Credo Reference

Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS)

by , , , |

Synonyms

[Activities of daily living (ADLs)](#); [Adaptive skills](#); [AFLS](#); [Criterion referenced assessment](#); [Functional living skills](#); [Self-help skills](#)

Description

The *Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS)* is a criterion-referenced assessment used to measure essential skills throughout the lifespan for an individual (Partington and Mueller 2016). The *AFLS* is designed to assess the functional skill repertoire of a learner across environments including home, school, community, and vocational sites. This comprehensive assessment is comprised of multiple modules that share consistent themes and foster overlapping goal development to increase an individual's learning and independence. For example, skills regarding meal preparation occur across environments throughout the assessment. These modules are represented in protocols which can be administered individually or in combination based on the current questions of the assessment team and characteristics of the individual being assessed (e.g., age, school placement, living arrangements). The ability to customize the assessment allows the evaluator to assess areas or domains that are pertinent to the individual at a given point in time (Partington and Mueller 2016).

The *AFLS* consists of a guide and six assessment protocols. The *AFLS* guide contains information about how to implement the assessment, what to teach and how to prompt skills, and task analyses to assist planning and programming. The protocols include assessments of *Basic Living Skills, Home Skills, Community Participation Skills, School Skills, Independent Living Skills*, and *Vocational Skills*. Collectively, these protocols assess of 1900 functional daily living skill in 66 skill areas (Partington and Mueller 2016).

AFLS Protocols. There are six assessment protocols included with the *AFLS: Basic Living Skills* (Partington and Mueller 2012a), *Community Participation Skills* (Partington and Mueller 2012b), *Home Skills* (Partington and Mueller 2012c), *School Skills* (Partington and Mueller 2013), *Independent Living Skills* (2015a), and *Vocational Skills* (2015b).

The *Basic Living Skills Assessment Protocol* (Partington and Mueller 2012a) evaluates eight general adaptive living skills that may be assessed across a variety of environments. The domains assessed include self-management, basic communication, dressing, toileting, grooming, bathing, health, safety and first aid, and nighttime routines.

The *Community Participation Assessment Protocol* (Partington and Mueller 2012b) assesses independence in a variety of community environments (e.g., grocery store, restaurants) across eight

domains including basic mobility, community knowledge, shopping, eat in public, money, phone, time, and social awareness and manners.

The *Home Skills Assessment Protocol* (Partington and Mueller 2012c) assesses eight essentials skill areas required for living in a home independently. The domains evaluated include meals at home, dishes, clothing and laundry, housekeeping and chores, household mechanics, leisure, kitchen, and cooking.

The *School Skills Assessment Protocol* (Partington and Mueller 2013) measures eight skill areas required to participate in school including routines and expectations including classroom mechanics, meals at school, routines and expectations, social skills, technology, common knowledge, core academics, and applied academics.

The *Independent Living Assessment Protocol* (Partington and Mueller 2015a) measures 16 skill areas necessary for an individual to live independent of supervision from others. The specific domains include organizational skills, self-care, maintenance and cleaning, mechanics and repairs, community travel, transportation, kitchen tools and appliances, food and meal planning, money management, independent shopping, personal management, safety, problem-solving, social interactions, and interpersonal relationships.

The *Vocational Skills Assessment Protocol* (Partington and Mueller 2015b) assesses 18 skill domains that are essential to acquiring a job as well as performing employment tasks including job search, interview, basic skills, co-worker relations, workplace safety, fixed activity skills, custodial and cleaning, laundry, retail, support personnel, office skills, computer skills, restaurant skills, restaurant kitchen, warehouse, tools, trades and construction, and landscaping.

Each protocol booklet is structured identically including a warning about learner safety when testing skills in potentially dangerous environments (e.g., crossing a street). The protocol booklets provide a brief overall of the *AFLS* assessment, information about the specific protocol, tracking grid to monitor progress for each skill domain, and modules formatted in tables for each of the skill domains (Partington and Mueller 2016). For ease of use, each module is organized by broad skill domains, which are assigned a reference letter(s). For example, in the *Home Skills Assessment Protocol*, the broad skill area *Meals at Home*, is assigned the letters *MH*. Each individual skill is assigned a reference number that is combined with the domain reference letter(s). For example, the first skill in *Meals at Home* is referenced as item MH1 (Partington and Mueller 2012c). The skill domain modules are organized similarly with the same headings. The first heading is *Task* which is the reference letter (s) and number for each item. The *Score* column is provided for the assessor to collect data by circling the number that corresponds to the learner's performance. The scoring numbers are presented horizontally in a row with either 0 1 2 or 0 1 2 3 4, which directly correspond to the specific score criteria in the *Criteria* column. The row of numbers is presented vertically four times so that each protocol booklet may be used across four separate scoring sessions. The next header, *Task Objective*, specifies the exact objective the individual must perform in order to receive a score. For example, the task objective for MH1 is "Learner will identify finger foods verses non-finger foods" (Partington and Mueller 2012c, p. 1). The *Question* presents the objective in a question format which may be used when interviewing caregivers regarding the individual's ability to perform the skill. The *Example* header provides a specific scenario in which the individual should

perform the skill. The *Criteria* header provides information regarding the number of targets, prompt levels, and other specific information needed in order to determine the overall quality of the individual's performance of the skill and directly corresponds to the scoring numbers in the *Score* column. A *Comment* column is provided in order to the evaluation to write in data collection and/or other anecdotal information that is important for the testing (Partington and Mueller 2016).

AFLS Guide. The *AFLS Guide* (Partington and Mueller 2016) is the user's manual for the *AFLS*, and the information contained in the guide can be applied across all six protocols. The *AFLS Guide* opens with a statement regarding learner safety during across the testing period as many skills assessed may occur in environments in which safety should be a priority (e.g., kitchens, work areas with machinery and tools). Additional information found within the *AFLS Guide* includes an overview of the importance of teaching functional living skills, a review of specific terminology used within the *AFLS*, and a general overview of the *AFLS*. The *AFLS Guide* also contains implementation information for the assessors to follow during assessment periods. Further information located in the guide provides directions for determining which skills to teach, teaching methods, and recommendations for building a task analysis based on the outcomes of the assessment (Partington and Mueller 2016).

Historical Background

Prior to the development of the *AFLS*, James W. Partington and Mark L. Sundberg developed the *Assessment of Behavioral Language and Learning (ABLLS;* 1998) based on B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* (1957). Skinner described a stimulus-response contingency with regard to the development of verbal behavior, identified the speaker-listener relationship, and differentiated a behavioral approach to the development of communication that distinctly differs from traditional models of language development (1957). The *ABLS* (Partington and Sundberg 1998) and subsequently the *Assessment of Behavioral Language and Learning-Revised (ABLLS-R;* Partington 2010) established the first assessment for evaluating the basic language skills, social and group skills, and self-help skills for young learners on the autism spectrum and other developmental delays. The primary purpose of the *ABLLS-R* is to provide parents, teachers, and other caregivers a comprehensive method for assessing and tracking early developmental skills in order to guide the development of learning objectives. The *ABLLS-R* assess 25 developmental domains that typically developing children master at approximately 4-5 years of age. While the *ABLLS-R* provides a foundational start for teaching language skills and learning readiness skills, the *ABLLS-R* is not a comprehensive assessment of independent living skills for young children and adults. Teaching adaptive and independent living skills across home, school, and the community is an essential component of educational plans for individuals with developmental delays. Therefore, Partington and Mueller developed the *AFLS* in order to meet the need for continued assessment of life skills across the age continuum (Partington Behavior Analysts 2016).

Psychometric Data

The *AFLS* is a criterion-referenced assessment and does not provide the standardized scores that accompany standardized assessments. As a criterion-referenced assessment, the *AFLS* provides

information regarding the ability of the individual to perform specific skills identified as compared to the learner's previous performance across repeated testing (Powers et al. 2014). Each *AFLS* protocol is scored in the same manner. For every task, evaluators circle the score that corresponds to the learner's current level of performance based on the criteria specified in the protocol. A score of zero indicates a task the learner is unable to perform or does not meet the criterion for the lowest score associated with that task (Partington and Mueller 2016). Skills that may never be applicable or may not be applicable for that learner at the time of the assessment may be scored as not applicable. Specific information regarding the skills can be noted in the comment section for each task. The scores are represented in a tracking grid that corresponds to the specific protocol assessed. The protocol allows for the assessment to be updated three times for each learner. The tracking grid should be marked differentially, using a different color for updates. The use of different colors allows for assessors, parents, school personnel, and others to visually analyze the learner's progress and skill growth across subsequent reevaluations (Partington and Mueller 2016).

Clinical Uses

The *AFLS* measures and tracks a learner's current level of functioning across a variety of skills that are essential for living and participating in the home, school, community, and vocational settings (Partington and Mueller 2016). The *AFLS* may be completed by school professionals, caregivers, and community service providers to assess a learner's level of independent functioning across a variety of settings. The three primary sources of information required to complete the *AFLS* assessment include interviews of caregivers, direct observation/testing, and/or historical data. Assessors gather information from caretakers who regularly interact, directly observe, and formally present tasks to the learner (Partington and Mueller 2016).

See Also

- ?[Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)](#)
- ?[Adaptive Skills](#)
- ?[Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS)](#)
- ?[Criterion Referenced Assessment](#)
- ?[Functional Living Skills](#)
- ?[Skinner's Verbal Behavior](#)
- ?[Verbal Behavior](#)

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