Early Social Indicator

Social Behaviors

Social behaviors occur when a child attempts to convey a message to an adult or child partner. Social behaviors may be a single behavior (an initiation to play), or an episode/exchange of social behavior involving several turns (an initiation that is responded to by a peer, that is responded to by the target child). An episode begins when a child initiates or responds to an initiation presented by an adult or peer. The episode ends after a pause of at least 1-2 seconds (count to yourself, "one thousand one…") following an initiation or response. Thus, each social behavior or each episode separated by a 1-2 second pause is counted as one event.

Often children will engage in social behaviors with a play partner (adult, peer, or both) in the testing situation. For example, a child may invite the play partner to play with a specific toy. Children also may interact with a play partner about events or persons outside the testing situation. For example, if another person enters the testing room, the child may comment about the person while also pointing at him/her.

Children also may not engage in any direct social behavior and instead maintain a high level of engagement with the materials and toys. When two children are playing side by side but not engaging with each other, these behaviors are social behavior but are considered "parallel play", a stage of development for children not coded during an ESI administration.

General Administration Instructions

The Early Social Indicator was designed to provide a context for young children between 6 months and 42 months of age to interact with an adult or with an adult and peer as a means of capturing how an individual child typically initiates or responds to the social interactions of others. The ESI provides a snapshot of a child's social behavior within the context of 3 different materials each presented one at a time for 2 minutes each:

- Books
- Blocks and Balls
- Bubbles

The toys should be presented in the order listed above. During the transition from one toy set to another, make sure the timer is paused and no behaviors are coded until the timer is set for the next toy set. During each toy set, any of the ESI key skill elements can be scored.

For all three toy sets, the play partner should engage with the child and materials, but should not give "commands" for child to engage in a specific behavior.

Video recording

When video recording the administration, the video camera must be able to see the faces of the child and adult at all times. When videotaping please move as the child moves to keep both faces in view. If there is a peer involved in the play session and only one child is the "target" child being scored; if that child moves, follow the target child with the video. If both children are target children, keeping the camera on the adult and child still in the frame is appropriate. If the target child is out of the camera frame for more than 15 seconds during the 2 minutes, be sure to extend the session by the appropriate time so that a full 2 minutes of the target child is viewable.

When video recording pause the video during the transition of toys to ensure that each toy set gets a full 2 minute administration. At the end of the third task, please thank the child for playing and let them know that they are all done. Transition out from the session as is appropriate for the child.

Scoring

During the 6 minute assessment, when key skills are observed, a tally mark is made in the appropriate column. Children can receive more than one tally for a behavior sequence; for instance, if they hand a block to the adult while looking them in the face and say, "here is the block,"; then they can get a tally for attends to face, non-verbal social gesture, and multiple word all at the same time. If the coder is unable to distinguish to whom some of the behaviors were directed (e.g., verbal requesting, vocalizations, etc.), there is a category of "undirected." The child still gets credit for the behavior even though the coder could not tell if the behavior was directed to the peer or the adult.

Individual Task Administration

Books

Administration
- Get into book reading configuration.
- Present all 3 books at first. If child doesn't engage with one within 5 seconds, pick two books and have child choose.
- The play partner should engage and interact with the child. This might involve talking about the book, describing the pictures in the book, etc.
- The play partner should follow the child's lead and should not ask the child to do or say anything in particular.
- The play partner should **NOT** read the book word for word but instead look at pictures, talk about pictures/book, interact.
- The play partner should not ask the child to point to pictures or direct the child to request.

Blocks/Balls

Administration
- The play partner should follow the child's lead and continue to interact and engage with the child during the 2 minutes.
- The play partner should engage the child in Blocks and Balls play. This might include stacking blocks or rolling the ball.

Bubbles

Administration
- Play partner should open the Bubbles container, blow a few bubbles, put the cap back on the bubble container, and put the bubbles down for the child. The social behavior that is recorded is what the child does next. This may include: asking for help, handing the bubbles to the play partner, etc.
- The play partner should not ask the child to participate in requesting, these behaviors will be scored as they happen spontaneously during the 2 minutes.

Definitions of Early Social Indicator Key Skills

Attends to Face

Definition: Attending to face of adult or peer who is talking, reading, singing, or attempting to engage the child. One instance of "attending to face" should be counted each time the child looks up at the adult or peer play partner. If child looks away and looks back again, count as a new instance. DO NOT code attends to face when play partner has the bubble wand at their mouth while blowing bubbles.

Attends to Face Inclusions/Exclusions

Includes	Excludes
- Child looking at face of play partner - Child smiling at play partner (either adult or peer) - Watching or gazing at others - Glancing at adult or peer play partner (even if adult doesn't respond)	- Looking at the wall or an object - Looking at toys or bubbles - Looking at face of other adults in the room - Looking when there is a toy or other object in direct line of sight between faces. - Looking at face/mouth of play partner while they have the bubble wand at their mouth and are blowing bubbles. - Looking at face of play partner if the play partner is directing child to look up at them (i.e., by saying "look at me", waving a toy by their face, etc.)

Non-Verbal Social Gestures

Definition: The child uses non-verbal gestures to socially interact with the adult and/or peer play partner. One instance of a non-verbal social gesture should be scored when observed during the assessment. Non-Verbal social gestures can be scored at the same time as all other key skills. Examples and non-examples of what constitutes non-verbal social gestures are listed below.

Includes	Excludes
- Child points to toy/object. - Child hands a toy or object to the play partner - Waves hello or goodbye - Child pointing to something/object outside of toys. (in room/objects around the play area) - Child points to something out of their reach - Taking a toy or object away/attempting to take an object away from adult or peer play partner (e.g., trying to take bubble wand while play partner is blowing bubbles) - Taking a toy or object from the hand of the play partner - Nodding, shrugging shoulders, shaking head, smiling (with or without eye contact) - Sticking out lip/"pouting"	- Turning pages of a book while not interacting with play partner or peer - Stacking blocks while not interacting with play partner or peer - Taking balls out of the bag (even if play partner is holding the bag) - Hand Flapping - Waving arms - Moving head in a tilt

Verbal Requesting

Definition: Talking to the play partner to ask for help or to obtain objects. Child uses words and/or phrases associated with requesting.

General Requesting Inclusions/Exclusions

Includes	Excludes
● Child uses words/phrases such as: "look", "help", "more", "please", "help please", "give me", "up", "down" ● Sign language for any words/phrases associated with requesting (see list above) ● Child verbally requesting a toy from the play partner (see list above) ● Child verbally requesting help from the play partner (see list above) ● Child verbally or through signs asks for "more" (see list above) ● Child says "look" with a toy or object in his/her hand. (see list above)	● Child using a vocalization that is not understood by play partner and coder. ● Just labeling the object (e.g., "book", "ball")

Child Initiated Physical Contact

Definition: Child making physical contact with adult or peer play partner. This is positive physical touch initiated by the child, not prompted. This behavior can co-occur with other key skills (e.g., requesting).

General Child Initiated Physical Contact Inclusions/Exclusions

Includes	Excludes
- Reaching out/holding hands - Patting adult or peer play partner - Sitting on lap - Hugging, kissing, patting - Sitting on floor leaning on play partner - High Five/Fist bump - Incidental contact while taking object from play partner (i.e., grabs play partner's hand while trying to take the bubble wand) - Child touches play partner with hand while sitting on play partner's lap - Grabbing the play partner's finger	- Play partner makes physical contact with the child. - Child responds to hug or kiss that is initiated by adult or peer play partner - Kicking - Pushing over/pushing away - Shoving - Hitting - Adult picks up child - If child begins assessment sitting on play partner's lap - Child falls over or falls down and touches play partner on the way down/"catches themselves". (accidental touch)

Vocalizations

Definition: Child makes a sound or verbalization (**NOT** understandable by person coding). Can count at same time as attending to face, child initiated physical contact, joint attention, or requesting. An episode ends when the child pauses for 2 seconds and/or takes a breath to start a new word or sentence. Can be coded at the same time as attends to face, show/point/gesture, response to play partner, and child initiated physical contact.

General Vocalizations Inclusions/Exclusions

Includes	Excludes
- Babbling - Cooing - Laughing - Any sounds not understandable by person coding. - Animal sounds/car sounds - Whining	- Any words that can be understood by play partner/coder - Involuntary noises (hiccups, sneezes, coughs, etc.) - Crying - Noises/buzzing sounds made in an attempt to blow bubbles

Single and/or Multiple Words

Definitions: Any single or multiple words made by the child that are understood by the play partner and person coding. Can be coded at the same time as attending to face, child initiated physical contact, joint attention, and requesting. An episode ends when the child pauses for 2 seconds and/or takes a breath to start a new word or sentence. Can be coded at the same time as attends to face, show/point/gesture, response to play partner, and child initiated physical contact.

General Single/Multiple Words Inclusions/Exclusions

Includes	Excludes
- Any single word or multiple word that is understood by the person coding. - Sign language for word or multiple words (even if can be counted as a verbal request) - Uh-oh - Yeah	- Any vocalizations not understood by the person coding. - Any involuntary noises (coughs, sneezes, hiccups)