(The Speechie Show Ep.15)

Welcome to the Speechie Show! Being a speech language pathologist often means having too much work and not enough planning time. To beat the overwhelm, we’re bringing you the tricks and tools that will make your job a little bit easier.

**Carrie**: Hey everybody, welcome to the Speechie Show. I'm here today with Lacee Johnson from Speech Me Maybe. How are you Lacee?

**Lacee**: I'm good, how are you?

**Carrie**: I'm good! And today we are talking about assessment with children with autism. So, we are talking about how do you get a good picture of a child with autism when you can't get them to sit down and do your standard battery of tests that you would like them to do. So, we're going to be sharing some awesome tips and resources for evaluating children with autism today. But if you are new to this show, this is the Speechie Show. We do this every week. I interview another speech language pathologist or another professional and we chat about one topic and we do some giveaways. We have lots of fun. So, stay tuned if you are here with us on Facebook live. You will have a chance to win our giveaways here in just a minute. And don't forget to share with your friends so we can get other people on her as well and have a good time. Alright so Lacee why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself before we get into the topic of treating children with autism. Or evaluating children with autism.

**Lacee**: So I'm Lacee Johnson. I'm a speech language pathologist. I work primarily with kiddos who have autism, so I do a lot of assessments and evaluations and stuff like that. So, I would love to share more.

**Carrie**: Wonderful, wonderful. And do you work at a center specifically for children with autism? Did I see that?

**Lacee**: Yeah. So, I work for Arizona Autism United. So, our population is autism. We have a clinic and then we do home services and school-based services as well.

**Carrie**: Perfect, that sounds wonderful. Alright so we're talking about evaluating children with autism today. What I want you to do if you’re on Facebook is go in and find an emoji that represents how you feel about evaluation children with autism. Go ahead and put that in the comments, I want to see what emoji's people come up with. So, what emoji best represents how you feel about evaluating children with autism. Alright so we're going to share 5 tips today that will get you through those assessments for children with autism and then we are going to share some resources and do some giveaways. So, our first tip today is about using different types of assessments. So Lacee talk to us about what kinds of assessments you use for children with autism.

**Lacee**: Yeah, so um usually typically when I do an assessment, I use a combination of test batteries. You always want to try to use a standardized assessment that you can base comparative and standard scores on. But I also use informal assessments, criteria based assessments, developmental skills, just to get a bigger picture overall for the child. So, if you look at the DSM5 for our level 1 and level 2 kiddos that maybe are non-verbal, more severe or limited verbal abilities, I do always try to give them the PPVT the EVT to get some type of standardized score. I also give them an informal assessment in addition to observation and language samples. The informative assessment gives you a better picture than what just a standard score would give you. And for our level 3 kiddos, so like our social communication kiddos that struggle with those social language aspects, um I give them a variety, in addition to the castle which may, they may get a standard score of 115 and we may not be able to justify why they need skilled speech services. It's always great to do an assessment checklist, which I'm going to talk about further too.

**Carrie**: Perfect. And do you include like parent and caregiver reports on those children that you just can't get them to do anything in your office?

**Lacee**: Yes. So that is definitely part of each the informal and the communication checklist. There's a functional communication assessment that the parent can fill out as well as a detailed case history form. And then for the social communication assessment that I give, I always want to get parent input, teacher input. Maybe they were the paired professional all day long that can give you more than what pulling them out for an hour, you would see.

**Carrie**: Perfect. Wonderful. Alright, so we are...oh no Tessa says she can't find her emoji's. So, we're talking assessment for autism if you're just joining us and I asked you to put in emoji's that represent how you feel about treating or assessing children with autism. I saw one angry emoji go by. I got at least one angry one. So, you can either type it in your comments. Or there is a place where you can kind of use it to um like or dislike on this actual Facebook live. Having a little fun with emoji's today. So, we talked about using different kinds of assessments. So, the next thing we want to talk more in depth about is observations and language samples and how that can be used to assess children with autism. Let's talk about that.

**Lacee**: Yeah so, I definitely always try to do an observation. I try to do an observation in the classroom, at lunchtime, you know in a different setting where the context is different. It may be a non-preferred activity so you might not see what you would see during a preferred activity. So, during those observations, I kind of am there for a while and thinking, I'm watching them, they are sitting quietly. There no really speaking much and I didn't really gain a lot. So, within those observations I try to get at least a language sample from what I can. So, I don't know if you are familiar with Speechie muse on Teachers Pay Teachers. She has an amazing freebie. It's just a one page checklist and you can look at grammar, semantics, pragmatic use, how they're interacting and you can just note areas of concern. So, I use that all the time during my assessments.

**Carrie**: I will find the link to that after this and I will put it in the comments of the Facebook post and we'll also put it in the show notes over on the website, so if you are on the website you can head on over and look at that.

**Lacee**: Yeah so basically just you know you're getting a good observation on different settings, different context and are they socializing with their peers. Do they rely heavily on verbal prompts to get through a task? That kind of thing. So, observations and multiple environments.

**Carrie**: Perfect, great. Yeah, I really like noting the level of support they need to do a task, which you just kind of eluted to. Ok how much prompting do they need to follow group given directions. What about individual directions. What about interacting with peers. So yeah, I think that if you just indicate the level of support on some of those tasks that can really give you a better picture.

**Lacee**: Yes, for sure.

**Carrie**: Alright so we've talked about different types of assessments, observations and language samples. Let's talk about getting a clear picture on their social and language skills. What would you be looking at in terms of who you could talk to get a big picture of that?

**Lacee**: Yeah so for social language assessments, you want to talk to everyone that is involved with them. So, on my freebie, it's a freebie you can download, you would do a social competence interview with parents, teachers, the student and maybe even a friend of the student. So, from that interview you can gauge whether or not they have the same feelings towards the student. Is it reciprocal. You can gauge whether there are more significant issues at home or in the community. Or at school and when you talk to the parent. And the teacher always gives great input for whole group instruction. It could look very different from you know a smaller pull out session.

**Carrie**: Absolutely, that's wonderful. Ok so Tessa says I missed the age range you are talking about for assessing. So, we're talking about assessing all ages. Are there any specifications you would put on ages for these things we've talked about?

**Lacee**: Not really ages. I really do more of levels. So, you're more severe on a number of kiddos with a more severe communication deficits you can use my informal language assessment. And that assessment is expressive, receptive and social and functional skills for like those basic language areas. And on the other end of that you have your level three kiddos who just kind of need that social communication approach.

**Carrie**: Perfect, alright wonderful. Tessa if you have more questions on that, go ahead and type them in. Ok if you are watching with us on Facebook like hang tight because we are going to be doing some giveaways here in just a minute, but we have 2 more tips to share. So, we are talking about using different types of assessments. We are using observation and language samples. We are talking to other people about their social language skills. And now we are going to talk about adding some more structured tasks to probe for language. So, what do you do when you are not getting what you think you should be getting?

**Lacee**: Yeah and that happens a lot. You know like I said, you'll go into a classroom or you'll observe at lunch and you won't get a lot of language, especially with those students with autism. So, like a typical language sample, you would, I usually pull them and do more of a task oriented activity. So, I'll pull out some pictures. We'll look at a book with no words and just see are the describing. Can they initiate. Are they using 2-3 words and they should be using you know 5-7. So, you kind of just getting more language out of them instead of just watching them passively participate.

**Carrie**: Perfect, yes. Alright, so we've got all of these different things that we're using. These different tools we can use. How do you put this all together to find the big picture?

**Lacee**: Yeah so during the report typically when I first started out I would write a standard score and maybe the scale score would be you know 1. So, you know this type of assessment allows you to gain a better picture overall child. And you can see if there's skills that are not generalizing into other skill sets. Like they've mastered asking for help when they are with you. However, they go into the classroom setting and they are not able to raise their hand and be asking for help. So, pulling all of these assessments together. So definitely always attempt to give a standardized measure, but then do not forget to do your criteria based assessment, and your informal observations and language assessments, as well. Because that will really make a better picture of the whole child combining all of those together.

**Carrie**: Absolutely. Ok so we have a question about non-verbal children or maybe a child that's just using echolalia and not using functional communication. So, which of these different things that we've talked about do you think would be most appropriate for a child like that who is really maybe one of those bottom tears of this diagnosis?

**Lacee**: Yeah so, I use the functional communication profile a lot with children who are numerable. They are communicating, just not verbally so you just have to kind of dig a little bit deeper. I manipulate the environment to where they have to demonstrate some type of communication so I can gain some kind of idea of where they are. And you can also do a lot of receptive tasks with non-verbal students. So, my receptive language portion and my information language assessment. It's a huge booklet where real pictures where they can id pictures, verbs, body parts. And if they're not at the picture level you might start with objects, you know something on their level. So, there are a lot of receptive tasks that you can do with non-verbal kiddos.

**Carrie**: Perfect, perfect. Ok well those are our 5 tips for today. We are going to go ahead and do a giveaway here in just a minute. So, if you are with us on Facebook live hang tight. But Lacee go ahead and tell us your favorite resources that you have for this topic today.

**Lacee**: So my favorite resource would be my informal language assessment for students with autism. So, there's a receptive language portion, and expressive language portion, a functional communication portion and a social language portion. So, it really gives you a comprehensive picture of the student.

**Carrie**: And is that the cards you were just holding?

**Lacee**: Yeah. It's like, once you print it out and laminate it, it's like a stimulus book that you flip through. And it also comes with a little scoring worksheet.

**Carrie**: Oh perfect.

**Lacee**: I don't know if you can see this at all...

**Carrie**: Probably a little...ahhahaha

**Lacee**: But, so basically you just, the skill is right here and the score would be over here. So, for example, 'labels objects for expressive', you can do either a 0, a .5, or a 1. So, a 0 meaning could not complete the task, not really stimulable to the task. A .5 would be you know ok they can do one or two of the items. Maybe it's emerging. Maybe a good area to target for future goals for the IEP and then a 1 meaning yep they can do it and have mastered it in that setting.

**Carrie**: Perfect. Uh Oh hang on, I got a pop up box right over your face...hahaha. Woops! Alright Heather Freeman just hopped on. Hey Heather. She says she's glad she checked out Facebook today. Alright so, that's the first one. That's the informal assessment for children with autism. Where can people find that if they want it?

**Lacee**: That is on my Teachers Pay Teachers store. If you just go to Teachers Pay Teachers and type in speech me maybe. My store will come up and the name of the product is informal assessment for children with autism.

**Carrie**: Perfect. That's speech me maybe. So, you guys can head on there. And you had another one, didn't you?

**Lacee**: Yeah, this one is free. If you go to my...I don't think it's on my Teachers Pay Teachers yet, but if you go to my blog, it's just [speechmemaybe.com](http://www.speechmemaybe.com/), it's on there. And that is just basically when you're assessing those social communication areas and you want more than the castle pragmatic sub test, you can download this and it's an assessment checklist. A checklist of anything you need for that area.

**Carrie**: Did you say it was social? I'm sorry.

**Lacee**: Yeah, yeah

**Carrie**: Ok so checklist for social. Ok, so you guys can check out those as well, over at [speechmemaybe.com](http://www.speechmemaybe.com/) and she's got that freebie up there. Landrea says and evidence based protocol. I'm not sure which one she's referring to. Landrea if you can clarify that would be good. Ok so we're going to do a giveaway. We're actually going to do 2 giveaways. Oh, here we go, I would do the VB Mapp, Ablls, Essic, play based informal assessment. Yep those are some good ideas as well when we were talking about more of those standardized and informal assessments those are good options to have.

**Lacee**: Yep those are great.

**Carrie:** Alright. Ok so now we are going to do some giveaways. What are you giving away today?

**Lacee:** The informal assessment for children with autism.

**Carrie:** Perfect. That's those big packs of cards the stimulus books. She's going to be giving away one of those, a digital download to the first person here who responds to my question in just a sec. And also, the second person to respond is going to win two free months in my membership. If you're not familiar with that, that is the speech therapy solution and it is my membership just for speech language pathologists. Once you get in there are training videos, ready-to-go therapy materials that you can print off and use right away. We answer questions in there. We have a Facebook group. We do monthly webinars. All kinds of good stuff in there. So, the second person to respond to the question will get two free months in there. But if you're interested in check in that out, go ahead and head over to [speechandlanguagekids.com/join](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/). Alright so here's the question. The first two people to respond on Facebook live here today are going to get, to get...blah blah blah...hahahaha...this is LIVE folks...hahahha.... are going to win. Ok so the first, the question is what is your favorite way to evaluate children with autism? It can be a test, it can be a technique, whatever you want. So, favorite ways to evaluate children with autism. First person gets the informal assessment. Second person gets two free months in my membership. So, go ahead and type those in. There is usually a delay so we need a little dance, a little music. I should just start, this is like the dance party. Ok here we go. Beth Clair says observational play. Wonderful. Alright Beth you are going to win the informal assessment for children with autism. How do you want her to contact you?

**Lacee:**  She could just email me. My email is speechmemaybe@gmail.com.

**Carrie:** Perfect, perfect. Alright so the next one is Tessa Learner and she says also through play. And Tessa I am pretty sure you are already a member, but I will give you two free months on your membership. So, go ahead and email me at carrie@speechandlanguagekids.com and we will get your membership upgraded to have that extra two months on there. So, there we go. We got lots of other good answers too. Thank you everyone for participating in the giveaway. Alright we hope that helped you with your evaluations for children with autism. If you need help with any other tough cases, head on over to speechandlanguagekids.com/join and check out the speech therapy solution membership. We'd love to have you in there and answer all your questions. Lacee where can people find more about you and everything that you have to offer.

**Lacee:** So on my Teachers Pay Teachers store, speech me maybe, but also, I blog at [speechmemaybe.com](http://www.speechmemaybe.com/).

**Carrie:**  Perfect, sounds wonderful. Alright thank you all for being here with us. Join us next Monday afternoon, we're going to me talking about what to do with those wiggly preschoolers when you have a group activity. We're going to talk about using story books and getting really engaging with storybooks and nursery rhymes to work on some speech and language skills. So, join us next week and we will see you all then. In the meantime, head on over to [speechandlanguagekids.com](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/) or [speechmemaybe.com](http://www.speechmemaybe.com/) and check us out. Thanks guys have a good one!

**Lacee:** Bye, thanks!

Thank you for joining us today on The Speech Show. We hope today’s tips have helped you feel a little less stressed and a little more confident about your work. If you’re looking for more stress busters and confidence boosters, we’d love to have you join us in The Speech Therapy Solution, where you’ll get access to a huge library of premium training videos and another library of print and go therapy materials. You can also get help with your tough cases by Carrie on the weekly Q&A calls, or by posting in the exclusive Facebook group. Plus, group members can join us for a monthly webinar that can be used for a continuing education credit. Head on over to [SpeechandLanguageKids.com/join](https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/become-a-member/) to check out all the amazing benefits of the speech therapy solution membership. Bye for now.