harcourt Educational Measurement
The Psychological Corporation

NEWS

Contact:
Mark Slitt
210.339.5399

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**HARCOURT ASSESSMENT OFFERS NEW TESTS TO HELP DIAGNOSE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS IN YOUNG CHILDREN**

SAN ANTONIO – Harcourt Assessment announced today the availability of a new line of tests that helps speech-language pathologists identify speech and language disorders in young children. Approximately 12 percent of school-age children in the United States have a speech or language disorder.

The Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation™ (DELV™) assessment series is unique because it helps speech-language pathologists distinguish between variations from mainstream American English and actual speech or language disorders.

"With so many American children speaking many different varieties of American English, it is easy to misdiagnose a child's natural language variation as a language disorder," said Aurelio Prifitera, publisher of Harcourt Assessment. "The beauty of DELV is that it accounts for this diversity in American English and identifies those children who are truly at risk for or show signs of a speech or language disorder. And with proper diagnosis, the right children can receive the special educational services they need."

American English varies across the United States and among different cultural groups. For example, the mainstream American English spoken in the Northeast differs from that spoken in the South, and varieties of English spoken in rural and urban areas can differ from each other as well as from mainstream American English. These and other variations are considered legitimate forms of American English with their own rules and patterns.

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The DELV line of assessments is the result of more than 15 years of research supported by the National Institutes of Health and draws upon the work of prominent theorists in linguistics, developmental psychology and communication disorders. Most notable is the influence of Noam Chomsky. Considered by some to be the foremost linguist and language theorist of his generation, Chomsky emphasized that all languages are based on the same underlying structures. DELV assesses whether or not a child correctly uses this basic knowledge, no matter what variation from mainstream American English the child speaks.

The DELV Screening Test is a two-part assessment. Part I, Language Variation Status, is appropriate for children ages four through 12 and enables speech-language pathologists to distinguish between those who speak mainstream American English and those who use a variation.

Part II, Diagnostic Risk Status, is appropriate for children ages four through nine and enables speech-language pathologists to distinguish between children who appear to be developing language skills normally and those who may be at risk for a language disorder.

Taken together, the two parts of the DELV Screening Test take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to administer. The child's test results are reported by degree of variation from mainstream American English (strong, some, none) and degree of risk for language disorder (lowest, low-to-medium, medium-to-high, highest).

The DELV line of assessments also includes the DELV Criterion Referenced Test. This test is appropriate for children ages four through nine and helps speech-language pathologists accurately identify speech and language disorders or delays.

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The DELV Criterion Referenced Test assesses a child's ability to understand and use language appropriately. Some of the specific skills assessed are a child's ability to ask and understand the right questions, tell a short story and learn new words. The test takes approximately 45 to 50 minutes to administer and results are reported on a numerical scale in four language skill areas – language structure, language use, language meaning and speech sounds.

An interdisciplinary team of researchers, comprising a speech-language pathologist, a developmental psychologist and a linguist, created the DELV line of assessments.

Speech-language pathologist Harry N. Seymour, Ph.D., led the team. Seymour is professor emeritus and former chair of the department of communication disorders, as well as adjunct professor of linguistics, at the University of Massachusetts.

The team also included linguist Thomas W. Roeper, Ph.D., and developmental psychologist Jill de Villiers, Ph.D. Roeper is professor of linguistics at the University of Massachusetts and de Villiers is the Sophia and Austin Smith professor of psychology and philosophy at Smith College. Peter A. de Villiers, Ph.D., also contributed.

Based in San Antonio, Harcourt Assessment is respected worldwide for its technically superior, industry-leading products. The company publishes the Wechsler® family of tests, including the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children® and the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence™, both of which are industry standards.

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