

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization developed the 2001 International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The Communication Function Classification System (CFCS) and the Focus on the Outcomes of Communication Under Six (FOCUS) are based on the participation and activity level of the ICF (Figure 1).

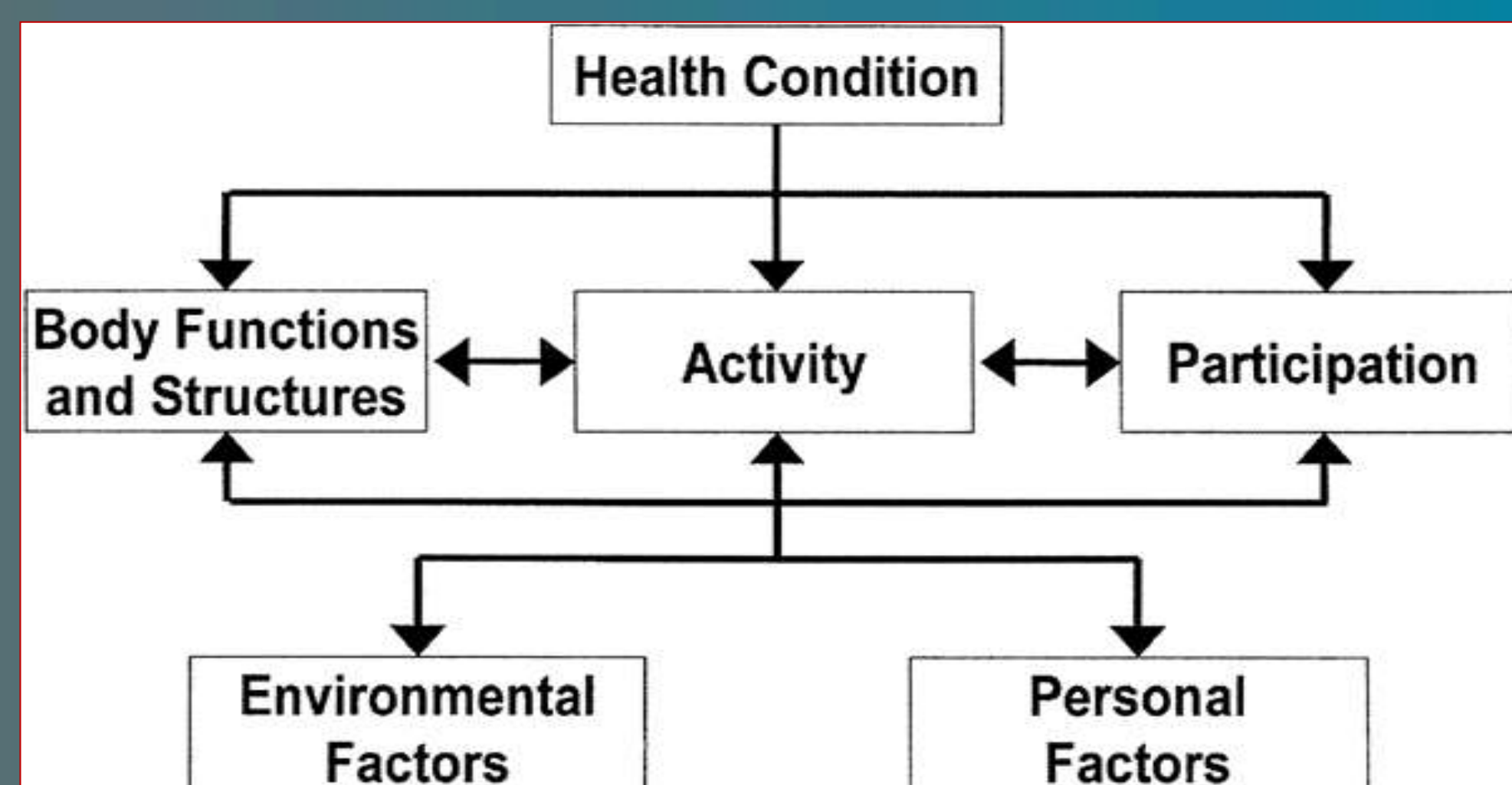


Figure 1. Model of the ICF

The CFCS consists of five levels based on everyday communication performance (Figures 2 & 3). The FOCUS is a parent-reported questionnaire used to look at changes in young children's communication. The FOCUS form uses a categorical response scale to rank daily communicative behavior (Figure 4). Though previous research has looked at the FOCUS and CFCS Levels when compared to children with disabilities, little research has been done with typically developing children. In CFCS pilot data of 32 children, ages 24 to 60 months, communication performances of children older than 31 months were generally classified as CFCS Level I. However, the relationship between age, the FOCUS Forms, and the CFCS Levels of typically-developing children needs further study. This research will expand the number of children observed by including a younger sample and adding the FOCUS information.

PURPOSE

This research will investigate the relationship between typically developing toddlers' age, the Communication Function Classification System (CFCS), and the Focus on Communication Under Six (FOCUS).

OBJECTIVES

- Determine at what age 90% of typically developing toddlers consistently communicate at CFCS Level I and compare those results to the FOCUS.
- Determine the age range and FOCUS outcomes of typically-developing toddlers for each CFCS Level.

CFCS

Level I	The person independently alternates between sender and receiver roles with familiar and unfamiliar partners at a comfortable pace.
Level II	The person alternates between sender and receiver roles with familiar and unfamiliar partners, but at a slower pace.
Level III	The person alternates between sender and receiver roles with familiar partners, but is not consistently effective with unfamiliar partners.
Level IV	The person does not consistently alternate between sender and receiver roles, but may be effective with familiar partners.
Level V	The person is limited as both a sender and a receiver, and communication is seldom effective, even with familiar partners.



Figure 2. CFCS Level explanation

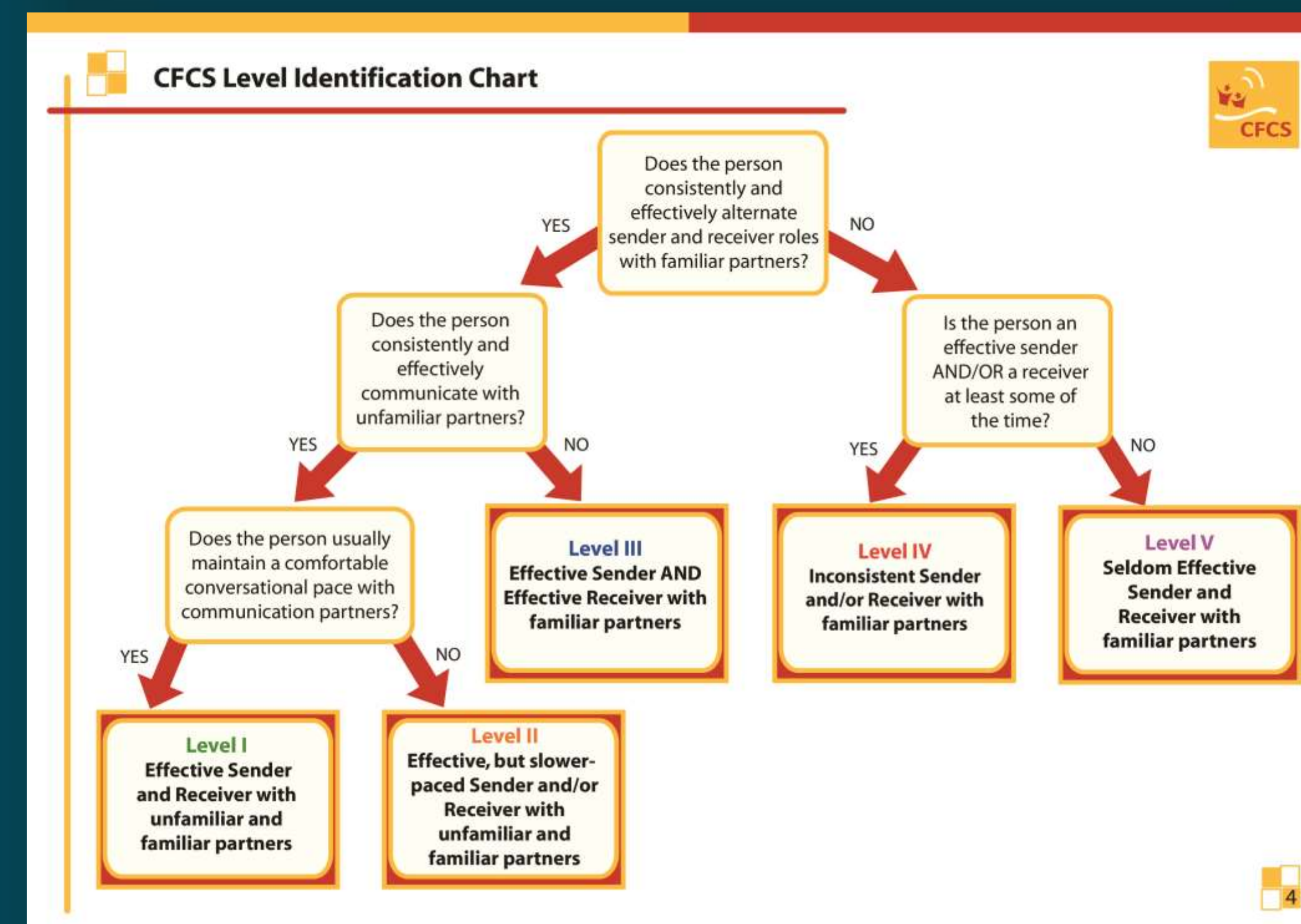


Figure 3. CFCS Page 4

FOCUS



- My child makes friends easily.
- My child will ask for things from other children.

Not like my child	A little like my child	Some what like my child	A fair bit like my child	Quite a bit like my child	Very much like my child	Exactly like my child
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Figure 4. Sample FOCUS Form items

For More Information...

www.cfcs.us

www.FocusOutcomesMeasurement.ca

METHODS

Participants

Thirty children, between the ages of 12 months and 42 months, recruited from local daycares/preschools, and their parents/guardians and daycare/preschool providers.

Instrumentation

The CFCS classification is broken into five levels, from Level I (most functional) to Level V (least functional), by their ability to send and receive messages. These levels are dependent on communication effectiveness with familiar and unfamiliar partners (Figures 2 & 3).

The FOCUS items were created to look at changes in children under six. Their communication activity and participation was reported by parents and clinicians after speech-language therapy. The FOCUS form consists of parent-friendly phrases surrounding topics based on their child's ability to use speech and language in daily life (Figure 4).

Procedure

1. Two CFCS researchers will observe each toddler interacting with familiar and unfamiliar communication partners in a natural environment for approximately 30 minutes.
2. CFCS researchers will independently complete a questionnaire classifying the child's overall communication performance using the CFCS.
3. If both CFCS researchers did not classify a child's communication as a CFCS Level I, the researchers will contact and re-observe the child at one-month intervals. This will continue until the child's communication performance is classified as Level I.
4. A parent and a teacher of the child will also be asked to complete the FOCUS.

Data Analysis

The relationship between the FOCUS and the CFCS Levels will be assessed using Spearman's rank correlation. Descriptive statistics will be used to make summaries about the age range for each CFCS Level.

CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Speech-language pathologists may use this information to determine if a toddler is making typical communication progress and whether intervention is necessary.

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