

# **The Assessment and Development of an Instrument to Measure the Speech-Related Attitudes of Preschoolers Who Stutter**

Claudia Abbiati, University of Vermont

April, 2013

This study began by evaluating the validity of the KiddyCAT (Vanryckeghem, 2005) – a measure designed to examine the speech-associated attitudes of preschool-aged children who stutter. Although this instrument has been widely used to assess the attitudes of preschoolers who stutter, preliminary data demonstrated a high-degree of acquiescent mind-set in children tested with the KiddyCAT. In other words, children who stutter reply in a way they think will please clinicians, such as dismissing any problem with their speech. Assessment of this measure's validity has continued to determine whether or not it should be supported or not. A new measure (The Preschooler Awareness of Stuttering Survey-- PASS) has also been developed to explore alternative ways of measuring the speech-related attitudes of young children. Two methods are being used to examine the instrument's validity. (1) Preschool-aged children who stutter and preschool-aged children who don't are being tested using the KiddyCAT to see if the speech-related attitudes of the two groups differ. (2) Mothers of the preschool-aged children who stutter will be given The Impact of Stuttering on Preschool Children and Parents (ISPP) – a published questionnaire (Langevin, Packman, & Onslow, 2010) that asks them about their perception of their children's attitudes toward their speech. The information gathered from parents will be compared to the children's answers on the KiddyCAT to test for consistency. The new instrument has been created to measure the speech-related attitudes of preschoolers and the speech-associated attitudes of a puppet. It also includes a survey to assess mothers' perception of their children's attitudes. Answers will be compared with those of the KiddyCAT and the ISPP, as well as between children who stutter and children with typically-developing speech. Data suggests that the KiddyCAT does not discriminate between children who stutter and those who don't. Preliminary information on the PASS demonstrates that the majority of preschool-aged children who stutter still answer in a way that they find would please the clinician. However, preschool-aged children who stutter do tend to rate their speech more negatively than preschool-aged children with typically-developing speech. This is continuous with findings from rating of school-aged children and adults who stutter when compared to those who do not.