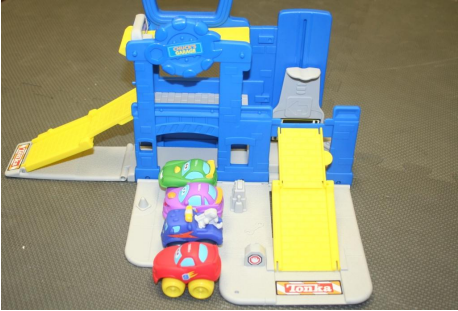# Language Sample Protocol

A <u>language sample</u> is a naturalistic adult-child interaction with a specific set of toys to evaluate a child's spontaneous expressive language ability.

<u>Purpose:</u>
1. A language sample accurately captures a child's initiated, unprompted language using a 20-minute language sample.
2. A language sample avoids language-rich verbs and labels that may not occur in the child's natural environment but provides a fun, responsive and engaging environment.

<u>Materials</u>:
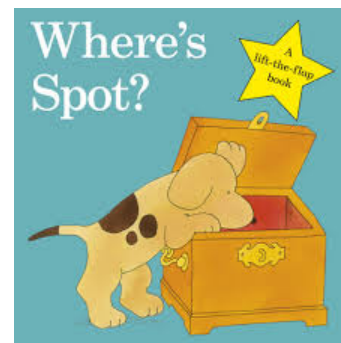There are 6 toys sets that comprise the language sample:

1. Babies	
2. Barn, animals, blocks	
3. Cars with ramp	

4. Playdoh	
5. Where's Spot?	
6. Bubbles	

Getting Started Procedures:
1. Have all 6 toy sets available in the room.
   a. Set up toysets so that they are in the child's line of sight, but contained to maintain room organization and environmental control
2. Start the timer for **20 minutes.**

Communication
3. Be at the child's eye level in close proximity to the child.
4. Use a warm, positive tone of voice and engage with the child.
5. Engage with the child and toys.
   a. Imitate the child's play acts.
6. **Respond to all child communication** (gesture, vocalization, words):
   a. Imitate the child's words
      i. When imitating a word, use a "comment-like" tone rather than a questioning tone (i.e. "train" rather than "train?").
   b. If the child continues to talk, let the child talk. Repeat what you remember from the long utterance only. **Do not add in words you think you might have heard**.
   c. Acknowledge nonverbal communication with sounds (e.g., "mhm," "yeah," "uh-huh") but refrain from making too many silly noises (oop! Vroom, numnumnum (eating noise) that the child might begin to over use)
   d. If the child asks a question: respond with a nonverbal gesture (i.e. point or show). If you are not able to answer nonverbally, then use a brief, positive response (i.e., "I don't know")

Play
7. The child is allowed to choose the toy set he/she wants to play with.
   a. If the child **does not** choose a toy:
      i. pick a toy and begin to play with it
      ii. hand the child part of the toy to play with
      iii. hold up two toys for the child to choose from
      iv. encourage the child to sit and interact with a toy
      v. move the child to the table and help them begin to play
      vi. remove a distracting toy from the room
   b. If the child **chooses** a toy:
      i. Introduce each toy set with the specific Open-ended Milieu Question listed below
8. The adult must attempt to have the child interact with all of the toy sets:
   a. High priority toys may be cleaned up and put back in the Language Sample bag to help the child move on to a different toy set.
   b. If removing a toy or moving to different toy set causes behavior issues, you may stay with the preferred toy or you may combine toy sets together.
   c. Discontinue playing with a toy set if the child loses interest and present a different toy set
   d. If the child loses interest in the toy sets quickly, some of the toy sets may need to be re-introduced to make it through the 20 minute session.

e. If you can't get the child to interact with all of the toy sets, to meet the totals required during the LS, additional Time delays and Open-ended Questions may need to be presented within the toy sets the child will play with.
  i. Open-ended questions that need to be embedded within a preferred toy set rather than as an introduction may be: "Now what should we do?" or "What's next? "
  ii. Time Delays in which the child Looses Interest (TLI) can count toward the 6 total opportunities, if need be.

Things you must do during each toy set

9. Introduce the toy set with an **OPEN QUESTION**
   a. *Here are my **babies**, what should they do?*
   b. *Here are my **animals**, what should they do?*
   c. *Here are my **cars**, where should they go?*
   d. *Here is my **playdoh**, what should we make?*
   e. *Here is my **dog** book, tell me what you see?*
   f. *Here are my **bubbles**, what should I do?*

10. Use **1 Time Delay** strategy per toy set.
    Time Delays are a <u>non-verbal</u> strategy. If you do one of the following paired with a verbal prompt – such as asking a question – it does not count as a Time Delay. Do not pair with the open question at the beginning of the toy set.
    a. Set up TD and wait expectantly, for up to 5 seconds, for the child to use a communication attempt (gesture, sign, vocal, or verbal) prior to honoring the request.
    b. The adult must maintain possession of the TD items long enough (tug/resistance) for the child to understand another response is required other than just taking the item from the adult.
    c. If the child loses interest, you may try again, but TLIs can also count toward the 6 total opportunities, if need be.
       i. <u>Inadequate Portions</u>: providing small or inadequate portions of preferred materials (e.g., give the child only a few pieces of train track).
       ii. <u>Assistance</u>: creating situations in which the child needs the adult's help (e.g., giving bubble jar to the child with the cap on)
       iii. <u>Waiting Expectantly</u>: setting up a routine in which the child expects certain actions and then waiting before doing the expected action again (e.g., hold the next page down in the book).
       iv. <u>Choice Making</u>: holding up two objects and wait for the child to communicate about which item he/she wants (e.g., holding up a doll and a teacup)
    d. There must be a Total of **5** Time Delays in the 20 minute LS.
    e. TD are NOT used during the book. Therapist is to point 4 times instead (without words) to elicit communication.

11. **Model at least 2 new play acts per toy set.** If the child will not engage with all of the toy sets, model extra play acts with the toys that the child will use.
12. **Point to 4 pictures** during book reading. Preferably point to something the child is already interested in to see if he/she will label it.
13. The adult must make at least two statements per minute (one every 30 sec) to maintain engagement. This rate includes the adult's Open-ended, Comments, and Responses to the child's communication. Behavioral or Transition statements do NOT count toward this total. There should never be more than 30 seconds of silence.
    a. Since there are a lot of built in opportunities, this will only occur when you have completed your open questions, comments, and the child is silent for the 30 seconds.
    b. When making these statements:
        i. Use non-specific words you have heard the child use during the Language Sample and limit introducing new vocabulary.
        ii. Talk in sentences at least 4 words long and, if possible, use non-informational language (e.g. it, that, those instead of nouns): "wow, look what you did with that!" "That looks like so much fun!" "it went all the way over there"
        iii. Don't finish a statement with a content word that is likely to be imitated/the child has used spontaneously earlier.

JASP-EMT for Toddlers with ASD
Language Sample Code Summary

Single Codes	Form	Independence	Function	Joint Attention	Eye Contact
[cx] – unintelligible word	[g] – gesture	[u] – unprompted	[re] – request	[po] - point	[ec] – eye contact
[s] – scripted speech; vocalization; non-social AAC activation;	[w] – word	[p] – prompted	[co] – comment	[sh] – show	
	[z] – sign	[i] – imitated	[ot] – other/unknown	[gi] – give	
	[a] – AAC	[e] – elicited		[og] – other gesture	